



November 9th, 2021

Dr. Maria Lupe Jaime-Mileham
Deputy Director Child Care and Development Division
California Department of Social Services

Dear Deputy Director Jaime-Mileham,

On behalf of *Build Up California*, we write today to share input we have received from our members and partners regarding the California Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grant Program. We thank you for the recent stakeholder meeting that the Department held on November 4th and hope that this feedback provides additional insight as you begin to implement this important program.

Build Up California is a statewide network dedicated to the sustainability, improvement, and expansion of early learning and care facilities. Launched in 2020, we advocate to ensure children can learn and grow in safe and healthy environments while their parents work. We were proud to advocate in support of the \$250 million allocated in this year's State Budget for early care and education facilities and look forward to being a partner with you and your staff at the Department of Social Services to ensure the success of this program. We also look forward to continuing to advocate for additional state and federal dollars to continue the State's commitment to providing all California's children with safe, healthy, and quality care and learning settings.

Since the launch of *Build Up California*, we have held a series of roundtables and stakeholder meetings to discuss the most effective strategies to expand, improve, and sustain early learning and care facilities. Facilities are a core component of creating healthy, safe, developmentally-appropriate child care settings, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated California's lack of early care and education infrastructure. After



Governor Newsom signed AB 131, providing the \$250 million one-time funding for the Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grant Program, we convened a stakeholder survey and session to discuss what could be done to ensure the success of the program.

All providers throughout the state, whether home- or center-based, have unique needs when facing facilities funding concerns, many of which you will see reflected below. For example, some may only need the ability to access grant funds, while others may need additional technical assistance in the pre-development aspect of their grant request. Some may have large projects with a gap in funding that needs to be filled, while others have repair projects that could be considered a licensing violation. As is reflective of our state, no one provider or their needs are the same, and we hope the Program can have the flexibility to meet the needs of all licensed providers throughout the state.

Below you will find a list of input we have received from our members and partners, many of which we understand the Department is intimately aware of and working diligently on. We hope this information can provide insight into the field's feedback and questions and support the important work we know you and your staff are already doing to implement this essential program. For more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at info@buildupca.org or visit www.buildupca.org.

Thank you for your consideration, commitment, and collaboration on this critical program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ericka Erickson".

Ericka O. Erickson

Coordinator, Build Up California

www.buildupca.org

Policy and Program Officer, Early Care and Education

Low Income Investment Fund

www.liifund.org

Build Up California

Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grant Program

Program Implementation

- Offer webinar training on Request for Application and Grant process.
- Promote funding to ensure providers throughout the state are aware of the Program.
- Move the applications and grants out to providers in an expedited manner within 60 to 90 days.
- Provide translation services to ensure access for all providers.

Application Process

- Ensure a user-friendly application process.
- Allow all licensed programs to apply, not just those serving specific income brackets.
- Provide technical assistance for application.

Grant Money Priorities and Qualifications

- Leverage funds needed by providers by working with organizations like Community Development Financial Institutions.
- Prioritize best practices design. Ensure high-quality facilities for all children but especially our most vulnerable.
- Consider the TK disruption- support adaption to serve ages 0 to 4 years old- consider shared services.
- Align eligibility for co-location of affordable housing and child care
- Separate repair and renovation from construction; they should be managed differently.
- Prioritize shovel-ready projects but don't forget about areas with low capacity that need technical assistance (T.A.) and capacity building.
- Ensure the ability for small, medium, and large projects to be funded- a concern that large organizations who have easier access to financing take up the majoring of funding
- Allow projects of all amounts to be funded.
- Include funding for big projects (example: \$5MM renovations)

- Funding of facility improvements shouldn't be restricted to adding additional capacity.
- Prioritize outdoor education - COVID-19 has changed how providers do what they do.
- Include funding for specific needs such as toilets or outdoor improvements.
- Support eco-conscious spaces with big windows greened a/c units, and clean drinking water as facilities undergo renovation
- Include funds to support classroom and overall facility improvement.
- Consider a percent increase for each school versus the number of spots (for example, a program has 16 spots now so should be able to receive funding if they double their spots to 32 versus a program that has 16 spots now but will only receive funding if they add 100 spots)
- Use the LPC zip code priorities. Give priority to schools that are the only licensed care in a certain zip code, or childcare desert.
- Prioritize programs that are facing imminent eviction (i.e., programs at school districts sites).
- Set grant amounts that aren't so high that they only serve a few projects but not so low that you won't be able to get the money out the door in time.
- Work with an intermediary to leverage the public dollars so the money can go further.
- For repair and renovation, prioritize licensing violations, but also programs affected by disaster.

Technical Assistance (TA)

- Provide TA for financing, design, and construction.
- Consider grant programs and technical assistance with changes in local policies.
- Ensure family child care businesses are receiving additional technical assistance and support in capacity building and quality programs and requirements.
- Set aside some funding to build capacity with:
 - > ECE support orgs like R&Rs, LPCs, and First 5s
 - > Local CDFIs
 - > Developers for co-location
 - > Architects
 - > Cities and counties on supportive policies, land use, zoning and fire code

Post-Grant Data Collection and Monitoring

- Ensure clear outcomes and data collection system that enables providers and the field to tell the story of the concrete impacts of these funds on child care in California

Provider and Field Questions and Concerns

- The start and end date.
- New construction can take up to 5 years to complete. How will funds in projects like this be invested?
- Does DSS have the staff and resources to manage this grant program work on time?
- I am curious as to how the grant program will decide which communities to invest in. I understand the facilities in dire need of repair are usually in redlined districts or districts that don't always have the funds or a way to access one on one time with city planners, licensing, contracting, etc.
- What is the fund/grant allocation formula being implemented by the Dept. of Social Services?
- Would the funds support the purchase of materials to upgrade program delivery to children?
- How will we know when this funding is available? What can we do in the meantime to prepare?
- I wonder how many programs could apply to rebuild after a disaster - 5? 100? That can help us figure out how much could be available for the remainder of the funds.