

Texas Workforce Commission

A Member of Texas Workforce Solutions

Bryan Daniel, Chairman
Commissioner Representing
the Public

Julian Alvarez
Commissioner Representing
Labor

Aaron Demerson
Commissioner Representing
Employers

Edward Serna
Executive Director

February 24, 2021

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

Dear Ms. Wheatley,

Enclosed is Texas' Planned Use of Child Care and Development Fund Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA) Funds Report. Please direct any questions to Ms. Reagan Miller, Director of the Child Care & Early Learning Division, Reagan.Miller@twc.texas.gov.

Respectfully,

/s/
Edward Serna
Executive Director
Texas Workforce Commission

CC: Bryan Daniel, Chairman & Commissioner Representing the Public, TWC
Julian Alvarez, Commissioner Representing Labor, TWC
Aaron Demerson, Commissioner Representing Employers, TWC
Reagan Miller, Director, Child Care and Early Learning Division, TWC

Texas Planned Use of Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) Funds Report

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) posted information on our Child Care & Early Learning (CC&EL) [Stakeholder Input webpage](#) regarding the \$1.1 billion in Child Care & Development Block Grant funds allotted to Texas in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA) and outlined several potential uses of the new funds. CC&EL also hosted a webinar on February to solicit stakeholder feedback.

TWC has not yet finalized how the CRRSA Child Care and Development Block Grant funds will be expended. The information in this Planned Use of CRRSA Funds Report outlines TWC's current planned use of funds; final decisions on the use of funds are expected no later than May 31, 2021. TWC has not yet determined how much to invest in each of these strategies. At this time, TWC expects to heavily invest in Grants to Stabilize Child Care Providers, and we estimate that at least 50 percent of the funds will be used to support this strategy. All final decisions on the use of funds will be considered by TWC's three Commission (Commission) at a posted public-meeting; materials for all Commission Meetings are available prior to the meeting on TWC's [website](#).

Direct Child Care Services (Subsidies)

Low-Income Child Care Allocation to Local Workforce Boards

TWC will increase funding for low-income child care in FY22 and FY23. As the COVID vaccine becomes more readily available and the economy continues to rebound, more working families, including essential workers, can receive financial aid to subsidize child care. While these are one-time funds, TWC can scale the number of children served, and reduced the number based on available resources in future years.

Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices

Texas does not have current plans to expend CRRSA funding on virus mitigation policies and practices.

The Texas Health and Human Services Administration's Child Care Regulation

Division has enacted an [emergency rule](#) for child care providers to protect the health, safety, and welfare of children in day care operations and the public from the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergency creates specific requirements relating to health and safety standards and how to comply with recommendations from health authorities that have evolved since the pandemic began. And the Governor's Strikeforce to Open Texas issued several Open Texas Checklists for various industries, including child care. The checklist for [Child Care Centers](#) and [Child Care Families](#) provide recommended practices for child care providers. Additionally, the state previously addressed the provision training and technical assistance through [Texas A&M University's Agri-Life Extension child care training platform](#).

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

Grants to All Providers

TWC will implement a grant program for all Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) eligible regulated providers to assist these businesses in addressing the higher costs they have experienced during COVID as a result of lower enrollment and higher operating costs. TWC will administer grants to approximately 14,000 CCDF-eligible regulated providers (licensed child care centers, licensed child care homes, registered child care homes). In order for providers to easily record how grant funds were used, TWC will direct funds to support rent/mortgage, utility, personnel costs, or payroll/employment/property taxes, all of which have clear documentation to support expenses. Personnel costs may include stipends and hazard pay; providers may also use these funds to support the cost of paying staff salaries to attend required professional development that occurs after regular working hours.

TWC will calculate grant amounts on provider size (based on licensed capacity) and the average cost of care (based on the TWC 2020 Market Rate Survey) within the provider's local workforce development area. TWC may consider enhancing grant amounts based on Texas Rising Star certification and other national accreditation status, and TWC will also consider how we might enhance our support for providers operating in a child care desert.

Outreach and Technical Assistance/Business Support Coaches

TWC will contract with grantee(s) to fund Business Coaches who will provide assistance on TWC's CRSSA funded grants to all providers, as well as other federal supports such as the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loans, and other resources available from the Small Business Administration. Business Coaches can also provide other assistance to help educate programs on general financial stability.

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

TWC's grants to all CCDF-eligible regulated child care providers, previously outlined, will provide assistance to non-subsidy providers.

Other

Texas Rising Star Texas Rising Star

TWC is currently examining opportunities to assist Texas Rising Star certified child care providers with CRRSA funds. TWC may invest in the expansion of Texas Rising Star capacity through the use of Contracted Slots for targeted populations, such as infants & toddlers, and pre-K partnerships. TWC is also considering a parent outreach and education campaign on the importance of quality child care, noting Texas Rising Star programs as Texas' quality rated providers.

Child Care Capacity Building

TWC is considering several initiatives to build child care capacity. TWC may build on our previously support for the development of Prekindergarten Partnerships between Texas Rising Star providers and public-school programs. Through the development of formal partnerships, PreK instruction is provided within an early learning center with children dually enrolled in both programs. Through informal partnerships, child care and public-school programs can align curriculum/assessment, pursue joint professional develop, or establish common goals around early childhood education

TWC will also consider how we can support the development of Employer Site-Based Child Care, increase our support for Family Child Care, and support and expand registered early childhood apprenticeship programs. TWC is also examining additional support for shared services alliances, and opportunities to address rural child care challenges.

Support for Early Childhood Professionals

TWC currently supports professional development for early education professionals and may expand our existing initiative to serve more educators. In addition, TWC is examining how to best support early childhood educators to improve children's social-emotional and behavioral health development, including the strengthening of teacher-family relationships, the identification of children with or at-risk for behavioral, developmental or mental health difficulties, and linkages to additional support services.

Studies/Evaluation/Planning

TWC will also review several existing studies for potential updates, including the Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and Administrators, the ECE Core Competencies, the Texas Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines, the Texas Early Learning Statewide Needs Assessment, and the Texas Early Learning Statewide Strategic Plan.