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Nancy T. Buckner
Commissioner

February 22, 2021

Ellen C. Wheatley, Ph.D., Acting Director
Office of Child Care
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

RE: Planned Use of CCDF CRRSA Funds Report

Dear Acting Director Wheatley:

This correspondence is intended to serve as the report describing how the Alabama Department of Human Resources (hereinafter referred to as the Department), the CCDF lead agency, plans to spend CCDF funding provided by CRR SA.

Direct Child Care Services (Subsidies)

In an effort to remain responsive to the fluid demands related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department plans to use CRRSA funds to provide direct child care services, including child care subsidy assistance, to health care employees and emergency responders. The Department has created a protective services group to provide child care assistance to those who are eligible without regards to income. The Department has a waiver to serve these families for an eligibility period of less than twelve months. Child care providers serving these families are receiving 125% of the base reimbursement rate.

Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Procedures

The Department plans to use CRRSA funds to provide resources and supplies to child care providers to support implementation of health and safety practices and policies in line with guidance from state and local health departments and the CDC via a grant program called Temporary Assistance for Stabilizing Child Care Round 2 (TASCC-2). Child care providers can use grant funding for any expenditures related to the additional costs that may be incurred due to adhering to CDC guidance related to group size and space to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Eligible costs include, but are not limited to, cleaning services, obtaining personal protective equipment, or the costs of measures to limit contact between individuals. For more information about the TASCC-2 grants, refer to the next section.

Grants or Assistance (Other than Subsidies) to Stabilize Child Care Providers

The Department plans to use CRRSA funds to support the stability of the child care sector to help child care providers pay for increased operating expenses during the COVID-19 public health emergency via a grant program called Temporary Assistance for Stabilizing Child Care Round 2 (TASCC-2). All licensed child care facilities, including centers and family child care homes are eligible to participate regardless of their participation on the Child Care Subsidy Program. To be eligible, child care facilities must be in good standing with the Department, must be open and operating, and must commit to remaining operational for a period of one year from the date of receiving the grant award. The grant amount will be

based on each provider's daytime licensed capacity and each facility is eligible to receive \$500 per child. For example, if a licensed center has a capacity of 50, they can apply for a grant award of \$25,000. Grant funding may be used on expenditures in the following categories: retaining or hiring employees (including substitute teacher pay), classroom materials and supplies, unreimbursed food, facilities costs, supplies to adhere to CDC guidelines, and tuition relief for families.

Assistance to Providers Not Participating in the Subsidy System Prior to the Pandemic

The Department plans to use CRRSA funds to support the stability of the child care sector to help child care providers pay for increased operating expenses during the COVID-19 public health emergency via a grant program called Temporary Assistance for Stabilizing Child Care Round 2 (TASCC-2). All licensed child care facilities, including centers and family child care homes, are eligible to participate regardless of their participation on the Child Care Subsidy Program. Therefore, assistance is being provided to CCDF-eligible child care providers not participating in the subsidy program prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency. For more information about the TASCC-2 grants, refer to the previous section.

Other

The Department plans to use CRRSA funds for the establishment and maintenance of an updated and improved computerized child care information system, including a data system, which will allow the Department to utilize data on real-time attendance, supply and demand, capacity and utilization rates, and openings and closures. The current system the Department has is outdated and unable to provide this information. This has severely impacted the Department's ability to determine needs of child care facilities during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The Department has been forced to track which facilities were open or closed during the pandemic through a manual polling process that has been labor-intensive and time-consuming.

Not Yet Determined

The Department has not yet determined how it plans to spend all the CRRSA funds. Discussions are taking place to decide the best use for the remaining unallocated funds to best support the child care sector in Alabama. Plans are expected to be finalized by June 2021. The Department does not need additional guidance from the Office of Child Care to finalize its plans.

Respectfully,

/s/

Nancy T. Buckner, Commissioner

NTB/jc

cc: Eric Blanchett, OCC Regional Program Manager
Faye Nelson, Deputy Commissioner for Family Resources
Nancy Schlich, Chief Financial Officer
Bernard Houston, Administrator for Child Care and Workforce Development
Jennifer Connell, Child Care Services Division Director