

Restoration and Enhancement Program



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

The goal of the Restoration and Enhancement Program (REP) is to improve facilities, invest in new equipment, and enhance the quality of child care homes and centers throughout the state of Nebraska. Awards will be used to financially support child care programs by providing funding for allowable indoor and outdoor equipment, facility and maintenance repairs, installation of required fire alarm systems, and upgrading child care supplies and equipment. This program is being administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Economic Assistance (OEA).

The Restoration and Enhancement Program is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which the federal government provided to states to invest in child care networks. Over \$7 million dollars (\$7.5M) is available in grant awards for this program.

Applications will be accepted beginning at **8:00 a.m. CST on Monday, December 18, 2023 through 11:59 p.m. CST February 9, 2024**. Awards to qualifying applicants will be made following the close of the application period.

I. Eligibility Requirements

1. Who is eligible to apply for the Restoration and Enhancement Grant funds?

This grant opportunity is open to programs that meet all the following:



- Any Nebraska licensed and provisionally licensed child care program that is currently open and operating and in good standing with the State. Licensed child care program types include Family Child Care Home I, Family Child Care Home II, Child Care Center, School Age Only Center, and Preschools.

2. Are tribal child care providers eligible?



Yes. Tribally operated child care centers licensed in Nebraska are eligible and encouraged to apply even if the provider has received funds from their tribal child care lead agency. The grant funds must be used to supplement, not supplant, tribal funds used for tribally operated child care centers.

3. Is this grant only for licensed programs?



Yes, this grant is only open to Nebraska licensed child care programs.

If your program is not currently licensed, visit: **Child Care Licensing (dhhs.ne.gov)**. You must be licensed, open, operating and actively caring for children on or before December 15, 2023 to be eligible for this grant.

4. Does my child care program need to be licensed by a certain date?



Yes, child care programs need to be licensed, opened, operating and actively caring for children on or before December 15, 2023.



5. I recently opened my child care program. Am I eligible for this program?



If your child care program is licensed, you are eligible to apply.

6. Am I eligible for program funding if I have received funds from another source?



You may be eligible for Restoration and Enhancement Program funding if your child care program has received other grant awards from the State of Nebraska; however, priority may be given to child care providers who have not received Child Care Development Funds (CCDF), Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES), American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Act (CRRSA) funding.

II. General Application Information

1. What items can I apply for?

Funding can be used for minor remodeling and for upgrading child care programs to ensure that providers meet state and local child care facility and licensing standards, including applicable health and safety requirements. Funds can also be used to improve the quality of care provided to meet accreditation or other quality enhancement programs such as Step Up to Quality (SUTQ). In general, funding can be used to purchase items from the categories below at a cost within reason. A full list of allowable items is in *Section VI. Allowable Items* of this document. Categories of eligible items include:



- **Equipment:** Safety, Developmentally/Age-Appropriate Equipment, Quality and Educational Toys, Outdoor Play, Educational and Business Management, Program Supplies
- **Minor Building Modifications:** Fire Safety, External Modifications, Bathroom Modifications, Adaption for Children with Disabilities, Miscellaneous
- **Household Equipment:** Vacuum cleaners, microwave, room dividers/sound proof barriers, domestic carpet cleaning machine
- **Appliances (Homeowner Family Child Care Home II and Child Care Centers only):** Air conditioner, furnace, water heater, portable humidifier/air purifier, dishwasher, washing machine / dryer, oven, refrigerator, snowblower

2. What items are not allowed to be purchased with these funds?



A full list of items which are not allowed to be purchased with these funds can be found in this document in *Section VII. Non-Allowable Expenditures*.

3. How do I apply for the Restoration and Enhancement Program?



A link to the application is available on the DHHS website: www.dhhs.ne.gov/CCDF. It will take you to the application platform on JotForm.com where you can set up an account and complete your application. This application will take more than 45 minutes to complete, therefore you will be able to save your work and return it.

4. What documentation / information will I need to provide?

Applicant Information

- Applicants contact information, including name, title, business phone number, and business email address.
- A copy of your valid Nebraska driver's license or state ID

Program Information



- Child Care Program Name
- Child Care Program Type (Family Child Care Home I, Family Child Care Home II, Child Care Center, School Age Only Center, Preschool)
- Child Care Program License Number. You can find this by referencing the DHHS Child Care Roster at: dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Documents/ChildCareRoster.pdf
- Child Care Program Federal Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) or Social Security Number (SSN)
- Child Care Program Address, including county

5. Do I have to be the owner of the child care program to apply?



No. Child care program owners, directors, and assistant directors can apply for this grant program.

6. Can I apply for funding for more than one location?



Yes, a provider with more than one licensed location (for example, centers, community-based agencies, and other organizations) can apply for funding for more than one location; however, each site must have its own application and address.

7. How will I know my application has been received?



Applicants will receive a confirmation email from NEDHHSGrants@pcgus.com when their application has been received. Be sure to also check your spam folder for emails from this address.

8. Can I start the application and return to it later?



Yes, if you are unable to complete the application at one time, you can create a username and password to login to JotForm.com, save your work and complete your application at your convenience.

9. Will I be able to make changes to my application after I have submitted it?



No, once an application has been submitted, an applicant cannot make any edits. Please review the application User Guide before you begin your online application to ensure you have the required documentation for submission.

If you have submitted your application and your circumstances change during the application period, call the helpline at 1 (877) 402-0292 or send an email to NEDHHSGrants@pcgus.com.

10. Can I fill out the application using my mobile device?



Yes, the website is mobile-friendly; however, it may be easier to complete your application on a computer. You may submit the application and supporting documents electronically using your computer, phone, tablet, or other mobile devices.

11. What if I fail to apply by the deadline?



Applications must be submitted on or before **February 9, 2024 at 11:59PM CST**. The online application will not be accessible after this time and other means of applying will not be offered. If you saved your application to finish later, you will not be able to access it after February 9, 2024 at 11:59 PM CST.

12. Why do I need to complete an attestation before being notified whether my application has been approved?



It is an industry standard that applicants acknowledge they have read, understand, and agree to certain requirements and conditions as a step in the approval process. This includes but is not limited to:

- “I agree to comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, executive orders, policies, procedures, and directives regarding the award process from application to audit and beyond.”
- “I understand that grant recipients are required to remain open and caring for children for 12 (twelve) months after their awarded date (date they signed the grant agreement). Closing the business before 12 (twelve) months have passed may require the grant recipient to reimburse DHHS for a prorated or the total cost of their grant award amount
- “I agree to the public reporting of award information as part of the State of Nebraska’s public transparency and accounting.”
- “I confirm this application contains complete and accurate information.”

13. Can I apply for this grant and the Technology Access Program?



Yes, you can apply for both the TAP and REP grant opportunities.

14. Will a paper application be available?



It is preferred and strongly recommended that all providers submit an online application. For those providers who are unable to complete an online application on their own or with the support of the helpline, a PDF version of the application may be sent via USPS to you. You must complete the application in ink and return to the following address. The paper application must be post marked **no later than February 9, 2024**.

15. What kind of help can I get to complete an application? Help line, email, webinars, recorded webinars posted on CCDF webpage other?



If you need assistance with the application or have questions about the grant opportunity, you can call the help line at 1 (877) 402-0292 or send an email to NEDHHSGrants@pcgus.com. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and recorded informational webinars will be posted on the DHHS website at www.dhhs.ne.gov/CCDF.

III. Award Disbursements

1. What are the Award amounts?

Award amounts are based on license type. The maximum award for each type of licensed program follows:



- Child Care Center: \$250,000
- Family Child Care Home I & II: \$25,000
- School-Age-Only & Preschool Centers: \$10,000

2. How will applications be scored?

Each Restoration and Enhancement Program grant application will be scored according to the criteria in the table below as well as being reviewed for intention of funding use, and previous funding awards. This allows for prioritization of underserved programs that may meet one or more of the scarcity categories (see Question 3 for scarcity criteria).



Response	Score
Blank, incomplete, or inaccurate response to application question(s)	0
Completed application question accurately	1
Applicant identifies scarcity criteria in application responses*	2

3. Will priority be given to programs if they meet certain criteria?

Yes, priority for funding will be given to licensed child care programs that meet one or more of the following scarcity criteria and have not previously been awarded certain grant (CCDF, CARES, ARPA, CRRSA) funds:



- Provide child care during non-traditional work hours (outside the hours of 7:00AM – 7:00PM, weekends, and holidays)
- Are located in a child care desert or gap county (see *Section VIII. Child Care Desert and Gap Counties*)
- Provide child care to tribal communities

- Have an active Child Care Subsidy Agreement with DHHS on or before December 15, 2023.

4. How will I be notified if I am awarded funding?



Grant award notifications will be emailed to the contact identified in the application on or before April 1, 2024. Applicants receiving awards will be emailed a grant agreement and banking information form which must be completed in JotForm and returned within 5 days. Grant funding may be disbursed electronically via direct deposit on or before July 1, 2024.

Please make sure your server will accept emails from NEDHHSGrants@pcgus.com. Otherwise, you may need to check your spam or junk folders.

5. Will the grant be a one-time payment?



Yes, the grants will be paid in one single payment.

6. By when do I need to spend Restoration and Enhancement Program grant funding?



All Restoration and Enhancement Program funds must be spent on or before July 31, 2024.

7. If my application is not approved, will I be informed about the reason for denial?



Yes, a notification email regarding application decisions may provide the reason(s) your application was not approved.

8. Is there an appeals process related to award or eligibility determinations?



The application process does not include an appeals process.

9. What common reasons could result in a denial?

The following are examples of reasons that could result in a denial:



- Provider is not licensed on or before December 15, 2023.
- Provider is not currently open, fully operating, and providing in-person child care
- Application is incomplete

10. How long must my program remain open if I receive a grant?



Grant recipients are required to remain open and caring for children for 12 months after their awarded date (date they signed the grant agreement). Closing the business before 12 months have passed may require the grant recipient to reimburse DHHS for the total cost of their Restoration and Enhancement Program grant.

11. Can I apply for other grants if I apply for this one?



Yes, this includes applying for the Technology Access Program grant.

12. How do I apply if I have multiple sites?



Please complete an application for each site.

13. What information about me will be made publicly available if I receive an award?



The State of Nebraska may issue public grant funding reports in aggregate form.

IV. Tax Implications of these Awards and Grant Monitoring

1. Will this grant need to be repaid?



Programs may only need to repay any funds that are not spent on or before July 31, 2024, if the program has not remained open and caring for children for 12 months after the award date, or if the grant funds were spent on items not allowed. Repayment may be required if the applicant provides inaccurate or false information or there are other applicable instances of non-compliance.

2. Will I be audited?



Ten percent (10%) of programs who receive Restoration and Enhancement Program grant funds may be audited to ensure the proper use of grant funds and continued program eligibility. All grant recipients are required to keep receipts of the items purchased for 5 (five) years for potential auditing purposes. Repayment may be required if the applicant cannot provide receipts. DHHS also reserves the right to verify items purchased with REP funds are being used according to grant purposes. This may include but is not limited to monitoring visits to the facilities where the items are used.

3. Will my grant award be considered taxable income?



Yes. And you may receive a Form 1099-G if your award is \$600 or more in the mail on or before January 31, 2025.

V. Additional Questions

If you have remaining questions about the Restoration and Enhancement Program, please contact the help line at 1 (877) 402-0292 or email NEDHHSGrants@pcgus.com.

VI. Allowable Items

Note: Individual items requested must be within reasonable cost expectations for a quality product.

1. Equipment:

a. Safety:

1. First aid kits
2. Car seats and booster seats
3. Indoor Safety gates
4. Locks/Locked storage
5. Choking Device/Choke tube
6. Thermometers
7. Fire extinguishers
8. Medication lock boxes
9. Biohazard cleanup kits
10. Medical devices/equipment to assist in care for children with disabilities
11. Portable humidifier, air purifier

b. Developmentally/Age-Appropriate Equipment:

1. Cots, mats, and crib mattresses
2. Cribs and playpens (federally approved)
3. Highchairs
4. Child sized tables and chairs
5. Strollers
6. Changing stations with non-porous surface
7. Step stool for sink area

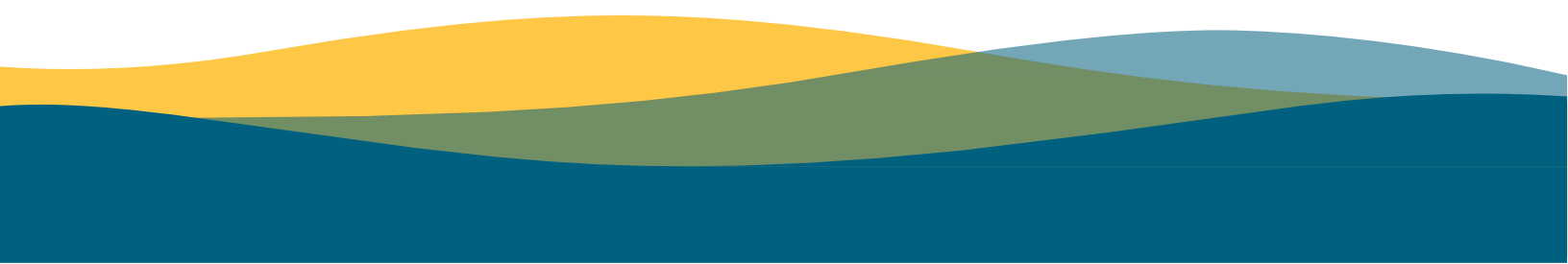
c. Quality and Educational Toys: Requested items in this this category may include, but are not limited to books, puzzles, wooden blocks, soft blocks, balls, small cars and trucks, stuffed animals, dolls and doll clothing, doll beds, stacking toys, rattles, dramatic play items, sand and water toys, clay, Play-Doh, games, peg boards, stringing beads, infant discovery quilts, shape sorters, and riding toys, etc.

d. Outdoor Play: Safe and age-appropriate playground equipment and outdoor play items, such as water -toys, balls, tricycles, nature kits, sandboxes, swing set, slides, climbing structures, playhouses, chalk, outdoor easels, picnic tables, garden tools, balance beams, jump ropes, outdoor music instruments, umbrellas and shade structures, rubberized tiles, and hula hoops etc.

e. Educational and Business Management:

1. Age-appropriate curriculum
2. Business Management Software

f. Program Supplies



1. Crib sheets, mattress pads and blankets
2. Adult rocking chair
3. Shelving, storage, totes, baskets
4. Fans
5. CD players/Bluetooth speakers/sound machines
6. Child size non-disposable plates, cups, and utensils
7. Activity rugs, tumbling mats
8. Baby Monitors
9. Dry erase boards or corkboards for parent communication

2. **Minor Building Modifications:**

Expenditures in this category must be necessary for state requirements and/or local zoning ordinance requirements. Be very specific when requesting building modifications; individual costs for every modification must be provided. This does not include major renovations which are defined in 45 CFR 98.2 as: (1) 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 (2) extensive alteration of a facility such as to significantly change its function and purpose, even if such renovation does not include any structural change. Major remodeling is not an allowable use for these funds.

a. **Fire Safety:**

1. Fire alarm system
2. Sprinkler system
3. Emergency lighting and exit signs
4. Self-closing door
5. Barriers surrounding furnace or water heater
6. Electric smoke alarms
7. Wiring necessary for the installation of items in this section, as needed
8. Replacing fire sprinklers, carbon monoxide detectors, and smoke detection systems

b. **External Modifications:**

1. Steps leading into building
2. Updating sidewalks to provide a safe pathway for children
3. Fence- must provide written bids for fences
4. Playground Ground Cover – mulch, pea gravel, etc.
5. Building playground
6. Replacing windows or doors
7. Outdoor safety gates

c. **Bathroom Modifications:**

1. Porcelain lavatories (sinks)
2. Porcelain toilets
3. Necessary plumbing for installation of lavatories (sinks) and toilets

4. Renovating or updating bathrooms (e.g., sink, faucet, toilet, etc.) to ensure age-appropriateness and child safety

d. Adaptation for Children with Disabilities:

1. Entrance/exit ramp
2. Widening of doorways
3. Handrails and/or other adaptive equipment

e. Miscellaneous:

1. Repair of linoleum (must provide written bids for flooring, and only damaged areas of linoleum may be replaced)
2. Lead paint removal/abatement
3. Paint - Repainting walls with non-toxic paint
4. Upgrading kitchens to add safe electrical outlets and repair plumbing fixtures
5. Replacing cabinets with an adequate storage space for each child's personal belongings
6. Removing non-load bearing walls to create additional space to maintain staff-to-child ratios as required by Nebraska Statute 391
7. Completing a minor roof repair which includes:
 - i. Replacement of shingles that are missing or damaged
 - ii. Fixing leaks around vents or flashing
 - iii. Fixing nail lifting
 - iv. Repairing holes due to past damage

f. Appliances (Allowed only for non-rented (homeowners in which their program location is their home) Family Child Care Home II and Child Care Centers):

1. Dishwashers
2. Air conditioners, furnace, water heater
3. Washing machine and clothes dryer
4. Oven
5. Refrigerator
6. Snowblowers

g. Household Equipment (Allowed for all provider types):

1. Vacuum Cleaners
2. Microwave
3. Room dividers/sound proof barriers
4. Domestic Carpet Cleaning Machine



VII. Non-Allowable Items

1. Equipment:

a. Developmentally/Age-Appropriate Equipment/Toys:

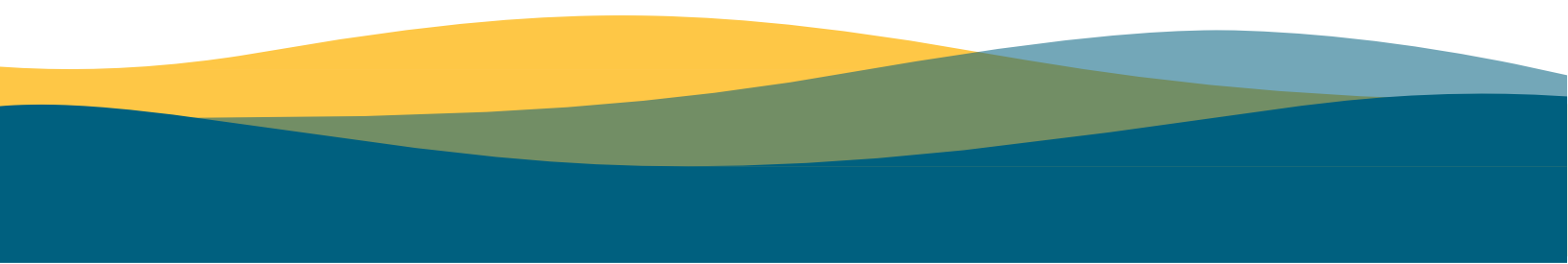
1. Infant swings
2. Infant walkers
3. Swimming pools
4. Trampolines
5. Portable Sinks
6. Bassinet/Rocking Bassinets

b. Property and Facilities

1. Purchasing of:
 - i. Buildings, land, or vehicles
2. Construction:
 - i. Buildings, excavation, ceilings, weight-bearing walls, roofs
 - ii. Additions to existing structures (i.e., finishing basements, finishing bathrooms, adding or enlarging rooms, adding second exits, or windows)
 - iii. Decks, porches, storage sheds, sewer link-ups, fences surrounding swimming pools, wood flooring, garage doors, security systems, installation of awnings
 - iv. Tornado shelters
 - v. Roof replacement
 - vi. Parking lots
3. Rental Property: Grant funds may not be used to fund items in rental property which is NOT exclusively used for childcare unless the requested items can be moved to another location. This includes, but not limited to:
 - i. Fences
 - ii. Items purchased with grant funds in rental property that are exclusively used for child care belong to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services until such time the 12 (twelve)-month grant contract has been fulfilled.

c. Administrative Costs

1. Fees:
 - i. Licensing, inspection, advertising and consultant fees
 - ii. Travel fees, including ground, air, and rail travel
2. Administrative or Operating Costs including wages/salaries/bonuses
3. Materials and Equipment Not Required for Licensure:
 - i. Non-essential equipment, such as televisions, DVD Blu-ray players, streaming devices, modems/Wi-Fi hubs, video recorders, video cameras (unless for security), computers, printers, cameras, and stereos

- ii. Office equipment and materials, such as desks, chairs, tables, answering machines, pencil sharpeners, or cellular phones
 - iii. Carpeting, flooring or wall paneling complete replacement
 - 4. Consumable or Disposable Items (including, but not limited to):
 - i. Food or beverages
 - ii. Paper products
 - iii. Cleaning supplies
 - iv. Clothing
 - v. Printer ink
 - 5. Utilities
 - i. Television services/equipment, including cable, streaming, satellite, antennas, any television services included in package deals, internet
 - ii. No utility (sewer) link ups
 - iii. Mortgage/Rent
 - iv. Utilities
- 

VIII. Child Care Desert and Gap Counties

Adams
Arthur
Banner
Blaine
Boyd
Butler
Custer

Dawes
Furnas
Gage
Hayes
Holt
Jefferson
Keith

Keya Paha
Lincoln
Logan
Loup
Madison
McPherson
Platte

Polk
Saunders
Scotts Bluff
Sioux
Thomas
Thurston
Wayne

