



## COVID – 19 Crisis

# Emergency Funding Assistance for Early Learning/Child Care Providers Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act Initiatives

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### OF INTEREST TO

The Division of Early Learning (DEL, the Division), Early Learning Coalitions and other subrecipients of DEL implementing federal and state early learning programs (ELCs, coalitions), such as the School Readiness (SR) Program and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program and private early learning/child care providers not contracted with a coalition (Providers).

### SUMMARY

This program guidance addresses the methods for tracking costs associated with the COVID-19 crisis. It also provides coalitions and providers guidance about emergency funding assistance for early learning providers, their staff and families affected by the Coronavirus Pandemic.

### AUTHORITY

#### **Related Federal Regulations/Authority**

[Public Health Emergency Nationwide - COVID-19](#) and subsequent renewals

[Consolidated Appropriations Act, Division M - Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations \(CRRSA\) Act, 2021](#)

[CCDF ACF Info Memo 2017-02 CCDF Spending Flexibility during Federal or State Declared Emergency Child Care and Development Block Grant Act](#)

- Section 658E(c)(2)(I) Establishment of Health and Safety Requirements
- Section 658E(c)(2)(U) Disaster Preparedness

[45 CFR 98.56 Restriction on the Use of Funds](#)

- 45 CFR Part 98, Subpart E, § 98.41, Health and Safety Requirements
- 45 CFR Part 98, Subpart B, § 98.16, Plan Provisions

[CCDF-ACF-IM-2021-01](#), CCDF Discretionary Funds Appropriated in the CRRSA Act (Public Law 116-260)

#### **Related Florida Statutes/Authority/Guidance**

[DEM Order NO. 20-004, COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

[Department of Education Emergency Order #2020-EO-01](#)

[Florida Department of Education Press Release March 17, 2020](#)

[Section 252.34, Florida Statutes](#)

[Child Care and Development Fund State Plan for FY 19/21 \(effective 10/1/2018\)](#)

- [Section 1.8 – Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan](#)

[Division of Early Learning Program Guidance 240.20, Tracking Costs for Disasters](#)

Reference to any laws, rules and regulations in this guidance document includes revisions to those laws and regulations made after the effective date of this guidance document.

**PROGRAM GUIDANCE**

The following guidelines should be used by coalitions, providers and families in Florida during the COVID-19 state of emergency as declared by the President of the United States and the Governor of Florida for initiatives funded by the CRRSA Act.

**Temporary Closures (OCA: RVPKC)**

*Voluntary PreKindergarten – Additional Closure Days due to COVID-19 (July 2021 – June 2022)*

Rule 6M-8.204, F.A.C., addresses the conditions for reimbursement of providers during temporary closures caused by emergency circumstances. Section 5(a) of the Rule states in order for a temporary closure to be payable, a state of emergency must be declared by federal, state or local officials. It also indicates that private providers or school districts shall revise their “class schedule to restore VPK instructional days which are lost due to temporary closures caused by emergency circumstances in excess of a total of five (5) instructional days for a VPK class” and these make-up days/hours must be completed no later than June 30<sup>th</sup> for regular school year classrooms.

DEL recognizes the magnitude of the current federally declared COVID-19 crisis on a provider’s operations and received authorization to pay for VPK Closure Days due to COVID-19 beyond those allowed by Rule as follows –

Coverage Period	Funding	Days to be made up
March – Sept 2020	General Revenue	No
October 2020 – June 2021	CARES Act <sup>1</sup>	Yes, if emergency closures (max 5) not used <sup>2</sup>
July 2021 – June 2022	CRRSA Act	Yes, if emergency closures (max 5) not used <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Refer to Appendix A – CARES Act Initiatives for information specific to these closures

<sup>2</sup>Providers and school districts must still adhere to the specifications in Rule 6M-8.204, F.A.C.

On a quarterly basis, DEL will provide coalitions with a list of days available for reimbursement due to COVID-19 closures, as well as any additional instructions for reimbursement with CRRSA Act funding. Coalitions shall –

- Verify payable closures; and
- Pay providers within 45 days of receiving quarterly list; and
- Review the VPK Overpayment Report and process adjustments in EFSM for excessive days paid, if necessary; and
- Invoice DEL on the monthly EL workbook following the quarter’s payment to providers using the OCA – RVPKC (CRRSA VPK Closures – July 2021 through June 2022); and
- Maintain adequate records to support calculated payments to providers.

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**Phase V: CRRSA Support Grants for Early Learning/Child Care Providers**

Coalitions will receive additional funding to support private early learning/child care providers and contracted school district providers that were classified as operational/open on April 1, 2021 and are providing on-site early learning/child care services on the date of application, to assist them in remaining open during the COVID-19 crisis. Provider must have remained open and operational, with the exception of temporary closures due to COVID-19 or other temporary emergencies. Operational is defined as the provider status listed on the DCF database. Some portion of the funds must be used for staff salaries/benefits. **Providers may qualify for Phase V grants, in addition to any grant awarded in Phases I – IV.**

Private early learning/child care providers will receive additional funding based on their DCF capacity, when available, or EFS Mod Provider Profile capacity data if DCF capacity is not available. School district providers, whether public or charter, must have an active SR or VPK contract on the date of application in order to qualify and funds are based on the total distinct number of SR and/or VPK children served in FY 2020-21 as opposed to DCF capacity. Contracted school district providers operating the VPK Flex option are also considered eligible.

These funds shall be paid to providers as soon as practicable (i.e., within 15 business days). Early learning/child care providers that contract with multiple coalitions will be paid by the coalition where the provider is physically located (“home” coalition). Only one Phase VI grant may be awarded. Grant funding levels for providers meeting the eligibility criteria are indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4:**

<b>Phase V: CRRSA Act Support Grants for Early Learning/Child Care Providers</b>	
<b>Private Providers – Contracted (OCA: RSPC5)</b>	
<b>Capacity Range</b>	<b>Base Grant Funding</b>
1 - 12	\$ 3,000
13 - 20	\$ 6,000
21 - 74	\$ 10,500
75 -149	\$ 15,000
150+	\$ 19,500
<b>Private Providers – Non-contracted (OCA: RSPN5)</b>	
<b>Capacity Range</b>	<b>Base Grant Funding</b>
1 - 12	\$ 3,000
13 - 20	\$ 6,000
21 - 74	\$ 10,500
75 -149	\$ 15,000
150+	\$ 19,500
<b>Public/Charter School Providers – SR and/or VPK Contracted ONLY<sup>1</sup> (OCA: RSPS5)</b>	
<b>Children Served Range</b>	<b>Base Grant Funding</b>
1 - 12	\$ 3,000
13 - 20	\$ 6,000
21 - 74	\$ 10,500
75 -149	\$ 15,000
150+	\$ 19,500

<sup>1</sup>For the public school district providers, funds are based on the total distinct number of SR/VPK children served in FY 20-21 as opposed to DCF capacity.

### ***Private Early Learning/Child Care Providers***

Early learning/child care providers must meet each of the following eligibility criteria for payment:

#### **ALL PROVIDERS:**

- Early learning/child care provider was operational/open on April 1, 2021 and is providing on-site early learning/child care services (consistent with local ordinances or restrictions, if applicable<sup>2</sup>) as of the date of application, with the exception of temporary closures due to COVID-19 or other temporary emergencies; and
- Some portion of the funds must be used for staff salaries/benefits; and
- Early learning/child care provider does not receive cash Head Start CRRSA funding (materials and supplies allowed); and
- Early learning/child care provider completes the Phase V grant application (Attachment 11), which includes plans and budget for expenditure of funds.

#### **NON-CONTRACTED PROVIDERS:**

- Early learning/child care provider agrees to complete a current fiscal year Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) profile in the [Florida Early Learning Provider Services Portal](#), if not previously completed; and
- Early learning/child care provider has not received any Class I DCF violations since July 1, 2019; and
- Early learning/child care provider did not have a contract with the early learning coalition that was terminated for cause within the past five years; and
- Early learning/child care provider is not under investigation or has been convicted of child care fraud; and
- Early learning/child care provider is not included on the Florida Child Care Food Program (CCFP) USDA Disqualified List; and
- Early learning/child care provider submits an IRS Form W-9 for payment and direct deposit forms (as required by coalition), if not previously submitted.

<sup>2</sup> The term “consistent with local ordinances or restrictions” for Phase V grants may include those providers not permitted to establish on-site early learning/child care services until a later date due to local ordinances or restrictions and those contracted school district sites operating the VPK flex option. If providers do not begin on-site early learning/child care services by the established date by the local school district, the coalition may take the necessary actions to recoup these funds.

### ***Contracted Public/Charter Schools***

Early learning/child care public/charter school providers must have an active SR and/or VPK contract with a local early learning coalition for the current fiscal year on the date of application and will receive additional funding based on the total number of distinct children served during fiscal year 2020-21. These providers must also meet the requirements for Phase V – Private Early Learning/Child Care Providers above. Public/Charter school providers may complete one Grant Application Form (Attachment 4) and include a list of the eligible public schools for each eligible school.

**Phase VI: CRRSA Additional Support Grants for Early Learning/Child Care Providers**

Coalitions will receive additional funding to support private early learning/child care providers and contracted school district providers that were classified as operational/open on September 1, 2021 and are providing on-site early learning/child care services on the date of application, to assist them in remaining open during the COVID-19 crisis. Provider must have remained open and operational, with the exception of temporary closures due to COVID-19 or other temporary emergencies. Operational is defined as the provider status listed on the DCF database. Some portion of the funds must be used for staff salaries/benefits and must be certified on the submitted application. **Providers may qualify for Phase VI grants, in addition to any grant awarded in Phases I – V.**

Private early learning/child care providers will receive additional funding based on their DCF capacity, when available, or EFS Mod Provider Profile capacity data if DCF capacity is not available. Private providers are also eligible for additional allocation for workforce incentives. Providers must expend this allocation on workforce initiatives such as recruitment/on-boarding expenses (e.g., \$250 as a signing bonus, \$300 for onboarding), retention/upskilling (e.g., \$500 as retention bonus after six (6) months employment and completing the 45 hours of DCF training, monthly teacher stipend that incentivizes retention and helps with increased hourly wages).

School district providers, whether public or charter, must have an active SR or VPK contract on the date of application in order to qualify and funds are based on the total distinct number of SR and/or VPK children served in FY 2020-21 as opposed to DCF capacity. Contracted school district providers operating the VPK Flex option are also considered eligible. Public/charter schools are not eligible for workforce incentive allocations.

These funds shall be paid to providers as soon as practicable (i.e., within 15 business days of application). Early learning/child care providers that contract with multiple coalitions will be paid by the coalition where the provider is physically located (“home” coalition). Duplicate grants will not be offered. Grant funding levels for providers meeting the eligibility criteria are indicated in Table 5.

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**Table 5:**

<b>Phase VI: CRRSA Act Additional Support Grants for Early Learning/Child Care Providers</b>			
<b>Capacity Range</b>	<b>Base Grant Funding</b>	<b>Additional Allocation for Workforce Initiatives<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Total Phase VI Provider Grant Amount</b>
1 – 10	\$ 4,356	\$800	\$ 5,156
11 - 20	\$ 8,678	\$800	\$ 9,478
21 - 74	\$ 18,400	\$1,600	\$ 20,000
75 -149	\$ 35,676	\$2,400	\$ 38,076
150+	\$ 45,394	\$3,200	\$ 48,594
<b>Capacity Range</b>	<b>Base Grant Funding</b>	<b>Additional Allocation for Workforce Initiatives<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Total Phase VI Provider Grant Amount</b>
1 – 10	\$ 4,356	\$800	\$ 5,156
11 - 20	\$ 8,678	\$800	\$ 9,478
21 - 74	\$ 18,400	\$1,600	\$ 20,000
75 -149	\$ 35,676	\$2,400	\$ 38,076
150+	\$ 45,394	\$3,200	
<b>Children Served Range<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Base Grant Funding</b>		<b>Total Phase VI Provider Grant Amount</b>
1 – 10	\$ 4,356	N/A	\$ 4,356
11 - 20	\$ 8,678	N/A	\$ 8,678
21 - 74	\$ 18,400	N/A	\$ 18,400
75 -149	\$ 35,676	N/A	\$ 35,676
150+	\$ 45,394	N/A	\$ 45,394

<sup>1</sup>Additional allocation for workforce initiatives included in the Phase VI total award amount.

<sup>2</sup>For the public school district providers, funds are based on the total distinct number of SR/VPK children served in FY 20-21 as opposed to DCF capacity.

**Private Early Learning/Child Care Providers**

Early learning/child care providers must meet each of the following eligibility criteria for payment:

**ALL PROVIDERS:**

- Early learning/child care provider was operational/open on September 1, 2021 and are providing on-site early learning/child care services (consistent with local ordinances or restrictions, if applicable<sup>2</sup>) as of the date of application, with the exception of temporary closures due to COVID-19 or other temporary emergencies; and
- Some portion of the funds must be used for staff salaries/benefits; and
- Amount awarded for Workforce Initiatives must be used for workforce incentives; and
- Early learning/child care provider does not receive cash Head Start CRRSA funding (materials and supplies allowed); and
- Early learning/child care provider completes the Phase VI grant application (Attachment 4), which includes plans for expenditure of funds.

**NON-CONTRACTED PROVIDERS:**

- Early learning/child care provider agrees to complete a **current fiscal year** Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) profile in the [Florida Early Learning Provider Services Portal](#), if not previously completed; and
- Early learning/child care provider has not received any Class I DCF violations since July 1, 2019; and
- Early learning/child care provider did not have a contract with the early learning coalition that was terminated for cause within the past five years; and
- Early learning/child care provider is not under investigation or has been convicted of child care fraud; and
- Early learning/child care provider is not included on the Florida Child Care Food Program (CCFP) USDA Disqualified List; and
- Early learning/child care provider submits an IRS Form W-9 for payment and direct deposit forms (as required by coalition), if not previously submitted.

<sup>2</sup> The term “consistent with local ordinances or restrictions” for Phase VI grants may include those providers not permitted to establish on-site early learning/child care services until a later date due to local ordinances or restrictions and those contracted school district sites operating the VPK flex option. If providers do not begin on-site early learning/child care services by the established date by the local school district, the coalition may take the necessary actions to recoup these funds.

***Contracted Public/Charter Schools***

Early learning/child care public/charter school providers must have an active SR and/or VPK contract with a local early learning coalition for the current fiscal year on the date of application and will receive additional funding based on the total number of distinct children served during fiscal year 2020-21. These providers must also meet the requirements for Phase VI – Private Early Learning/Child Care Providers above. Public/Charter schools may complete one Grant Application Form (Attachment 4) and include a list of the eligible public schools.

**Coalition Workforce Initiatives for Early Educators (OCAs: RWIEE, RCWIQ)**

COVID-19 has negatively impacted provider enrollment and many providers have experienced a loss of staff due to COVID-related closures of classrooms or centers. This initiative provides ELCs/RCMA the opportunity to build upon their current initiatives by applying for \$35,000,000 in funding to assist early learning providers with attracting and retaining highly qualified professionals, particularly in underserved communities to be implemented in the following focus areas:

- **Recruit** new early educators and reward them with a financial incentive upon completion of targeted preparation,
- **Upskill** current early educators and reward professionals with a financial incentive for achieving specific, measurable key professional development goals, and/or
- **Retain** qualified professionals who have already achieved key professional development goals and remain employed for a specific period of time by providing financial incentives at determined benchmarks.



ELC/RCMA applicants will be required to conduct a local needs assessment, select the criteria used for identifying participants, describe strategies for recruitment, upskilling, and retention, provide baseline data points, and a budget. Coalitions and RCMA must strategically target these efforts to support the needs of early educators and meet the needs in underserved communities, including communities where program assessment scores are lower and/or communities where child care access or staffing was disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. For upskilling/rewarding achievement, coalition and RCMA plans must be aligned with key professional development (i.e. CLASS training, VPK emergent literacy training, Florida’s Career Pathway, etc.) goals that have measurable professional development benchmarks and incentives that are appropriately tied to specific achievements. The initial allocation for which each ELC/RCMA may apply will be based on its proportionate share of the distinct private and public provider counts.

### ***Application Requirements***

ELC/RCMA applicants will be required to complete/submit Appendix B – Attachment 5, Coalition Workforce Initiatives for Early Educators – ELC/RCMA Project Application, which includes the following requirements –

- Conduct a local needs assessment
- Select the criteria used for identifying participants
- Describe strategies for recruitment, upskilling, and retention
- Provide baseline data points
- Draft budget

### ***Application Submission***

Applications should be uploaded to SharePoint Coalition Zone > Coalition Document Exchange > COVID-19 > Coalition Workforce Initiatives for Early Educators.

### ***End of Program Requirements***

DEL will conduct an evaluation, through an awarded contract, of the impact of both participating provider and coalition activities. Awarded coalitions will be required to provide a brief narrative and data points on the effectiveness of the program to include (at a minimum) –

- Total providers recruited by provider types,
- Total professionals recruited,
- Total professionals trained/awarded with retention bonuses,
- Total professionals awarded professional development/upskilling stipends,
- Total credentials or degrees (including documented progress) obtained,
- Narrative description of services delivered,
- Observed and/or measured outcomes,
- Impact on CLASS scores,
- Fiscal expenditures, and
- Retention rates among participating staff.

### ***Expenditure Allocations***

To assist with the administrative and planning requirements, coalitions may utilize the OCA – RCWIQ for expenditures related to this initiative as defined in Program Guidance 250.01, Attachment C, COVID-19 Disaster Relief OCA Working Definitions.



**Coalition Program Outreach, Awareness, and Family Supports (OCA: ROAFS)**

Coalitions will receive additional funding to support initiatives from September 2021 through June 2022, with continued opportunities in July and August 2022, based upon each coalition’s proportionate share of the distinct private and public provider counts, to:

- Raise awareness of importance of high-quality early learning programs/services, developmental screenings and available supports through community events, local advertisements, etc.
- Provide families and providers with monthly engagement materials, including books, to promote early literacy activities.

The Division of Early Learning has identified the following opportunities for program outreach, awareness, and provider and family supports, including but not limited to:

- **Calendars** (e.g., age-specific annual calendars with activities/tips for families and providers: birth to 3 years, preschool, transition to kindergarten)
- **Early Learning Materials** (e.g., family engagement month materials, targeted campaign on the importance of regular developmental screening)
- **Provider & Family Supports** (e.g., books for providers for Celebrate Literacy Week, school supplies for providers)
- **Local Events** (e.g., local community events that promote early learning programs such as coordinated activities with statewide organizations to further enhance parent engagement)
- **Advertisements** (e.g., commercials/radio announcements to promote early learning programs, targeted flyer mail-outs coupled with coupons for local businesses)

**Invoicing/OCA coding instructions, CRRSA Acts funded**

CRRSA funded costs must be coded to the OCAs as described in the table below and included in the coalition/RCMA’s monthly early learning (EL) invoice. As with CARES Act funded grants, grants issued by phase and provider type must be submitted on Attachment 6 – CRRSA Grants Issued by Phase and Provider Type for all expenditures coded to any of the CRRSA Phase grants.

Please contact your grant manager with questions or requests for assistance.

OCA	DESCRIPTION
CRRSA Funding OCAs	
RADMN	CRRSA Administrative Costs (limited to 5% of total CRRSA expenditures)
RCWIQ	CRRSA Coalition Workforce Initiative Quality
ROAFS	CRRSA Coalition Outreach, Awareness and Family Supports
RSADV	CRRSA Advance
RSPC5	CRRSA Support Grants Private Providers – Contracted (SR/VPK) (Phase V)
RSPN5	CRRSA Support Grants Private Providers – Non-Contracted (Phase V)
RSPS5	CRRSA Support Grants Public/Charter Schools – Contracted (SR/VPK) (Phase V)
RSPC6	CRRSA Additional Support Grants Private Providers – Contracted (SR/VPK) (Phase VI)
RSPN6	CRRSA Additional Support Grants Private Providers – Non-Contracted (Phase VI)
RSPS6	CRRSA Additional Support Grants Public/Charter Schools – Contracted (SR/VPK) (Phase VI)
RVPKC	CRRSA VPK Closures (July 2021 – June 2022)
RWIEE	CRRSA Coalition Workforce Initiatives for Early Educators

### **FLEXIBILITY IN EXPENDITURES ACROSS OCAS**

Coalitions are authorized to transfer budget across the respective CRRSA OCAs to meet the local needs for the VPK Closures, Phase V and Phase VI grants. Funds allocated for the CRRSA Coalition Workforce Initiatives for Early Educators and the CRRSA Coalition Outreach, Awareness and Family Supports may not be utilized for any other CRRSA program or grant. Funds allocated for CRRSA may not be utilized for any SR or CARES program or grant.

### **APPLICATION DEADLINES**

Coalitions may establish CRRSA Phases V and VI grant application due dates specific to its operations, but no later than June 30, 2022. Applications received after the established due date may not be processed. All Phase VI grant expenditures must be submitted by the FY2021-22 final invoice due date established by DEL.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

Issuance of this guidance represents approval by DEL management of the indicated procedures and related administrative forms. These procedures will be effective as of the date of this guidance listed below.

### **HISTORY**

Original guidance issued May 28, 2020, revised June 28, 2020, revised September 2, 2020, revised November 10, 2020, revised December 2, 2020, revised May 4, 2021, revised June 28, 2021, revised November 8, 2021.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – CRRSA Phase V Provider Grant Allocations Statewide (previously Attachment 10)

Attachment 2 – COVID-19 Grant Application: All Providers – Phase V Grants (previously Attachment 11)

Attachment 3 – CRRSA Phase VI Provider Grant Allocations Statewide

Attachment 4 – COVID-19 Grant Application: All Providers – Phase VI Grants

Attachment 5 – COVID-19 Coalition Workforce Initiatives for Early Educators Application

Attachment 6 – CRRSA Grants Issued by Phase and Provider Type

If you have questions, contact [OEL.Questions@oel.myflorida.com](mailto:OEL.Questions@oel.myflorida.com).