



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

February 25, 2020

Director  
Office of Child Care  
330 C ST SW, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear OCC Director:

This letter describes how the District of Columbia plans to use the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) awarded under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA) (Pub. L. 116-260). We understand that this description will be used for the purpose of informing the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families and Congress how our Lead Agency anticipates using the funds to support the child care needs in our jurisdiction.

We plan to use CRRSA funds for activities in the following categories:

- 1. Direct Services/Subsidies.** The District of Columbia may use a portion of CRRSA funds to cover the costs of payments to subsidy providers serving certain TANF children.
- 2. Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices.** The District of Columbia will allocate CRRSA funds, through our Building and Sustaining Quality grantee, to cover the costs of deep cleaning services for licensed child care facilities (centers or homes) who need assistance to conduct deep cleaning following a confirmed COVID-19 case in the center or home, to protect the health and safety of children and staff. Funds will also build capacity of the Building and Sustaining Quality grantee to provide child care providers participating in the District's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) with technical assistance in implementing health and safety procedures to mitigate the virus.
- 3. Grants or Assistance (Other than Subsidies) to Stabilize Child Care Providers.** The District of Columbia will use CRRSA funds to provide stability and relief funding to licensed child care providers. Funds will be allocated for stability and relief grants and distributed to licensed child care facilities via a formula based on licensed capacity. A portion of funds will also be allocated for targeted relief grants to child care providers who serve critical needs and underserved populations within the District's early childhood ecosystem (such as those who deliver care to medically fragile children) and/or those whose revenues or costs have been uniquely affected by the public health emergency, above and beyond the effects on all child care providers.

The District of Columbia will partner with two community development financial institutions, the Washington Area Community Investment Fund (Wacif) and Low-Income Investment Fund (LIIF), as sub-grantees to manage the two grant programs described above, with Wacif serving as sub-grantee for the stability and relief grant program and LIIF serving as sub-grantee for the targeted relief grants. Both Wacif and LIIF have expertise in and knowledge of child care business models and the unique context of the District's child care sector. The District has successfully partnered with both organizations on previous grant programs supporting the child care sector before and during the public health emergency. This approach will enable the District to distribute funds to child care providers in a timely manner, given the urgent needs that many providers are facing as a result of the public health emergency, and will seek to limit the burden on providers of applying for and accessing funds. In addition, providers participating in these funding opportunities will be able to access technical assistance, business training, and other resources and supports available through Wacif and LIIF.

- 4. Assistance to Providers Not Participating in the Subsidy System Prior to the Pandemic.** As noted above, the District of Columbia will use a portion of our CRRSA award to provide stability and relief grants to licensed child care providers. These funds will be distributed on a formula basis to nearly all licensed child care providers<sup>1</sup> who submit a simple application, including both those who participated in the subsidy system prior to the pandemic and those who did not. The funding formula will be based primarily on licensed capacity, and a provider's current or previous participation in the subsidy system will not be a factor influencing award amounts.

In addition, the deep cleaning services referenced in response to category 2 will be available to providers who did not participate in the subsidy system prior to the pandemic, as well as those who did.

- 5. Other.** The District of Columbia will use CRRSA funds for quality activities to enhance the capacity of the District's child care sector to sustain child care businesses through the public health emergency, implement health and safety procedures to mitigate the virus, support families in accessing child care, support mental health of the child care workforce and enhance the capacity of early care and education programs to respond to the impacts of the public health emergency on children's mental health and social emotional development.

These activities will be carried out primarily through expansion of the District's Building and Sustaining Quality grant, which supports the District's QRIS, Capital Quality; Child Care Resource and Referral Services, through D.C. Child Care Connections; and the Shared Service Business Alliance, as outlined in the District's CCDF Plan for 2019-2021 (CCDF State Plan). Funds will be used to support the following activities:

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<sup>1</sup> Local Education Agencies (LEAs) who are also licensed child development facilities will not be eligible for these grants, because they receive separate relief through the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) program.

- Enhancements to Child Care Resource and Referral Services to support families who are returning to the workforce or have lost child care access.
- Deep cleaning services for licensed providers where needed following confirmed COVID cases (as described in category 2).
- Expansion of the Shared Services Business Alliance to support financial viability of more Level I providers.
- Professional development offerings related to health, safety, trauma informed practices and children's social-emotional development.
- Increased capacity of the Building and Sustaining Quality grantee to provide health and safety and business technical assistance to child care providers to mitigate the effects of the public health emergency.

Separate from these enhancements to the Building and Sustaining Quality grant, the District may also use a portion of these funds to support mental health needs of child care staff, children and families by supporting continued or expanded delivery of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) services to child care facilities through the District's Healthy Futures program, operated under a Memorandum of Understanding between the District of Columbia's CCDF Lead Agency and the District's Department of Behavioral Health, as referenced in the District's CCDF State Plan.

The District of Columbia will amend our CCDF plan as a result of activities implemented under CRRSA funding not currently described in the plan, within 60 days of implementation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Sara Mead  
Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education  
District of Columbia

cc: Agda Burchard, Regional Program Manager, Office of Child Care, Region 3  
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