



FAQs: Child Care Stabilization Grants

The American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law in March 2021, providing Oklahoma with additional funds designed to help stabilize the child care industry as the state continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. These federal funds have specific rules and requirements that must be followed.

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services will use these federal stimulus funds to begin the Child Care Stabilization Grant Program. Below are answers to frequently asked questions about the funding.

1. Who is administering these funds?

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services will administer the Child Care Stabilization Grant Program.

2. What types of child care programs are eligible for the Child Care Stabilization Grant Program?

Child care program types eligible for funds include:

- Licensed family child care homes
- Licensed child care centers

In addition, the above eligible programs must be licensed and in good standing throughout the grant period with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. This means the program must not have been:

- The subject of a current or past finding of fraud
- Prohibited from receiving public funds under Oklahoma Statutes
- Under revocation or under temporary immediate suspension

To receive these funds, an eligible program, as described above, must have been licensed by March 11, 2021 and must currently be operating and serving children at the time of grant application submission. (See [questions 8](#) and [9](#) regarding allowable exceptions.)

3. How do I apply for the Child Care Stabilization Grant Program?

Eligible providers who were operating and serving children at the time of grant application submission, will remain open and operating during the grant periods, and remain in good standing with Oklahoma Department of Human Services will be eligible to apply. The website for application is <http://okdhs.org/childcaregrants>.

4. What information and documentation is needed to be eligible to receive these funds?

Providers are required to fill out an application, answer all required questions included in the application, sign the application and provide a Federal Tax Identification/Employer Identification Number.

The July application includes questions that will help to shape the full Child Care Stabilization Grant Program. The questions focus on staffing, child enrollment, number of COVID-19 program closures and the financial impact providers experienced over the past 16 months. This information will be gathered from all providers that apply for the first round of funding; however, the information will not impact the amount awarded for eligible providers. The data collected will be used to inform the Child Care Stabilization Grant Program moving forward.

5. What is required of eligible child care providers who accept these funds?

Eligible providers must certify in their application to:

- being open and serving children during the grant periods (see [questions 8](#) and [9](#) regarding allowable exceptions)
- implementing policies, when open and providing services, that are in line with guidance and orders from corresponding state, tribal, and local authorities and, to the greatest extent possible, implementing policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>)
- paying staff at least the same amount in weekly wages and maintaining the same benefits (such as health insurance and retirement, if applicable)
- providing relief from copayments and tuition payments for the families enrolled in their program, **to the extent possible**, and prioritize such relief for families struggling to make either type of payment, and if a provider is unable to provide relief for all families enrolled in the program, prioritizing relief for families most in need

Child care providers must agree **not** to:

- involuntarily furlough or lay off employees

6. What can funds be used for?

Child care providers must agree to use the funds for one or more of the following purposes:

- Personnel costs, benefits, premium pay, and employee recruitment and retention for an employee (someone who owns their own business, like a sole proprietor or an independent contractor, can count themselves as an employee)
- Rent or mortgage payments, utilities, facilities maintenance and improvements, or insurance
- Personal protective equipment, cleaning and sanitation supplies and services, or training
- Professional development related to health and safety practices
- Purchases of or updates to equipment and supplies to respond to COVID-19
- Goods and services necessary to maintain or resume child care services
- Mental health supports for children and employees
- Reimbursement for any of the uses above, paid between March 2020, and the date of application, to

address losses incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic

7. What are the funding cycles?

The first three grant cycles are listed below. Additional grant cycle information will be provided at a later date. Example: The July application period is meant to cover expenses for July – Sept 2021 or expenses incurred during the pandemic. In addition, the first payment also includes a retroactive payment for expenses incurred April – June 2021. Providers will have to reapply for the next round of grants during the next open enrollment period.

Application Submission Dates	Grant Period
<u>Grant Cycle 1</u> : Open 7/9 Close 7/30	<u>Quarters 1 & 2</u> : Apr 2021-Sept 2021
<u>Grant Cycle 2</u> : Open 10/25 Close 11/30	<u>Quarter 3</u> : Oct 2021-Dec 2021
<u>Grant Cycle 3</u> : Open 1/3 Close 1/31	<u>Quarter 4</u> : Jan 2022-Mar 2022

8. When do providers have to be open in order to be eligible to receive grants?

To be eligible to receive these funds, providers must be operating and serving children at the time of application and must continue to serve children during the entire grant period. See [question 9](#) for allowable exceptions.

All eligible programs must maintain their license or permit in good standing with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services throughout the grant period to remain eligible. Refer to [question 2](#) regarding eligibility requirements.

9. Under what circumstances can providers be closed temporarily and still be eligible for these funds?

Providers remain eligible to apply for the funds if the program temporarily closes under any of the following circumstances:

- Temporary closure due to public health guidance issued by the Oklahoma Department of Health, Oklahoma Department of Human Services and/or the provider’s local public health agency;
- The program temporarily closed days due to the license holder and/or primary care provider having a positive COVID-19 test result or “close contact” exposure; or
- Planned temporary closure for a provider vacation (i.e. days you typically care for children) over the duration of the grant period

10. Is a paper application available?

Yes, but providers are encouraged to submit an online application if at all possible. A paper application can be requested by emailing help@okchildcaregrants.com. This option is only for first time applicants. All paper applications must be postmarked prior to the end of the application enrollment period in order to be considered. Paper applications can be mailed to:

Oklahoma Human Services
Child Care Services
P.O. Box 25352
Oklahoma City, OK 73125

11. What are the funding amounts?

Grant cycles 1-3*

Child Care Centers

Capacity	Payment (per cycle)
1-24	\$5,000.00
25-49	\$9,000.00
50-75	\$11,000.00
76-100	\$13,000.00
101-149	\$14,000.00
150-200	\$15,000.00
201-350	\$16,000.00
351 and up	\$18,000.00

Family Child Care Homes

Capacity	Payment (per cycle)
C 1-7	\$3,000.00
C 8-12	\$4,500.00

* Cycle 1 will include double payments as it covers quarters 1 & 2.

12. Will there be additional grants available to providers outside of the stabilization grants?

Yes. There will be additional grants available outside of the stabilization grants.

13. Why is the department asking additional questions as part of an information collection effort for the stabilization grants?

The information is being asked of all providers types to evaluate how providers have been impacted by the pandemic so that criteria for future stabilization grants will be based on data. The information provided does not affect the grant amounts.

14. Why is tax information being requested and how will Oklahoma Department of Human Services ensure they are stored in a secure manner?

The information is required to evaluate how providers have been impacted by the pandemic in order to inform criteria for future stabilization grants. This data will be stored and protected just as all other data collected by The Department of Human Services.

15. Is the data in child care provider applications and the information about funding awards public data?

Oklahoma Department of Human Services may be exposed to or be provided with certain confidential and proprietary information of the Childcare Provider (Provider). OHS agrees to use the same degree of care that each such party uses to protect its own confidential information, but in no event less than a reasonable amount of care. OHS will not use Provider's confidential information for purposes other than those necessary to directly further the purposes of the grant or **otherwise permitted by law**.

16. Why do I need to provide my Federal Employer Identification Number as a part of the application?

The Internal Revenue Service requires the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to obtain Federal Employer Identification Number to report what is paid to you to issue a Tax Form 1099.

17. Will the Child Care Stabilization Grant funding be considered income when I file my 2021 taxes?

Yes, Child Care Stabilization Grant funds are considered income by the IRS. Providers are encouraged to consult with an accountant or tax expert to fully understand the tax implications of this funding.

18. How will I receive the grant awards?

Payments will be mailed to programs by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

19. What if information about my program (address, ownership, authorized agent) changes after I submit my application?

You should contact your Oklahoma Department of Human Services licensing specialist to update the information as soon as the changes occur. Additionally, if a program is contemplating operating status changes that may affect their eligibility, they should refer to [questions 8](#) and [9](#) of this document.

20. Will I still be eligible for payments if I move during the grant period?

Providers who move during the grant period remain eligible for the funds as long as the funding criteria continue to be met. Providers planning to move during the grant period should work closely with their Oklahoma Department of Human Services licensing specialist to ensure the move does not impact funding eligibility.

21. What if my check is lost, stolen or damaged?

For assistance, please contact Oklahoma Department of Human Services Child Care Services Division, at Childcare.OCCS@okdhs.org.

22. Are providers who receive Child Care Subsidy payments eligible for these funds?

Yes, providers who receive Child Care Subsidy payments are eligible for these funds. However, providers must not require Child Care Subsidy copayments from families whose children attend their program.

23. Do child care providers have to operate at their full licensed capacity to receive these funds?

No, providers do not have to operate at their full licensed capacity to receive these funds. In fact, implementing health and safety recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 may limit the ability of some providers to operate at full licensed capacity.

24. Can child care providers charge fees if they receive these funds?

Child care providers receiving these funds may charge standard fees to families attending their program. Providers cannot require Child Care Subsidy copayments from families whose children attend their program.

25. Will child care providers have to submit receipts to prove how funds were spent?

No, programs are not required to submit receipts of how the funds were spent. However, programs are required to maintain records of how the funds were spent and be prepared to share those records should the

Oklahoma Department of Human Services request them.

26. What are the consequences for a provider who applied for and accepted these funds not meeting the funding requirements?

If there is indication that a provider has failed to meet Child Care Stabilization Grant Program requirements, it may result in discontinuation of future grant payments, recoupment of payments already made, and/or referral to the Office of Inspector General for additional action.

27. When must the funds be used by?

Programs are encouraged to prioritize use of these funds for costs incurred during the grant periods. Additionally, programs are allowed to use the funds as reimbursement for any of the approved uses listed in [question 6](#), that were paid between March 2020, and the date of the grant period application, to address losses incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

28. Under any circumstances will I have to pay these funds back?

These funds do not constitute a loan and child care providers who comply with funding requirements will not be required to pay them back. However, funding recipients found to have violated the terms of the application process or certification may have prior payments recouped, future payments discontinued, and/or be referred to the Office of Inspector General for additional action.

29. Can providers who applied for and received financial support from another source still be eligible for these funds?

Yes. However, this funding can only be used for expenses listed in [question 6](#).

30. Are child care providers who received a Paycheck Protection Program loan or an Economic Injury Disaster loan (or any other federal Small Business Administration loan) still eligible for these funds?

Yes.

31. How can I ensure I receive the email communications from DHS related to these funds?

You should add OKDHS@public.govdelivery.com to your email client safe sender list. Adding this email address ahead of time will prevent important emails from being filtered to your spam or junk folder. If do not currently receive communication from Oklahoma Department of Human Services Child Care Services Division please email Childcare.OCCS@okdhs.org and request subscription to the Child Care listserv.

32. I still have questions and I am not finding answers in this FAQ. Where do I send my questions?

You can call the grants hotline at (405) 521-6177 or send an email to help@okchildcaregrants.com.