

CDD.1025: Application Processing

Category: Child Care Financial Assistance Program

Authority: 33 V.S.A. § 3512

Last revised date: 04/15/2024

Effective date: 06/30/2024

Overview

This policy guides the Child Development Division and Eligibility specialists in ensuring consistent practice statewide throughout the child care financial assistance eligibility determination process.

Updates

This document has been updated to reflect the new CCFAP Policy formatting, including rewriting and reorganizing the previous policy's content and completing a plain language review. Additional content changes include:

1. Removal of primary caretaker citizenship status description.

All changes are highlighted in gray below.

Policy

A family's eligibility for financial assistance must be reviewed and re-determined annually. The family must be notified that their eligibility period is ending no less than one month (30 days) before eligibility terminates. Child care financial assistance may be retroactive for up to one month (30 days) if the primary caretaker(s) can document that the family was eligible and had a service need during that period of time.

Procedure

A. General Application Information

1. The primary caretaker **must** submit a Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) application to the [Community Child Care Support Agency](#) serving their geographical area.
 - a. Paper applications **must** be signed and dated.
 - b. Applications without a signature **cannot** be processed and will be returned to the primary caretaker for completion.

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2. Assistance begins on the Sunday of the week the family is determined eligible and the child begins care.
 - a. The start date for financial assistance may be set up to 2 service periods before (**not** to exceed 30 days) the date the family is determined eligible if:
 - i. The child was placed with a licensed, registered, or certified child care provider.
 - ii. The primary caretaker(s) can document service need and income eligibility during that period.
 - iii. The primary caretaker requests the alternative date of their application.
 - b. The Eligibility Specialist may authorize an alternative start date up to 2 service periods (**not** to exceed 30 days) from the date that all documentation is received if the original application was incomplete or required additional documentation.
 - c. **Note:** The Eligibility Specialist may submit a request to the Child Development Division if an alternative start date more than two pay periods before the approval date is necessary.
 - d. A primary caretaker may request certificates with specific start and/or end dates that are within their 12-month eligibility period. The primary caretaker **must** note this information on the application or submit the request by phone or email.
 - i. The Eligibility Specialist **must** document this request and make a note in CDDIS.
3. The child care provider **must** be registered, licensed, or certified for payment.
 - a. Payments are **not** made until the child care provider is approved. The Eligibility Specialist will communicate this requirement to the primary caretaker if the provider chosen by the family does **not** meet this requirement.
 - b. **Note:** The Eligibility Specialist will check for child care provider license start date and rate agreement if the provider is found in CDDIS but a certificate **cannot** be created.
4. A family **must** report changes to their circumstances following the Reporting Changes Policy once eligibility has been determined and certificates are created.
5. The Eligibility Specialist may provide an Approved Relative Child Care provider packet to the primary caregiver after eligibility determination has been made and the primary caregiver states that the provider is a relative of the child.

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6. CIS referral

- a. The Eligibility Specialist may complete the CIS Referral Form, with the primary caretaker's consent, and send it to the CIS Child Care Coordinator
 - b. The Eligibility Specialist will consider a CIS Referral if:
 - i. A family is denied CCFAP and wants to pursue Family Support Child Care;
 - ii. A family indicates they have a child with Special Health Needs;
 - iii. A family indicates significant stressors that prevent them from covering the approved family share costs or if the CCFAP application has been denied due to income;
 - iv. A family indicates they are experiencing homelessness
 - v. A family indicates a child's citizenship status as 'Qualified Immigrant' or 'none of the above' and the family indicates they are experiencing stress.
 - c. The CIS Child Care Coordinator will process all necessary paperwork, approvals, denials, appeals, and enter data into CDDIS. Refer to the Family Support Child Care Program policy for more details.
7. Eligibility is determined annually, and the family share remains the same during the approved period except as stated in the Reporting Changes Policy.
8. A child retains their eligibility until the next re-determination regardless of any change in age, including turning 13 years old during the eligibility period.
- a. A child care provider **must** contact their licenser for a variance for children over the age of 13 years old.

B. CDDIS Management

1. The Eligibility Specialist **must** note all contact with the applying family in the case comments within CDDIS.
2. Application Processing: The Eligibility Specialist will:
 - a. Date stamp paper applications and any additional documentation to verify the date received.
 - b. Conduct a search in CDDIS to determine if the primary caretaker is already in the system.
 - c. Enter the application in CDDIS (all applications received **must** be entered).
 - i. Refer to the CDDIS Training Manual for step-by-step processes and screen shots.

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- d. Enter information for the primary caretaker, including all required fields.
 - i. The following fields are required only if a specific answer is used:
 1. If gender is 'Prefer to Self-Describe,' a description field will be required.
 2. If race is 'Prefer to Self-Describe,' a description field will be required.
- e. Calculate the hours for each primary caretaker based on their service need.
 - i. The Eligibility Specialist will enter the activity type and click 'yes' for flexible schedule.
 - ii. The Eligibility Specialist may enter one of the following in the hours per week box:
 1. If the service need hours including travel time are between 1-25 enter 25.
 2. If the service need hours including travel time are between 26-40 enter 40.
 3. If the service need hours including travel time exceed 40, enter actual hours.

3. Household Members: The Eligibility Specialist will

- a. Conduct a search for other household members in CDDIS.
- b. Enter information provided on the application when adding a member.
 - i. If a second adult caretaker is added, the service need field is required.
- c. Determine the number of approved child care hours per week based on the primary caretaker(s) schedule. This number should be the lower of the two caretakers.
 - i. This number transfers to the child's authorization.
- d. Enter the child care hours using the maximum hours that can be authorized based on the primary caretaker(s) schedule.
 - i. **Note:** The Eligibility Specialist will check for overlapping caretaker's schedules and the child's school schedule before authorizing child care.
- e. Enter the total hours for the child in 'approved number of hours' field.
- f. Document the number of hours that are specific to 'Child with Special Needs' in the 'Additional Child Care Hours Needed' field if the case has at

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least one child that has additional hours of care due to being a 'Child with Special Needs.'

- g. Check the box associated if a child receives Act 166 funds. This is a recordkeeping field only.

4. Income & Expense: The Eligibility Specialist will

- a. Enter all income and expenses for the family.
 - i. If a primary caretaker has more than one source of income or allowable expense, list each source separately.
 - 1. *Example:* Child support paid out or education savings plan.
 - ii. **Note:** Special attention is necessary when deciding if income is received weekly, biweekly, twice a month, or monthly.
- b. View the calculation of total countable income to verify the amount is correct in CDDIS.

5. Consent to Exchange Information: The Eligibility Specialist will

- a. Complete the consent information as submitted by the primary caretaker.
 - i. Document the specific organization within the designated text box when selecting child care program, school, or employer for which the consent is granted.

6. Create Missing Document Notice, when applicable: The Eligibility Specialist will

- a. Create Missing Document Notice and if additional documentation is required to process the application.
 - i. Refer to the CDDIS Training Manual for step-by-step processes and screen shots.
- b. Allow 10 business days for return of information requested. A grace period of up to 3 business days may be allowed after the initial due date for the missing documents requested.
- c. Continue with the application once all information is received.
- d. Make the file inactive if all information is **not** received by the date requested.
 - i. The Eligibility Specialist **must** reject the application in CDDIS and send an eligibility denial notice to applicant if it is determined the family is **not** eligible.

7. Submission of Application/Eligibility Determination: The Eligibility Specialist will

- a. Determine eligibility after the application is complete.
 - i. Application outcomes available include:

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1. Eligible
 2. Denied
 3. Rejected
- b. Refer to the Rejection and Denial Policy if the eligibility determination is anything other than 'Eligible.'
 - c. Enter the start date, end date, and redetermination date of eligibility on the determination eligibility page if the outcome is 'Eligible.'
 - i. The start and end date **must** be 12 months apart.
 - ii. The start date **must** begin on a Sunday and the start of the service period.
 1. The Sunday start date is determined by the week that the child is starting care.
 - iii. The end date **must** be the Saturday of the end of the service period that ensures a full 12 months (365 days or more) of eligibility.
 - iv. *Examples:*
 1. Child begins care on July 18, 2022 – eligibility dates are 07/17/2022-07/29/2023.
 2. Child begins care on July 27, 2022 – eligibility dates are 07/24/2022-07/29/2023
 - d. **Exception:** The Eligibility Specialist may override the approval on the eligibility determination page to override the family share for a child when one or more children in a case are adopted or receive a Reach Up Child Only grant.
8. Creating Authorizations: The Eligibility Specialist will
- a. Save the eligibility determination.
 - i. **Note:** If a child changes age categories during the eligibility period, two authorizations will be created for the child. The authorization will change on the Sunday after the child's birthday.
 - b. Enter the start date, end date, and redetermination date and click 'Save'.
 - i. **Note:** The authorization dates for each child **must** match the family's 12-month eligibility start and end dates.
 - c. Confirm authorization.
 - d. **Exception:** Authorizations for exempt children are only created when the rest of the application is denied.
 - i. *Example:* If an application is approved for all children, authorizations are created for all children, however, the exempt

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child(ren) will **not** have a family share assigned. The Eligibility Specialist shall create two applications, one for the child(ren) with an override and one for the child(ren) without an override, to authorize children who are exempt and **not** exempt.

e. Create the Provider Certificate and the Family's Statement of Eligibility.

i. **Note:** Once eligibility has been determined and authorizations are saved, certificates may be created by following the guidance found in the CDDIS Training Manual. Please be aware of the ad hoc process for assigning the family share.