

Child Care

NEWS BRIEF



Greetings from your Partners at the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Child Care Services Team!

It's Back to School Time Again! We hope that all with kiddos starting back to school have a wonderful year. Although we are on the cusp of Fall, we are definitely still experiencing the heat of summer. Just a reminder to practice the summer weather transportation and supervision protocols.

In this edition of the quarterly newsletter, we will focus on security concerns, a request for Child Care Licensing Board of Review members, TNPAL updates, reminders about the third and final round of ARPA stabilization grants as well as a new topic for our Educator's Corner section. We greatly appreciate our child care provider partners and all that you do for the children and families of Tennessee.

Update - Security Concerns and Legislative Special Session

As the legislature has just adjourned the Extraordinary Special Session of the 113th General Assembly, we understand there are questions around safety measures for our child care agencies and specifically, the status of armed guards at DHS-licensed agencies. The current rules allow for law enforcement officers to be armed at child care agencies. We greatly appreciate the providers who reached out to our team over the summer to share their questions and concerns with the current rule. TDHS is currently in the initial phases of a proposed rule change to allow armed security guards that meet certain training requirements to also be armed at agencies. The rulemaking process provides multiple opportunities for feedback through public hearings and comments. We look forward to continuing the conversation with you and incorporating your feedback.

As the Department navigates the rule proposal, we want to make you aware of other school safety measures that are currently available to you. [Child Care Enhancement Grants](#) can be used to bolster security measures at your agencies. Please consult your Licensing Consultant if you are interested in pursuing an Enhancement Grant per the information provided below. We are also working with CCR&R to make available more resources for safety measures and training for our providers.

"I know I echo our entire Department's feelings, but thank you for your work. We are very lucky in Tennessee to have such a strong network of providers and we appreciate everything you are doing." - Callon Schmid, TDHS Assistant Commissioner, External Affairs

Enhancement Grants for Safety Equipment

Under the current enhancement grant criteria, a licensed child care agency could apply for funding to support allowable security and safety equipment as long as the equipment does not fall under capital improvements. If you have not already applied for an enhancement grant or exhausted the funding limits as shown below during this Federal contract year, October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023, you may apply for funding should you wish to make security equipment purchases. We are exploring adding an additional supplemental amount specific to allowable security devices that promote safe and healthy environments in the next contract cycle beginning October 1, 2023.

As a reminder, Child Care Enhancement grants are available to licensed child care agencies to increase capacity, strengthen quality, and/or promote compliance with State licensing standards. There is a base amount available of \$4000 with additional supplemental amounts based on certain criteria:

- Physically operate in one of the economically distressed counties as may be identified by the Governor shall be eligible for an additional \$1000.00.
 - Are verified by the Tennessee Child Care Resource & Referral Network as having completed Infant and Toddler Specialization (ITCS) shall be eligible for an additional \$1000.00.
 - Seeking national accreditation through either the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), or National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) shall be eligible for an additional \$1000.00
 - Participation in the Child Care Certificate Program and meet all criteria under the contract shall be eligible for an additional \$1000.00.
 - Are referred by the State for compliance or remediation of deficiencies shall be eligible for an additional \$1000.00.
-

New - Seeking Candidates for the Child Care Licensing Board of Review

Members Needed

What is the Child Care Agency Licensing Board of Review?

The Child Care Agency Licensing Board of Review serves as a jury in civil enforcement actions initiated by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children's Services against licensed child care providers. The board hears appeals for denial of license, civil penalties, and revocations. Hearings take place as needed on Wednesdays and are scheduled twice a month. Board members can seek reimbursement for travel expenses at the state rate for any mileage or expenses incurred for traveling to board hearings. At-large board members are contacted to inquire of availability when appeal hearings are scheduled.

What is needed?

The board is currently seeking candidates to fill three at-large board member vacancies. If you are interested in serving as an at-large board member please contact and submit your resume' to the Recording Secretary, Mr. Shawn Garret, at ChildCareAppeal.DHS@tn.gov.

Educator's Corner



Our Educator's Corner highlights resources, tools and tips that support our valued child care early care education workforce in promoting ongoing professional development, retention, and professional career growth.

Did you Know you May Qualify for Tuition Assistance?

There are many resources available to support ongoing professional development. Our partners at Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) provide technical and financial assistance to help you get started, which can be found on their website located [here](#). This includes tuition support to help you and/or your staff earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™ and complete degree programs in Early Childhood at the Associate's, Bachelor's, or Graduate degree levels. In addition to tuition assistance, TECTA will connect you with peers and groups in your area.

Updated: Stabilization Grants Information



New: Third/Final Round of Stabilization Grants

The third/final opportunity for American Rescue Plan Act Child Care Stabilization Funds, is well underway. The application and Notice of Award (NOA) process has completed for Cohorts 1 through 5. Applications for Cohorts 6 and 7 will be completed on Tuesday, September 5th, based on the chart below.

Cohort	Form	Open	Close
Cohorts 1 & 2	Round 3 Applications	Monday, June 05, 2023	Tuesday, June 20, 2023
Cohorts 1 & 2	Round 3 NOAs	Wednesday, July 05, 2023	Wednesday, July 12, 2023
Cohorts 3, 4, 5	Round 3 Applications	Monday, July 17, 2023	Monday, July 31, 2023
Cohorts 3, 4, 5	Round 3 NOAs	Wednesday, August 09, 2023	Wednesday, August 16, 2023
Cohort 6 & 7	Round 3 Applications	Monday, August 21, 2023	Tuesday, September 05, 2023
Cohort 6 & 7	Round 3 NOAs	Wednesday, September 13, 2023	Wednesday, September 20, 2023

The following agencies are included in each Cohort.

- Cohort 1 - Licensed Child Care Centers (Capacity is between 101-up)
- Cohort 2 - Licensed Child Care Centers (Capacity is between 76-100)
- Cohort 3 - Licensed Child Care Centers (Capacity is between 51-75)
- Cohort 4 - Licensed Child Care Centers (Capacity is between 26-50)
- Cohort 5 - Licensed Child Care Centers (Capacity is between 16-25)
- Cohort 6 - Licensed Family and Group Child Care Homes (Capacity is between 7-15)
- Cohort 7 - Eligible DOE regulated agencies participating in the Child Care Certificate Program

The base grant amount will be based upon 2 months of operating expenses rather than the 3 months we had been able to support in prior rounds. Overall, we hope all the stabilization funds have helped your agency navigate through the effects of the pandemic while strengthening the foundation for continuing to provide quality care in the future.

We at the Department have begun the process of reviewing the application and NOA documents for accuracy and routing for distribution of payments. As a reminder, this is an involved process to ensure accuracy of payments.

Prior to issuance of Round 3 dollars, we are confirming compliance with reporting requirements for Rounds 1 and 2. You should have received a notification dated August 10, 2023 if you have not completed the required expense reporting. There are specific instructions to log in to your account in the Tennessee Department of Human Services program management portal to submit any outstanding documents. Failure to comply to the terms and conditions of your subgrant award will also result in ineligibility for Round 3 ARPA Child Care Discretionary Supplemental grant funds.

Remember that all grant funds for Rounds 1 and 2 must be expended by September 30, 2023.

Reporting and Accountability Post Receipt of Grant Funds

As a Reminder: The Department of Human Services is administering these funds in collaboration with its consultant HORNE who has a team dedicated to supporting recipients of Tennessee's Child Care Stabilization Grants. HORNE will facilitate the reporting and accountability elements of the grant process. As listed on the application and the grant contract, agencies that are awarded funds are required to report how those funds were used and status of meeting the certifications. HORNE is supporting these requirements by communicating to agencies after funds have been distributed and helping agencies submit the necessary reports and expense verifications.

You will receive an email from the HORNE TN Child Care Stabilization Grant Support Team shortly after receiving your funds. That email will include a copy of the Expense Tracking Workbook. Detailed instructions on how to complete the workbook will be included in the file provided. You should add expenses to this workbook as they are incurred, and expenses should only be added to this workbook if you have documents supporting the expenses in your records.

To help you recognize communications from HORNE, the subject line of all email communications from HORNE will begin with the heading **CC Stabilization Communication**. When you see an email with this heading in the subject line,

please review the message and take action in order to meet your grant reporting requirements.

As a reminder, award dollars must be spent on one or more of the below purposes:

- Personnel costs, benefits, premium pay, recruitment, and retention.
- Rent or mortgage payments, utilities, facilities maintenance and improvements, or insurance.
- Personal protective equipment, cleaning and sanitation supplies and services, or training and 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 support for children and employees.

Technical assistance is available if you have any questions. If you have any questions, please contact UT SWORPS at TDHS_CCP@utk.edu or call the tollfree number at 1-888-883-5514.

An FAQ document has been created to address questions related to the process and may be found at this link:

<https://tnchildcarehelpdesk.sworpswebapp.sworps.utk.edu/ccdf-stabilization-grant/>. The most current version is available including updated questions and answers from the Cohort rounds.

We are excited to make these dollars available to support the very critical work you provide in caring for the children of Tennessee. These funds are to build a stable and sustainable early care and education system for our existing providers, so children will continue to have access to safe, healthy and educationally rich spaces.

Update - TNPAL

As you know, we have been working to strengthen the user experience for TNPAL. We appreciate those child care provider partners who have engaged with us over the past few months in sharing their experiences so we in turn, are able to work with our vendor to deploy enhancements that improve the overall efficiency of the system. There has been an update to the system as of August 21, 2023, based on your feedback and the enhancements are shared below. This information mirrors the direct communication sent on August 23, 2023.

"The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) is pleased to share periodic enhancement updates for the Tennessee Professional Archive of Learning (TNPAL). Please see below select highlights of enhancements made to TNPAL with our update release on August 21, 2023:

Changes to Individual Training Reports

- Dates defining training requirements aligned to annual QRIS cycle added.
- Dates defining training requirements aligned to three-year CCDBG cycle added.
- Licensing Rules and Regulations preservice training requirement applied to all workforce members to be completed before September 30, 2023.
- Child Abuse and Neglect annual training requirement elevated as distinct.
- Formatting adjustments to improve report structure and display.

Enhanced Helps & Prompts

- New icon introduced to identify unverified education and credential/certification records.
- New onscreen help prompts added for Early Childhood Professional users.

New Verifications Introduced

- A new function allows directors to attest and verify for each staff member completion of communicable diseases screening and examination by medical professional.

TDHS also wishes to take the opportunity to share several important reminders for licensed child care provider directors and educators:

- Directors must ensure all program staff are affiliated with the licensed program.
- Once affiliated, directors must complete a one-time verification for educator's (1) start date, (2) education records, and (3) credentials/certification records.
- Directors must request one-time verifications from the program's assigned Licensing Consultant.
- As noted in the TDHS communication on August 01, 2023:
 - Annual and ongoing trainings must be completed during the QRIS period, beginning 10/01/2022 through 09/30/2023. Annual training requirements will renew at the beginning of each QRIS period.
 - Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) training requirements must be completed during a three-year cycle (four-year for drop-in centers), beginning 10/01/2022 through 09/30/2025 cycle.

Health and safety trainings meeting Tennessee Licensure requirements may also satisfy federal CCDBG requirements.

Follow @TNHumanServices



©2020 Tennessee Department of Human Services

505 Deaderick Street

Nashville, TN 37243-1403

ChildCareServices.DHS@tn.gov

[Find Your Local Office](#)

[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt Out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

505 Deaderick Street, 17th Floor | Nashville, TN 37243 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma®

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.