

Early Childhood Strong Start 2020

Community Network Plan & Request for Applications

Due: June 12, 2020

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child care sector are significant. A survey conducted by the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children found the majority of child care providers have reported a loss in revenue, and a significant number of child care providers are facing temporary or permanent closures. Early childhood communities must be equipped to offer child care providers strategic and targeted support to recover.

Additionally, in anticipation of potential facility closures or modified school and center operations in the coming year, early childhood communities and providers should begin making plans to ensure children have the experiences and support they need to develop and grow, regardless of setting.

Louisiana has made considerable progress in unifying and strengthening its early childhood system and has been focused on three key priorities for early childhood: increasing early childhood classroom quality, expanding access for economically disadvantaged families, and supporting local governance. To sustain the progress Louisiana has made as a state and to prepare for a strong start to the 2020-2021 school year, it is critical early childhood communities take steps to support the child care sector in the immediate aftermath of COVID-19 and to ensure children continue to learn and thrive in the long-term.

This Community Network Plan and COVID-19 Community Child Care Recovery Grant Request for Applications (RFA) will provide communities with an opportunity to request funding to support the recovery of the child care sector and to ensure children continue to have access to high-quality early learning options across Louisiana.

STRONG START 2020 PLANNING PRIORITIES

The Department released a [Strong Start 2020 Planning Guide for Early Childhood](#) on May 14, 2020. This planning guide outlines priorities for communities and sites to ensure:

- All **child care centers have the tools and resources they need to reopen safely** and in accordance with Office of Public Health guidelines.
- **Communities sustain and/or increase access** to opportunities for early childhood care and education in the near and long-term.
- **Teachers are prepared to lead classrooms and provide high-quality interactions** for children every day.
- **Families are supported to re-enroll** children in early childhood programs, **or to provide quality care and education in their homes** if programs are unable to reopen or remain open.

This particular funding opportunity is supported by the Child Care Development Grant (CCDF) Relief Fund, and therefore, must be used to support child care. In order to carry out their Strong Start 2020 Plan and address each priority, community networks might choose to use a variety of funding sources in addition to this grant, including but not limited to lead agency allocations, Ready Start allocations, and available school system funding. In order to understand the full scope of funding available, lead agencies should communicate with their local school system.

COVID-19 COMMUNITY CHILD CARE RECOVERY GRANT RFA

On behalf of early childhood community networks, lead agencies are eligible to apply for COVID-19 Community Child Care Recovery Grants to support activities aligned to the priorities contained within the Early Childhood Strong Start 2020 Framework. These grants will be awarded to and administered by lead agencies. These grants will be funded by the Child Care Development Grant (CCDF) Relief Fund, and as such, must be used to support child care. Early childhood lead

agencies should use this RFA to request funding to support recovery in their community, and should engage with and receive feedback from all program partners. Ready Start Networks will be required to engage their governance structure.

The below table provides guidelines for COVID-19 Community Child Care Recovery Grant application amounts. Lead agencies should use these amounts for guidance as they determine their funding request for this grant. Lead agencies should consider basing their total requested funding amount on 1) the number of CCAP providers in the network prior to COVID-19 and 2) how intensely COVID-19 has impacted the network and the child care providers in their network. The Department will provide community-level data related to COVID-19 to all networks to inform their funding request. To determine the size of the funding request, networks should analyze data and reflect on the impact of COVID-19 on their community, including by considering the following questions:

- How significant has the impact of COVID-19 been in your community? And specifically, how significant has the impact of COVID-19 been on the child care providers in your community?
- What was the level of poverty in your community prior to COVID-19?
- How has COVID-19 affected the unemployment rate in your community?

Size of Network	Suggested range of funding request, depending on the recovery needs of each community
Fewer than 5 CCAP providers	\$25,000.00 - \$50,000.00
5 to 10 CCAP providers	\$50,000.00 - \$75,000.00
10 to 20 CCAP providers	\$100,000.00 - \$150,000.00
20 to 40 CCAP providers	\$150,000.00 - \$200,000.00
40 to 50 CCAP providers	\$200,000.00 - \$300,000.00
More than 50 CCAP providers	\$300,000.00 - \$400,000.00

APPLICATION

All lead agencies are invited to submit an application. The Word version of the RFA and application will be sent to lead agency contacts on May 15. Those intending to apply need to submit an Intent to Apply email to devon.camarota@la.gov by noon on May 21. **In your intent to apply, please include your anticipated total funding request.**

Complete the application below and submit to devon.camarota@la.gov by June 12 at 5:00 p.m. Please save the document as a PDF file and name the document: 'NETWORK_COVIDCommunityGrant_Application.pdf'

***NOTE:** Child care providers interested in applying for the [LaCAP Relief Grants](#) do not need to submit an Intent to Apply. Those individuals can apply directly by clicking [HERE](#). The deadline for that grant application is May 20, 2020.

TIMELINE

May 14	The Department releases the Request for Applications for the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Community Recovery Grant.
May 16	The Word version of the application will be sent to all lead agency contacts.
May 21	Applicants submit an Intent to Apply with an estimated total funding request via email to devon.camarota@la.gov by noon.
June 12	Applicants submit a final application via email to devon.camarota@la.gov by 5:00 p.m.
Week of June 15	The Department notifies recipients of the grant.

**Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Community Child Care Recovery Grant
Application**

Please submit a complete version of the following application to devon.camarota@la.gov by 5:00 p.m. on June 12, 2020. Please save this document as a PDF file and use the following naming convention prior to submission: 'NETWORK_COVIDCommunityGrant_Application.pdf'

Community Network: *[Insert response here]*
Lead Agency Contact Name: *[Insert response here]*
Contact Email and Phone Number: *[Insert response here]*

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

I. Community Needs:

In addition to the COVID-19 data the Department will be providing, how are you assessing the impacts of COVID-19 on early childhood in your community? What have you learned? At a minimum, you should include answers to the following questions:

- Of the type III centers or home-based CCAP providers that existed prior to COVID-19, how many plan to reopen and on what timeline?
- What are the greatest barriers to successfully reopening for child care providers in your community?
- Are there particular areas of your community where you are concerned families who need child care will not be able to access child care?
- What are the greatest challenges facing the early childhood workforce in your community?
- Are the challenges for child care providers and workforce universally experienced in your community, or are there particular providers that may need more targeted support?

[Insert response here]

Considering your community's recovery needs, what are your top 3 priorities to aid in the early childhood recovery efforts?

1. *[Insert response here]*
- 2.
- 3.

II. Strong Start 2020:

What is your community's proposal to achieve the priorities detailed in the Early Childhood Strong Start 2020 Framework? At a minimum, describe how your network is addressing your top 3 priorities described above, and consider including how you intend to ensure the following statements are true for your network:

- All **child care centers have the tools and resources they need to reopen safely** and in accordance with Office of Public Health guidelines.
- **Communities sustain and/or increase access** to opportunities for early childhood care and education in the near and long-term.
- **Teachers are prepared to lead classrooms and provide high-quality interactions** for children every day.
- **Families are supported to re-enroll** children in early childhood programs, **or to provide quality care and education in their homes** if programs are unable to reopen or remain open.

[Insert response here]

III. Request for Funding

Lead agencies should request funding to support the child care sector in alignment with the implementation of their Strong Start 2020 Plan. Consider funding for these activities:

- **Direct Supports for Child Care:** Ensuring child care centers have the direct supports they need should be lead agencies' first priority with this funding. Consider requesting funding to implement the following activities to directly benefit and support the child care centers in your community:
 - **Workforce incentive grants:** Providing workforce incentive grants to child care centers who can, in turn, offer bonus payments to returning workforce
 - **Subgrants to child care centers:** Awarding child care centers or home-based providers in your community subgrants to support reopening
 - **Purchase of additional PPE and supplies:** Purchasing necessary PPE and supplies to ensure a safe environment for children in the months to come
- **Other Community-Level Supports:** In addition to providing direct supports to child care, lead agencies might also consider additional activities including the following:
 - **Workforce training:** Training new or returning staff to ensure children are still receiving high-quality care in a safe environment
 - **Family engagement & coordinated enrollment:** Aiding in the communication and engagement with families to support re-enrollment

TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED

[Insert amount here]

Please provide a description of the activities you intend to fund through this grant award. Please note that final budgets may be adjusted in eGMS and as needs evolve.

[Insert response here]

IV. Program Partner Feedback

Briefly describe how you engaged your program partners and solicited feedback for this application.

[Insert response here]