

# Relief Funding Best Practices Checklist for Child Care Advocates

## States should ensure their grant applications and state reporting requirements:

- Use simplified language and offer translations in multiple languages, as recommended in OCC's guidance. States can reach out to their [OCC Regional Program Managers](#) to get sample grant applications.
- Accept applications in many ways, including via online portals, emails, fax, etc.
- Allow for the ability to save drafts and return to them before final submission.
- Balance collecting enough information to ensure that funds are being spent correctly, while not being burdensome for providers to fill out the form. OCC's guidance encourages this.
- Accept and process on a rolling application process so that funds are not disbursed on a first-come, first-serve basis. This is required in OCC's guidance.

## States should consider those grant outreach efforts:

- Include trusted, proven community partners or [intermediaries](#), such as [CCR&Rs](#), to raise awareness of the grant opportunities, application process, and disbursement process. OCC's guidance highlights the benefits of partnering with intermediaries to get grants out quickly.
- Announce the availability of the funds in more than one language and in a wide variety of settings. Doing so will ensure the reach of as many providers as possible.

## States should ensure that any grant administration process is transparent, efficient and equitable. Here's what to consider in that process:

- Ensure relief grant application processes are stood up as soon as possible. Likewise, ensure that funds are quickly distributed to give providers immediate stability.
- Create broad eligibility for the grants. This may include a variety of child care settings, such as family child care and programs serving school-age children. They may also consider providers who closed during the pandemic and need help with reopening. OCC guidance strongly encourages states to consider a wide range of providers to be eligible for the grants.
- Provide a clear definition of who is eligible for the funds and what purposes funds may be used for. Include reimbursement of expenses made prior to the enactment of the American Rescue Plan Act in March 2021. OCC encourages states to allow this.
- Include a clear timeline for decision making and disbursement of funds, as well as when grants must be spent by.
- Release information on the criteria used to distribute funds, as well as a summary of grant distribution. At a minimum, programs should include datapoints by setting and geographic location. (Example: [Child Care Aware of Minnesota's grant information](#) on prior emergency grants)

## When determining how relief funding can be spent to best stabilize the system, states should:

- Collect input from a wide spectrum of diverse stakeholders. Consider asking families, providers and CCR&R staff about the current state of child care and beneficial policies. Getting their input can be done through a statewide task force, hearings, informal listening sessions, surveys, etc.
- Use [data to study the impact](#) of previous policies to understand how they stabilized the system, increased supply or created access to affordable, quality care for families.
- Learn what other states have implemented with [federal relief funds](#).
- Take part in the [Office of Child Care's monthly webinars](#) on American Rescue Plan Act implementation
- Consider other available federal relief funding that supports child care outside of the CCDBG and the Stabilization Grants.

## Looking for additional support?

Contact our team to get customized support as you advocate for high-quality, affordable and equitable child care. Email us at:  
[takeaction@usa.childcareaware.org](mailto:takeaction@usa.childcareaware.org)

