

Increasing access to Minnesota Child Care Stabilization Base Grants

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Project summary:

Minnesota's Department of Human Services (MN DHS) aimed to identify methods to enhance equitable access to Childcare Stabilization Base Grants (CCSBG) among child care providers in the state. Proactive outreach such as one-way texts and emails can improve take-up of benefits by simplifying information, and providing reminders and planning prompts. This type of informational outreach may be less effective than direct interactions that can be tailored to the individual for beneficiaries who are unfamiliar with a program or hold misconceptions about how the program works. People may also miss outreach messages if they are delivered through just one mode of contact (e.g., by email, call, or text message).

Evaluation and intervention summary:

Likely eligible child care providers who had missed at least one award in the prior six months were randomized to one of three communication bundles:

- **Business as usual:** The standard set of monthly CCSBG emails sent by MN DHS;
- **Text:** A set of revised monthly emails and reminder text messages, *or*;
- **Call:** The set of revised emails and texts plus a semi-scripted phone call from a DHS staff member.

What did we learn?

Outreach by text increased awards of Minnesota's Child Care Stabilization Base Grants (CCSBG) by 3.8 percentage points, while combining calls with text outreach increased awards by 5.2 percentage points. Among child care providers with no prior awards, outreach that included calls increased awards by 12.4 percentage points — an effect five times larger than outreach by text alone. In contrast, among child care providers previously awarded grants, outreach by text alone increased awards by 5.3 percentage points.

The project page for this impact evaluation can be [accessed on our website](#).

Insights incorporated:

In this document, we share more details on each of the interventions as well as capture the behavioral and social science insights incorporated with the hopes that agencies can continue learning from previous efforts.

Insights from the Behavioral and Social Sciences

Below we define the insights incorporated into the interventions designed for this impact evaluation.

Application assistance: Providing assistance can help an individual overcome inertia.¹

Benefit > costs: Highlighting the benefits of taking action and the low hassle costs can encourage an individual to take action.^{2,3}

Certainty: Emphasizing the certainty of benefits from taking an action can encourage an individual to take action.⁴

Communication channel: Sending messages through multiple channels so that they are more likely to be seen.⁵

Effective formatting: Bolding important information and using formatting to direct attention to key takeaways.⁶

Human touchpoint: Personalizing support has been shown to improve follow through and task completion.⁷

Implementation prompt: Including a prompt promotes follow through.⁸

Proactive outreach: Calling providers directly removes potential barriers to action/help-seeking.⁹

Reminders: Sending messages at the right time can catch attention.¹⁰

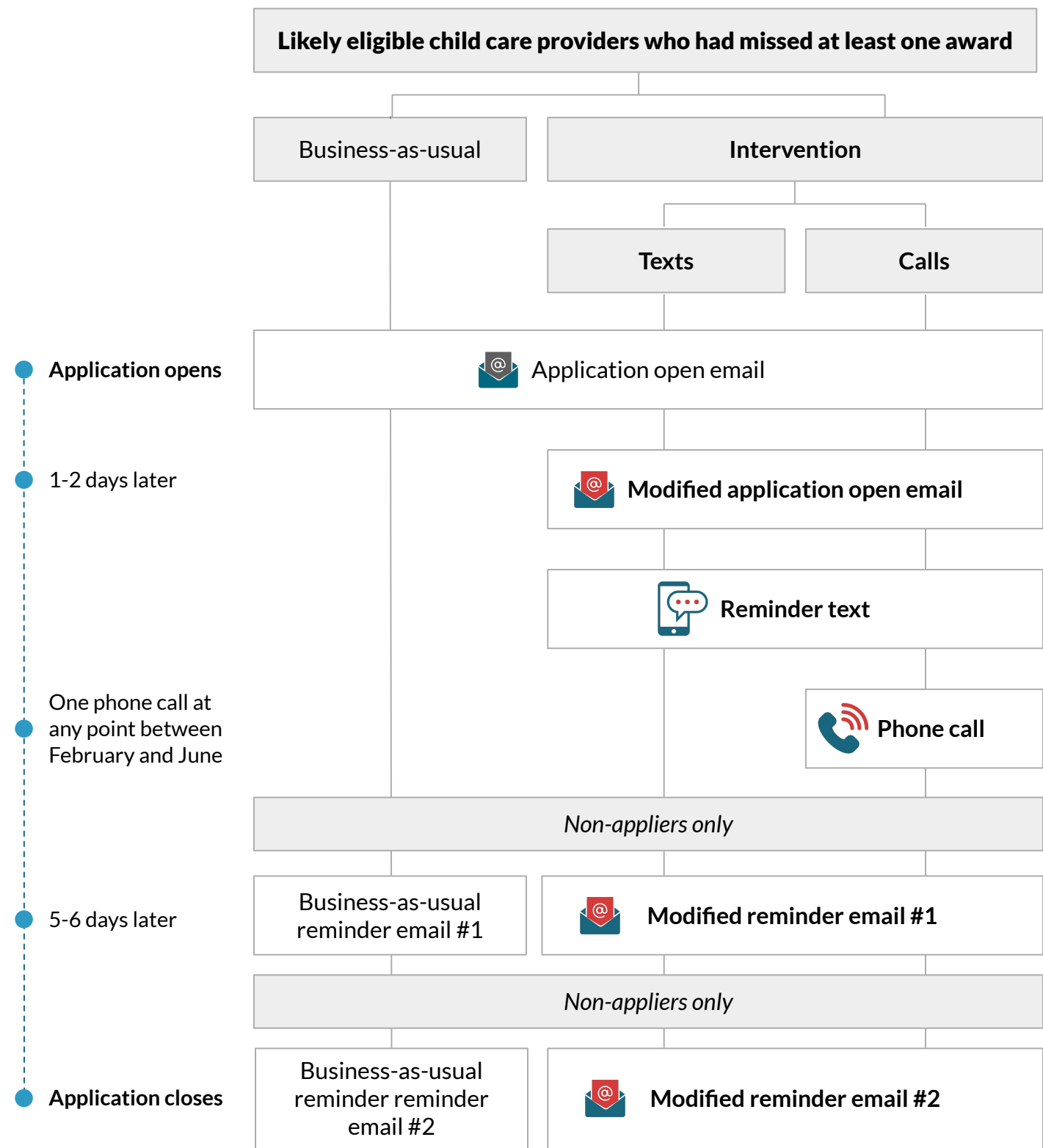
Simplification: Simplifying and shortening messages can reduce cognitive load and help facilitate action.¹¹

Trusted messenger: Sending information from a familiar party so it's perceived as more reliable.¹²

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Intervention overview



Intervention: Modified application open email

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Insights applied to the modified email:



100%

Certainty

Emphasizing the certainty of benefits (i.e. that all eligible providers who apply receive funding) increases willingness to apply



Effective formatting

Bolding important information and formatting text using a bulleted list directs attention to key takeaways. Adding a button directs attention to the desired action



Implementation prompt

Informing providers which documents to have on hand promotes follow through during the application process

Intervention: Modified application open email

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024



Funding Available! Apply for April Child Care Stabilization Base Grants

April 20

Minnesota's Child Care Stabilization Base Grant (CCSBG) gives most providers \$400 or more each month to increase compensation and benefits.

Apply to confirm [Name]'s CCSBG eligibility for April by 4pm on April 24, 2023!

The CCSBG is a non-competitive grant, which means **ALL eligible providers will receive funding**, and funds do not have to be repaid.

You can receive these funds by applying every month through June 2023. Most providers who received this funding said **the application took them 15 minutes or less. Nearly all recipients received their funding within 4 weeks.**

APPLY NOW!

Ways to use the funds: In addition to the 70% of funds that must be used to increase compensation and benefits, providers have used these funds to:

- **Pay operating costs (i.e., utilities, rent or mortgage payments, facility improvements)**
- **Offer professional development and training**
- **Provide mental health supports for children or child care workers**

How to apply: You can apply by clicking the button above and confirming your information. **Providers save time by having these documents on hand:**

- **Last month's employee timesheets pay stubs**
- **Completed W-9 form**
- **Federal Employer Identification Number Document**

We are happy to help!

If you have any questions or need assistance please refer to the [Base Grant Frequently Asked Questions web page](#) or contact our partners Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704.

Need assistance in a language other than English?

[Insert standard language here]

Effective formatting

Bolding important information directs attention to key takeaways

Certainty

Emphasizing the certainty of benefits

Effective formatting

Adding a button directs attention to the desired action

Effective formatting

Listing key points in a bulleted list makes them easier to understand

Implementation prompt

Informing providers which documents to have on hand promotes follow-through during the application process

Intervention: Sending text messages

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Insights applied to sending text messages:



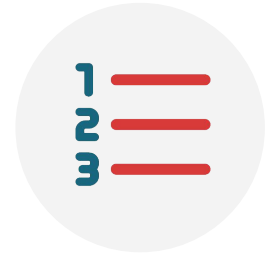
Communication channel

Messages sent through multiple channels are more likely to be seen



Reminders

Messages can catch attention at the right time



Simplification

Short, simple messages can reduce cognitive load and help facilitate action

Intervention: Text message content

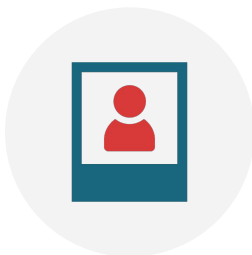
A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Insights applied to text message content:



Benefits > costs

Highlighting the benefits of applying (award amount) and low hassle costs (short application time) can encourage action



Trusted messenger

Information is perceived as more reliable when it comes from a familiar caller

Intervention: Sending text messages

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Intervention: Sending text messages

MN DHS: Your child care program may be eligible for a Child Care Stabilization Base Grant. Most providers receive \$400 or more a month. Apply in just 15 minutes! Check your email for a personalized application link. Need help? Call [651-290-9704](tel:651-290-9704). SMS terms & conditions: <https://mn.gov/dhs/general-public/policies/text-messaging/child-care-base-grant-text-consent>

Communication channel

Messages sent through multiple channels are more likely to be seen

Reminders

Messages can catch attention at the right time

Simplification

Short, simple messages can reduce cognitive efforts and help facilitate action

Intervention: Text message content

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Intervention: Text message content

MN DHS: Your child care program may be eligible for a Child Care Stabilization Base Grant. **Most providers receive \$250 or more a month. Apply in just 15 minutes !** Check your email for a personalized application link. Need help? Call [651-290-9704](tel:651-290-9704). SMS terms & conditions: <https://mn.gov/dhs/general-public/policies/text-messaging/child-care-base-grant-text-consent>

Benefits > costs

Highlighting the benefits of applying (award amount) and low hassle costs (short application time) can encourage action

Trusted messenger

Invoking a trustworthy messenger can increase the effectiveness of messages

Intervention: Phone calls

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Insights applied to making phone calls:



Application assistance

Messages sent through multiple channels are more likely to be seen



Human touchpoint

Access to personalized support has been shown to improve follow through and task completion



Proactive outreach

Calling providers directly removes potential barriers to action/help-seeking



Reminders

Messages can catch attention at the right time



Trusted messenger

Information is perceived as more reliable when it comes from a familiar caller

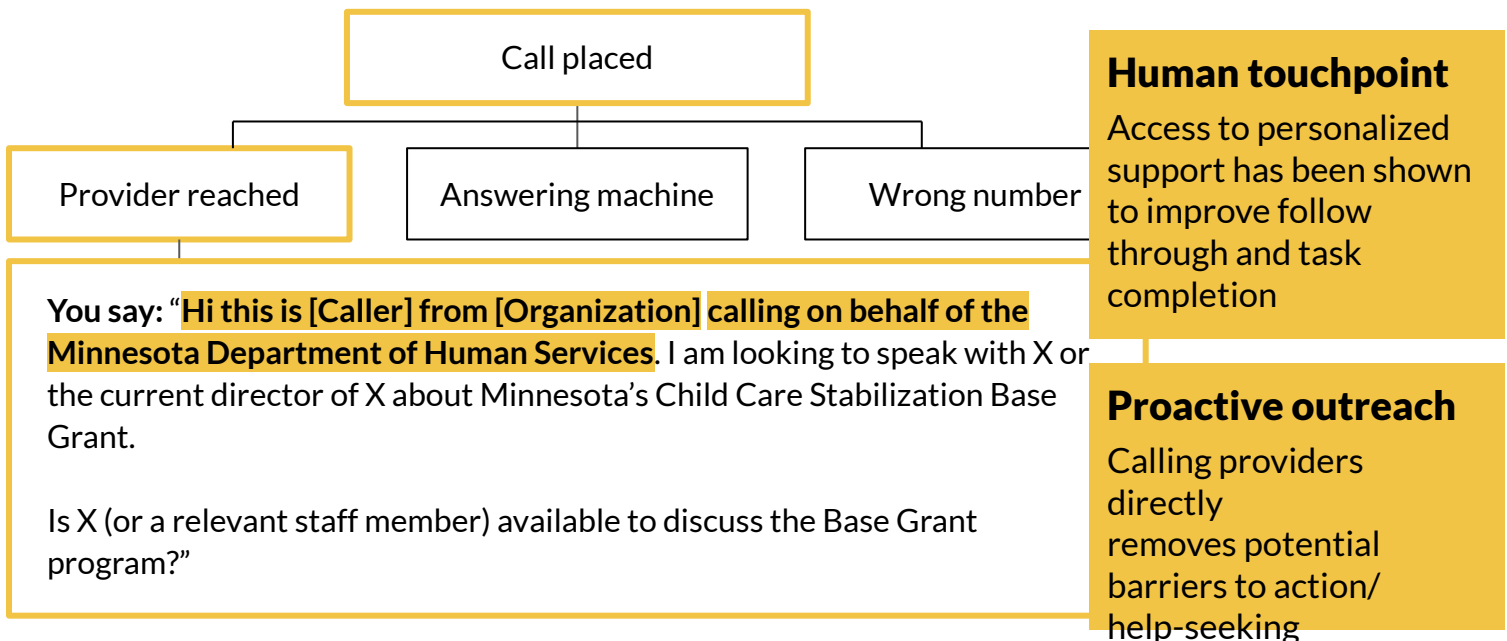
Intervention: Phone calls

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

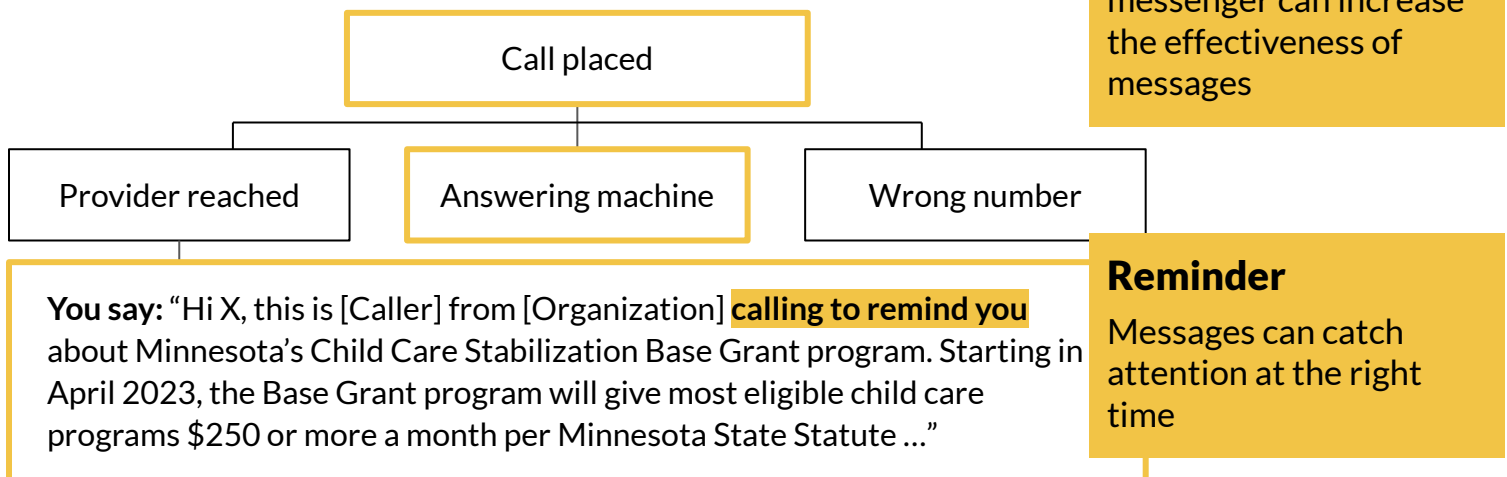
The call script was implemented using an online form that provided dynamic talking points and captured call data.

- The DHS staff caller was prompted through call dialogue with a responsive online form
- The form collected information reported by the caller including call length, topics flagged, whether the call was taken, etc.

Example dialogue tree: Phone call answered



Example dialogue tree: Phone call not answered



Intervention: Phone calls

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Screenshot depicting call script interface DHS staff caller used to deliver talking points. The staff caller could select from several topics based on providers’ questions/concerns during the call.

Click table to view Talking Points

When the provider runs out of questions, click the blue arrow to continue the call.

Talking Point:	You Hear:
Allowable Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "I don't understand what these funds can and can't be used for"• "I'm unable to afford/maintain the required staff benefits increase"
Application Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "I would like assistance with the application process"• "I'm interested in applying, but I don't know how"
Competition for Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Other programs need the funding more than mine"• "I don't want to apply only for my program to be rejected"

Call Notes

Type call notes here (issues that arose, outstanding questions, follow-ups requested with time)

Application assistance

Providing help with the application process can help overcome inertia

→

Intervention: Phone calls

A collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services | 2024

Screenshot depicting call script interface DHS staff caller used to deliver talking points. When the staff caller selected a topic from the menu, the call script displayed specific talking points for the selected topic.


Click anywhere to close
Click table to view talking points

Talking Point:	Behavioral Inroads:	In your own words try saying...
Talking Points Application Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Instruct program on how to find the current month's application link emailWalk through application form with provider; be available to answer specific questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Providers should first check for that month's application link email(try searching 'Action Needed: Child Care Stabilization Base Grant Application').Providers should have these documents on hand to save time while applying:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Last month's employee timesheets pay stubs – to enter hours directly caring for childrenFilled W-9 FormFederal Employee Identification Number Document
Allowable Uses	<p>can't be used for"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">"I'm unable to afford/maintain the required staff benefits increase"	
Application Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">"I would like assistance with the application process""I'm interested in applying, but I don't know how"	
Competition for Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">"Other programs need the funding more than mine""I don't want to apply only for my program to be rejected"	

→

Appendix

Business as usual: Application open email [also sent to intervention group]:

 **DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES**

Action Needed: Child Care Stabilization Base Grant Application

CCAP Provider ID: 99999999
Provider type: Child Care Center
Name of program: Test License
Services provided: [REDACTED]
Name of Provider: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

The American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law in March 2021, providing Minnesota with additional funds designed to help stabilize the child care industry : [Legislature created Minnesota's Child Care Stabilization Grant program](#) which began in June 2021 and will last until June 2023.

How to apply

You must open the [application link](#) respond to the questions and attestation items as required. This application link is personalized to Test License (CCAP Pr application completely to be considered for funding.

The deadline for your submitting your application is 4 PM on April 24 2023.

How do I know the application was received by DHS?

Once you submit the application, you will receive an email confirming receipt of your application within one hour. **Keep a copy of this confirmation email f** application to ensure all responses are accurate.

If you do not receive a confirmation email, please check your junk or SPAM folder. If you still do not find the confirmation email, contact Child Care Aware of M successfully received.

Please refer to the [Base Grant Frequently Asked Questions webpage](#) for additional information on Child Care Stabilization Base Grants. If you need further ass supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org for assistance.

Need assistance in a language other than English?

Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta carta, comuníquese con Rocio Sosa rsosa@thinksmall.org, 651-641-6660
Hadaad ubaahantahay caawimaad fahanka warqadan, fadlan la xiriiir Abdulkadir Warsame awarsame@thinksmall.org, 651-641-6673
Yog tias koj xav tau kev pab nkag siab tsab ntawv no, thov hu rau Julie Yang JYang@thinksmall.org, 651-366-6792

Child Care Aware of Minnesota will use Language Line Services for languages other than Spanish, Hmong and Somali.

Business as usual: Reminder email #1



April 2023 Child Care Stabilization Base Grants

April 20, 2023

April 2023 applications now open

April 2023 Child Care Stabilization Base Grant applications are now open. DHS sent emails with information and a link to a personalized application to eligible providers on April 16, 2023. If you cannot find this email please check your spam or junk folder and move it to your inbox. If you never received this email, you can generate a new application link on this [webpage](#). If you don't receive your new application link right away, please check your spam or junk folder. If you still can't find your new application link, please immediately contact Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.

You should also ensure that dhs_child_care@state.mn.us is on your safe sender list in your email account, for instructions on how to do this please see this [webpage](#).

April 2023 applications will close at 4 p.m. on Monday, April 24, 2023.

DHS will continue to use the monthly online application process for the Child Care Stabilization Base Grants. This is intentional to ensure that if a program is not eligible in a given month, they will have the opportunity to participate in other months. Please apply early and reach out to Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org if you need assistance.

REMINDER: The per full-time equivalent (FTE) award amount is \$250 this round (April 2023).

Need assistance in a language other than English?

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- Vea un ejemplo en español de la aplicación de subvención base aquí: [subvención base de abril del 2022](#)

Hadaad ubaahantahay caawimaad fahanka warqadan, fadlan la xiriir Abdulkadir Warsame, awarsame@thinksmall.org; 651-641-6673

- Fadlan halkaan ka eeg tusaale Codsiga Deeqda Aasaaska oo Af Soomaali ah: [Deeqda Aasaaska ee Abriil 2022](#)

Yog tias koj xav tau kev pab nkag siab tsab ntawv no, thov hu rau Julie Yang, JYang@thinksmall.org; 651-366-6792

- Thov nias ntawm no mus saib ib qho Base Grant ntaub ntawv qauv txhais lus Hmoob: [April 2022 Base Grants](#)

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Child Care Stabilization Base Grant webpage

Child Care Stabilization Base Grant information and frequently asked questions (FAQs) are available on the [Base Grants webpage](#) and the [Base Grant FAQs webpage](#). These webpages contain general information, answers to FAQs, and other resources to aid both applicants and recipients in applying for and using grant funds.

If you have questions and are not able to find the answers in the FAQ, please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.

Business as usual: Reminder email #2



April 2023 Child Care Stabilization Base Grants

April 24, 2023

April 2023 applications close TODAY

April 2023 Child Care Stabilization Base Grant applications close TODAY. DHS sent emails with information and a link to a personalized application to eligible providers on June 14, 2023. If you cannot find this email please check your spam or junk folder and move it to your inbox. If you never received this email, you can generate a new application link on this [webpage](#). If you don't receive your new application link right away, please check your spam or junk folder. If you still can't find your new application link, please immediately contact Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.

You should also ensure that dhs.child.care@state.mn.us is on your safe sender list in your email account, for instructions on how to do this please see this [webpage](#).

April 2023 applications will close at 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 24, 2023.

DHS will continue to use the monthly online application process for the Child Care Stabilization Base Grants. This is intentional to ensure that if a program is not eligible in a given month, they will have the opportunity to participate in other months. Please apply early and reach out to Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org if you need assistance.

NOTE: The per full-time equivalent award amount will be approximately **\$175** this round (April 2023). The exact amount will be determined after the application period closes.

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Yog tias koj xav tau kev pab nkag siab tsab ntawv no, thov hu rau Ka Youa Vang, kvang@thinksmall.org; 651-366-6792

- Thov nias ntawm no mus saib ib qho Base Grant ntaub ntawv qauv txhais lus Hmoob: [April 2022 Base Grants](#)

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Child Care Stabilization Base Grant webpage

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If you have questions and are not able to find the answers in the FAQ, please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.

Intervention: Reminder email #1



Reminder - Funding Available! April 2023

Child Care Stabilization Base Grants

April 20, 2023

In April 2023, Minnesota's Child Care Stabilization Base Grant (CCSBG) will give most providers \$400 or more to increase compensation and benefits, per Minnesota State statute.

Apply to confirm your program's eligibility by 4pm on the deadline.!

APPLY NOW!

The Minnesota Child Care Stabilization Base Grant (CCSBG) is a non-competitive grant, which means **ALL** eligible providers will receive funding, and funds do not have to be repaid.

Most providers that received this funding said **applying took them 15 minutes or less. Nearly all recipients received their funding within 4 weeks.**

In addition to the 70% of funds that must be used to increase compensation and benefits, providers have used these funds to:

- Pay operating costs (i.e., utilities, rent or mortgage payments, facility improvements)
- Offer professional development and training
- Provide mental health supports for children or child care workers

You can receive these funds by applying to confirm your eligibility every month through June 2023.

We are happy to help!

If you have any questions or need assistance please refer to the [Base Grant Frequently Asked Questions web page](#) or contact our partners Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704.

Application links for providers with multiple programs

Providers with multiple programs can find a <https://oes.gsa.gov/> 2023 Base Grant application link for each program below.

- <https://oes.gsa.gov/>
- <https://mn.gov/dhs/>
- <https://mn.gov/dhs/housing/>
- <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/>

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If you have questions and are not able to find the answers in the FAQ, please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.

Intervention: Reminder email #2



Last Day to Apply for Funding! 2023 Child Care Stabilization Base Grant

April 24, 2023

Don't miss out on \$400 per full time child care worker this month! Apply to confirm your program's eligibility by 4pm TODAY!

APPLY NOW!

The Minnesota Child Care Stabilization Base Grant (CCSBG) is a non-competitive grant, which means **ALL** eligible providers will receive funding, and funds do not have to be repaid.

Most providers that received this funding said **applying took them 15 minutes or less. Nearly all recipients received their funding within 4 weeks.**

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If you have questions and are not able to find the answers in the FAQ, please call Child Care Aware at 651-290-9704 or email supportfunds@childcareawaremn.org.

Citations

- ¹ Bettinger, Eric P., Bridget Terry Long, Philip Oreopoulos, and Lisa Sanbonmatsu. 2012. The Role of Application Assistance and Information in College Decisions: Results from the H&R Block FAFSA Experiment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127, no. 3 (July 20): 1205-1242. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjs017>.
- ² Castleman, Benjamin L., Francis X. Murphy, Richard W. Patterson, and William L. Skimmyhorn. 2021. Nudges Don't Work When the Benefits Are Ambiguous: Evidence from a High-Stakes Education Program. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 40, no. 4 (March 4): 1230-1248. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22303>.
- ³ Burnett, Annalise and Sarah Kroeger. 2020. "The Role of Information in College Scholarship Enrollment: Evidence from a Light-Touch Intervention." Working Paper. Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO), University of Notre Dame, June 20. https://leo.nd.edu/assets/407847/the_role_of_information_in_college_scholarship_enrollment_kroeger_burnett.pdf
- ⁴ Dynarski, Susan, C. J. Libassi, Katherine Micheltore, and Stephanie Owen. 2021. Closing the Gap: The Effect of Reducing Complexity and Uncertainty in College Pricing on the Choices of Low-Income Students. *American Economic Review* 111, no. 6 (June): 1721-1756. doi: 10.1257/aer.20200451. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257%2Faer.20200451>.
- ⁵ Weixler, Lindsay, Jon Valant, Daphna Bassok, Justin B. Doromal, and Alica Gerry. 2020. Helping Parents Navigate the Early Childhood Education Enrollment Process: Experimental Evidence from New Orleans. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 42, no. 3 (June 1): 307-330. <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737209222>.
- ⁶ Office of Evaluation Sciences. *How to design effective communications: What has OES learned? PDF file*. Accessed March 12, 2024. <https://oes.gsa.gov/assets/abstracts/OES%20Learnings%20on%20Writing%20Better%20Communications%202018.pdf>
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- ⁸ Milkman, Katherine L., John Beshears, James J. Choi, David Laibson, and Brigitte C. Madrian. 2011. Using Implementation Intentions Prompts to Enhance Influenza Vaccination Rates. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108, no. 26 (June 13): 10415-10420. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1103170108>.
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