

Readiness Payment Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The 2023 Child Care and Early Childhood Education law (Act 76) created the Readiness Payment Program to support family child care homes, center-based child care and preschool programs, and afterschool programs to "get ready" for the expansion of the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) and other changes in Act 76.

We will update this document as new questions come in and/or when further information and details are available to clarify answers to existing questions.

Who To Contact

If you did not find your answer in this document or would like additional support in applying the answer to your specific situation, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at AHS.DCFCDDReadiness76@vermont.gov.

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Section 1 - Eligibility

1. Who is eligible to apply for the Readiness Payment Program?

To be eligible for the program, you must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Have an active Registered or Licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH), Center Based Child Care and Preschool Program (CBCCPP), or Afterschool Child Care Program (ASP) license from the State of Vermont.
- ✓ Be open and serving children as of the date of your application.
- ✓ Intend to stay open and serving children through at least June 2025.
- ✓ Accept or are willing to accept payments from the CCFAP on behalf of children in your care or be a Head Start recipient.
- ✓ Have completed the final ARPA Stabilization funding report (if applicable).

2. What does an active license mean?

An active license means you have the official document issued by the Child Development Division that permits you to operate a Registered or Licensed Family Child Care Home, Center

Based Child Care and Preschool Program, or an Afterschool Child Care Program. This includes programs with provisional licenses but does not include programs that have had their licenses suspended or revoked.

3. Can school-based programs apply?

Yes, if your program meets the eligibility criteria above. School-based program directors may need to seek approval from their administration before applying.

4. Added 8/31/2023 - I am a public Universal Prekindergarten program who only operates for 10 hours per week. Can I apply?

These funds are intended to support providers accepting Child Care Financial with expansion, stabilization, and quality improvements as the state implements expanded CCFAP eligibility for families. You may apply if your program has extended days and accepts Child Care Financial Assistance. If you do not, then the application for the Readiness Payment Program is not open for your program to apply.

Section 2 - Application Process

1. When can I apply?

Eligible programs can begin submitting applications now.

2. How do I apply?

To apply, please complete the [online application form](#).

3. What is the application submission deadline?

Applications opened August 25, 2023, and will remain open until all available funds are committed (anticipated February 2024). Programs need only apply once per license.

4. If I apply later, will my total payment amount be different?

No, your program will receive the same overall payment amount regardless of when you apply for the program if funds remain.

5. If I have more than one licensed program, do I fill out separate applications?

Yes, to ensure the accuracy of payments, only one application per license will be accepted.

4. Can I save and finish the application later?

Yes, you can save and submit the application later if needed. See the “Save” button at the bottom of each page of the application.

5. Who do I contact if I am having trouble with the application?

If you need assistance, please don't hesitate to email us at AHS.DCFCDReadiness76@vermont.gov.

6. How will I know if my application was received?

After submitting your application, you will be directed to a confirmation page indicating that you submitted your application successfully. You will also receive an email with a copy of your

application. If you did not receive the email confirmation, please check your spam/junk folder. The email will be from noreply@jotform.com.

If you did not get the confirmation page and/or email, please email us at AHS.DCFCDReadiness76@vermont.gov. Do not resubmit the application unless advised to do so.

7. I made a mistake on my application. What do I do?

Please contact us at AHS.DCFCDReadiness76@vermont.gov and include your program's name, license number, and the information that needs to be changed within your application. Please do not resubmit the application unless advised to do so.

Section 3 - Payment Calculations

1. How are the payments determined?

Payments amounts will be determined based on a formula that reflects the Readiness Payment Program's intention to support stabilization, expansion, and quality in child care programs.

The formula was designed based on priorities identified in Act 76, feedback collected via survey from early childhood education and afterschool programs in July 2023, and what worked in the ARPA Stabilization program.

See the [Program Overview](#) for further details of how payments are determined, and/or view the [Program Overview PowerPoint](#) for scenarios of what to expect to receive for your program.

2. What if I intend to use funds to increase capacity, enrollment, hours open during the week, etc., but end up not being able to. Do I need to return a portion of the payments?

The intention is to support child care programs to pay for the additional costs associated with each of these factors. Programs will have flexibility in how they use the payments to support stability, expansion, and quality.

3. Why is there a bonus offered for programs that have a more diverse population?

Programs that serve a culturally or linguistically diverse population may require additional tools and resources to support these families, such as accessing interpreters or translating materials.

Section 4 – Payments

1. When will I receive my payment (award) letter?

If deemed eligible, you will receive a letter detailing your Readiness Payment Program information within ten business days following your application submission.

2. How will I receive payments?

Payments will be issued in the same manner which your program has chosen to receive CCFAP payments from the state (direct deposit or paper check).

3. When will I receive my payments?

Payments will begin in September 2023. To receive the first payment by the end of September, you must submit a complete and accurate application by midnight on September 15, 2023. Any applications received after September 15, 2023, will be processed on a rolling basis (see Table 1 below).

Table 1

Application Submission Date	First Payment Date
August 25, 2023 – September 8, 2023	End of September 2023
September 9, 2023 – October 13, 2023	End of October 2023
October 14, 2023 – November 10, 2023	End of November 2023
November 11, 2023 – December 8, 2023	End of December 2023
December 9, 2023 – January 12, 2024	End of January 2024
January 13, 2024 – February 9, 2024	End of February 2024

Please note that you will receive the same overall payment amount regardless of when you apply for the program if funds remain.

4. We are a multi-site program – will we receive payment in one payment or by site?

You will receive one lump sum, and the remittance advice will provide the details of the separate payments that made up the lump sum.

Section 5 - Use of Funds

1. How can my program use this funding?

Programs have flexibility in how they use the funds. The Readiness Payments are intended to support your program in stabilizing, expanding, and/or strengthening as the changes to CCFAP laid out in Act 76 roll out in 2023 and 2024.

The use of the funds should support the Readiness Payment Program's goals and align with the information shared in your application. Expenditures can include:

- Compensation and other personnel-related costs
- Facility costs, including renovations.
- Program materials, including groceries or classroom supplies.
- Professional development
- Mental health supports
- Other expenses the program deems to be in alignment with the goals of Act 76.

2. Do I need to spend the funds by a specific date?

No. You can spend the funds as you need.

Section 6 – Reporting & Accountability

1. Will I need to do a monthly and/or final report?

Programs receiving Readiness Payments will be required to complete a brief survey at the end of the program that describes how they used the funds and what impact the program had on

their stability, capacity, and quality. Programs may also be chosen for interviews or site visits to collect additional data regarding the impact of these funds.

We will email the survey to you at the end of the program or if your program closes, whichever is sooner.

2. If my program closes, will I have to pay back funds?

If your program closes, you must notify ahs.dcfddreadiness76@vermont.gov and return any unspent funds. No additional payments will be issued past your closure date.

3. Is this a loan that needs to be paid back?

No, this is not a loan that needs to be paid back.

4. How is the Readiness Payment Program funding?

The program is funded through the Vermont Act 76 (2023).

5. Is this funding taxable?

Please consult an accountant for specific information on how these readiness payments may impact your tax liability.

6. Am I a subrecipient?

No. Programs are not subject to subrecipient requirements.