



## Tracking Costs for Disasters Health and Safety Cleaning Supplies/Mini-grants for Early Learning/Child Care Providers

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### OF INTEREST TO

The Office of Early Learning (OEL, the Office) and Early Learning Coalitions (ELCs, coalitions) and other direct subrecipients of OEL implementing federal and state early learning programs, such as the School Readiness Program (SR) and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK).

### SUMMARY

This program guidance advises ELCs and other subrecipients that receive early learning funding from OEL about available emergency purchasing authority for purchases of specified goods/commodities to assist early learning/child care providers during disasters and declared states of emergency. On a case-by-case basis, OEL may activate these instructions to authorize ELCs and Redlands Christian Migrant Association Inc. (RCMA) to directly purchase (a) public health/safety cleaning supplies, (b) personal use items for infants and toddlers and/or (c) to award min-grants for these items to eligible /child care providers using the process and requirements described.

### RELATED FEDERAL REGULATIONS/AUTHORITY

#### [Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant Act](#) (CCDF)

- Section 658E(c)(U)(i) Disaster Preparedness
- Section 658G(b)(10) Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care

#### [CCDF ACF Info Memo 2017-02 CCDF Spending Flexibility during Federal or State Declared Emergency](#)

Reference: [45 CFR § 98.53](#), [ACYF-PI-CC-99-05](#), [§1002.89\(6\)\(b\), F.S.](#), [§287.057\(3\)\(a\), F.S.](#) and [CCDF State Plan](#)

### OVERVIEW

Funds set aside for quality-related activities may be used to provide one-time grants to support/enhance early learning/child care services before, during and after disasters and declared states of emergency. Guidance from the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) Office of Child Care (OCC) (*see link above to CCDF\_ACF\_Memo\_2017-02*) allows flexibility to lead agencies to operate the CCDF program within the parameters of federal requirements. In addition, agencies may also determine state emergency purchasing processes are required pursuant to s. [287.057\(3\)\(a\), F.S.](#) Based on this guidance, OEL has made the following determinations:

- Early learning/child care services are a critical work support for Florida’s families, including those employed as essential workers, medical staff and/or first responders.
- In some declared emergencies, state emergency purchasing processes for ELCs/ RCMA may be warranted.

- In some declared emergencies –
  - Public health/safety cleaning supplies for early learning/child care providers and classrooms may be essential to help keep providers open and operational.
  - An additional list of welfare-related personal use items for infants and toddlers may also be essential to help minimize interruption of program services.

OEL’s management team will evaluate any declared state of emergency to determine if the below-described emergency purchasing processes can be activated to support the delivery of early learning program services. Notice from OEL will be provided in writing for each emergency event, along with other specific instructions (if any) that may be warranted.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **Eligibility requirements for Early Learning/Child Care Providers (SR and VPK)**

Eligible early learning/child care providers will meet the following requirements:

- Provider has an active SR or VPK contract with at least one early learning coalition or RCMA, Inc.; and
- Provider does not have a pending/open provider **contract-related** Corrective Action Plan (CAP) or Probation notice in effect\*; and
- Provider is currently providing early learning services (i.e. open for business); OR
- Provider is currently preparing to resume operations to provide early learning services.<sup>1</sup>

*\*Criteria does not include (1) VPK readiness rate improvement plans or (2) Quality Improvement Plans (QIP).*

*<sup>1</sup>Required re-opening timelines will be set by OEL for each specific declared disaster or emergency event. Please reference related PG Attachments or FAQ files (as applicable) for more details.*

### **Maximum allowable payments – Provider health/safety or support/welfare supplies mini-grants**

Each eligible early learning/child care provider may be awarded up to \$1,000 per location as a one-time grant per declared disaster/emergency event lasting less than 12 months. Grants may be awarded once per fiscal year for declared disaster/emergency events lasting more than 12 months.

### **Types of qualifying Provider Costs - health and safety cleaning supplies**

Quality funds within an OEL grant award, specifically 97QHS, may be used to directly purchase specified supplies and/or to award mini-grants to eligible providers to assist with public health and safety needs. Supplies may include disinfectants, soap, hand sanitizer (health and safety of teachers and children), masks\* for teachers and staff (\*eligible during public health emergencies), disinfectants, bleach, bleach wipes, toilet paper and other items to address public health and safety needs. See disinfectants identified by the [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) and suggested cleaning instructions from the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s \(CDC\) tips for Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) for more details.

### **Types of qualifying Provider Costs – Consumable support/welfare infant and toddlers costs**

Quality funds within an OEL grant, specifically 97QOO, may be used to directly purchase specified supplies and/or to award mini-grants to eligible providers to assist with the support and welfare needs of infants and toddlers receiving program services. Supplies may include baby wipes, crib sheets, detergent (Dreft or equivalent), diapers, and other items for supporting the health, safety and welfare needs of infants and toddlers.

### **Period of availability**

These mini-grants are only available while the disaster or emergency declaration remains in effect. Mini-grant application and approval should be completed before the emergency declaration period expires. Release of mini-grant funds should occur as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the emergency declaration period expires.

### **Documentation requirements for awarding Provider mini-grants**

Documentation requirements for this mini-grant process are described as follows.

- Early learning/child care provider submits application to attest each eligibility factor (Attachment 1);
- ELC/RCMA approves applications and maintains documentation; and
- For each accepted application, ELC or RCMA will submit reimbursement requests as part of their monthly invoice to OEL for any locally authorized mini-grant activities.

### **Documentation requirements if ELCs/RCMA directly purchase supplies for Early Learning/Child Care (SR/VPK Providers)**

Documentation requirements for this mini-grant process are described as follows:

- Early learning/child care provider submits application to attest each eligibility factor (Attachment 1 – one per location);
- Each eligible early learning/child care provider location is identified by the ELC or RCMA;
  - Apply the listed eligibility criteria and document results in writing.
  - Retain all documentation in ELC files to identify eligible providers.
- Purchase allowable supplies following the state’s emergency purchasing requirements;
  - Obtain pricing information from at least two prospective vendors; OR
  - Document in writing why this documentation cannot be obtained.\*
  - Retain all documentation in ELC purchasing/contract files.
  - *Reminder* – while this guidance is in effect an entity can make multiple bulk purchases above and/or below state purchasing threshold Category II (\$35,000) without having to competitively procure (advertise) them.
- Document delivery to/receipt by each eligible provider of the purchased supplies.
  - Email notices to/from each provider are acceptable;
  - Retain all documentation in ELC purchasing/contract files.
- ELC or RCMA will submit reimbursement request as part of their monthly invoice to OEL for any locally authorized mini-grant activities.

\*In rare circumstances, the time required to obtain pricing information could increase the immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare or result in other substantial loss to the state. Please document such instances in writing and keep details in purchasing/contract files if this occurs.

### **OCA coding instructions – requests for reimbursements/Provider mini-grants**

Reimbursement requests for health and safety cleaning supplies (direct purchases or mini-grants), should be charged to OCA code 97QHS – School Readiness Quality Health and Safety.

Reimbursement requests for consumable welfare support supplies (direct purchases or mini-grants), should be charged to OCA code 97QOO – School Readiness Quality.

Although these costs are reimbursable under existing SR OCAs, ELCs/RCMA and OEL will need to track expenditures and planned purchases related to each emergency/disaster event. A cost-reporting spreadsheet will be placed in each ELC's Invoice folder on SharePoint for the specified year. For example, for FY2019-20, the file would be located at ELC Coalitions Zone > Coalition Invoices - Restricted > FY 19-20. This spreadsheet must be submitted with a coalition/RCMA's monthly invoice. Please contact your grant manager with questions or requests for assistance.

### **Definitions**

Please refer to PG 240.20, *Tracking Costs for Disasters*.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Sample application – Early Learning/Child Care Provider Eligibility Form

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

Issuance of this guidance represents approval by OEL 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 April 15, 2020, revised May 12, 2020. Revised May 20, 2021.

### **AUTHORITY**

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.

Please direct questions and comments to the Office of Early Learning at [oel.questions@oel.myflorida.com](mailto:oel.questions@oel.myflorida.com)