

## Child Care Services Daily Update – June 24, 2020

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) will continue to provide you with the most current information pertaining to Child Care programs. We will continue to remain diligent in keeping this site current.

**Please Note:** If your agency has been closed and you applied for the Loss of Income category under the Disaster/Emergency grants and you have now opened, you may now apply for additional supports. We understand there will be a transition period for increasing your enrollment as you resume operations. The Operational Support category is available to agencies who are open and are needing financial assistance to support your operations. These grants will remain available through August 2020. Additional information is listed below.

### **COVID-19 Relief Grant**

Operations\*\* DHS licensed child care agencies that remain open can apply for costs associated with operating under the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will allow agencies to continue to pay operating costs while factors such as child attendance, staff availability, and supply costs (including cleaning supplies) are impacted.

### **Reminder: Additional Clarification When Applying for Operational Costs through the COVID-19 Relief Grant**

As we continue to explore opportunities to support child care agencies and families during this public health emergency, we want to provide additional clarification on existing resources that are available.

The Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance program is for the period of April 15, 2020 through August 21, 2020. Regardless of when an application was submitted or approved, the benefit will be effective on the first day of the program, April 15, 2020. If the child was in care at that time, the payment will be retroactive to that date or when the child began care with your agency if after the April 15<sup>th</sup> date. For example: A parent applies for the Essential Employee assistance on June 23, 2020 and the eligibility is approved. The child has been attending your program since April 30, 2020. The payment will be retroactive to April 30, 2020. You should receive a backdated Enrollment/Attendance/Verification (EAV) for this time period so that you may submit attendance for the child in order to receive payment.

We will provide you with additional information on how to recoup the cost difference above the maximum State Rate so that you may refund or credit the family approved under the Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance program if you have already applied for the Disaster/Emergency Grant for Operational Costs for April. Additional guidance will be made available during the month of June to provide information on how to reconcile this cost difference through the grant application.



Many families have lost employment or have been subject to lay-offs during this time and are struggling to pay above the State Reimbursement Rates. This is causing some families to withdraw their child from the licensed care program. We certainly want to avoid this from happening so the family may retain their child's slot. The COVID-19 operations costs relief grant allows you to apply for costs associated with operating under the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand there may be a "cost difference" above the maximum state rate that families are required by your policy to pay. We ask that you apply for this "cost difference" amount under the operations cost category. This will provide relief for the family and support you in recouping that revenue.

The stipulation under this grant, is that once the money is received, if you have already charged and received payment from the parent, you refund or credit their accounts. If you have not received payment from the family, this grant amount will cover the full cost of care for children enrolled through subsidy.

**Please Note:** There is a new method implemented for agencies to learn the status of their grant applications or ask specific questions about the application in process. Community Foundations of Middle Tennessee has created one easy form for you to complete. This enables a quick feedback process and routes your request into one easy system so that everyone gets an answer in an orderly manner. Please allow adequate processing time before requesting a status update.

Early applicants received a pop-up when applications are completed. The process is now improved:

1. An email is received upon submission of the application.
2. An email is received when the application is approved by DHS field supervisors and sent to the next processing step.
3. An email is received when the application is sent to DHS for invoicing. There are several steps between invoice and receipt of funds by your agency.

Submit any status requests about Support and Enhancement Grants and Disaster/Emergency Grants to <https://childcareoftennesseeellc.formstack.com/forms/helpdesk> and you will be provided this feedback form to complete for a status response.

Learn about grant opportunities and apply online by visiting [www.childcaretennessee.com](http://www.childcaretennessee.com).