

CHAPTER 6-000 CHILD CARE GRANTS: The Department has established a grant fund from Child Care Development Funds; awards are made from the grant fund to child care facilities in order to increase the number of licensed child care slots that are available to families who are receiving Child Care Subsidy. There are two categories of grants:

1. Start Up/Expansion child care grants; and
2. Child care mini grants.

6-001 General Provisions:

6-001.01 Definitions: For definitions used within the administration of Child Care Grants, see 392 NAC 1-003.

6-001.02 General Eligibility:

6-001.02A Nondiscrimination: To be eligible, a program must not discriminate against children with disabilities or children whose care is funded by any state or federal funds.

6-001.02B Multiple Child Care Sites: Entities operating multiple child care sites are eligible to submit one application per site.

6-001.02C Ineligible Programs: Preschool-only and drop-in-care-only programs are ineligible.

6-001.02D Application Process: Applications are accepted monthly, and must be postmarked by the first of the month in order to be included in that month's review cycle. Applications postmarked after the first of the month are reviewed during the next month's review cycle.

Based on the recommendations of the review committee and availability of funds, money is awarded to applicants each month. The Department reserves the right not to award any grants during a review cycle.

Proposals requesting funds in excess of the specified award amount are not considered.

The Director of HHS Services reviews the list of the applications that are recommended for funding before the grant awards are made.

6-001.02D1 Review Committee: The Review Committee consists of one or more representatives of HHS, Services; HHS, Regulation and Licensure; and Department of Education.

6-001.02E Grant Awards: A proposal may be fully or partially funded. Funding decisions are not subject to appeal.

Grant funds must not be used to reimburse for any item purchased before the grant has been awarded.

6-001.02E1 Selected Proposals: Applicants who are selected for funding have 60 days from the award date to accept the grant and sign and submit all necessary paperwork. Grants not accepted within 60 days of the award date are considered abandoned.

Once funded, a child care program is not eligible for a grant for a period of three years.

6-001.02E2 Proposals Not Selected: The Grant Manager will send a written notice to an applicant whose proposal is not selected for funding including an explanation for the denial. If not selected, an applicant may reapply during a future funding cycle.

6-001.02E3 Time Limit for Expenditure of Funds: All grant funds must be spent within one year of the date of award, unless a written request for an extension of time has been submitted and approved by the Department.

6-001.02F Audit of Expenditures: Within six months of awarding a grant, the Grant Manager will send an Expenditure Report to the child care facility. The child care facility must submit the Expenditure Report along with receipts for purchases made with the entire grant. If the Expenditure Report indicates there are funds remaining, the Grant Manager will send an additional Expenditure Report to the child care facility until all funds have been spent.

6-001.02G Contract Breach and Collection: If a child care facility does not comply with the terms of the grant contract, all or a prorated amount of the original grant award must be refunded to the Department. If a child care facility has its license revoked or subsidy agreement cancelled, the full amount of the grant award must be refunded to the Department.

If a child care facility fails to respond to a request for repayment of the grant, the Department pursues collection.

6-002 Start Up/Expansion Child Care Grant:

6-002.01 Purpose: The purpose of the Child Care Grant Fund is to expand the amount of licensed child care that is available to families who are receiving Child Care Subsidy. The following programs are eligible for Start Up/Expansion Child Care Grants:

1. New (not yet licensed) programs;
2. Programs that are expanding (increasing the license capacity); or
3. Programs that are expanding from a Family Child Care Home I to a Family Child Care Home II, or a Family Child Care Home II to a Child Care Center.

6-002.02 Definitions: For use within the administration of Start Up/Expansion Child Care Grants, the following definitions apply.

Children with Disabilities: Children who are eligible for special education services according to the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51 or the definition of "special needs" at 392 NAC 1-003.

Community Agency/Representative: Any agency, organization, government office, or individual that offers a service, or has knowledge of services and/or needs related to young children and families.

Developmentally Appropriate Program: A program that will meet the individual and age-appropriate needs of each child.

Expansion: Increasing the license capacity of an existing child care program.

Full Service Resource and Referral: An agency that provides a wide range of services to families including, but not limited to, health, social services, mental health, parent education, and child care resource and referral.

Ill Children: Children who are excluded from a regular child care program due to illness or disease, symptoms of illness, or who are recuperating from a serious illness, accident, or surgery requiring exclusion.

Market Plan: A well defined approach to informing families that the child care program exists. This may include using local advertising, the Child Care Food Program, resource and referral systems, and local support groups.

Minor Building Modifications: Improvements required for licensing by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System and/or other state, county, or city regulatory agency that do not involve the construction or removal of a weight-bearing wall. Minor building modifications also mean any improvements necessary to serve additional infants, children with disabilities, children who may be ill, and/or school-aged children.

6-002.03 Eligibility Requirements

6-002.03A Compliance with Federal Statutes and Rules: Applicants must comply with all federal statutes and rules related to nondiscrimination, prohibitions against lobbying, suspension, and disbarment; the provision of a drug-free workplace; the provision of a smoke-free environment in nonresidential settings; and access for all persons with disabilities.

6-002.03B Child Care License and Subsidy Agreement: If a program has a child care license and/or child care agreement, the program must be in good standing with the Department to be eligible for funding. The Review Committee reviews the child care license and subsidy agreement, if applicable.

6-002.03C Priority in Awards: Awards are made on the basis of need in the community for additional child care. Priority is given to the following:

1. Child care programs serving families who receive Child Care Subsidy;
2. Areas of need for additional child care providers serving families who receive Child Care Subsidy;
3. Areas of high poverty and/or very high or low population densities; and
4. Child care programs that would increase the number served who are infants, children with disabilities, school-aged children, and/or children who are ill.

6-002.03D Abuse Registries: The names of all applicants are cleared against the Nebraska Child Abuse and Neglect registry and the Nebraska Adult Protective Services registry. Applicants whose names appear as perpetrators on either registry or whose file contains serious noncompliance will not be funded.

6-002.04 Selection Criteria and Process

6-002.04A Application: Each application must contain the following seven sections:

1. Application form;
2. Statement of Assurances, including an Agreement:
 - a. To not discriminate against children with disabilities or children whose care is funded by any state or federal funds;
 - b. To participate in an external evaluation or site visit as determined by the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education;
 - c. To obtain and maintain licensure with the Health and Human Services system;
 - d. To keep records for fiscal audit and program evaluation, and to provide the information to the Department;
 - e. To ongoing participation in training;
 - f. To continue to provide child care services for three consecutive years after the grant has been awarded;
 - g. To serve families who receive Child Care Subsidy;
 - h. That funded proposals will become public domain;
 - j. To accept the grant award within 60 days of notification.
3. Community Impact Statement;
4. Program;
5. Business Plan;
6. Budget; and
7. Letters of Support.

6-002.04B License and Child Care Subsidy Agreement Review: The licensing file, Child Care Subsidy agreement, and history of each applicant are reviewed, if applicable. Applicants holding a license and/or a Child Care Subsidy agreement must be in good standing with the Department to be considered eligible for funding.

6-002.04C Review Process: The review committee reviews and scores proposals on a total point system of 100. Proposals must score at least 75 points to be considered eligible for funding.

6-002.05 Grant Awards: Maximum grant awards are \$5,000 for home-based child care programs and \$10,000 for center-based child care programs.

6-002.05A Proposals Not Selected: Applicants whose proposals are not selected for funding are sent a written notice including the reviewers' comments. If not selected, an applicant may reapply during future funding cycles.

6-002.05B Verification of Expenditures: HHS staff may conduct a site visit to the child care facility to verify purchases made with the grant funds.

6-002.05C Change in Director or Licensee: If there is a change in Director/Licensee of the program, the responsibilities and contractual obligations of the grant must be reassigned to the new Director/Licensee.

6-003 Child Care Mini Grants

6-003.01 Purpose: The purpose of the Mini Grant fund is to assist licensed home-based and center-based child care facilities with items that are required to maintain licensure.

6-003.02 Child Care License and Subsidy Agreement: To be eligible for grant funds, a child care facility must have both a child care license and a child care subsidy agreement. Applicants without both a child care license and a child care subsidy agreement must obtain and maintain them and be in good standing with the Department. The Review Committee reviews the licensing and subsidy files and history of each applicant.

6-003.03 Application Contents: Each application must include:

1. Application form;
2. Statement of Assurances;
3. Documentation of need for the item(s) requested from either the Health and Human Services System, local health department, and/or fire marshal;
4. Budget form with two written estimates for any individual item costing more than \$100;
5. A letter of support which documents the applicant's ability to provide quality child care.

6-003.04 Mini-Grant Awards: Maximum grant awards are \$1,000 for a child care program with a provisional license, and \$2,000 for a program with an operating license.

6-003.04A Proposals Not Selected: Applicants who are not selected for funding will receive written notice including an explanation for the denial.

6-003.04B Verification of Expenditures: A Health and Human Services System staff person, local health department staff person, and/or the fire marshal may conduct a site visit to the child care facility to verify purchases made with the grant funds.