



Office of Early Childhood

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S140, Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

P: 501.682.8590 F: 501.683.6060 TDD: 501.682.1550

American Rescue Plan Act Child Care Expansion Grant Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) **What is the Expansion Grant?** The expansion grant is for providers who want to increase the number of infants, toddlers, and/or school-agers they serve. It is a competitive grant. Priority will be given to quality programs that serve low-income families and operate in areas of the state where there is an identified shortage or no services for children in these age groups.
- 2) **Does my facility qualify to apply?** All licensed child care centers, child care family homes, and out-of-school time facilities that were open on or prior to March 11, 2021, qualify to receive funding.
- 3) **How can child care family home facilities qualify?**
 - ✓ If you are currently at a max capacity of 10 children, you may qualify to increase your capacity to 16 children depending on approval from your Licensing Specialist and Fire Department. If you are approved to increase your capacity to 16, you must pass the health/safety and fire department requirements (the Expansion Grant funding may assist in the cost associated this process).
 - ✓ If you are already at a max capacity of 16 children, you will not qualify to increase your capacity. Licensed child care family homes are not allowed to have a capacity beyond 16 in any circumstance.
- 4) **Can I add on an additional building or add on to my home/facility?** No. Adding on to your home, building an additional room, or purchasing a separate building/classroom/double wide for your property is not allowable with the Expansion Grant. Expansion funding cannot be used for construction of new facilities, major renovations, or purchasing a building. However, a child care provider could purchase another building or add on to existing building with their own funds and use the Expansion Grant for allowable expenses within that area.
- 5) **What qualifies to be turned into an additional classroom?** The following will be considered for approval:
 - ✓ Renovating an existing room inside of your home/facility
 - ✓ Closing in a specific area in your home to create an additional classroom
 - ✓ Converting an existing space (i.e.: garage, sunroom, porch area, large, spare room, additional classroom, large play space, shed, etc.) into a functional classroom
 - ✓ Other renovations and spaces can be considered on a case-by-case basis with your Licensing Specialist

Please Note: ALL renovations and classroom additions MUST BE approved by Licensing and the Fire Department prior to your application being reviewed and considered for approval.

- 6) Do I have to remain open if I accept this funding?** Currently, the Expansion Grant requires that your new classrooms remain open for at least 2 years if you are approved for the funding.
- 7) Where do I get the link to apply?** The applicant portal initial email was sent to the facility owner's email address listed in our child care licensing system, and **the email came from this address: noreply@notificationhelp.com**. The applicant portal links are currently being e-mailed every Friday by our IT Department. If you have not received it, please check your spam/junk folders, and verify that we have the correct provider e-mail on file.
- 8) Should I wait to begin any renovations/purchases?** Yes. Because of the competitive nature of the Expansion Grant, all applicants are not guaranteed to be approved for funding.
- 9) Will I be audited?** All applicants that are approved for funding from any of the ARPA Grants are required to keep a record of receipts for at least 5 years. DCCECE encourages you to work with a financial professional. Depending on the amount of funding you receive, you could be required to submit an audit to the state. Accepting a grant does not mean that you will automatically be audited; however, if the state ever pulled your facility for a random audit, you want to make sure that you maintain all financial records related to the grant.
- 10) How long do I have to apply for the expansion grant?** We will start reviewing expansion grant applications on **March 1, 2022**. The number of approved applications and the amount of funding requested will determine how long we continue to review applications.
- 11) How long do I have to spend the money/make renovations?** September 30, 2023
- 12) Do I have to be Better Beginnings to apply?** No. Applicants do not have to participate in the Better Beginnings program to apply for this grant funding.
- 13) Can I use this funding if I don't plan to serve more infants, toddlers, or school-agers?** No. This funding is only granted to facilities that are increasing the number of children they serve.
- 14) Can I still apply for the other ARPA Grants?** Yes. The Operational and Quality Improvement Grants can both be applied for until April 30, 2022.
- 15) What if I have technical difficulties with my application(s)?** Please select the blue button on the bottom right on your applicant portal or applicant login screen that says, "SEND TICKET". Once you complete that form our IT Department will reach out to you within 24/48 hours to assist you with your application.