

Absentee Shawnee Tribe Child Care Assistance Program
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
Tribal Stabilization Sub-Grants for Child Care Providers
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)*

The American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law on March 2021, providing the Absentee Shawnee Tribe with additional funds designed to help stabilize the child care industry as the Tribe continues to recover for the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of providing financial relief to child care providers is to help defray unexpected business costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help stabilize their operations so that they may continue to provide care.

Below are answers to frequently asked questions regarding the Tribal Child Care Stabilization Sub-Grant funding.

Q1. Who is administering these funds?

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Child Care Assistance Program

Q2. What types of grants are available?

Stabilization subgrants are available to qualified and eligible childcare providers to help promote, stabilize, and sustain the operation of the child care business sector.

Stabilization Sub-Grants can **only** be used for operating expenses.

Q3. What can funds be used for?

Funds **must** be used for purposes allowed under the Federal guidelines, including:

- Personnel costs, including payroll, salaries, similar employee compensation, employee benefits, retirement costs, educational costs, child care costs; and supporting staff expenses in accessing COVID-19 vaccines.
- Rent (including under a lease agreement) or payment on any mortgage obligation, utilities, or insurance; also, may include late fees or charges related to late payments.
- Facility maintenance or improvements, defined as minor renovations, including outdoor learning spaces/playground, and minor improvements to address COVID-19 concerns.
- Personal protective equipment, cleaning and sanitization supplies and services, or training and professional development related to health and safety practices.
- Goods and services necessary to maintain or resume child care services.
- Mental health supports for children and employees.
- Health and safety trainings for staff, including but not limited to CPR, First Aid, and medication administration.

Q4. Can I use the funds for construction or major renovations?

No, Funds may not be used for construction or major renovations. Major renovation means: (1) structural changes to the foundation, roof, floor, exterior or load bearing walls of a facility, or the extension of a facility to increase its floor area; or (2) extensive alteration of a facility such as to significantly change its function and purpose, even if such renovation does not include any structural change.

Q5. Do grant funds need to be paid back?

No, grant funds are not a loan, so they won't need to be paid back.

Q6. How will I receive the grant funds?

Upon approval, by the Tribal Child Care Assistance Program the payment will be submitted and processed by the Tribal Finance Department and checks will be mailed.

Q7. Will child care providers have to submit receipts to show how funds were spent?

Providers applying for the regular Stabilization Subgrant won't need to submit receipts, but providers are required to submit a monthly report on how you are spending the grant funds. The report can be emailed to astchildcare@astribe.com or mailed to AST CCDF Program, 2025 S. Gordon Cooper Drive, Shawnee, OK 74801.

Providers who are applying for the Reimbursement Subgrant will be required to submit receipts showing expenses paid from March 11, 2021-February 28, 2022. These can be submitted with the application. Providers have until July 1, 2022 to apply for these funds.

Providers will be reimbursed/funded up to the max funding amount based on their OKDSH Stars Level. Max levels: 3 Star= \$75,000, 2 Star= \$51,000, 1 Star+= \$25,200, 1 Star and Others= \$10,800. Eligible providers may apply for both application types.

Providers are **required** to maintain records on how funds were spent as your program could be selected for an audit. Per federal regulation requirements all recipients of federal funds need to keep financial documents for seven years.

Q8. Are the COVID-19 Stabilization Grants taxable?

Stabilization Grants are considered income by the IRS. The IRS has published information indicating that "receipt of a government grant by a business is generally not excluded from the business's gross income under the Federal Tax Code and therefore is taxable." Please consult your accountant or tax professional to understand more about your particular tax situation and how this guidance applies to your specific business structure.

The ARP Act does not exempt the ARP child care stabilization subgrant funding from taxation. Therefore, this funding is subject to the same tax rules as regular CCDF funding. State tax rules may apply. Regarding federal tax rules, please contact the Internal Revenue Service for guidance. In some cases, funds used to cover operating expenses may be exempt from taxation.

Q9. Will providers be receiving a 1099 for tax purposes?

Yes.

Q10. What are the funding cycles?

Stabilization subgrants are based on monthly operating expenses. As many of these stabilization expenses are recurring to support provider's stability, the Tribal Child Care Assistance Program will make awarded subgrants with recurring payments to providers through the funding period.

Reimbursement subgrants are for past expenses from March 11, 2021 to February 28, 2022.

Q11. Is the data in the provider application about funding awards public information?

Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Child Care Assistance program will not use provider's confidential information for anything other than what's necessary for the purpose of the grant as permitted by law.

Q12. Under any circumstances will I have to pay the funds back?

You may have to pay funds back if your program closes permanently and you haven't spent all the received funds, or you are using the funds for unallowable uses.

Q13. What are the consequences for providers who applied for and received funds that are not following the funding requirements?

If there is an indication that a provider isn't using the COVID-19 Stabilization Grant funds for the purpose laid out by the federal government, it could result in termination of future grant payments, repayment of funds already received and/or an audit.

Q14. What do I do, if I have applied for a grant and need to change something?

Send an email to astchildcare@astribe.com that included your first and last name, Business Name, Business Provider ID and the grant that you want cancelled or mail or drop off at the office. Your application will be cancelled, and you will be able to re-apply.

Q15. How long do I have to spend the funds I receive?

Stabilization Funds: Every 30 days (with Expense report due by the 5th working day of the following month)

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Eligibility

E1. What type of child care programs qualified and are eligible to receive Child Care Stabilization Subgrant funds?

- DHS and/or Tribal Licensed family child care homes
- DHS and/or Tribal Licensed group child care homes
- DHS and/or Tribal Licensed child care centers
- DHS and/or Tribal Licensed school-aged programs

In addition, the above eligible programs **must** be licensed, certified, regulated, or registered and CCDF-eligible and had to have been serving children and in operation, before March 11, 2021.

Qualified providers include child care providers that are open and available to provide child care services on the date they apply for a subgrant or are temporarily closed due to public health, financial hardship, or other reasons related to the COVID-19 public health emergency and plan to re-open in a timely fashion. They must meet applicable health and safety requirements and be in good standing throughout the funding period with the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Child Care Assistance program to remain eligible.

E2. What is required of child care providers who accept grant funds?

If you are an eligible provider interested in applying for the COVID-19 Stabilization grant, you must attest/certify to the items listed below each time that you apply/renew. **(See Application)**

1. My facility is open and operating a Tribal licensed child care program, OR my facility is temporarily closed as per OK Department of Health advisement for COVID-19-related closure.
2. My facility will meet all child care rules and regulations according to my tribal license type.
3. My facility, when open and operating and available to provide child care, will implement policies in line with guidance from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and with guidance and orders from state and local public health authorities.
4. For each employee at my facility on the day of this application, I agree that I must pay at least the same or higher amount in weekly wages and maintain the same or higher benefits for the duration of the grant period. I will not issue any involuntary furloughs, layoffs, etc. through the duration of the subgrant period.
5. To the extent possible, I will provide relief from copayments and tuition payments for the families enrolled at my facility. I will prioritize such relief for families struggling to make either type of payment, including efforts to connect families to other assistance that may be available.
6. After award payment is issued, I acknowledge that I must report on how the grant funds were utilized at my facility. This report must take place within timeframes and in the manner specified by the Tribal Childcare program, and I acknowledge that I am expected to participate in any financial and program monitoring related to this grant award, as defined and required by tribal law, to ensure appropriate use of funds.
7. I understand that if my facility permanently closes during the subgrant period, I am responsible for immediately reporting the closure to the Tribal Childcare Program.
8. I attest that the information I provide about my facility in the grant application, to the best of my knowledge, is accurate and true for the purposes of determining the grant award amount.

E3. What is required of child care providers who accept grant funds?

Child care businesses are required to be open and available to provide child care services or temporarily closed due to public health, financial hardship, or other reasons relating to the COVID-19 public health emergency. They must meet applicable health and safety requirements and be in good standing throughout the funding period with the Absentee Shawnee Tribe Child Care program to remain eligible.

E4. When do providers have to be open in order to be eligible for grant funds?

Providers must be open and operating a DHS/Tribal licensed child care program on the day they submit a grant application.

E5. Under what circumstances can providers be closed temporarily and still be eligible for grant funds?

Temporary closure due to public health guidance issued for the Oklahoma Department of Health, or the provider's local public health department. The program temporarily closed days due to the primary care providers having a positive COVID-19 test result or close contact exposure.

E6. Do I need to pay my employees if my program is closed temporarily and still eligible for grant funds?

Yes, for each employee at my facility I must pay at least the same or higher amount in weekly wages and maintain the same or higher benefits for the duration of the grant period. You also may not issue any involuntary furloughs, layoffs, etc., through the duration of the subgrant period.

E7. Can I still receive grant funds if my child care program is under corrective action?

If your program is under provisional license, intent to revoke or suspension you are ineligible to receive grant funding. The tribe agency will re-evaluate eligibility once all non-compliant standards are corrected and the corrective action has been removed from the program license.

Grant Application Process

G1. How do I apply for the Child Care Stabilization Grant?

Stabilization subgrant applications are available online at <https://www.astribe.com/child-care/> or providers can request an application be mailed to them by phone 405-445-6000 or email astchildcare@astribe.com .

G2. What information and documentation is needed to apply for grant funds?

No additional documentation is required when initially applying for a stabilization subgrant award. However, providers will need to answer questions about enrollment, employment, and operating expenses, but no documentation will be required when you apply.

Receipts are required to be submitted with the Reimbursement Subgrant application.

G3. How will Stabilization payment be calculated?

Child care provider subgrant amounts must:

1. Be based on a provider’s stated current operating expenses, including costs associated with providing or preparing to provide child care services during the pandemic and;
2. To the extent practicable, cover sufficient operating expenses to ensure continuous operations for the intended period of the subgrant.
3. A cost estimation model of estimated child care providers operating expenses will be used to determine the amount of stabilization subgrant awards. Childcare providers will need to state or confirm operating expenses with the budget tool provided by the Tribal Child Care Program or have the option to provide their own calculations of operating expenses.

G4. Who is considered an employee?

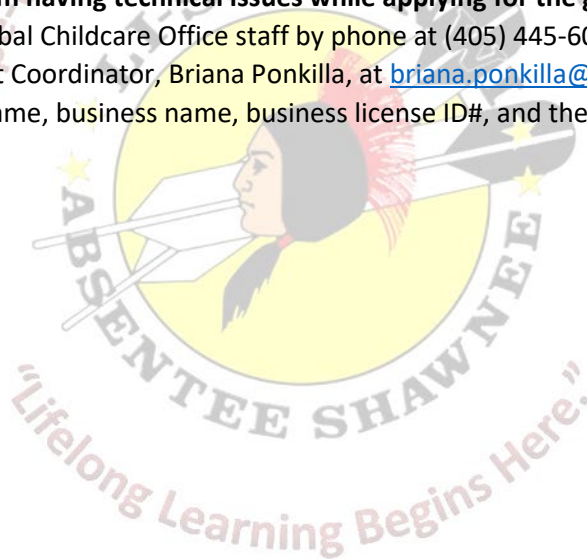
- Any paid staff of the organization.
- For center or group programs- The individual listed on the license that oversees the day-to-day operations is considered an employee.

G5. Do I need to count myself as an employee in my grant application?

Yes.

G6. What do I do if I am having technical issues while applying for the grants?

Contact the Tribal Childcare Office staff by phone at (405) 445-6000 or email any questions to the CCDF Grant Coordinator, Briana Ponkilla, at briana.ponkilla@astribe. Please include your first and last name, business name, business license ID#, and the grant you are having difficulty applying for.



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**Based on FAQs from Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Child Care Program.*