



FAQs: COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care

The costs to implement state and federal public health guidance related to COVID-19 are putting additional financial strain on child care providers, who are part of an already struggling industry that is critical to our economy reopening.

To support costs associated with implementing public health guidance, the Legislative Advisory Commission recently approved a request – developed by the Education and Child Care Workgroup under the direction of Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan – to provide federal Coronavirus Relief Fund funding to all eligible child care providers who have been operating and serving children since June 15, 2020.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet have developed a funding application and distribution process for these new funds, called the COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care. **The application period for these funds was open from July 15 to July 26 and is now closed.** Below are answers to frequently asked questions about the funding.

1. Who will administer these funds?

The Minnesota Department of Human Services will administer the COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care with support from the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet.

[Child Care Aware of Minnesota](#) is contracted to raise awareness of the funding and help providers navigate the application and payment process. Child Care Aware of Minnesota is a nonprofit that, for more than 25 years, has helped families find child care, supported the professional growth of child care providers, and informed local communities on the importance of quality early education for every child. Child Care Aware of Minnesota works with agencies across the state that support the quality and professional growth of child care providers and programs. The Child Care Aware system has experience providing grants to Minnesota child care providers, including the recent Peacetime Emergency Child Care Grants.

2. What types of child care programs are eligible for COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care?

Child care program types eligible for funds include:

- Family and group family licensed under Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9502
- Child care centers licensed under Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9503
- Certified under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 245H and exempt from licensure under Section 245A.03, subd. 2, para (a) clauses (11), (12), (15), or (18); these are nonprofit programs that primarily provide care for school-age children in the summer months; see questions 5 to 7 for more information about certified centers
- Tribally licensed child care programs.

In addition, the above eligible programs must be licensed or certified and in good standing with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (under Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9502 or 9503) or their tribe, and have not been:

- The subject of a finding of fraud
- Prohibited from receiving public funds under Minnesota Statutes, Section 245.095
- Under revocation or under temporary immediate suspension.

To receive these funds an eligible program must attest in writing to:

- Having been operating and serving children as of June 15, 2020 (see questions 3 and 9 for exceptions)
- Intend to continue operating and serving children through July, August and September 2020 (see questions 3 and 9 for exceptions).

Eligible programs must also attest in writing to use of these funds for:

- Covering increased costs or lost revenue resulting from employment or business interruptions due to COVID-19-related business closures, and/or
- Providing incentives or overtime to working staff, and/or
- Using of health and safety practices that prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a child care environment based on guidance created by the commissioner of Human Services, in consultation with the commissioner of Health. This guidance is posted on mn.gov/childcare.

This funding cannot be used for items that have already been supported by other state and/or federal funding, and cannot be used to pay taxes.

Child care providers accepting these funds also:

- Must prioritize use of these funds during the monthly award periods, and must use funds to cover costs incurred after March 1, 2020, and before Dec. 30, 2020
- Must report program information via the child care program survey at mn.gov/childcare
- May charge fees to families attending the program; these fees must comply with the Governor's Emergency Executive Order 20-10 prohibiting price gouging
- May require fees from families to reserve space in the program
- Must not require Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) copayments from families whose children attended prior to the declared peacetime emergency, but are no longer attending.

3. When do providers have to be open in order to be eligible to receive these funds?

To be eligible to receive these funds, providers must attest to having been operating and serving children as of June 15, 2020, except in the case of service disruptions that were necessary on that date due to public health guidance requested by the Minnesota Department of Human Services or Minnesota Department of Health to protect the safety and health of children and child care providers, or for planned temporary closures for a provider's vacation and holidays up to two weeks – but not sequentially at any time during the funding period. The funding period for eligible licensed child care centers and family child care is between July 15 and Sept. 30, 2020. The funding period for certified centers is between July 15 and Aug. 31, 2020. Providers who were closed and re-open after June 15 will not be eligible to receive these funds at any point. Additionally, providers must

remain open and serving children during the duration of the COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care funding period.

4. What is the timeframe for awarding these funds?

Funds will be awarded on a monthly basis with the first funding installment being made at the end of July. Eligible licensed child care centers and licensed family child care providers will receive funding in three monthly installments. Eligible certified child care centers will receive two monthly funding installments to support implementation of public health guidance for summer programming.

5. What types of certified centers are eligible to receive these funds?

Nonprofit child care programs that primarily provide care for school-age children, including in the summer months, are eligible. About 100 programs across the state meet this criteria. Similar to child care center businesses with multiple locations, certified centers were able to apply for funding during the application period of July 15 through July 26 for each individual site that meets the eligibility criteria.

6. What types of certified centers are not eligible to apply for these funds?

Certified centers that were not eligible to apply for COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care are school-based centers and Head Start programs. These programs may have access to other public funding including additional funding provided in the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. More information is available at the [Minnesota Department of Education's COVID-19 Update page](#).

7. Why are certified centers only eligible for two monthly payments?

The certified centers that were eligible for these funds – nonprofit programs that primarily provide care for school-age children in the summer months – typically operate on limited hours during the school year.

8. Will the funding award be considered income when I file my taxes?

Providers are encouraged to consult with an accountant or tax expert to fully understand the tax implications of this funding. However, providers who receive these funds will be issued a 1099 form and will be required to report the funding amount received in future tax filings as income. If providers have questions about their 1099 after the end of the 2020 calendar year, they can contact Minnesota Management and Budget at 651-201-8201.

9. Can providers temporarily close and/or go on vacation during the funding period and still be eligible for these funds?

Providers must attest to having been operating and serving children as of June 15, 2020, and to remain open for the duration of the three-month funding period, to be eligible to receive these funds. There is an exception for service disruptions that are necessary due to public health guidance requested by the Minnesota Department of Human Services or Minnesota Department of Health to protect the safety and health of children and child care providers, and for planned temporary closures for a provider vacation and holidays up to two weeks – but not sequentially – at any time during the funding period. The funding period for eligible licensed child care centers and family child care is between July 15 and Sept. 30, 2020. The funding period for certified centers is between July 15 and Aug. 31, 2020.

10. If a child care provider temporarily closes for the summer, could they receive any of this funding?

No, if providers have not been operating and serving children as of June 15, 2020, and/or do not plan to be operating for the summer, they do not meet the funding requirements.

11. How does a provider apply to receive these funds?

Applications closed at 5 p.m. on Sunday, July 26. Eligible licensed family child care providers, licensed child care centers and certified centers received an email with a link to the application and attestation. Emails were sent to the authorized agent for child care centers, the center operator for certified child care centers, and the license holder for family child care providers. Providers had the option to decline the funds if they did not want to receive them. To be eligible, the provider's license must be in good standing and they must not have been found responsible for fraud.

12. What information and documentation was needed to be eligible to receive these funds?

Providers were required to fill out an application, sign an attestation form, and, if directed, provide a Federal Tax Identification/Employee Identification Number, Social Security Number, or submit a completed copy of their W-9 form. The Minnesota Department of Human Services had W-9 forms on file for some providers, including those who received a Peacetime Emergency Child Care Grant. The department only required W-9 form submissions from providers who did not currently have one on file.

13. What are the funding amounts?

Funding amounts are \$1,200 per month for three months for family child care providers, \$8,500 per month for three months for licensed child care centers and \$8,500 per month for two months for certified centers.

14. When can I expect to receive the funding awards, and how will I receive them?

Monthly payments will be mailed to the authorized agent, center operator or license holder at the address on file with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Licensing Division. Payments will be mailed from Minnesota Management and Budget, a state agency, on or after July 29, 2020. Family child care providers and licensed child care centers should anticipate the next payments to be mailed near the end of August and September, pending no changes in provider eligibility as noted above in question 2. Certified centers should anticipate a final payment to be mailed near the end of August, pending no changes in program eligibility.

15. What if information about my program (address, authorized agent) changes between funding rounds?

You should contact your county or tribal licenser to update the information as soon as the changes occur.

16. What will the check look like?

The checks will come from Minnesota Management and Budget / State of Minnesota. The checks have perforations at the edges and the bottom.

17. What if my check is lost, stolen or damaged?

For assistance, please contact Pete Stahley, DHS Financial Operations, at 651-431-3727 or peter.l.stahley@state.mn.us.

18. If I don't want to receive these funds, can I decline?

Yes, providers had the opportunity to decline the funds using the same application to apply for the funds. If providers accepted the funds through the initial application process and now no longer want to receive the funds, they can decline them by filling out [this notification of closure or denial form](#).

19. If I didn't fill out the application sent in July, can I receive the monthly funding award in subsequent months?

No, providers must have completed the application and attestation during the application period between 8 a.m. on Wednesday, July 15, and 5 p.m. on Sunday, July 26. Providers who completed the application and attestation and met the eligibility criteria for the funds will receive a first payment on or after July 31, 2020.

20. After filling out the application and receiving the first funding installment, do providers need to take any action to receive the other two monthly installments?

No. Providers will automatically receive the August and September installments provided they have not given notice that they had to cease operations for a reason other than a public health directive. This assumes the provider still meets the eligible requirements listed above in question 2.

21. What if I decide to close and I already received one or more monthly payments of these funds?

When applying to receive these funds, providers were required to attest that they meet the funding requirements, which include remaining open for the three-month funding period. If a provider closes before the three-month funding period ends, they must [report closure using this form](#). You will not be eligible for subsequent monthly funding awards and may be required to return funds you already received.

22. Do child care providers have to care for children of essential workers in order to receive these funds?

No, but open child care providers are encouraged to prioritize needs of families working in critical sectors. For guidance on essential workers for schools and child care, refer to [this document on prioritization of children of families working in critical sectors for summer programming and child care](#).

23. Are providers who receive Child Care Assistance Program payments eligible for these funds?

Yes, providers who receive Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) payments are eligible for these funds. However, providers must not require Child Care Assistance Program copayments from families whose children attended prior to the peacetime emergency but are no longer attending.

24. Are providers who receive Early Learning Scholarships eligible for these funds?

Yes, providers who receive Early Learning Scholarships are eligible for these funds.

25. Do child care providers have to be participating in Parent Aware to receive these funds?

No, participation in Parent Aware is not required to receive these funds.

26. Do child care providers have to use Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement & Registry Tool, to receive these funds?

No.

27. Is the data in child care provider applications and the information about funding awards public data?

Most of the data in funding applications is classified as public data, and if requested, must be made available to the requestor. Private data that cannot be shared with the public is data that can potentially identify children in programs, tax identification numbers and Employer Identification Numbers, social security numbers, and data about individuals, such as phone numbers or email addresses. If you have data related inquiries, please contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Care Services division by sending an email to DHS.child.care@state.mn.us.

28. If child care providers completed the survey informing the state they are willing to provide care for essential workers, does this mean they will receive or have already applied for these funds?

No, completing that survey was not part of the application process and does not mean providers applied for or will receive these funds. However, this information will be used to help confirm that providers remain open. Completing that survey allows providers to share with Child Care Aware of Minnesota, the Children's Cabinet and Minnesota Department of Human Services that they are open and willing to serve essential workers, so those agencies can share the information with parents and guardians seeking child care.

29. Do child care providers have to operate at their full licensed capacity to receive these funds?

No, providers who hold a license do not have to operate at their full licensed capacity to receive these funds. In fact, implementing health and safety recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 may limit the ability to operate at full licensed capacity for some providers.

30. Can child care providers charge fees if they receive these funds?

Child care providers receiving these funds may charge fees to families attending their program. These fees must comply with the Governor's Emergency Executive Order 20-10 prohibiting price gouging. Providers accepting these funds may require fees from families to reserve space in the program, but they cannot require Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) copayments from families whose children attended prior to the declared peacetime emergency but are no longer attending.

31. What are the consequences of a provider not meeting the funding requirements?

When applying for these funds, providers attested that they remain in operation and are serving children. If there is indication that a provider has failed to meet COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care requirements, they will receive written notice and be provided an opportunity to clarify and/or correct any non-compliance. Failure to make the required corrections, and/or indication that a provider provided false or misleading information to the Minnesota Department of Human Services with regard to the funding requirements, may result in discontinuation of future installment payments, recoupment of payments already made, and/or referral to the Office of Inspector General for additional action.

32. What should I do if I believe a provider is not meeting the funding requirements?

Child care providers who have received these funds must follow certain requirements. If you are concerned that a child care provider is not following these requirements, email DHS.child.care@state.mn.us with "COVID-19 Public Health Support Funds for Child Care Complaint" in the subject line. Include as much detail as you can, including:

- Child care provider or program name
- Name of director if it's a child care center
- Address of child care provider or program
- If licensed, the license number (which can be found at licensinglookup.dhs.state.mn.us)
- The requirement you believe the child care provider may not be following
- A description of the way in which the child care provider is not following the requirement.

33. What if I am not sure if I continue to be eligible to receive the funds?

Please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.

34. Are there other financial supports available to child care providers?

Yes. The Minnesota Department of Education has waived the absent-day policy in the Early Learning Scholarship program, and enabled concurrent payment to a provider who needs to temporarily close and a replacement provider selected by the scholarship recipient's family.

The Child Care Assistance Program will pay for additional absent days when families request an exemption and will pay for up to four weeks for a provider who needs to temporarily close. The program will also pay unlimited numbers of absent days for children with a medically related exemption, which can apply for any COVID-related reason, until Sept. 6, 2020. For more information, visit the [Minnesota Department of Human Services COVID-19 waivers and modifications webpage](#).

Child care providers may also be eligible for business loans, including the Federal Small Business Administration COVID-19 Disaster Loans. The federal Coronavirus Aid, Response and Economic Security Act has provisions that expand the Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loans and the new Paycheck Protection Program, for which providers may be eligible. Small Business Administration Resource Partners are available to help with no-cost, one-on-one business counseling regarding COVID-19. Refer to this [Child Care Financial Support Matrix for additional information and resources on these and other child care provider financial support programs](#).

Child Care Aware and the Minnesota Department of Human Services are working together to acquire supplies and personal protective equipment that providers may not be able to get or afford. Providers are encouraged to [fill out this survey to document their needs](#).

35. I need the Notification of Temporary/Permanent Closure or Denial of Funds form translated into another language, how can I get help?

Please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.

Need assistance in a language other than English?

- Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta carta, comuníquese con Vanessa Carrasco Berliz vcarrasco@thinksmall.org, 651-641-6660
- Hadaad ubaahantahay caawimaad fahanka warqadan, fadlan la xiriir Abdinoor Sigat asigat@milestonesmn.org, 320-251-5081
- Yog tias koj xav tau kev pab nkag siab tsab ntawv no, thov hu rau Julie Yang jyang@thinksmall.org, 651-366-6792

Child Care Aware of Minnesota will use Language Line Services for languages other than Spanish, Hmong and Somali.

36. What can funds be used for?

Funds can be used for costs associated with implementing public health guidance, including cleaning supplies, increased staff time associated with cleaning, costs related to public health exclusion guidance, costs for implementing symptom screening or costs related to implementing 10-person program guidance. Funds can also be used to provide incentives for working staff, like providing employees who work directly with children during the funding period with hazard pay or overtime. Funds cannot be used for property taxes or other taxes. Funds should be prioritized to be used during the monthly award periods and providers must use funds to cover costs incurred after March 1, 2020, and before Dec. 30, 2020.

37. Will child care providers have to save or submit their receipts to prove of how funds were spent?

No.

38. Under any circumstances will I have to pay these funds back?

These funds do not constitute a loan and child care providers who comply with funding requirements will not be required to pay them back. However, funding recipients found to have violated the terms of the application process or attestation, or who are found to have provided false or misleading information to the Minnesota Department of Human Services with regard to the funding requirements may have future installments discontinued, prior payments recouped, and/or be referred to the Office of Inspector General for additional action.

39. Can providers who applied for and received financial support from another source (local or city government, nonprofit foundation, etc.) still be eligible for these funds?

Yes. However, this funding can only be used for additional reimbursements of business interruptions and not for items that have already been supported by other state and/or federal funding.

40. Are child care providers who received a Paycheck Protection Program loan or an Economic Injury Disaster loan (or any other federal Small Business Administration loan or grant, including an Economic Injury Disaster Loan Advance) still eligible for these funds?

Yes.

41. If I receive these funds, how does that affect my Paycheck Protection Program loan?

Please refer this question to your Payment Protection Program loan servicer or financial advisor.

42. I still have questions and I am not finding answers in this FAQ. Where do I send my questions?

Please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.