



COLORADO

Department of Early Childhood

EMERGING & EXPANDING CHILD CARE GRANT

Overview & Frequently Asked Questions

The Emerging and Expanding Child Care Grant Program (E & E program) was created for the purpose of expanding access and availability of licensed child care throughout Colorado and especially in areas where there are [child care deserts](#).

Funding for the Emerging and Expanding Child Care Grant (E & E) is administered through the Colorado Department of Early Childhood as authorized through Colorado Senate Bill 22-213, which is funded by Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) from the American Rescue Plan (ARP), which aims to support families and invest in long-term growth and opportunity. Federal requirements and compliance will apply.

Who should apply?

There are three categories of programs that may apply for the Emerging and Expanding Program:

1. Currently open and operating licensed programs, serving children birth to five, with a permanent or provisional license which are expanding their current licensed capacity, OR;
2. An applicant actively pursuing a child care license through the Colorado Department of Early Childhood to increase overall capacity or to increase the number of infant/toddler slots, OR;
3. Programs that opened between November 1, 2021, to the date of application that have eligible expenses incurred on or after July 1, 2022, per [C.R.S.26.5-3-803](#). Eligible expenses are detailed in the answers to the next question.

What can the funds be used for?

Programs that apply put together a budget that reimburses expenses in the following categories:

- **Coaching** - Includes costs associated with coaching services provided by the [Early Childhood Council](#) needed to support the expansion of an existing program or the opening of a new program.

- **Professional Development** - Includes costs associated with training/course work needed to support the expansion or new program. Allowable costs include: tuition, books and associated fees as well as substitute costs, mental health consultants, child care health consultants or other coaching support needed specific to the expansion or program opening and approved by the Early Childhood Council.
- **Learning/Classroom Materials (and fees, other)** - Includes costs associated with any educational materials, curriculum, Personal Protective Equipment, cleaning supplies, etc. needed to support the expansion or new program. This category would additionally include any fees (licensing, background checks, inspections, etc) or technology needs that are associated with the expansion or new program.
- **Capital Improvements** - includes costs associated with the expansion or new program that are more permanent such as construction, flooring, etc. Capital includes both major and minor renovations or improvements.

Applicants must provide a budget for the entire project. Participating programs are reimbursed for eligible costs and services. Applicants may be required to provide a plan for covering costs not covered by the grant.

Grant recipients have until **September 30, 2024** to spend their award and complete the child care licensing process.

What is the application process?

Programs applying for the Emerging and Expanding grant will log into the [provider portal](#), and then select the **Available Grants** tab. This will take the applicant to the grant application for the Emerging and Expanding Child Care grant. Parts of the application require uploading documentation. Documentation may include project bids, pictures, a narrative, business plans, licensing/insurance/bonding, etc. If an applicant rents or leases their space, **a letter of support from their landlord is required**. This is to be sure that any changes being proposed are acceptable to the owner. Here is [the link](#) if the program needs to apply for a new license.

The applicant will need to submit a budget template that supports the amount of funding requested. The template is provided within the application for download; Once completed, the applicant will upload the file within the application. **NOTE: Applicants are encouraged to work with their [Early Childhood Council](#) before submitting [a budget](#).**

What are the application questions and attestations?

Applicants should prepare to report on the following sections. Additional guiding questions will be provided in the application:

- 1) Program Name, etc.
- 2) License Number
- 3) License Capacity at the time of the E & E application, by age group

- 4) Project Type - Opening New or Expanding Current License
- 5) Renting/Leasing
- 6) Number of New Licensed Spots created by project, by age group
- 7) Project Description & Explanation
- 8) Amount of Funding Requested
- 9) Allocation of Funding Request by Coaching, Materials/PD, and Capital expenditures
- 10) Whether the project requires the use of contractors

Programs are required to attest to the following statements in order to apply for Emerging and Expanding funding:

1. I attest that I am aware this is a cost reimbursement grant. Additionally, I have read and understood the requirements as set forth in the [Guidance for Early Childhood Program](#) grantees.
2. I understand this funding is provided through federal grant stimulus dollars that are subject to audit and review. If awarded, I agree to fully participate in providing any documentation requested by my Early Childhood Council or Colorado Department of Early Childhood representatives. I further understand that all work must be completed with all applicable inspections by September 30, 2024.
3. If awarded, I understand there is a responsibility to continue to provide licensed child care services in my community. I understand that if I cannot provide continued care, I may need to repay a portion of the grant funds back to the State of Colorado based on the time services were provided.

What should I do to prepare for the application to open?

Prospective applicants are encouraged to prepare the following items before the application opens in the first quarter of 2023.

- 1) Connect with your Licensing Specialist and [Early Childhood Council](#) to answer questions and provide information.
- 2) Gather information to answer the questions in the application,
- 3) Gather and prepare to submit at least two bids for:
 - a) Single purchases of \$5,000+
 - b) Capital projects
- 4) Obtain at least two bids for construction work to be completed using equitable procurement practices prioritizing women and minority owned businesses when possible
- 5) In partnership with your [Early Childhood Council](#), prepare a budget for the project

Who will receive the grant?

Program applications are evaluated on multiple factors, including: the number of full time infant/toddler slots added, whether the entity is located in a [child care desert](#), and the total number of child care slots that will be created.

What are the award ranges?

Family Child Care Home License Types	Funding Range
3 under 2 OR Infant/Toddler Home	\$3,000-\$25,000
New Family Child Care Home OR Experienced OR Large OR Dual Infant/Toddler Home	\$3,000-\$50,000
Center Slots	Funding Range
Up to 19 slots or no new infant toddler slots added	\$3,000-\$50,000
20 slots+, at least 5 new infant/toddler	\$3,000-\$100,000
40 slots+, at least 10 new infant/toddler	\$3,000-\$200,000

What is the role of my Licensing Specialist and my Early Childhood Council?

The role of the Licensing Specialist is to ensure that the number of slots indicated in the E & E application is licensable and to oversee the licensing process to obtain the new license with the additional slots.

The role of Early Childhood Councils is to support the program in building a budget and guiding the program on obtaining the documentation necessary to support the budget request. After an E & E application is deemed “eligible” for funding, the Early Childhood Councils and the program enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which describes expectations of the program and the Early Childhood Council. After executing an MOU, the Early Childhood Councils oversee the reimbursement to the program for approved materials and services.

Below are additional Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1) Can capital requests be used for rent/lease? **No. Funds cannot be used to pay rent or lease payment. However, capital improvements can be made to cover costs for improvements. A landlord letter is required and there is a module in EConnect that will need to be completed.**
- 2) Can funds be used to pay salary or bonuses for staff? **No.**
- 3) What is the MOU signing process? **The "eligible entity" or child care provider (center or home) will initiate the signing of the MOU followed by an authorized representative from the Early Childhood Council and the assigned Child Care Licensing Supervisor for the area.**
- 4) What is the definition of toddler? **12-29 months**
- 5) Can a part day preschool operating less than 5 hours per day be eligible for the grant if they add an extra afternoon session? **No, to qualify for the E and E grant the program will need to add full time slots (9 months - 12 months out of the year) and increase**

their capacity. A full time slot is a program operating 5 hours or more at least 4 days a week.

- 6) Can a provider apply for both the E & E and the Employer-based grant? **Yes, if the expenses are not covered under the employer based and are eligible under the E & E.**
- 7) Is advertising covered under this grant? **No**
- 8) Why is there a \$25,000 cap on family child care homes pursuing a 3 under 2 license or a Toddler Home license? **These license types add one slot whereas the other license types add more than one slot.**
- 9) Can a program that received funding from E & E in 2021-2022 apply for funding again? **Yes, provided that the program is applying for slots that were not previously funded with E & E dollars.**
- 10) Can a program that was not eligible to apply for E & E in 2021 because they opened/added slots after the deadline apply for that round of E & E? **Yes. The caveat is that the only eligible expenses that could be reimbursed are those incurred on or after July 1, 2022.**
- 11) Can a program convert a preschool room into an infant/toddler room and receive E & E funding, even though the overall number of slots would decrease because of licensing ratios? **Yes. Infant/toddler care is prioritized in this grant.**
- 12) Does a program need to have a complete and finalized application in order to apply for E & E funding? **No. A provider can submit an application as long as they provide the required information and agree to the attestations. Providers that submit a complete and finalized application will have an eligibility determination quicker.**
- 13) Do programs need to participate in Colorado Shines to be eligible for funding? **It depends. The Colorado Department of Early Childhood cannot require Colorado Shines participation; HOWEVER, if your Early Childhood Council policy is that programs receiving E & E funding participate in Colorado Shines, then yes, the program will need to participate because it's a Council Policy.**
- 14) Do programs need to indicate that they will accept CCCAP in order to be eligible for funding? **It depends. The Colorado Department of Early Childhood cannot require CCCAP participation; HOWEVER, if your Early Childhood Council policy is that programs receiving E & E funding participate in CCCAP, then yes, the program will need to participate because it's a Council Policy.**
- 15) My Licensing Specialist completed the Licensing Consultation Guide. Why is my application still "under review"? **The E & E grant brings together the Licensing and Quality. The application remains "under review" the budget and supporting documents are finalized to ensure spending eligibility requirements are met. Check in with your [Early Childhood Council](#) to see what information they need from you to finalize the application.**
- 16) My Council has a policy that has different spending deadlines than the deadlines outlined here. Is that allowed? **Yes. The Council needs to be transparent about spending and reimbursement deadlines and provide support to meet those deadlines. It's important to contact your Early Childhood Council as soon as there's a change that may affect these deadlines or any other policy deadlines.**
- 17) Is this a reimbursement only grant? **Yes**

18) What are some low-interest loan options for programs who may need financial support to open or expand?

- a) [Energize Colorado Loan Program](#)
 - i) Up to \$75,000-\$100,000 with 5-6% interest
 - ii) Loan applications will open in February.
- b) [OEDIT Colorado Startup Loan Fund](#)
 - i) For businesses who have been operating less than 2 years
 - ii) Micro loans under \$150,000
 - iii) [OEDIT Small Business Accelerated Growth program](#)
 - (1) Offers grants of varying amounts, online learning modules, and TA.

Need further assistance?

If you need support at any point during the grant program, please connect with your local [Early Childhood Council](#). For licensing questions, please contact your Licensing Specialist.