



MANUAL: 2025 DCYF CHILD CARE COMPLEX NEEDS FUND



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Original Date: December 31, 2024

Early Learning Division | Approved for Distribution by Amy Russell, Early Learning Division Deputy



Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

This manual provides guidance and policies for the Child Care Complex Needs Fund.

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Section 1: General Information

Purpose

The [Fair Start for Kids Act](#) (FSKA) directs the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to distribute funds to promote inclusive, least restrictive environments and support providers serving children with developmental delays, disabilities, behavioral needs, or other unique needs. The funds are distributed through the Complex Needs Fund.

What is the Child Care Complex Needs Fund?

The goal of the Child Care Complex Needs Fund is to direct funding to early child care and education providers. It is intended to promote inclusive, least restrictive environments and support providers serving children with developmental delays, disabilities, behavioral needs, or other unique needs.

Grant funds may be used to help pay for adding new staff members or increasing staff hours, therapeutic services, facility improvements to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements, and supportive and adaptive materials and equipment.

How Are Amounts Decided?

DCYF will consider funding proposals from providers in the grant application. We request that providers evaluate the needs of the child(ren) in their care and how their program can be strengthened to meet those needs, and then use this information to make an informed request that allows them to improve their services.

Please see the table below for the minimum and maximum amounts a provider can request. Applications requesting outside of these amounts will not be considered.

Provider Type	Minimum amount	Maximum Amount
Licensed, certified, or certified for payment only providers	\$5,000	\$50,000
Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers	\$100	\$2,000

DCYF may change the award size or structure in future rounds of grant funding as part of the grant refinement process.

The number and range of the awards will enable DCYF to support a wide range of providers with varying needs.

What Can the Funds be Used For?

Category	What is included?	Maximum request	Grant funds may <u>NOT</u> be used for:
Adding new staff/increasing staff hours	<p>Funding in this category may be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding a new staff member to support children with complex needs • Up to a \$5,000 hiring bonus for new staff members that support children with complex needs • Increasing a current staff member's hours to support children with complex needs 	\$30,000	<p>Funding in this category may <u>NOT</u> be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner's salary • Accounting/Payroll costs • Travel costs • Training costs
Facility Improvements to comply with ADA requirements	<p>Examples of facility improvements include, but are not limited to: adding a wheelchair ramp, installing grab bars in bathrooms, widening a doorway, installing accessible playground equipment to comply with ADA requirements</p>	\$50,000	<p>Funding in this category may <u>NOT</u> be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital expenses such as major construction or renovation projects • Support to sites other than the licensed or certified site to which the funds were granted • Building a new fence
Therapeutic Services	<p>Therapeutic Services means services, offered by skilled professionals, that focus on curative, rehabilitative, preventative or healing practices. Examples include but are not limited to: behavioral therapy offered by a licensed behavioral specialist.</p>	\$25,000	<p>Funding in this category may <u>NOT</u> be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services that are not offered by skilled professionals focused on curative, rehabilitative, preventative or healing practices.

Supportive and Adaptive Materials and Equipment	Materials and equipment that directly support children with complex needs. Examples include but are not limited to: picture exchange communication systems, calming or sensory items, adaptive swings, adaptive chairs, eating aids.	\$25,000	Funding in this category may <u>NOT</u> be used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum for teacher training or professional development • Vehicles • General supplies such as: copy paper, toner, etc.
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Review the list of ineligible items in the appendices.

Section 2: Eligibility

The Child Care Complex Needs Fund is awarded through a competitive grant process. Submitting an application does not guarantee that an eligible provider will receive a grant award. Eligible applicants may only receive Complex Needs Funds once each state fiscal year.

Eligible providers include:

- Open licensed, certified, or certified for payment only child care providers
- License-exempt Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) providers who have served at least one child on subsidy in four of the last six months or two of the last three months and claim for subsidy through the Social Service Payment System (SSPS) at time of application.

To be eligible, providers must have children currently enrolled in their care who have behavioral needs, developmental delays, disabilities, or other unique needs.

Section 3: How to Apply

All providers are required to have a WA Compass Provider Portal account before they can complete the Child Care Complex Needs Fund application.

The application requires you to answer questions about your program and explain your plans for using the grant funds, if awarded. DCYF strongly recommends that you review the application before you apply so you can draft your answers, review them against the provided rubric, and make sure you are satisfied with the accuracy and completeness of your answers. Providers can save their application and return to it before submitting.

Applications will not be reviewed until the application period closes. There is no benefit to applying early. DCYF recommends you take your time filling out the application and reviewing your answers.

If you want help reviewing your application, including your proposed plan for the funds, please contact our technical assistance partner, The Imagine Institute. Information on Technical Assistance is available [here](#). DCYF highly encourages providers to utilize our technical assistance partner to fill out the application.

The deadline to submit the application is March 19, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. PDT. DCYF highly recommends that providers not wait until the last minute to fill out the application. Submitting your application before the deadline will help to prevent any technical issues or last-minute complications that could potentially prevent you from submitting your application. DCYF is unable to accept applications after the deadline.

Application Criteria and Language Access

DCYF encourages applicants with no grant-writing experience to apply. We do not discriminate against applications written in languages other than English, or applications with typos or grammatical errors.

DCYF will provide all materials in English, Spanish, and Somali. Providers are encouraged to submit their applications in the language they feel best able to express themselves: English, Spanish, Somali, or some combination. To ensure that all applications receive equal consideration, applications submitted in Spanish or Somali will be translated into English.

As part of the review process, all members of the scoring team receive training on the rubric standards, including the requirement that grammar and spelling *not* be considered as part of the evaluation process.

Procedure

Before you apply, you must have a WA Compass Provider Portal account.

1. To set up a WA Compass account, please contact dcyf.providerportal@dcyf.wa.gov or call 866-627-8929.
 - a. To update your name, address, phone number, and email address, you will need to contact your licensor.
 - b. Access is granted to the director and primary contact. These roles can assign additional designee access.

Application

2. Providers submit an application using the [WA Compass Provider Portal](#).
 - a. Before submitting your application, please review the [Application Preview and Question Guide](#), which contains all of the application questions and tips on how to answer them. DCYF strongly recommends you review this guide, as well as the [Scoring Guide](#), before completing your application.
 - b. For detailed instructions and screenshots showing how to submit your application within the portal, please see the Guide for How to Submit a Complex Needs Fund Application in Appendix A.

- c. To get started, log in to the [WA Compass Provider Portal](#), navigate to the Grant Information tab, select “Current Grants” and select the DCYF Complex Needs Fund application.

After answering a series of questions, you will then submit the application.

3. Once the application has been submitted, providers are unable to edit the application.

Review your answers carefully before you submit your application. Ensure the application you are submitting is under the correct site location. DCYF will not change the content in a submitted application.

Attestations

By completing the Child Care Complex Needs Fund application, applicants agree to the following terms and conditions:

- *I certify that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct.*
☐ Agree
- *I will spend the Child Care Complex Needs Fund award on the purchases outlined in this grant application.* ☐ Agree
- *I will spend the Child Care Complex Needs Funds within one year of receiving the funds.*
☐ Agree
- *I understand that my application will be denied if I have requested funding for any disallowed costs.*
☐ Agree
- *I will report to DCYF on how I spend the Child Care Complex Needs Funds. This will include keeping receipts and documentation from all purchases made with this grant money.*
☐ Agree
- *I will complete and submit the quarterly update that DCYF sends to me. I understand this is a requirement of receiving a grant award. If I receive funding and do not complete the update, I am in violation of the terms of the Child Care Complex Need Fund and I will return the grant funds to DCYF.*
☐ Agree
- *If I close my license before the one-year cycle ends, I will return any unspent grant funds to DCYF. I will still be responsible to provide reporting and receipts to DCYF detailing funds I did spend, regardless of open or closed status.* ☐ Agree
- *If I do not comply with DCYF reporting requirements or cannot show that the funds were spent in accordance with my application, I am in violation of the terms of the Child Care Complex Need Fund and I will return the grant funds to DCYF.* ☐ Agree
- *I understand that if my project is selected to receive funding, I will need to attend a special technical assistance session and pass a check for understanding about the grant process before I receive any money. DCYF will provide this session at no cost to me. If I do not attend the technical assistance session and pass the check for understanding, I will not receive the funds.* ☐ Agree
- *I have reviewed my application and am ready to submit. I understand once my application is submitted, I cannot make any changes to my answers.* ☐ Agree

Section 4: Selection and Awards

Applicant Selection

The Child Care Complex Needs Fund is awarded through a competitive grant process. All applications received within the application period will be reviewed. First, all applications will be reviewed for eligibility. Second, all applications will be scored according to the [scoring rubric](#). Only applications that score an average of nine points or higher are eligible to move forward in the review process. After the initial scoring process, DCYF will convene a review panel of subject matter experts to make funding determinations.

Once an applicant has been awarded grant funds, all funds must be spent on the costs listed in their approved application within one year of receiving the grant award.

Scoring

Applications will be scored solely on content and criteria according to the [scoring rubric](#).

Applicants may receive points for saying they need something; more points for explaining how the request will help the child(ren) in their care; and the most points for explaining the research, planning, or process that led to their decision.

In order to move forward in the review process, applicants must receive an average of 9 points or higher. Applications that receive less than 9 points are not eligible for funding consideration.

Prioritization

If the eligible applications received request more funding than DCYF has available, DCYF may prioritize applications from each provider type that received the highest total of points. To simplify the prioritization process, we have removed the zip code factors.

A review panel of subject matter experts will conduct a thorough review of these finalist applications to make funding determinations.

The review panel evaluates finalist applications based upon:

- 1) Does the application fulfill the intent of the Child Care Complex Needs Fund?
- 2) Out of these finalists, will this specific application produce the best impact for children with complex needs?

Applications that receive the highest priority from the review panel will receive an award until funding has been depleted.

Receiving Payment

The Child Care Complex Needs Fund application will be open for approximately eight weeks. When funding determinations are made, applicants will be notified. DCYF will implement a special pre-award technical assistance session for awardees. DCYF will provide this technical assistance session at a mutually-agreed-upon time after funding decisions

are finalized. The purpose of the pre-award technical assistance is to support providers' success in managing their award and carrying out their grant activities.

For FY 2025, the dates are as follows:

Application opens	January 22, 2025
Application closes	March 19, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. PDT
Application Initial Scoring	April 2025
Applicants notified whether or not they are finalists	April/May 2025
Review Panel meets	May 2025
Finalists are notified of award decisions and required technical assistance session deadline	May/June 2025
Payments processed	2-4 weeks after approval notifications and required technical assistance session is completed.

Providers will receive the grant payment in one lump sum. Please understand that electronic payment processing and the U.S. Postal Service may take several business days, which may impact the exact date that providers receive payments.

DCYF will process payments through SSPS. Providers will receive the DCYF Complex Needs Fund payment in the same way they receive SSPS payments. Details for future rounds will be released at a later date.

Section 5: Post Award

If you are awarded a grant, be prepared to submit your receipts for items and expenses you used the grant funding for. You will also be required to submit quarterly updates about your progress using a form that DCYF will provide. Once an applicant has been awarded grant funds, all funds must be spent on the costs listed in their approved application within one year of receiving the grant award.

Reporting requirements are intended to help current and future grantees. This process will help DCYF and grantees identify developing issues while there is still time to troubleshoot them. If providers indicate an issue in their reporting, DCYF will contact them to offer additional assistance or have a technical assistance partner contact them directly. Information learned from these updates will help DCYF shape and refine its grant program for future rounds.

Reporting

Quarterly grant reporting will be required until the grantee has spent the full amount of funds. Each quarter, grantees will submit a narrative about their progress, answering the following questions:

- How is your experience working with activities funded by your Child Care Complex Needs Fund award so far?
- Have you spent the full amount of your Complex Needs Fund award at this time?
- Do you think you will need to make changes to your original Complex Needs Fund spend plan?
- Is this grant funding helping you accomplish your goals for supporting children with complex needs?
- Are the results different than your original goals?
- What adjustments are you making, if any?
- What have you learned so far? Any surprises?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your project plan, timeline, or budget? For example, have you experienced any challenges?
- Do you require any additional help or assistance at this time?

If reporting is not submitted, the provider will be considered in violation of the grant agreement and may be required to return the funding.

Tracking Receipts

Providers are required to keep all receipts from purchases made with the Child Care Complex Needs Fund for five years and may be asked to submit receipts to DCYF. If the provider is unable to submit receipts, they may be required to return part or all of the funds to the State of Washington.

DCYF will select a random sample of grantees to submit receipts for purchases associated with the grant. Providers who are selected for receipt review will be notified after the one-year grant spending period closes.

DCYF recognizes there are multiple ways to track all receipts for your grant funds. Below are ideas to get you started:

1. **Keep all receipts.** This point cannot be overstated. Developing a systematic process of filing receipts can save you a lot of time if you are selected for receipt review.
2. **Scan receipts and keep them at least five years.** This is helpful if the ink on a receipt fades. If DCYF cannot read a receipt, they will not be able to accept it as part of receipt review. DCYF allows electronically stored receipts. However, it is a good idea to back up stored receipts in case your hard drive crashes.
3. **Take a picture of receipts with your smartphone.** This is a great idea and there are a number of apps that can assist you. With today's technology, you can "make a note on the receipt and then take a picture of it." But remember to back up those app files too.
4. **Have your receipts emailed to you, if offered.** This is a great idea and a number of vendors offer this as a service to you.

5. **Don't rely on bank statements, credit-card statements, or canceled checks.** These are important, yet insufficient without actual receipts. DCYF may see on the credit card statement that you spent \$435 at Home Depot, but they have no idea what exactly you bought. It could be that you purchased a barbecue grill instead of the ADA handrails you listed in your grant application. For recordkeeping purposes, bank statements, credit card statements, and canceled checks are excellent, but the detail of the transaction, which the receipt provides, is critical for a DCYF receipt reviewer.
6. **Avoid cash.** This is very important. Cash is hard to track, easy to spend, and nearly impossible to reconcile with receipts. Use debit and credit cards; they provide you with monthly statements that can be easily matched to your receipts.
7. **Ask for help if you need to.** The receipt review process is not meant to be scary! If you have questions about what receipts and documentation are required, please ask. We are here to help.

Section 6: Where to Find Assistance

DCYF partners with the Imagine Institute to offer robust technical assistance in multiple languages, both pre- and post-award.

- Technical Assistance and Language Access
 - If you need technical assistance, including assistance in your language, guidance with preparing for and accessing the application, or questions on spending and saving receipts/documentation, you can contact the Imagine Institute.
 - Imagine Institute
 - Phone: 206-492-5249
 - Email: TA@imaginewa.org
- Application Questions
 - If you have questions about the application, the timeline of the grant, or other questions specific to the grant, please email dcyf.childcaregrants@dcyf.wa.gov
- WA Compass Provider Portal Link
 - To access your account, use the login link here: https://wa-del.my.site.com/PP_LoginPage
- Can't Log In?
 - If you need help logging into your WA Compass Provider Portal account, please email dcyf.providerportal@dcyf.wa.gov or call 866-627-8929

More Information

[Child Care Complex Needs Fund Webpage](#)

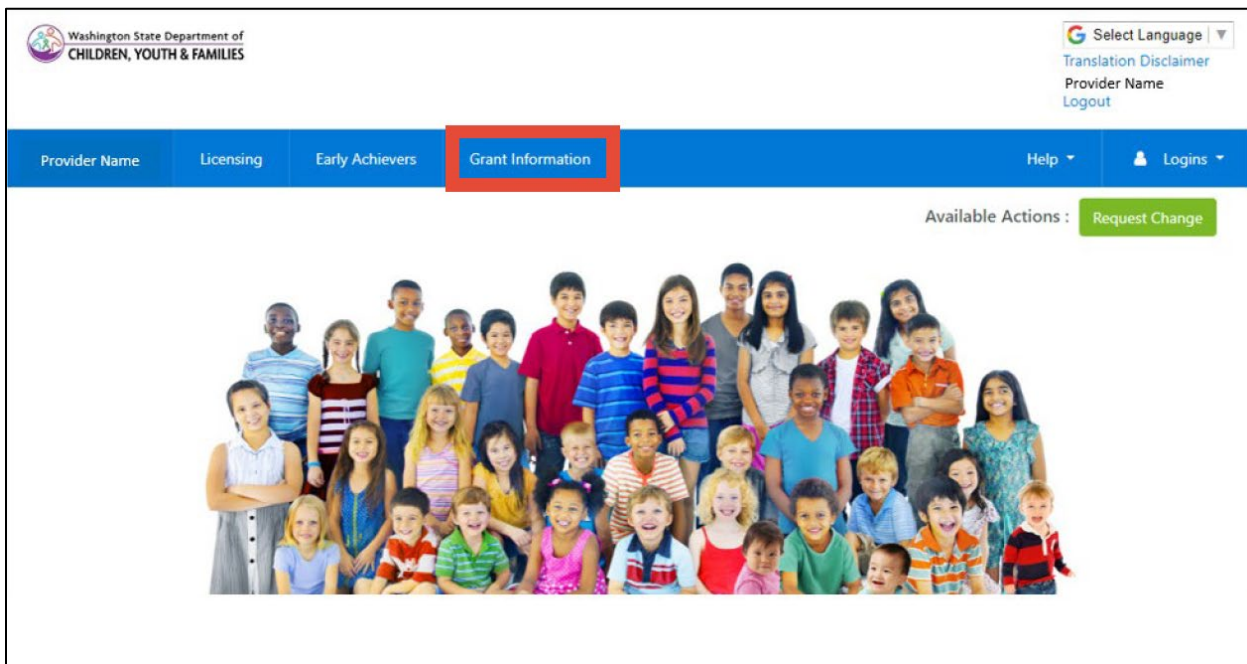
Appendix A: Application Step-by-Step Guide

DCYF highly encourages providers to utilize our technical assistance partners to fill out the application.

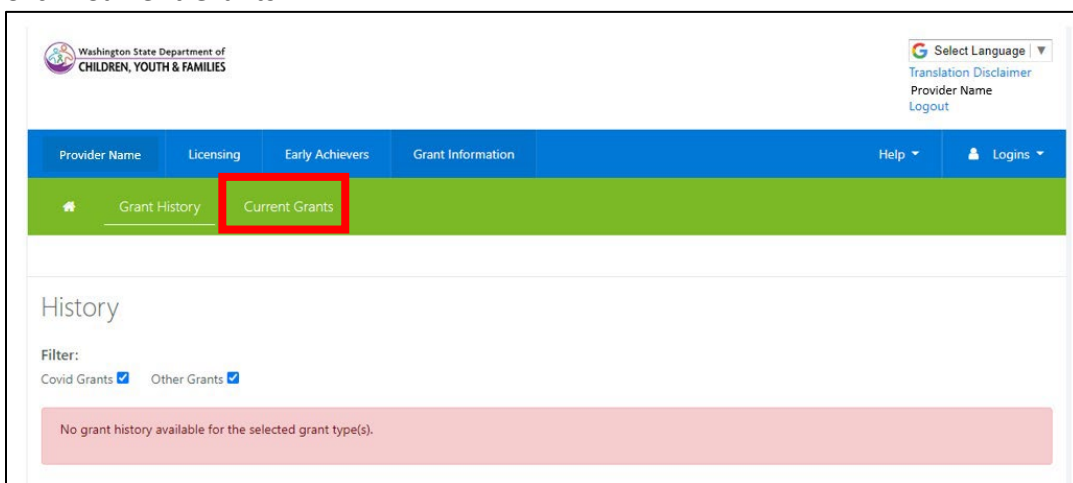
We recommend using the [Application Preview and Question Guide](#) to prepare your answers before inputting them into the WA Compass application. You can save your application and

return to it at a later time. Please take your time filling out the application and once you are confident you are finished, please submit. Applications that are saved and not submitted by the provider are not eligible for consideration. Once you submit your application, you cannot make any edits nor will DCYF make any edits on your behalf.

1. Log in to the [WA Compass Provider Portal](#).
2. Click on the “Grant Information” tab.

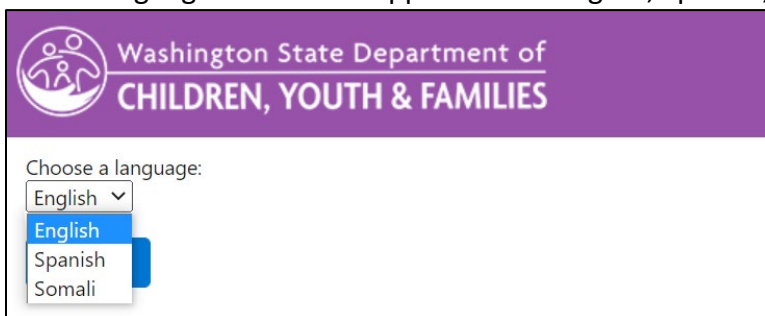


3. Select Language, if you would like to view the page in a language other than English.
4. Click “Current Grants.”

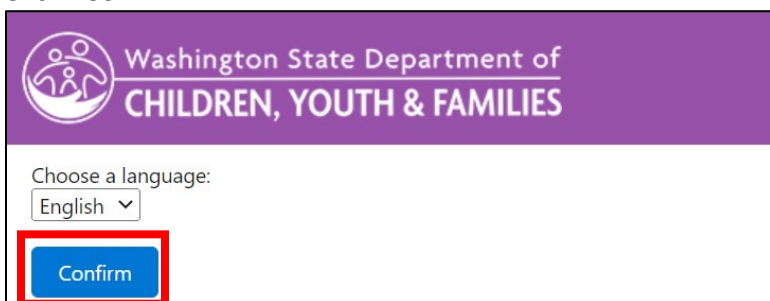


5. “Current Grants” shows all grant opportunities that are currently open, and whether or not a provider has already applied. Click on “Child Care Complex Needs Fund.”
6. Application opens in a new window.

7. Select Language to view the application in English, Spanish, or Somali.

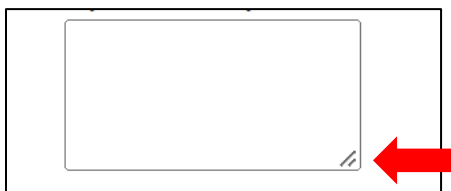


8. Click “Confirm”.



9. Read and answer questions 1-5.

Tip: To make a text box bigger, click on the bottom right corner of the box with your mouse, and drag to change the size.



10. Questions 6 through 9 list the four different allowable spend categories. You do not need to request funding in all four categories. Only select the spend category/ies that you are requesting funding for. For example, if you are requesting funding for therapeutic services, select the box here first.



After selecting this box, three additional questions (“sub-questions”) will appear. **Your answers to these questions will be scored. For information on how responses are scored, please review the [Application Scoring Guide/Rubric](#).**

7. Are you requesting funds for therapeutic services?



Please complete the table below for each therapeutic service that you are applying for. *Reminder: The maximum amount you can request is \$24,000.32.

Name of Therapeutic Service/Type	Estimated cost. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For example, “24000” and not \$24,000.32”	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost? Example – cost information on a professional quote or cost per hour or session. Enter the total yearly cost for this service under “Estimated Cost”. Do not enter only the hourly rate.
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
+Add New Item		
Total: \$0		

Please describe how the requested funds will provide targeted care or support for children with behavioral needs, developmental

How will adding these resources improve the quality of care for children with complex needs? (5 points)

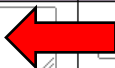
The first sub-question will ask you to list the cost of the therapeutic service(s) you are requesting. Please enter your responses into the table.

The table has three columns.

List the name or type of the therapeutic service in the first column.

Please complete the table below for each therapeutic service that you are

Name of Therapeutic Service/Type	Estimated cost. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For example, “24000” and not \$24,000.32”
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>



In the next column, list the entire estimated cost of that service. If the service you're requesting is based on an hourly, weekly, monthly rate, please enter the estimated cost of this service for the entire grant period (one year).

Enter a whole number only. Do not enter any text, commas, or decimals. For amounts with change, please round up or round down accordingly. An example is provided below.

If you are requesting an item that costs \$60.97, you will enter "61".

If you are requesting a service that will cost \$10,781.41, you will enter "10781"


Service	Estimated cost	Basis
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Then enter the basis for your estimate answering the question “how did you calculate this cost?”

sole r not	Basis for estimate – how did you arrive at the estimated cost? Example – cost information based on a professional quote or cost per hour or session. Enter the total yearly cost for this service under “Estimated Cost”. Do not enter only the hourly rate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

Continue entering all of the therapeutic services you are requesting funding for. Enter one name or type of service per line. If you need additional lines on the table, click on [+Add New Item](#) at the bottom left of the current table.

Please complete the table below for each therapeutic service that you are applying for. *Reminder: The maximum amount

Name of Therapeutic Service/Type	Estimated cost. Enter whole dollar amounts only. For example, "24000" and not "\$24,000.32"	Basis for estimate – how did you estimate cost? Example – cost on a professional quote or cost session. Enter the total yearly cost under "Estimated Cost". Do not enter an hourly rate.
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
+Add New Item 		
Total: \$0		

Once you have finished entering each service and the estimated cost, the total for this specific spend category will appear at the bottom of the table.

Review the total in this table to make sure it shows the entire amount of funding you are requesting for this specific spend category.

11. Complete this process for each spend category you are requesting funding for.

12. Question 10: Type the Total Grant Amount Requested in the text box. This answer is the total amount of funding for each spend category added together.

10. Total Grant Amount Requested (this must be the total amount from all estimated costs above. Enter a numerical value)

Enter a whole number only. Do not enter any text, commas, or decimals. For amounts with change, please round up or round down accordingly. An example is provided below.

Example: if you requested \$10,000 for staffing and \$10,000 for therapeutic services, you will enter "20000" for this question.

Example: If the supportive/adaptive materials cost is \$10,000.50, enter "10001". If the supportive/adaptive materials cost is \$10,000.25, enter "10000".

Questions 10-13 are not scored.

13. Read and agree to all terms and conditions by checking each box. Each term and condition requires a response in order to submit your application.

Terms and Conditions:

*(You must fill out all fields with a * next to them in order to submit the application.)*

I certify that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct. *

☐

I will spend the Child Care Complex Needs Fund award on the purchases outlined in this grant application. *

☐

I will spend the Child Care Complex Needs Funds within one year of receiving the funds. *

☐

I understand that my application will be denied if I have requested funding for any disallowed costs. *

☐

I will report to DCYF on how I spend the Child Care Complex Needs Funds. This will include keeping receipts and documents.

☐

I will complete and submit the quarterly update that DCYF sends to me. I understand this is a requirement of receiving funding.

☐

If I close my license before the one-year cycle ends, I will return any unspent grant funds to DCYF. I will still be responsible for the funds.

☐

If I do not comply with DCYF reporting requirements or cannot show that the funds were spent in accordance with my application, I will not receive the funds.

☐

I understand that if my application is selected to receive funding, I will need to attend a special technical assistance session to check for understanding. I will not receive the funds. *

☐

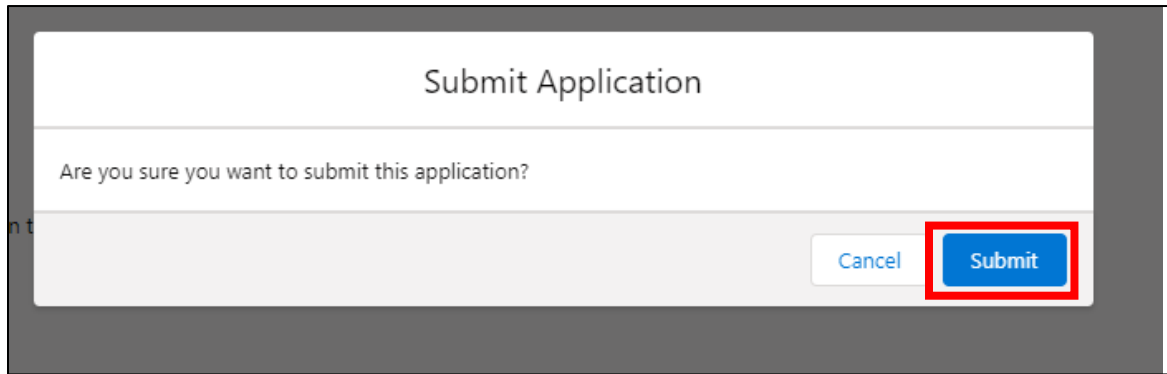
I have reviewed my application and am ready to submit. I understand that once my application is submitted, I cannot make any changes.

☐

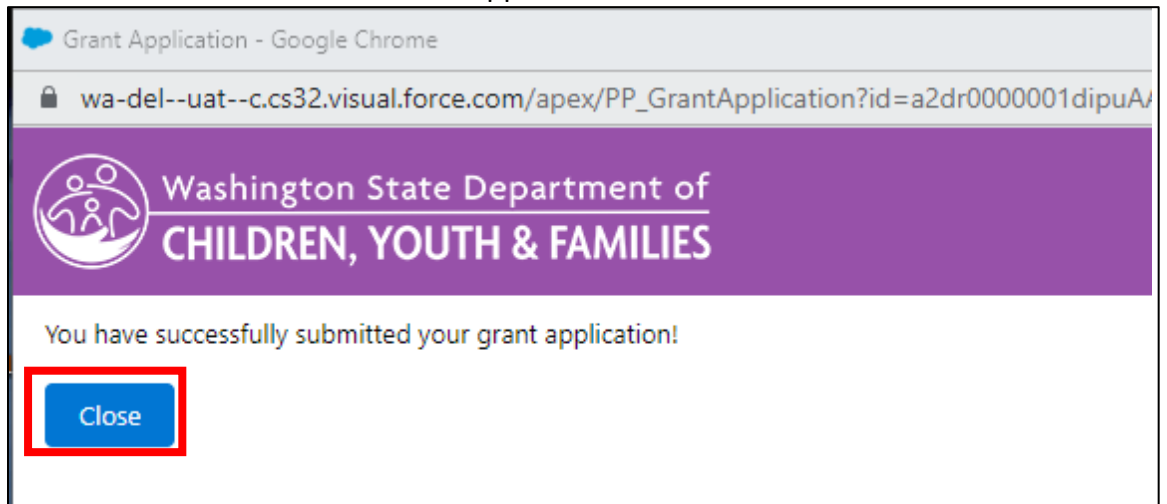
14. Click "Submit."



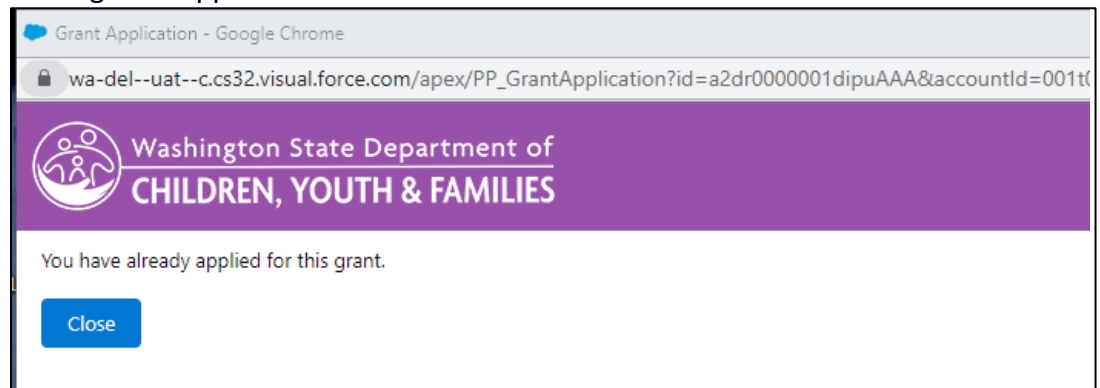
15. Click "Submit" again if you are sure you are ready to submit. Once you click submit, your application is final and you will not be able to make any edits.



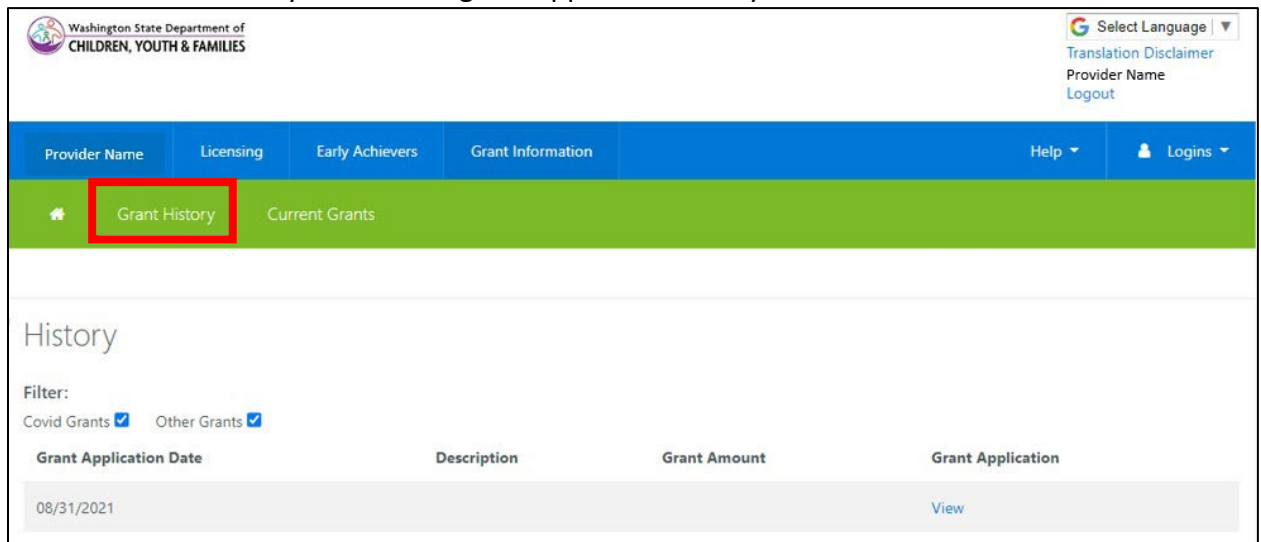
16. A Successful Submission screen will appear. Click "close."



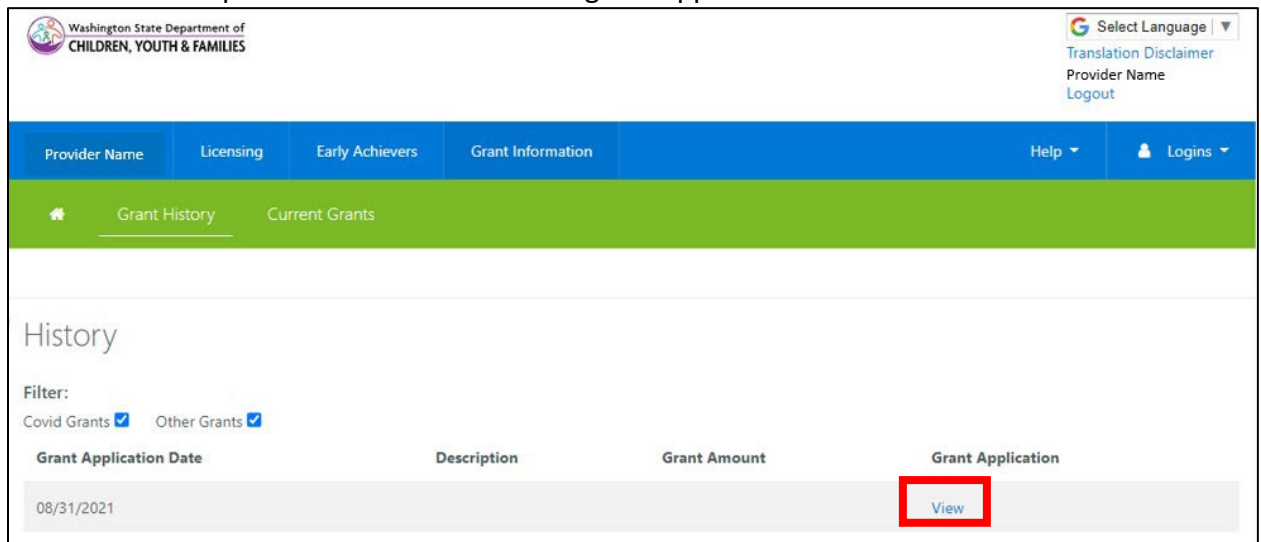
- a. If you attempt to click on the grant application again, a "you already applied" message will appear.



17. Click on “Grant History” to see the grant application that you submitted.



18. Click “View” to open a PDF of the submitted grant application.



19. Click “Download as PDF” to save a copy of your application.



Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is eligible for the Child Care Complex Needs Fund?

A: Open licensed, certified, or certified for payment only child care providers are eligible. License-exempt FFN providers who have served at least one child on subsidy in four of the last six months or two of the last three months and claim for subsidy through the Social Service Payment System (SSPS) at time of application are also eligible. Providers must also have children currently enrolled in their care with behavioral needs, developmental delays, disabilities, or other unique needs.

Q: What is a complex need?

A: Complex needs include any behavioral needs, developmental delays, disabilities, or other unique needs a child may have. It does not have to be a diagnosed or diagnosable condition. For example, a child who needs extra room to move because they require a mobility aid might have a complex need. A child who needs extra attention because they are acting out due to circumstances at home might also have a complex need.

Q: How can these funds be spent?

A: Grant funds may be used toward adding new staff to support children with complex needs, up to a \$5,000 hiring bonus for new staff that support children with complex needs, to increase current staff member's hours to support children with complex needs, therapeutic services, facility improvements to comply with ADA accessibility requirements, and supportive and adaptive materials or equipment. Providers must request funds in one or more of these categories and explain how they will spend the funds they request. Providers must agree that they will spend the grant funds on the expenses outlined in their approved application.

DCYF cannot fund applications that are unclear on what the funding will be used for.

DCYF cannot fund applications that request any disallowed expenses. Read [Appendix C](#) in the manual for a list of ineligible items.

Q: Can these grant funds be used for reimbursement of previous purchases?

A: No, this funding may only be used for resources identified in the grant application after the grant is approved and the funds are received by the provider.

Q: Can I apply for staffing funds to pay my own salary?

A: No. You may use the funds to hire a new staff person, up to a \$5000 hiring bonus, or to increase a current employee's hours. You cannot use the funds to cover current payroll or general operating expenses associated with payroll such as benefits, raises or retention bonuses.

Q: How is the Child Care Complex Need Fund different from past DCYF grants?

A: This grant is competitive. We are asking providers to tell us what they will do with the funds to support the needs of the child(ren) in their care. Applications are scored and those that

receive nine points or higher will be considered eligible for funding. A review panel will decide which applications to fund. Data from the applications will be used to prioritize the funding.

Q: Who is on the review panel?

A: DCYF will convene a review panel made up of internal and external subject matter experts that may include, but will not be limited to the following:

- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
- Bilingual Language Access Specialists
- Early Achievers
- Child Care Licensing
- Child Care Subsidy Special Needs Rate
- Child Care Grants
- Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Early Learning or relevant subject matter expert

Q: Does it matter when I submit my application?

A: DCYF will not review applications until the submission period is over. It does not matter when the application is submitted, as long as it is during the application period. Providers are highly encouraged to use technical assistance when applying and are encouraged to take their time in applying. Providers can save their application and return to it later.

DCYF highly recommends that providers not wait until the last minute to fill out the application. Submitting your application before the deadline will help to prevent any technical issues or last-minute complications that could potentially prevent you from submitting your application. DCYF is unable to accept applications after the deadline.

Q: Do I need to answer every question in the application?

A: The first four questions are required. In questions 6-9, providers only need to answer the questions for the spend categories they are applying for. If a provider selects a spend category, they are required to answer all sub-questions for that spend category. Question 10 is required. Questions 11-13 are not required, but providers may use them to give DCYF feedback on any assistance they received.

Providers must carefully read each term and condition, then check the box showing they agree.

Q: I just applied. What happens next?

A: The application will be open until March 19, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. PDT. After the application closes, they will be reviewed for eligibility and scored. Then, the review panel will meet to make funding determinations. Decisions will be announced in Spring 2025. Providers will be notified of their application status, and providers whose applications are approved will receive funding within 2-4 weeks after completion of the required pre-award technical assistance session.

Q: Can I potentially be awarded less money than I requested?

A: Yes. If you are awarded less grant money than you requested, DCYF will notify you and explain the amount that you are awarded and why it may differ from your original request.

Q: If I am eligible and apply for a grant, am I entitled to receive the grant?

A: No. The money that has been set aside for this grant by the Legislature is not enough to fund every application. Only applications that are complete and reasonably detailed will be considered (please see the [Application Scoring Guide](#) for more information). If we receive more complete and reasonably detailed applications than we are able to fund, we will prioritize applications based on data gathered from all applications.

Q: If I am selected for funding, how will I receive payment?

A: DCYF will process payments through the Social Service Payment System (SSPS). Providers will receive the Child Care Complex Needs Funds in the same way they usually receive subsidy payments from DCYF.

Q: If I am selected for funding, when can I expect to receive payment?

A: Payments will be processed within 2-4 weeks of the approval notification and completion of the required pre-award technical assistance session. Payment is also dependent upon USPS mail processing and electronic payment timelines of your financial institution.

Q: Is this grant taxable?

A: Yes. Grant funds are considered income. DCYF sends out a 1099 each January for tax purposes. The 1099 includes all DCYF funds provided in the tax year period.

Q: Do these grant funds need to be spent within a certain timeframe?

A: Grant funds must be spent within one year of receipt. DCYF is unable to allow any extensions for providers to spend the funds.

Q: Can I apply for this grant more than once?

A: Yes. If you are not selected for funding, you may apply again in the next round. Providers can only receive Child Care Complex Needs Funds once per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

Q: What if my greatest need for funding changes between when I apply and when I am granted the funds? Or what if I need to make changes part of the way into my project?

A: Let us know right away if things have changed. Email dcyf.childcaregrants@dcyf.wa.gov with subject line “Child Care Complex Needs Fund Spending Plan Adjustment.” We will evaluate these requests on a case by case basis.

Q: Do I need to save and submit receipts associated with this grant?

A: Yes. Providers must save the receipts for purchases made with these grant funds for five years. Providers may be asked to submit these receipts to DCYF. If a provider is unable to provide receipts and documentation upon request, they may be required to repay part or all of the grant funds.

Q: Are there any other reporting requirements associated with this grant?

A: Yes. Providers will be required to complete the quarterly update on how their grant project is going. DCYF wants to make sure we are supporting providers appropriately and hopes to capture any issues during the grant process while there is still time to help providers work through them. Providers are encouraged to submit any feedback they have about the grant or grant process, as well.

Q: What is the grant timeline?

A: Approximate dates are below. Dates are subject to change based upon the number of applications received and the funding determination review timeline.

Application opens	January 22, 2025
Application closes	March 19, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. PDT.
Application Initial Scoring	April 2025
Applicants notified whether or not they are finalists	April/May 2025
Review Panel meets	May 2025
Finalists are notified of award decisions and required technical assistance session deadline	May/June 2025
Payments processed	2-4 weeks after award approval notifications and required technical assistance session is completed.
Quarterly reporting, quarter 1	September 2025
Quarterly reporting, quarter 2	December 2025
Quarterly reporting, quarter 3	March 2026
Quarterly reporting, quarter 4	May 2026
Receipt review (for random sample of grantees)	Summer 2026

Q: What happens if I close my license after receiving the grant?

A: If a provider receives the grant and then closes their license, they must return any unspent grant funds to DCYF. A provider will still be responsible to provide reporting and receipts to DCYF detailing funds they did spend, regardless of open or closed status.

Q: Is there a deadline to apply for this grant?

A: Yes. The deadline to apply is March 19, 2025, at 5:00pm. PDT.

Q: When can I learn more about the next funding round for this grant?

A: More information will be posted on the [Child Care Complex Needs Fund website](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/child-care-grants) when it is available. DCYF will send out updates to licensed providers via email. The information will also be posted online at <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/child-care-grants>

Appendix C: Ineligible items/services

Items/Services on this list are not allowable for funding. This list is not exhaustive but is meant to show examples of requests that are not allowable.

If your application includes any of the items/services following, your application will not be approved.

If the total requested amount you entered in question 10 does not match the combined amount of your itemized spend plan(s) in your application, your application will not be approved.

DCYF will review each application to determine if the provider's requests are eligible and meet the criteria of the Complex Needs Fund.

General Operating Costs are **not** allowed uses of the Complex Needs Fund. These are costs that are needed to regularly run your business. They include, but are not limited to the following:

- Payroll for current staff
- Payroll for yourself/owner salary
- Rent/Mortgage
- Utility payment
- Landscaping for purposes other than supporting children with complex needs
- General supply requests (including, but not limited to: printers, copy paper, etc.)
- General child care equipment that does not directly support children with complex needs
- Food and/or food supplies that do not directly support children with complex needs
- Taxes
- Benefits costs for current staff
- Raises/Bonuses not used for hiring purposes/Retention Bonuses for current staff
- Substitute pay
- Staffing travel costs for training (gas, parking fees, etc.)
- Staff training, teacher training or professional development training

- Curriculum or materials for teacher training or professional development

Other costs that are **not** allowed:

- Vehicle purchase
- General facility upgrades
- Building a new fence
- Removing a load bearing wall
- Building an addition to the home (building a new room (indoor or outdoor), tiny houses, building a shed)
- Painting the exterior of the facility
- Building an outdoor restroom
- Facility security systems
- Religious Activities: You may not use grant funds for any religious purpose or activity, including worship or instruction
- General supplies for the child care program that are not specific for a child with complex needs
 - For example: “I need new high chairs for my toddler class” is **not** allowed, but “I need an ADA-approved high chair for a child enrolled in my care that has a complex need” is allowable.
 - Another example: “I need a ramp for future children with complex needs to attend my child care.” This is ineligible because the need expressed must be for a child currently enrolled.