Early Care and Education Access Grant Guidance Document – All Program Types

BACKGROUND

Analysis by the Bipartisan Policy Center found that an estimated 76,660 Ohio children are unable to access potentially needed early care and education due to a gap in availability of early care and education slots throughout the state. The Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) have allocated $85 million dollars of discretionary funding from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) for five competitive grant opportunities to improve access to early care and education for Ohio children.

Programs must be compliant with all applicable Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) and Ohio Revised Code (ORC) requirements which include Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds health and safety requirements and the completion of comprehensive background checks.

ACCESS GRANT

The five early care and education access grant opportunities are: 1) New Program Start-Up Grant; 2) Program Expansion Grant; 3) Program Repairs Grant; 4) Family Child Care Type B to Type A Grant; and 5) Increase Capacity for Children with Special Needs. While programs may apply for one or all access grant opportunities that applies to their program type, only one grant opportunity may be awarded per license number.

Eligible provider types are listed with each access grant outlined below. DCY licensed early care and education centers, schools/preschools, and family child care (FCC) type A and type B home providers are eligible to apply. Child day camps and in-home aides (IHA) are not eligible for participation in any of these access grants.

Grant Type	New Center	Program Expansion	Program Repairs	Family Child Care Type B to Type A	Increase Capacity for Children with Special Needs
Center	X	X	X		X
FCC Type A	X	X	X		
FCC Type B	X	X	X	X	
School/Preschool	X	X	X		X
School-Age	X	X	X		

Competitive grants are an opportunity for application. Competitive grants are not entitlements and not every application will be approved for funding. Each early care and education access grant application will be scored; with the highest scores receiving funding. **While programs may apply**

---

for one or all access grant opportunities that applies to their program type, only one grant opportunity may be awarded per license number.

Licensed early care and education programs can increase access to services by starting new programs, expanding current capacity, or making repairs to their existing programs. Programs may also use access grant funds to focus on building capacity and evidence-based supports for children with special needs and evidence-based training for staff and families to best serve children with special needs.

ACCESS GRANT ELIGIBILITY

Below are the applicant qualifications and access grant award criteria. Applicants from all Ohio counties may apply. There is no county requirement associated with this access grant opportunity. Applicants may use the checklist below to determine whether they qualify and to prepare for the online application process:

Check Box	Applicant Qualifications and Access Grant Criteria
	Licensed by DCY and in "Continuous" license status as verified in the Ohio Child Licensing and Quality System (OCLQS).
	In "Open" program status as verified in OCLQS and serving children. A temporarily closed program can apply for these access grants to reopen the temporarily closed program.

	License is in good standing as of the date of application.
	     Programs not in good standing include:
	1) Programs in enforcement during the qualification period.
	2) Programs who have had their Provider Agreement for Publicly Funded Child Care terminated, within the five years prior to this application, due to misuse of funds.
	    If a program is in good standing at the time of application but is later determined not in good standing prior to the funds being awarded, the funds may not be awarded.

	In agreement with access grant terms by certifying that the early care and education program will, for the duration of the grant, use funds only for the purposes indicated for each of the access grant types.

The following are not eligible for early care and education access grants at this time:
- Child day camps and IHA are not eligible to participate in any of the access grants.
- In "Provisional" license status as verified in OCLQS.
- Out-of-state providers are not eligible to participate in any of the access grants.
- Programs that have not properly reconciled previous ARPA stabilization grant funds for Phases 1-3.
- 2023 Infant and Toddler Start-Up Grant recipients are not eligible to receive the Program Expansion Grant.

ACCESS GRANT DESCRIPTIONS AND PAYMENTS

New Center Start-Up Grant
Estimated Number of Grants: 150
Maximum Amount Program Can Request: $500,000 per program.

Timeframe: The current program must apply to DCY for their new center license by August 31, 2024. Proof of license application is required as part of reconciliation. If new center license application is not made by August 31, 2024, funding must be returned.

Eligible Providers: Centers, Schools/Preschools, School-Age and FCC Providers (if they intend to open a new early care and education center)

Eligible providers who qualify may use these funds related to opening a new center by paying:
- Mortgage or rent expenses- including rent, mortgage, utilities, insurance.
- Salary or benefits expenses- Paying personnel costs; including onboarding new staff, maintaining/increasing wages, or benefits such as insurance (health, dental, vision), paid sick leave or family leave, retirement contributions.
- Classroom supplies expenses- including consumable materials and equipment for classroom use.

Program Expansion Grant
Estimated Number of Grants: 50 (Centers, Schools/Preschools, School-Age) and 25 (FCC)
Maximum Amount Program Can Request: $50,000 per Center and $5,000 per FCC provider.

Eligible Providers: Centers, Schools/Preschools, School-Age and FCC Providers

Please note, funds may not be used for expenses paid for by other stabilization funding and/or state or federal funding programs receive.

Eligible providers who qualify may use access grant funds for:
- Expanding the number of children served or serving new age groups or serving more children with special needs. Examples of program expansion include but are not limited to: adding more children to the program capacity; adding or expanding care groups like infant/toddler, school-age, or care for children with special needs; or expanding hours of operation to include non-traditional hours (weekdays 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. or between 12:00 a.m. Saturday to 6:00 a.m. Monday).
- Salary or benefits expenses- Paying personnel costs; including adding new staff or work shifts, maintaining/increasing wages, or benefits such as insurance (health, dental, vision), paid sick leave or family leave, retirement contributions.
- Classroom supplies expenses- including consumable materials and equipment for classroom use.

Program Repairs Grant
Estimated Number of Grants: 50 (Centers, Schools/Preschools, School-Age) and 25 (FCC)
Maximum Amount Program Can Request: $100,000 per Center and $5,000 per FCC provider.

Eligible Providers: Centers, Schools/Preschools, School-Age and FCC Providers

Eligible providers who qualify may use access grant funds for making repairs to their facilities: Conducting facility maintenance, renovations, including those that make early care and education programs inclusive and accessible for children and families with disabilities. For example: lead abatement, mold remediation, ADA compliance, parking lot, playground, roof, HVAC or plumbing repairs.

Type B to Type A Grant
Estimated Number of Grants: 10
Maximum Amount Program Can Request: $25,000 per FCC provider.
Timeframe: The type B provider must apply to DCY for their new type A license by
August 31, 2024. Proof of licensing application is required as part of reconciliation.
If new type A license application is not made by August 31, 2024, funding must be returned.

Eligible Provider: Type B Family Child Care Home Providers

Eligible providers who qualify may use access grant funds to convert to a type A program by paying for items listed below. *(Note: FCC providers applying for this grant will not be awarded FCC Expansion or FCC Repairs Access Grants.)*

- Mortgage or rent expenses- Paying ongoing costs including rent, mortgage, utilities, insurance.
- Salary or benefits expenses - Paying personnel costs; including adding new staff or work shifts, maintaining/increasing wages, or benefits such as health, dental, vision, paid sick leave or family leave, retirement contributions.
- Classroom supplies expenses- including consumable materials and equipment for classroom use.

Increase Capacity for Children with Special Needs Grant
Estimated Number of Grants: 20
Maximum Amount Program Can Request: $100,000 per program.

Eligible Providers: Centers and Schools/Preschools

Eligible providers who qualify may use access grant funds to focus on:
- Capacity building and providing evidence-based support for children with special needs.
- Evidence-based training for staff and families to best serve children with special needs.

Allowable expenses are purchasing evidence-based materials, training costs (trainer, facility materials, staff time), expenses convening and supporting families.

ACCESS GRANT APPLICATION

The early care and education access grant application will be found in the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR). Guidance and requirements are available on the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association's (OCCRRA) website at www.occrra.org. Eligible providers must submit an application through the OPR, via a program's organization dashboard at https://registry.occrra.org/.

All applications submitted during the application period are eligible for review in this competitive grant process. Points will be assigned to each application based on established criteria including, but not limited to, children per slot with both parents in the workforce, evening care, weekend care, infant care, toddler care, highly rated, anticipated children served, and Inclusive Child Care Program (ICCP) designations obtained as of April 5, 2024. There are no additional points awarded for submitting earlier in the process. **The goal is to have a complete and well-thought-out application.**

Programs that apply must select at least one, some, or all of the access grants; however, funds cannot be used toward an expense previously paid for with any ARPA stabilization grant funding. When considering the amount to apply for, programs should determine the amount of expenses they will have in the grant expense period.

The table below is a summary of the early care and education access grant timeline.

Application Period	Award Notification	Expense Period	Reconciliation Due
April 12, 2024 at 2 p.m. through April 26, 2024 at 5 p.m.	May 3, 2024	July 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024	August 31, 2024

The **maximum amount** is the amount per grant that is available based on the program type.

The **requested amount** is the amount up to the maximum amount that the program will be able to spend during the expense period. Funds received by the program and not spent will need to be returned.

The **process for awarding these competitive grants** is based on allocations determined by the budget in each grant category starting with the applicant with the highest points, until funding is exhausted. If the remaining funding is not enough for the next request, OCCRRA may reach out and offer a partial award or combine the remaining funds to complete a full award.

The **awarded programs payments will be processed** approximately four weeks after the award notification date of May 3, 2024. Grant notification can be viewed by a status change in the organization dashboard of the OPR. These statuses will be available on May 3, 2024.

The **expense period** is the timeframe when the funds need to be used. The expense period for **Access Grant is July 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024**. Your expense receipts, paid invoices and documentation will need to have dates within this period.

The **application period** for the Access Grant funding cycle is **April 12, 2024 at 2:00 pm through April 26, 2024**. Applications must be submitted **by 5:00 pm on April 26, 2024**. A complete submission includes the Access Grant application and payment portal submissions. Incomplete submissions <u>will not</u> be accepted.

- Submitting for additional funds that do not exceed the maximum funding amount.

Programs will submit a new application for the changes above. Reminder – the new applications must be submitted before the application due date. In situations where access for an application or reconciliation needs to be changed, please reach out to grants@occrra.org.

Programs can see the status of their application in the Organization Dashboard of the OPR.

PAYMENT

Programs will be required to complete the payment portal for payments to generate. The payment portal contains information for a substitute W-9 and Bank Account information. Programs that provide bank account information will be able to receive their payments via Automated Clearing House (ACH) transactions. Programs that do not enter bank account information, have the option to receive funding via a paper check. It is the program's responsibility to enter the correct bank account information. OCCRRA is not liable for incorrect information entered by the program.

Payment Portal information entered by the professional, will be evaluated using a tool called GIACT. If the information cannot be verified, the program will receive a check. Professionals will have one attempt to enter banking information for the program.

Corporate programs are multi-site, single owner programs, where payments may be going to a centralized banking account. For corporate programs, please add a fiscal representative contact name and a fiscal representative email so we may provide license number information when paying a corporate account.

Payments will be processed approximately four weeks after the application approval date. Programs can see the status of their application and payments in the program's organization dashboard in the OPR.

RECONCILIATION

Programs are required to complete a reconciliation for each early care and education access grant. Reconciliations must be submitted no later than August 31, 2024.

Reconciliations will be located in the program's organization dashboard in the OPR. Programs should retain receipts, invoices and documentation for expenses used toward these grants. Reconciliation guidance will be located at www.occrra.org. Should a program receive but not be able to spend all of the funds provided, funds should be returned to OCCRRA.

SUPPORT / QUESTIONS

Please contact OCCRRA with questions at grants@occrra.org or 614-396-5959 option 1.

Your regional Child Care Resource and Referral Agency will be assisting with grant support related to promoting the availability of this access grant and ensuring eligible programs submit their application by the deadline.