

DSS is issuing an application for a Child Care Expansion/Operating Grant for child care providers. This grant opportunity is primarily designed to assist providers in increasing their current enrollments. Licensed centers are strongly encouraged to use these funds to expand access to more children by opening unused classroom(s) and/or hiring additional teachers. Funds may also be used to retain current staff through salary increases or retention bonuses. Other allowable expenses include: paying facility expenses, including rent/mortgage payments, utility bills, and personnel costs; classroom materials; playground repairs/upgrades; technology equipment/services; goods/services; and cleaning or sanitation costs.

Providers must be in compliance with the Child Care Licensing Regulations, Fire Codes, and remain within licensed capacity for the facility. Family Child Care Homes, Group Child Care Homes and Licensed Exempt in ABC Quality are not eligible to use funds for expansion.

Grants will be issued to licensed or registered child care centers, group child care homes, and family child care homes, Head Start facilities, and license exempt providers enrolled in the ABC Quality program. Providers must have at least a provisional license as of July 1, 2024, to be eligible to apply for this grant.

**4K/preschool programs operated by public schools and other approved (licensed) facilities owned and operated by the school district, are not eligible for this grant.**

**Note: Child care facilities that have permanently closed are NOT eligible to apply for this grant. Providers who plan to close or sell their facility should not apply for this grant. If a facility closes or is sold within six months of receiving this grant, DSS may take steps to recoup the funds.**

Grant amounts will be determined based on the chart below:

Child Care Facilities (Based on Licensed Capacity)	Grant Amount
Small Child Care Centers (Up to 49 children)	\$70,000
Medium Child Care Centers (50-99 children)	\$80,000
Large Child Care Centers (100+ children)	\$90,000
License Exempt in ABC Quality	\$60,000
Group Child Care Homes	\$27,000
Family Child Care Homes	\$20,000

The terms and conditions of the grant are as follows:

- Licensed Centers are encouraged to use funds to offset cost due to expanding access to child care, including hiring additional teacher(s) that will allow you to serve more children within your current licensed capacity.
  - Funds may be used to offset cost to open an existing classroom that is already a part of your licensed capacity. Infants **MUST** be cared for only in a fire rated room.
  - If there is a room you are considering opening within your facility that is not a part of your licensed capacity, you **MUST** contact your Child Care Licensing Specialist to have the room included in the licensed space.

- Providers will use the grant funds to offset child care business expenses, including teacher compensation (bonuses, retention bonuses, etc.), offset costs due to increased insurance premiums, rent/mortgage payments, utility bills, food, cleaning or sanitation costs, classroom materials, playground repairs/upgrades, technology equipment/services, and goods/services.
- Providers MUST maintain documentation supporting the expenditure of grant funds which may include records of application approval, receipts, invoices, and/or any other supporting documentation indicating how funds were used. Documentation must remain on file at the facility for a period of three (3) years from the date the grant is completed as needed to satisfy a possible audit. Documentation may be requested at any time by DSS and, if requested, will need to be provided within fifteen (15) calendar days of the request.

For questions, please email [DECEGrants@dss.sc.gov](mailto:DECEGrants@dss.sc.gov) or call 1-800-476-0199 if you are not able to contact via email.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### ***How long will it take to receive grant funding?***

Payments will be received within approximately 10 business days of approval for providers currently in the system. Providers who are currently in the ABC Quality program and set up for direct deposit will have their funds deposited into this same account. If a provider applied for and received previous grants from SCDSS, your bank account information remains on file and upon approval the funds will be deposited into the same account as the previous grant.

#### ***If I am a new licensed or registered child care provider who does not participate with ABC Quality and have never received any grant payments, what documents will I need to provide to receive payment?***

- If you operate under a Federal Tax Identification Number (FEIN), you must provide a signed, completed W-9 and a copy of your IRS letter (147-C or SS4). The name on these two documents must match.
- If you operate under a Social Security Number (SSN), you must provide a signed, completed W-9 and a copy of your Drivers' License and a copy of your SSN card. The name on these documents must match.

**Link to complete W-9 form:** <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>

Please forward this information to: [DECEGrants@dss.sc.gov](mailto:DECEGrants@dss.sc.gov).

#### ***If a provider has multiple sites does each site have to apply for the grant funding?***

Yes, each site must apply individually.

#### ***What if I plan to close or sale my facility?***

Providers who are planning to close or sale their facility should not apply for this grant. If a facility closes or is sold within six months of receiving this grant, DSS may take steps to recoup the funds.

***Will programs hear anything back once they submit the grant application?***

Yes, programs will receive a system generated email from the Division of Early Care & Education for the following events:

- Application has been received in the Provider Portal and a confirmation number is provided.
- Application has been approved.

***How long do providers have to apply for this grant?***

Grant applications will no longer be accepted after September 9, 2024. Portal will be closed to allow time for grants to be processed. If you are a new provider and not set up to receive payments, you must be set up for the payment to be awarded no later than September 30, 2024. See information above for documents needed if you are a new provider and not set up to receive payments.

***Is there a timeline for provider to spend this grant funding?***

No, the child care provider does not have a timeline to spend this funding. However, funding MUST be used for operating or expansion cost as describe in terms and condition of grant for the facility that the grant application was approved for.