



Childcare Expansion Grant Program

Center-based Providers

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated November 17, 2023

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Thank you for submitting your questions via email. Questions have been consolidated, with responses covering the questions asked. **This is the third and final round of FAQs and Responses.**

Please refer to <https://valleyhealthfoundation.org/how-we-help/childcare-center-programs.html> for the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and a recording of the webinar held on October 6, and a copy of the slides from the webinar. The NOFA provides detailed information regarding the Childcare Expansion Grant Program, the application process, and eligibility requirements.

IMPORTANT DATES & TIMELINE

When will all pre-eligibility forms be reviewed?

There has been significant interest in the program and the pre-eligibility forms are being reviewed in the order received.

Is there a deadline to submit the pre-eligibility form?

The deadline to submit a pre-eligibility form was Friday, October 27th 2023 at 5pm (PST).

When is the last day to submit the actual application?

The last day to submit construction and/or operations applications is Thursday, November 30th 2023 at 5pm (PST).

ELIGIBILITY

New Questions and Responses (11/17/23)

The tables asking for license capacity and enrollment use different ages for infant and toddlers than what I am used to. How am I supposed to complete these tables?

The equity criteria and eligibility for the program describe the requirement to increase infant/toddler capacity and enrollment as follows:

Provider demonstrates plans to increase in capacity or enrollment of infant and toddler slots (i.e., children under 3 years).

The tables should be completed using the age criteria (Infant (0-18 months) and Toddler (19-35 months)). The review of the applications will focus on increases in capacity and enrollment of children under 36 months. It is also important to note that the second table should reflect any



and all increases in capacity and enrollment in infant/toddler and other age categories if the grant is awarded.

Applicants will be provided with an additional form that will include the tables with the ages used by the State of California Licensing Division. These forms should be completed and submitted when they are received.

New Questions and Responses (11/3)

Are there any exceptions to the Citation Eligibility Requirements?

Valley Health Foundation is not able to consider any exceptions to the Citation eligibility requirements as stated in the Addenda to the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Demonstrate compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and the provider is not operating with a restricted license. The applicant provider shall have no CDSS reported Type A, resolved or unresolved, citations recorded against the childcare license, and shall not have more than five (5) CDSS Type B citations within the last five years. All Type B citations must have been resolved according to CDSS, and documentation of the resolved citation(s) must be provided to VHF by the applicant. Applicants not meeting this threshold will not move forward to the full application process.

Please refer to the NOFA Addenda

https://valleyhealthfoundation.org/file_download/e96d2fdd-b899-4129-96a5-79803635198d

Can I provide documentation showing my citation should be cleared instead of the CDSS documentation?

Valley Health Foundation requires CDSS generated documentation to demonstrate Type B citations have been cleared. Other related documentation will not be accepted.

If I am a Center applying for one site with multiple licenses and one license has a Type A citation but the other licenses do not have any citations, am I eligible?

Only the program and area without a Type A citation or 6 or more Type B citations may be eligible for consideration of funding. Construction and Operation funds can only be utilized for the specific and separate program and area that is eligible.

If an owner/provider acquired a childcare center business that was closed due to COVID-19, and is now operating under a different business name and license, will the new center qualify?

If the business owner/provider has been providing childcare services for 24 months or more and meets the licensing compliance requirements as noted in Addenda #1 of the NOFA, the provider may be eligible to apply for the new center. The applicant will need to provide the registered license prior to receipt of the grant funds.

If a new owner/provider acquired a childcare center business that was closed due to COVID-19, would the new owner be eligible to apply for the grant funds?

If the new owner/provider has been providing childcare services for 24 months or more and meets the licensing compliance requirements as noted in Addenda #1 of the NOFA, the provider may be eligible to apply for the new center.

I recently completed the requisite training to be a childcare provider and have received a childcare center license. Will I be eligible for grant funds to renovate a recently acquired childcare center?

If you as the provider have not been operating a childcare business for a period of 24 months or more, you would not be eligible.

I acquired a childcare center that needs a lot of repairs. Since this will increase the number of childcare spaces in Santa Clara County, would the childcare center be eligible for grant funds?

If you as a childcare provider can demonstrate that you have been operating a childcare business and meet the licensing compliance requirements, you may be eligible.

We are expanding our operations to a new site. Can this grant be used for a new facility? If our expansion is to open a new child care site, how do we handle requests to send a copy of license?

Eligible applicants must demonstrate that they have been providing childcare services for 24 months or more and meet licensing compliance requirements as noted in Addenda #1 of the NOFA. If the license is pending, submit a copy of the new location license application. License must be submitted prior to fund disbursement.

Prior Questions and Responses (10/20/23)

Is there any eligibility criteria?

Refer to the Notice of Funding Availability, Section 4 - Eligibility Requirements.

What criteria are you using for the pre-eligibility form ?

The pre-eligibility criteria include:

- Childcare site located in Santa Clara County.
- Provide CDSS childcare license or indicate license exempt status. Licensed centers must have been operating for at least two years from the date of application. Consideration may also be given to Centers that had been operating more than two years prior to closure specifically attributable to Covid.
- Demonstrate compliance with applicable laws and regulations and in accordance to the 10/20/2023 [NOFA Addendum #1](#).
- Demonstrate COVID-19 negative economic impact.

Do non-licensed child care or FFN providers qualify to apply?

Refer to the Childcare Center NOFA, Section 4 - Eligibility Requirements.

If we removed our pre-eligibility form on Submittable, are we able to complete a new eligibility form?

Yes. Pre-Eligibility form submission deadline is October 27, 2023 by 5PM (PST).

Do you have to be a non-profit organization to apply?

Refer to the Childcare Center NOFA, Section 4 - Eligibility Requirements.

- Eligible applicants include private, nonprofit or educational organizations.
 - Nonprofits must have a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(19) tax-exempt designation at the time of application submission.

Is operating in a low-income area a program criteria?

Priority will be given to childcare center providers meeting [Equity Priority](#) criteria.

Does the center need to be open for a certain period of time? Can the year of opening of the center be a factor to qualifying?

Providers must demonstrate being actively licensed for over 24 months.



Our organization has unlicensed sites that we would like to use the funds to become licensed. Would that be allowable use of these funds?

The specific circumstances will need to be reviewed. Unlicensed operating sites are not eligible. Unlicensed sites preparing for operation may be eligible.

I recently bought a childcare center that was impacted by covid. Can I still be eligible?

Providers must demonstrate being actively licensed for over 24 months and meet other eligibility requirements. Refer to the NOFA, Section 4 - Eligibility Requirements.

Our childcare center has been closed for a couple years due to COVID, and we hope to use this funding opportunity to reopen it. Does the fact that it's not currently in operation hurt our eligibility?

Providers must demonstrate being actively licensed for over 24 months. If your center closed due to negative impacts of the pandemic, but were actively licensed and in compliance for over 24 months prior to closure, your center may be eligible.

Is this funding only for Infant & Toddler programs?

No, however infant and toddler programs are a priority. Refer to the [Equity Priority](#) criteria.

How can we access the draft before submitting the pre-eligibility?

The Notice of Funding Availability, as amended (NOFA), is now posted on the VHF website for your review. The NOFA provides details on eligibility. Please be reminded that the pre-eligibility form must be completed prior to receiving a link to the full application.

The Pre-eligibility form must be submitted by October 27, 2023 by 5PM (PST).

Were the operations of your childcare business affected by the COVID pandemic?" Is this in reference to if your childcare organization is reviving a specific childcare location and/or branch that was closed or effected during the pandemic? Or is this referring to whether or not the childcare organization as a whole was affected during the pandemic?

This question is specific to the childcare facility you are considering to apply for.

Does the childcare provider have to be the one applying for the grant? As a housing developer we would like to apply for the grant on behalf of the overall project to complete childcare center tenant improvements in a new commercial space.

Refer to the NOFA, Section 4 - Eligibility Requirements. An eligible applicant is a childcare center provider that can demonstrate active and compliant licensing for 24 months or greater. A potential path for your organization would be to identify and enter into an MOU with an existing childcare center provider. This provider would submit the application and could name and describe your organization as a partner in the application. The existing childcare provider would be indicating their intent to add a new site and license, or to move an existing site license to the housing development. The childcare provider must demonstrate an increase in childcare spaces and meet other eligibility criteria.

I am currently a large family home daycare with ten enrolled children. If I wanted to use the grant for the center, would I be using the \$200,000 approved for FCC, or would I be applying for the Center Application for the center funds?

Center grant funding is limited to those centers that have been licensed for two years.

Because the family program is the current license type, to increase capacity by becoming a center, it would be the family program to which you should apply.

Because the family program is the current license type, to increase capacity by becoming a center, it would be the family program to which you should apply. The family program maximums of \$200,000 for Operations and \$200,000 for Construction would apply.

I have applied for the State of CA's major renovation/repair program. Can I still apply for this program?

Yes. You can apply for operations, construction or both. If approved, these funds can not be used to supplant funds received from the state program.

ELIGIBLE USES

New Questions and Responses (11/17/23)

If I receive an operations grant, spend some of the funds and within a year determine that I will need to close the childcare business due to lack of enrollment, will I have to return the funds?

If you are an existing provider and were approved for the operations grant, you will only receive half of the funds the first year. If you close within the first year of funding, you will need to submit a final expenditure report with receipts of the budget approved expenses along with the remaining balance to Valley Health Foundation. The remaining funding, including Year 2 funding will be re-allocated.

New Questions and Responses (11/3)

Can my application be rushed because of current facility issues I am facing, or can I apply and use the funds to pay for repairs I make now?

Applications will be reviewed in the order that full applications are received. Grant funds are not allowed to be applied to costs that have already been incurred.

Can I submit an FCCH and Center application simultaneously?

Both applications may be submitted, however each application must meet the eligibility requirements for the funding category.

Prior Questions and Responses (10/20/23)

REFER to the NOFA, Section 2 - Calendar and Funding Categories, Eligible Uses - Operations, and Eligible Uses - Construction, starting at page 7.

Does the project need to either increase capacity or re-open a center? Can the funds be used for center improvement to serve the community better?

The applicant must demonstrate an increase in childcare capacity or enrollment. Center improvements without increase in capacity or enrollment are not eligible uses.

Will this grant be available for projects already in process to cover costs? Or will it only be available for future projects?

Projects already in process may be eligible. However, these grant funds can not replace/supplant current project funding and cannot be applied to any costs incurred prior to the grant award.

What can we use those funds for, will that include outdoor enhancements as well?

Outdoor enhancements to the childcare center that provide a safe and developmentally appropriate environment for children may be eligible. See the NOFA section referenced above.

Due to workforce challenges many childcare operators cannot enroll to capacity. Have you considered allocated funds to help attract and retain teachers in the County?

See the NOFA section referenced above. Staff costs to support the increase in capacity and enrollment is an eligible use.

Is providing weekend child care services an eligible activity?

Childcare provided during non-traditional hours may be eligible. See the [Equity Priority](#) criteria

I am a 64 seat center with 50% enrollment that does not need major construction - but could really use \$75k to improve the playground to improve safety and catch up on deferred maintenance.

Refer to the NOFA, Section 4 -Eligibility Requirements.

Childcare providers are required to demonstrate an increase in childcare capacity or enrollment. If this eligibility requirement can be met, playground safety improvements and deferred maintenance to areas specific to the childcare space may be eligible.

Can we encourage enrollment by offering free childcare to families and use the funds to offset lost revenue?

No. These dollars are not designed to pay for tuition. These funds are available to support the increase in capacity and the stabilization of the childcare business.

If the childcare center plans to add a school-age program, can the funds be used to purchase a vehicle?

Yes. The acquisition of a vehicle is an allowable use, however the childcare provider must demonstrate an increase in your childcare capacity.

Can a landlord, agency or company that has a childcare center apply on behalf of the operator/tenant if they are making the investment to improve the facility and increase capacity?



Refer to the NOFA, Section 4 - Eligibility Requirements. Eligible applicants are licensed and compliant childcare providers with an active license for over 24 months.

We applied for our UEI number in 2022, but we have not yet been assigned a number due to the 501 C 3 letter having a different address than our current address. We called the federal service desk but you cannot speak to anyone in the UEI department. We have been assigned a case number but no UEI number. Is this a problem?

The organization must have a valid UEI at application and prior to funding.

MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNTS

No Questions and Responses (11/17/23)

No Questions and Responses (11/3)

Prior Questions and Responses (10/20/23)

Refer to the NOFA Section 2 - Calendar and Funding Categories, Center-Based Maximum Grant Amounts.

How do I know how much money I can request?

Center-based childcare providers may be eligible for:

Operations: Up to \$250,000 per year for a total amount not to exceed \$500,000 for the 2-year period. Providers must demonstrate an increase in quality childcare spaces or enrollment proportionate to the operational needs and requested funds.

Construction: Maximum construction grant per application is \$1,250,000. We anticipate funding 3 to 5 childcare centers for renovation and/or repairs to the facilities that can demonstrate an increase in childcare spaces proportionate to the requested funds.

Does the maximum grant amount apply to each applicant or each childcare center site?

The maximum grant funds apply to each childcare center site.

BUDGET

No Questions and Responses (11/17/23)

No Questions and Responses (11/3)

Prior Questions and Responses (10/20/23)

Can I change the estimated budget amount on the pre-eligibility form if actual estimates are greater?

Yes. If eligible, you will receive a link to the requested fund category application where you will have an opportunity to adjust the grant amount.

DOCUMENTATION

No Questions and Responses (11/17/23)

New Questions and Responses (11/3)

How can I attach a document with multiple pages to my application?

If applicants have difficulty attaching files to their applications, please contact Submittable Technical Assistance via <https://submittable.help/en/>

Do I have to upload my entire tax return?

The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) indicates all schedules should be provided in the application. While the focus of the review will be on the Schedule C, the information in the entire tax return may be applicable to the review of the application and determination of eligibility.

I am a non-profit that doesn't file tax returns – what should I include in my application?

All non-profit organizations are required to file tax documents with the Internal Revenue Service on an annual basis. If you are not aware of such forms being filed, it may be that you are a subunit of an organization that files such documents.

Prior Questions and Responses (10/20/23)

What kind of proof do you need to show that we have been impacted by Covid disproportionately?

Evidence provided can include before and after rosters, financial statements showing a decrease in revenue, or an attestation to the impact.

Must you have an external audit conducted by a CPA in order to apply? Or, can you use internal financial statements?

Refer to the NOFA, Section 5 - Application Submission for required documentation.

Can these funds be used to reimburse construction costs for construction already completed?

No. These funds are for projects and expenses going forward, not for those already incurred.

CONSTRUCTION

No Questions and Responses (11/17/23)

New Questions and Responses (11/3)

Can I hire a family member to do very minor work at my program, like painting?

Please refer to the NOFA under Additional Construction Requirements to determine whether such an expense would be allowable.

Prior Questions and Responses (10/20/23)

Can construction funds be used for swing space to be used due to renovation of the space?

Such a project may be eligible for inclusion in an application, and would be required to result in increased capacity, increased enrollment, and/or an increase in infant/toddler capacity.

For two-year eligibility, does construction period count for a new center?

The construction must be complete and funds fully expended by December 2026.

We have been located on a church's property since 1954 but have never had a written lease. What could we do without a formal lease?



The childcare provider must demonstrate a minimum 5-year site control.

**All of these construction bids and docs need to be ready by the Nov 30 deadline?
That is a very tight timeline for many project types.**

Approved bids are preferred, however realistic estimates will be accepted. Reminder: Readiness will be an evaluating factor.

Can we use construction funds to hire a construction management consultant to manage the construction project or are we restricted to use your CM consultant?

A construction project manager is an eligible use of the construction funds. A referral will be made to the VHF Construction Consultant given their expertise in childcare facility design. The VHF Construction Consultant will also participate in the bidding process.

Will the VHF Construction Consultant assist with the development of the application scope of work?

The Construction Consultant will be available only to awarded providers.

Do the prevailing wage requirements apply to the entire project or only the parts paid for using the grant?

If public dollars are used for the entire project cost or part of the project costs, prevailing wage is required for construction contracts over \$25,000.

Are bids and design work required at time of the application? Can the construction plan costs be paid for by the grant funds?

Bids and design work are preferred at time of application. Realistic estimates and designs are also allowable. Construction design costs incurred prior to the application submission are not allowable costs. Post award costs are allowable.

Will the construction contract be with you or with our agency?

The construction contract will be an agreement between the provider and the construction contractor.

Must you have two construction bids when applying?

Not required, but highly encouraged.

SITE CONTROL

No Questions and Responses (11/17/23)

No Questions and Responses (11/3)

Prior Questions and Responses (10/20/23)

My landlord is a school district and they only allow a 1 year lease with an option to renew for another year. What exception can be made for this scenario?

Inform the school district of the site control requirement. Options are to obtain a lease agreement with an option to renew for the next 5 years, or obtain a letter of intent to renew the lease for the next 5 years.

APPLICATION

New Questions and Responses (11/17/23)

I have a kid that has subsidies from Gokids for low-income. Is it considered categorically eligible for children for question 2g?

The GoKids subsidy for low-income does not necessarily qualify for the categorically eligible criteria. If the child in your care is also a referral from a provider of services for special needs populations, then you may be eligible for these points.

For the categorically eligible criteria, you must have an agreement with an agency that serves families from these identified special needs populations. For example: having a referral agreement with a homeless service provider to accept homeless children for childcare.

No Questions and Responses (11/3)

Prior Questions and Responses (10/20/23)

Can we have the applications before we submit the pre eligibility? Our team is still working on an estimated budget and it would be helpful to know what the application will require.

Refer to the NOFA, as amended for eligibility requirements, use of funds, and application submittal requirements.

If the application is for construction, are you saying that construction needs to be completed and finished by December 2023?

No. The construction and total grant expenditure must be complete by December 31, 2026.

Any unused funds after December 31, 2026, will need to be returned to VHF.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

*Technical Assistance Requests:
To request assistance, email the Childcare Expansion Grant Program at
childcare@vhfca.org.*

Will the slides be available on-line?

Yes, slides, recordings and FAQs are available at the Childcare [Expansion Grant Program](#).