



American Rescue Plan Act Stabilization Subgrants for Child Care Providers: Application Tips, Considerations, and Sample Forms

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act provides significant funding for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies to support child care providers through stabilization grant funding. The Act and subsequent guidance issued in [ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants \(CCDF-ACF-IM-2021-02\)](#)—referred to throughout as “the guidance”—on May 10, 2021, includes expectations for Lead Agencies to ensure broad access to child care programs. The expectations include providing an online application, collecting specific data and provider certifications, and creating a simple application that is easy to understand and submit.

This document includes tips and considerations for Lead Agencies to consider when developing the application and application process for ARP Act stabilization subgrants. Four sample applications are also available and can be obtained through contacting the Office of Child Care Regional Offices. These samples can be customized based on the Lead Agency’s need. A description of the application fields, tips, and considerations are in this document under the following heading: [ARP Act Stabilization Subgrant Sample Applications: Tips and Considerations](#). Individualized technical assistance is also available to support this work.

General Tips and Considerations for Subgrant Applications

Creating Accessible and Provider-Friendly Subgrant Applications

- Use plain language and short, concise sentences and paragraphs. This helps facilitate translation and supports the use of screen readers for users with low or no vision.
- Provide applications, information, and resources in the core languages spoken by providers to effectively serve all eligible providers.
- Make sure there are staff available who can translate documents received from providers in different languages.
- Lead Agencies must create and post applications for subgrants on the Lead Agency’s child care website. Consider highlighting and providing a link to this information that is prominently displayed on the website’s landing page (for example, by using a banner).
- To help explain each application question, consider using drop-down menus or hover-over effects to define each field and the information to be entered.
- Additional efforts to customize the application to support diverse communities in states and territories will help reduce disparities and advance racial equity within the child care system.

Sample Applications for ARP Act Stabilization Subgrants

The following sample applications are available for Lead Agencies:

- Sample Application Family Child Care Version 1: No Budget Requested
- Sample Application Child Care Center Version 1: No Budget Requested
- Sample Application Family Child Care Version 2: Budget Requested
- Sample Application Child Care Center Version 2: Budget Requested

Developing Subgrant Application Forms

- Consider using different applications for different types of programs or categories of care—or design the application with specific sections for different provider types.
- Consider whether different types of subgrants need separate applications (for example, previous expenditures, mental health services, and so on). Consider whether one application form could collect information needed to feed into the different types of subgrants.
- Support accuracy and reduce the burden on providers by considering any opportunity for Lead Agencies to leverage data systems that prepopulate the application form with information from licensing or other data sources. Typical data that a Lead Agency might have would be the legal name of the business, location address, type of program, licensed capacity, and days and hours of operation.
- For Lead Agencies offering multiple rounds of subgrants, consider ways to simplify the application form for providers who were awarded grants in previous rounds. For example, include an option for providers to update or confirm that information in their initial application is still accurate, rather than asking them to reenter the same information.

Determining Subgrant Application Components

- Consider including only information to determine provider eligibility, determine subgrant amounts, and meet reporting requirements described in the [guidance on pages 21 and 25](#). To keep the application as simple as possible for providers to complete, do not ask for information beyond what is needed.
- Lead Agencies may want to collect additional information for reports to stakeholders, partners, legislators, the executive branch, and so on. Consider if you need to include a question about quality rating and improvement system levels, languages spoken, individualized education programs, individualized family service plan information, or other information that is specific to Lead Agency priorities. Extra questions should be kept to a minimum to keep the application as short and simple as possible.
- Lead Agencies may choose to target funds to child care programs based on certain characteristics, as described in the [guidance on page 17](#). Consider using data captured on the initial application to identify these programs without an additional application. For example, location zip codes could be used to identify underserved areas, while operating hours could identify those who operate on the weekends or during a 2nd or 3rd shift, and so on.

Providing Technical Assistance and Support for Providers

- Providers will have questions about the application and process. Include and prominently display contact information on the application and Lead Agency website.
- Create a short video to walk through the process for completing the application. This helps providers and can reduce their need for one-on-one support.
- Create a user guide that includes screenshots of the steps applicants need to take. This can support providers as they access and complete the application.
- In the user guide, instruction documents, or other communications with child care programs, the Lead Agency will want to clearly specify the logistics of the grants (for example, monthly checks, duration, and so on) and how the funds will be dispersed.
- Lead Agencies should also communicate how they determine the funding amounts that programs receive. Is there a formula or method used to determine the subgrant amounts? The formulas may change for

additional rounds of grants, but providers need to have information about what funding they should expect to receive.

ARP Act Stabilization Subgrant Sample Applications: Tips and Considerations

Four sample applications are available for Lead Agencies to use or modify as they develop their stabilization subgrant application process:

- **Sample applications with no budget requested:** These application samples can be customized by Lead Agencies that create a subgrant formula based on general cost estimates for enrollment.
 - Sample Application Family Child Care Version 1: No Budget Requested
 - Sample Application Child Care Center Version 1: No Budget Requested
- **Sample applications with budget requested:** These application samples can be customized by Lead Agencies that create a subgrant formula based on detailed average monthly operating expenses submitted by providers.
 - Sample Application Family Child Care Version 2: Budget Requested
 - Sample Application Child Care Center Version 2: Budget Requested

These sample applications include the fields below that Lead Agencies can use or adapt based on their needs. States and territories will want to review the considerations for each field and determine how to customize their application based on the Lead Agency's subgrant approach.

General Applicant Information

- The legal business name could be defined as what is noted on the Secretary of State's website or on the program's license. Add other parameters that are relevant to the state or territory.
- Lead Agencies should provide directions on what type of license or other number is required and should include where the program can find their number.
- For DUNS Number or Taxpayer ID#, some providers may use their Social Security Numbers (SSN). Lead Agencies are reminded that they may collect SSN as the provider Taxpayer ID# but SSNs cannot be reported to the Office of Child Care. For providers already receiving subsidy, Lead Agencies should connect the information provided in this field with the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or Unique State Provider ID.
- For the race, ethnicity, and gender of the operator or director, consider using drop-down menus or check boxes. This will help ensure consistency for reporting.

Operational Status

- Simplify the list of options for types of programs to align with the Lead Agency's definitions.
- Some Lead Agencies may want to ask the program for information about staffing, as this might impact the formula being used to determine the funding amount. If so, this field would need to be added to the application.

Child Count Information

- The [guidance, on page 11](#), includes language for Lead Agencies to consider regarding how children who are funded by Head Start, Early Head Start, or a public prekindergarten program are included in the funding formula. The application could include fields to collect the number of children enrolled in these

programs, if those numbers will impact the formula. If it will not impact the formula, these questions can be removed.

- Regarding prepandemic enrollment numbers, the Lead Agency should consider asking for these data only if they will be used to calculate funding amounts. Providers may have difficulty reporting these numbers from 2020 and having to do so may create unnecessary challenges in completing the application.

Current Monthly Operating Expenses

- Provider operating expenses do not limit or dictate the amount of the grant that providers receive, but the provider must state and affirm their operating expenses as noted in the [guidance on pages 14 and 15](#).
- Depending on how the Lead Agency operationalizes funding for subgrants, all the details about a program's operating expenses may not be needed.
- The categories of operating expenses on the sample applications are aligned with the categories in the ARP Act. A Lead Agency may want to reword to align with language that is typically used in their state or territory.
- On the sample applications that include budget details, the categories of “goods and services” and “mental health supports” are separated out, as those most likely would not be ongoing monthly expenses. Including an area for the program to describe what they are covering in those categories will help the Lead Agency have a better understanding of how those funds are going to be used.

Options for Use of Funds

- While a Lead Agency might choose to provide multiple months of operating expenses in each round of applications, the sample application with budget details is set up for the provider to indicate, by category, how they would plan to use those funds each month.

Certification

- Lead Agencies will want to add any additional language here, as needed, based on guidance from their legal or procurement offices.
- The sample applications include a statement that the provider is responsible for maintaining records and documentation on how they used the funds, as well as how they meet the requirements for implementing policies on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), wages, and copayment or tuition relief. The Lead Agency may have additional reporting requirements that could be added. Please note that [page 21 of the guidance](#) encourages the Lead Agency to be mindful not to overburden providers with information that they need to submit or collect.

More information is available on the [child care stabilization grants web page](#) for CCDF Lead Agencies and policymakers. This web page will be updated regularly with new resources, including links to Frequently Asked Questions. Lead Agencies can continue to visit this web page for the most up-to-date information and resources.

