



**State of Utah**

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February 25, 2021

Ellen Wheatley, PhD., Acting Director  
Office of Child Care  
Administration for Children and Families  
330 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Director Wheatley,

Utah’s Lead Agency, the Department of Workforce Services (Workforce Services), is submitting this letter in accordance with CCDF-ACF-PI-2021-01 describing its planned use of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act 2021 Funds.

The Lead Agency will be seeking input from various stakeholders to prioritize the use of CRSSA funds to ensure the needs of child care providers, families, employers, and communities are addressed. Below are some strategies that are in the early stages of development within the Lead Agency but will be informed by stakeholder and partner meetings which will begin in early March 2021.

**Direct Child Care Services (Subsidies)**

Where existing CCDF funds fall short, the Lead Agency plans to utilize CRRSA funds to ensure maximum flexibility for subsidy access to ensure working families have the child care support necessary during the pandemic and as the economy recovers. This may include continuation of increased entry and exit income thresholds, waiving copayments for certain subsidy groups, and paying based on enrollment. In addition to the existing subsidy program, the Lead Agency intends to develop strategies to broaden the child care support available to essential employees who may not be eligible for the subsidy program. From April through June 2020, the Lead Agency operated One Utah to provide child care for essential employees. In conversations with stakeholders, the Lead Agency plans to review that program to determine whether a version of that effort is needed and how it can be operationalized and/or expanded to serve a greater number of essential employees. The Lead Agency anticipates getting input from employers as part of stakeholder discussions to determine the current needs of the essential workforce.



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## **Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices**

The Lead Agency works closely with the Child Care Licensing (CCL) program to ensure that information related to health and safety standards are communicated to child care providers, many of whom have remained open during the pandemic. The Lead Agency will consider another round of grant funding, potentially to be administered by CCL, for child care providers to ensure compliance with health and safety guidance consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as state and local health authorities. Additionally, the Lead Agency will leverage existing partnerships with Care About Childcare (CAC) Agencies throughout the state to ensure providers have the personal protective equipment needed in their programs. The Lead Agency expects that child care providers, CCL, and the CACs will provide additional information through stakeholder discussions about ongoing needs related to meeting health and safety guidelines, which will inform the use of CRRSA funds in this area.

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

The Lead Agency successfully launched the Child Care Operations Grant in April 2020 in response to reduced enrollments to ensure the child care system could be sustained to support working families. The Operations Grant amounts were reduced in October 2020 and have continued in the form of monthly grant payments to eligible child care providers. The Lead Agency, with input from stakeholders, plans to review the Operations Grant to determine if it should be extended in its current form, expanded, reopened, or otherwise amended. Additionally, the Lead Agency is considering strategies to support the child care workforce through incentive or bonus payments to acknowledge the challenge of working in a pandemic while, for many, being paid low wages.

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

The Lead Agency anticipates implementing several strategies that would be available to providers not participating in the subsidy system prior to the pandemic. In 2020, the Lead Agency released grant funding specifically in response to the pandemic, which was also available to programs not previously participating in subsidy. With input from stakeholders, the Lead Agency expects to identify initiatives that would benefit a variety of child care providers, including those not previously or currently participating in subsidy; some of these may be a continuation of current programs that were launched in 2020. The Lead Agency will review guidance from the Central Office to ensure the response is consistent with what is allowable and expected.

## **Other**

The Lead Agency is considering additional uses of CRRSA funds to support child care programs, caregivers, and families. This may include expansion of mental health and trauma services, supporting the creation of a shared service alliance, system programming changes to allow for

automation or increased ease of administering child care programs, efforts to expand the supply of child care, the release of grants to support summer programming, and other initiatives to address the needs of families and children. These strategies will be related to effects stemming from the pandemic, including ongoing child care challenges that have intensified since March 2020.

The Lead Agency appreciates the opportunity to share the ways it is contemplating the use of CRRSA funds.

Sincerely,

/s/

Rebecca Banner  
Director  
Utah Office of Child Care  
Utah Department of Workforce Services

cc: Karen Knoll-Moran, Region VIII Program Manager  
Casey Cameron, Executive Director, Utah Department of Workforce Services