



Child Care Services Emergency Grant Application Guide

Child Care Services Emergency Grants assist existing programs who have experienced an emergency that directly affects their ability to provide care. Emergencies include natural disasters such as floods and tornadoes, weather-related damage not covered by homeowners or business insurance such as frozen pipes or hail, increased costs related to a pandemic, and other unforeseen circumstances.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who can apply for Emergency Grants?

Any program that is actively providing early learning services to children ranging in age from birth to school-age and is currently licensed with the Minnesota Department of Human Services or Tribal Government OR legally license-exempt, which include certified centers. If licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, a program must have no current negative actions. Licensing violations such as a temporary immediate suspension, suspension, revocation, or a maltreatment determination where the facility was found responsible will prevent the issuance of a grant and/or will cause the withdrawal of a grant. Programs operating under a conditional license may still apply while under the terms of that license status but grant funds must be used to assist the program in becoming fully compliant.

Programs that have received a Start-Up Grant or Regional Grant may also apply for an Emergency Grant.

2. How much money can my program apply for?

Programs can apply for up to \$5,000.

3. What items can my program apply for?

Programs may apply for funds to replace or repair materials damaged or lost due to an emergency, or to correct infractions flagged by licensing. The items you apply for must directly affect the quality and safety of your program and meet licensing requirements. The items you apply for must be comparable to the items lost. Please refer to the Grants Spending Categories and Eligible Items list included in this guide. All materials must be new and must be purchased from a retail company, an early childhood supplier such as Lakeshore, and not a private individual.

Any items purchased with this grant must be used in accordance with licensing requirements. Please contact your licensor if you have questions about a particular item meeting licensing requirements.

Child product safety information to guide expenditure eligibility or ineligibility can be found at these government resources:

www.cpsc.gov/Recalls

www.cpsc.gov/SafeSleep

playgroundsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/NPPAS_PlaygroundSurfacing.pdf

www.cdc.gov/injury/features/child-passenger-safety/index.html

Minor Construction Projects: Grants may be used towards the cost of materials for outdoor play area fencing or other minor construction or renovations to the spaces used for child care as required by licensing to ensure child safety or meet other program standards. All materials must be new and must be purchased from a retail store, not a private party.

In the event that a child care program wishes to have the cost of assembly and/or installation covered by a grant, the labor must be performed by a contractor following applicable state and local laws and regulations regarding registration and licensure. See dli.mn.gov/business/residential-contractors-remodelers-roofers for more information.

Technology: These grants can be used for technology and software to replace lost business management systems.

Eligible items that are for 100% business use will be funded at 100%. Items that are shared with a household or organization (such as a church) will be funded at 50%. The reimbursement rate depends on how the item is used and not the item itself. For example, in one program a refrigerator may be used only for child care food (business use only); and in another program it may be used for child care food and a family's food (shared).

4. What items are not eligible?

Due to a federal rule, Emergency Grants may not be used for the following:

Major Construction or Renovations: Major renovation means structural changes to the foundation, roof, floor, exterior or load-bearing walls of a facility, or the extension of a facility to increase its floor area; or extensive alteration of a facility such as to significantly change its function and purpose, even if such renovation does not include any structural change.

Religious-based Curricula, Activities, Materials, or Counseling: Child care programs are allowed to purchase and/or use religious-based curricula or items in their program if they choose, but they must use their own funds; they cannot use Child Care Services Grants.

Expendable Supplies: Expendable supplies (diapers, wipes, soap, paper products), except as it pertains to Personal Protective Equipment (cleaning products, hand sanitizer, masks) used for recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health to keep children and staff healthy and safe.

Office supplies that are not directly used for early childhood quality improvement activities: Ink and paper used to print invoices for families would not be an allowed use of grants. Ink and paper used to print curriculum, worksheets, or a newsletter for families in the program would be allowed.

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) federal restrictions can be reviewed online in the National Archives Code of Federal Regulations: Title 45 Subtitle A Subchapter A Part 98 Subpart F § 98.56(b)(1) Restrictions of the use of funds at [eCFR :: 45 CFR 98.56 -- Restrictions on the use of funds](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-a/subchapter-a/part-98/subpart-f/section-98.56).

Grants are not allowed to be spent on items considered to be part of the cost of doing business (such as rent, utilities, taxes, bank service fees, and down payments).

In addition, grant funds are not allowed to be spent on child care tuition (scholarships), nor items prohibited by licensing.

Items are ineligible if someone employed by the program, or a relative of theirs, will benefit financially from the purchase. For example, purchasing toys from an employee who is a Discovery Toys representative.

5. How many grants am I eligible to apply for?

You may receive only one Emergency Grant per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). A program can receive an Emergency Grant and a Regional Grant or Start Up Grant in the same fiscal year.

6. If my program receives a grant, what requirements do I have to meet?

Your program will need to sign and follow the requirements of a Participation Agreement. Please read the agreement carefully before signing.

7. If my program receives a grant, how will my program receive the money?

All grants are paid on a reimbursement basis and after all requirements are completed.

8. When is this grant available?

It is available on an ongoing basis, subject to available funds.

9. How does my program apply for this grant?

Please contact your local Child Care Aware of Minnesota Grants Administrator for additional guidance about this grant funding. You must fill out the application form and mail it to the address listed at the end of this document.

Additional items may be eligible for purchase with an Emergency Grant if the program owned the item, but it was damaged or lost in a disaster (tornado, fire, flood), and if the program's insurance does not cover replacement.

APPLYING FOR AN EMERGENCY GRANT

Participation Agreement: Your program will need to sign a Participation Agreement that details all requirements. The agreement lays out the responsibilities of programs receiving grants. Please read the agreement carefully before signing.

Two-Year Requirement: If you are awarded a grant, your program will be required to provide active licensed or license-exempt child care services in Minnesota for a minimum of two years from the date of your award letter. If for any reason your program ceases to provide active child care services within the required timeframe, you will be required to alert your grant administrator and repay grant dollars on a prorated basis.

Expenditures: Be specific on your expenditure pages. Only items that were approved on your application will be reimbursed. If any substitution needs to occur, this **must** be approved by your local Grant Administrator, prior to making the purchase. A budget change can only occur once in a grant cycle.

Grant Payment Information: All Emergency Grants are paid on a reimbursement basis after all requirements are completed.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Fill out your application form completely in ink. Your application should be neat and easy to read and stapled together in order. Do not submit grant applications in folders or binders, professionally bound or store-bought.

1. Send in one complete packet, including the application with all required attachments stapled to it.
2. Keep one copy of the completed application form and all required attachments for your records. You will need to refer back to your application if you are awarded a grant.
3. Mail or email the original completed application packet to:

Families First of MN
Attn: Grant Administrator
126 Woodlake Drive SE
Rochester MN 55904

Checklist

Your application packet must include:

- ☐ The application form, including the participation agreement, with all questions completed.
- ☐ Copy of your current child care license (*if applicable*) and documentation from your licensor and/or fire marshal that the items in your grant application are needed to meet licensing requirements.
- ☐ Documentation from your licensor and/or fire marshal that the items in your grant application are needed to meet licensing requirements.
- ☐ A copy of your insurance/warranty claim (*if applicable*).
- ☐ Estimate or bid (*if applicable*). This is required for the installation of fences, windows, or construction, as required by licensing, or equipment assembly projects. If a child care program wishes to have the cost of assembly and/or installation covered by a grant, the labor must be performed by a contractor following applicable state and local laws and regulations regarding registration and licensure. See <https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/residential-contractors-remodelers-roofers> for more information.
- ☐ Pictures (*if applicable*). A picture of the current item and a picture of the proposed replacement item from a catalog or online source. The two items must be comparable.