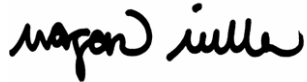


TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION
Workforce Development Letter

ID/No:	WD 21-21, Change 1
Date:	December 1, 2021
Keyword:	Child Care
Effective:	Immediately

To: Local Workforce Development Board Executive
Directors Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers



From: Reagan Miller, Director, Child Care & Early Learning Division

Subject: **COVID-19 Federal Funds for Texas Rising Star Supports—Update**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this WD Letter is to provide guidance to Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) on the distribution of additional Board Contract Year 2022 (BCY'22) Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) federal funds and the allowable expenses for this additional funding.

The purpose of this change letter is to update the Background section to expand the potential federal funding sources that may be used to support these activities.

RESCISSIONS:

WD Letter 21-21

BACKGROUND:

Texas received COVID-19 relief funds for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program, which is authorized under the CCDBG Act of 2014, through multiple pieces of federal legislation. This federal legislation includes the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

On June 29, 2021, the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) three-member Commission (Commission) approved [CCDBG COVID-19 Federal Funding for New Initiatives](#), including the use of \$30 million of CCDBG COVID-19 relief funds for Texas Rising Star program supports. The Commission dedicated these funds to promote increased and ongoing participation in the Texas Rising Star program.

PROCEDURES:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that Boards must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this WD

Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This rating indicates that Boards have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this WD Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”

NLF: Boards must use the Commission-approved distribution of \$30 million (see Attachment 1, Texas Rising Star Incentives Distribution) for targeted supports to promote increased and ongoing participation in the Texas Rising Star program. Allowable activities include the following:

- Targeted recruitment and outreach activities to expand the number of providers in the Texas Rising Star program, with specified goals regarding the number of new Texas Rising Star programs to be certified. Funds may be used to help providers address the requirements for becoming Texas Rising Star certified. It is recommended that Boards outreach all subsidy providers not currently participating in Texas Rising Star and conduct facilitated self-assessments to determine whether they may be certified.
- Incentives for newly certified providers and current providers that reach and sustain higher levels of quality. This includes consideration of enhanced incentives for providers in rural areas, home-based providers, and providers offering care during nontraditional hours in addition to providers with lower child/teacher ratios. Incentives may include offering providers curriculum, professional development opportunities, classroom materials, outdoor environment improvements, and/or onetime bonus payments that may be used on the aforementioned items, other program support, and/or staff bonuses to incent and support staff retention.
- Targeted coaching and resources to assist providers in strengthening their business practices. This may include strategies for improving providers’ enrollment efficiency, which can reduce their operational costs, as well as assisting providers facing challenges in obtaining or retaining their Texas Rising Star certification. Boards are encouraged to help providers address the issues and underlying concerns that cause them to obtain a licensing deficiency. Additionally, it is recommended that Boards consider targeted strategies for providers pursuing Texas Rising Star certification as well as support strategies that are based on a provider’s initial self-assessment or pre- assessment and that allow those providers to address their individualized needs.
- Targeted strategies to help Texas Rising Star providers meet the goals of their individualized Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIPs). This includes providing training and resources on inclusive care, offering child care during nontraditional hours, improving program design to address the needs of English language learners, measuring and improving teacher/child interactions, and/or monitoring child progress.
- Other Board-defined activities approved by TWC’s Child Care & Early Learning (CC&EL) Division

NLF: Boards must develop a plan for use of the Texas Rising Star support funds and submit

that plan to CC&EL for approval before project implementation. All plans must be submitted by October 31, 2021, to BCM@twc.texas.gov using the COVID-19 Federally Funded Texas Rising Star Supports Board Template (Attachment 2) and must include the following elements:

- Description of planned activities
- Activity goals and outcome measures (for example, increasing the number of providers that maintain certification after one year or increasing the number of providers that achieve 4-Star certification)
- Planned expenditures by category

NLF: Boards must be aware that TWC will review the Board plan and send notice of approval or need for revisions within 10 business days. If revisions are needed, TWC will provide the Board with a timeline for returning a revised plan.

NLF: Boards must be aware that the approved Board plans for the use of the Texas Rising Star support funds will be posted on the TWC website.

NLF: Boards must fully expend these funds by March 31, 2023.

NLF: Boards must use Attachment 2 to complete and submit an end of year (EOY) report 30 days after the grant period ends. The EOY report is due on April 30, 2023.

NLF: Boards must report obligations and expenditures in the Cash Draw and Expenditure Reporting (CDER) system under the cost categories with the “TRSS” prefix. The TRSS categories will be regular (not supplemental) cost categories for the BCY’22 Child Care Quality (CCQ) child care grant awards.

INQUIRIES:

Send inquiries regarding this WD Letter to childcare.programassistance@twc.texas.gov.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Texas Rising Star Incentives Distribution

Attachment 2: COVID-19 Federally Funded Texas Rising Star Supports Board Template

Attachment 3: Revisions to WD Letter 21-21 Shown in Track Changes

REFERENCES:

[Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#)

[Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 \(CRRSA\)](#)

[American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 \(ARPA\)](#)