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February 25, 2021

Ellen C. Wheatley, Ph.D.  
Acting Director of Office of Child Care  
Administration for Children and Families  
Mary E. Switzer Building  
330 C ST SW, Room 4502  
Washington, DC 20201

Sent Via E-Mail to Doris Hallford - Doris.Hallford@acf.hhs.gov

Dear Ms. Wheatley:

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is the lead agency for the child care funding allocated through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA). This response is to fulfill the requirement of submitting a plan to the Office of Child Care for the CRRSA child care funding by February 25, 2021. This funding must be presented during the supplemental budget process, and Missouri will not have final budgetary approval until April or May 2021.

Direct Child Care Services (Subsidies)

Question:

Does the lead agency plan to use CRRSA funds to provide direct child care services, including child care subsidy assistance to health care sector employees, emergency responders, sanitation workers, farm and other food service workers, and/or other workers deemed essential or frontline during the response to coronavirus? If yes, describe.

Response:

An increase is planned to be allocated to providers from June 2021 through May 2022. Providers are currently receiving a 20% increase from January 2021 through May 2021 from CARES Act funding. Providers who are serving Foster Care children will also receive an additional increase.

This funding will assist all families including health care sector employees, emergency responders, sanitation workers, farm and other food service workers, and/or other workers deemed essential or frontline during the response to coronavirus.

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This COVID relief funding increase will:

- Help families that are responsible for the difference between the subsidy amount and the amount the child care provider charges.
- Assist providers in staying open when attendance is not steady.
- Assist subsidy providers as it is estimated Missouri pays 55% of the market rate, and OCC recommends 75% is paid. The Market Rate Survey which helps set rates would have been complete by May 2021; however, a waiver is being requested for the survey to be complete by the spring of 2022 in an attempt to receive better data.
- Assist with the additional cost in serving Foster Care children and helping to ensure there are child care slots available.

DSS plans to offer stipends to providers who have non-traditional hours of care. This stipend will be paid to subsidy and non-subsidy providers. The provider must agree to offer or must be currently offering this care. This will assist essential employees meet the needs of Missourians. In addition, this will assist businesses who need employees, and help Missouri's economy.

DSS plans to provide subsidy for job search for Missouri citizens that qualify. This will likely include these essential employees.

Note: In addition, DSS pays for COVID related absences for all families.

#### Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices

Question:

Does the lead agency plan to use CRRSA funds to provide resources, supplies, and/or technical assistance 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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)? If yes, describe.

Response:

Grants will be offered to license, license exempt, and registered subsidy providers for opening, reopening, expansion, and upgrading their childcare facilities. These grants will allow for the purchase of personal protective equipment and additional lease and staff costs for the new or expanded space, and to meet licensing requirements (allowable for license exempt and registered providers also) such as abatements, cooking/cleaning equipment, repairs, safe sleeping, seating, and supplies.

To qualify for the grant, providers must receive a one-on-one consultation with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which is part of the University of Missouri Extension, to ensure they have the tools necessary to continue operations into the future. SBDC will also offer online trainings.

All receipts must be submitted for reimbursement. Grants can be requested from July 2021 through September 2021 with all invoices must be paid by September 2022.

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

### Question:

Does the lead agency plan to use CRRSA funds to support the stability of the child care sector to help child care providers (program facilities and workforce) pay for increased operating expenses during the COVID-19 public health emergency? If yes, describe.

### Response:

In addition to the rate increase for subsidy providers, Missouri will provide one-time stipends to subsidy and non-subsidy child care providers. This will allow providers to stay open by providing funding to assist with costs that are in arrears, and continuous increased operational costs due to staffing ratios, and other increased costs. Providers will request the funding through a short application process that states they are open and intend to stay open.

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

### Question:

As required in CRRSA, how does the lead agency plan to use a portion of funds appropriated in CRRSA to provide assistance to CCDF-eligible child care providers not participating in the subsidy system prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency?

### Response:

The stipends will be available eligible to licensed, licensed exempt, and registered providers. These providers include non-subsidy providers.

### Other

### Question:

Does the lead agency plan to use a portion of CRRSA child care funds for any other activities or assistance not described above? If yes, describe.

### Response:

Missouri plans to offer grants that will allow higher education locations to offer or expand on-site child care. This will provide wrap-around services for students, and other residents. In addition, this will allow students in early childhood programs the ability to gain their required training hours in a child care setting onsite.

Missouri plans to contract the administration of the funding with the exception of increased rates and providing subsidy for job search.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me at (573)751-7533 or via e-mail at [Patrick.luebbering@dss.mo.gov](mailto:Patrick.luebbering@dss.mo.gov).

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Sincerely,

/s/

Patrick Luebbering  
Chief Financial Officer

PL:JJB:bsb