

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | September 23, 2021

ND announces new stabilization grants for child care providers; funding supports operations, health and safety measures, quality and more

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Early Childhood Division is inviting all licensed or regulated North Dakota child care providers to apply for federally funded stabilization and recovery grants beginning now through August 2022. A variety of grant types are available, including stabilization, health and safety facility improvement, technology, inclusion, start-up, and quality improvement grants.

"These grants, which we previewed last month at the [Let's Chalk 0 to 5](#) event, give North Dakota the opportunity to invest in the long-term stability of our child care sector," said department Executive Director Chris Jones. "We have focused a number of grants on building capacity and quality child care for infants and toddlers as this remains an area of high need."

Types of Grants Available

The new **stabilization grants** can be used for operating costs and are focused on serving more families and strengthening the financial stability of programs. They also include added support for underserved areas of the state, infant and toddler care, and care during non-traditional hours. Funding amounts are based on these factors and the number of children served.

Early Childhood Division Director Kay Larson said stabilization grant funds can be used for personnel costs, including payroll and employee benefits, staff recruitment and retention incentives, and other related costs; rent and other facility costs, including maintenance and minor renovations not involving construction. This grant is re-verified monthly, like the Child Care Emergency Operating Grants offered earlier in the pandemic.

She said child care providers can also apply for other one-time funded grants. These include up to \$10,000 in **health and safety-related facility improvement grants** to address COVID-19 related needs and overall health and safety needs, and up to \$3,000 in **technology grants** to upgrade equipment and resources that allow a child care program to better connect to training, and child care reimbursement and licensing systems.

Because finding care for a child with special needs can be especially challenging for parents, the department is also offering one-time **inclusion grants**. Providers can use this funding to create and provide an inclusive environment so that children with disabilities or developmental delays can learn, grow, play and develop alongside their peers.

-MORE-

ND offers new child care stabilization and recovery grants – Page 2

To give working parents more options and to encourage more North Dakotans to consider starting a licensed child care program, DHS is also offering **start up grants**. Newly licensed and soon-to-be licensed child care programs are eligible to apply for one-time grant funding, which can be used to pay for initial business costs, including supplies and needed equipment. Programs interested in expanding their licensed capacity may also qualify for this funding.

Larson said licensed child care programs will also be rewarded for quality improvement efforts. Beginning in September 2021, Early childhood programs that have recently received a [Bright & Early North Dakota](#) quality rating of step two, three or four, will qualify for a tiered **quality improvement grant** to help support their continued efforts to improve the overall quality of the experience they offer to children.

How to Apply

North Dakota licensed group, family and center child care programs and self-declared child care programs can apply for grants using a new grant management module in North Dakota's Growing Futures Workforce Registry at <https://www.ndgrowingfutures.org>. If a North Dakota child care provider submits a complete application, is eligible and agrees to abide by grant program terms, they will receive funding.

Grant funds do not have to be repaid. However, grants are considered income by the Internal Revenue Service, and providers should retain all receipts.

Child care providers can find details including the answers to frequently asked questions online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/earlychildhood/ec-grants.html.

North Dakota received more than \$100 million in federal funding as part of the Congressional COVID-19 response and recovery packages, dedicated specifically to early childhood and the child care sector. Access to quality, affordable child care is vital to supporting the workforce and the economic recovery.

The state strategy for investment of these dollars includes grants directly to child care programs as described above. In addition, resources have been dedicated to increase access to the Child Care Assistance Program, to help improve affordability for families who earn modest incomes. Later this fall, North Dakota will also announce an initiative to provide retention and training incentives directly to child care workers to further stabilize the child care sector.

#

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Heather Steffl | 701-328-4933
hsteffl@nd.gov

LuWanna Lawrence | 701-328-1892
lklawrence@nd.gov