



## COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# Request for Response Remote Learning Support Services Grants October 13, 2020

### Purpose

The purpose of the Remote Learning Support Grant program is to promote and support equitable access to affordable, safe, and supportive environments for children to engage remotely in instructional time during the school day.

### Eligibility and Funding

A total of \$12.1 million has been allocated for this purpose through the federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.

Funding priority has been given to cities and towns with local education agencies (LEAs) that:

- operate elementary schools offering either fully remote or hybrid learning schedules as of September 16, 2020;
- are in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> low-income band used as part of the calculation to determine Chapter 70 education funding (or are in the 8<sup>th</sup> income band and are most significantly impacted by COVID-19 according to September Department of Public Health data); and
- are not located in a jurisdiction that received Coronavirus Relief Funds directly from the federal government (City of Boston and Plymouth County).

Grant awards in the table below were calculated based on the number of elementary school children in the Fiscal Year 2021 foundation enrollment of the LEA.

Chelsea	\$ 368,400
Chicopee	\$ 350,800
Everett	\$ 372,900
Fall River	\$ 624,600
Fitchburg	\$ 289,100
Framingham	\$ 475,600
Gardner	\$ 116,600
Greenfield	\$ 104,200
Haverhill	\$ 437,800
Holyoke	\$ 325,700
Lawrence	\$ 809,100
Lowell	\$ 884,600
Lynn	\$ 837,000
Malden	\$ 357,700

Marlborough	\$ 259,600
New Bedford	\$ 779,300
North Adams	\$ 78,400
Orange	\$ 51,000
Pittsfield	\$ 272,600
Randolph	\$ 160,600
Revere	\$ 372,900
Salem	\$ 223,900
Somerville	\$ 285,800
Springfield	\$ 1,461,600
Ware	\$ 62,400
Webster	\$ 102,600
West Springfield	\$ 197,700
Worcester	\$ 1,359,000
<i>Regional Elementary School Districts (eligible towns):</i>	
Hoosac Valley (Adams and Cheshire)	\$ 64,100
Gill Montague (Gill and Montague)	\$ 56,800

### **Application Process**

Each eligible city or town must determine a “Lead Applicant” for the purposes of completing this grant application. The Lead Applicant may be either the eligible city or town or an entity delegated by the city or town to coordinate the grant application on its behalf.

Lead Applicants will be responsible for determining which organizations receive funding from this grant. Eligible organizations will be “Designated Recipients” of grant funding and can include any organization that is licensed or approved by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to deliver remote learning support services, as authorized by the Governor’s COVID-19 Executive Order 49. (Further information and guidance about remote learning support services can be found [here.](#)) Lead Applicants will facilitate this application process by:

1. Identifying organizations as Designated Recipients of grant funding, after confirming that they are providing or will be providing remote learning support services to children from the eligible city or town during the school day;
2. Working collaboratively with the Designated Recipients to determine how the grant award will be allocated among them;
3. Confirming that the allocation reflects agreement among the Designated Recipients;
4. Providing a description of the process used to identify organizations as Designated Recipients and allocate funding;

5. Confirming that the process for allocating funding was in accordance with state and local finance and procurement laws; and
6. Confirming that the program will be open at the appropriate times during the school day to meet family needs, barring COVID related health and safety closures or quarantine as instructed by the Local Board of Health.

The Executive Office of Education (EOE) will review applications on a rolling basis to confirm that all application requirements have been met. The organizations listed as Designated Recipients in the approved application will then receive their allocated funding from the Commonwealth.

### **Identifying Designated Recipients**

Raising awareness and increasing availability of remote learning support services is a critical part of this grant program. While LEA's are not eligible to receive funding through this grant, the Lead Applicant should work closely with the LEA as well as other key community organizations to understand how best to support remote learners who cannot engage successfully in remote learning from home during the school day.

To identify potential Designated Recipients, Lead Applicants should review the information and guidance about remote learning support services found [here](#). A list of EEC-Licensed Providers serving school age children in their area can also be downloaded from the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) [Child Care Search](#) using the Search by "Radius" option.

Key questions that Lead Applicants should answer in identifying potential Designated Recipients include:

1. Is the LEA or another community organization keeping records of programs or providers where children are engaging in remote learning during the school day, if they are not at home?
2. Have any of the before and after school programs in the community expanded their hours to serve students during the school day?
3. Could the LEA or another organization survey families to understand their current use of remote learning support services outside the home, and the level of unmet need for such services?
4. Could the LEA or another organization help the Lead Applicant to convene local organizations that may be working with school age children during the school day, to discuss options for allocating funding and expanding access to meet the needs of local families?

### **Allocating Funding**

After identifying potential Designated Recipients, the Lead Applicant should facilitate a process to allocate funding in collaboration with those organizations, soliciting ideas and feedback regarding operational, staffing, and enrollment costs to provide these services.

Methods for allocating funding include, but are not limited to:

- **Operational support per classroom or cohort of children**: allocate funding on the basis of the number of classrooms or cohorts of children that the Designated Recipients supports or plans to support, to defray the costs per classroom or per Family Child Care Home to operate school age programs for remote learning coverage. In determining the per classroom grant funding, Lead Applicants are encouraged to consider the costs of PPE, COVID-19 testing, cleaning, and providing sufficient access to internet connectivity.
- **Salary support for additional staff needed for classrooms or cohorts of children**: allocate funding on the basis of the number of additional staff needed to provide these services, to defray the costs of the additional staff needed to maintain stable groups of children and avoid needing to share staff members across classrooms.
- **Attendance cost support for families**: allocate funding based on the number of economically-disadvantaged families that the Designated Recipient plans to serve, to defray the costs to parents by allocating funds per school aged child enrolled in programs. This approach may include the potential to adjust formulas to incentivize services and increase access for students with disabilities, students with special needs, students of color, students experiencing homelessness, students involved with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), students from low-income households, English Language Learners, or students whose needs may not be fully met by remote options. The EEC rate chart for per child subsidies, if helpful, [can be found here](#).

Lead Applicants may choose one of these approaches, a combination of approaches, or an approach that is not outlined here, depending on local needs, capacity, and provider interest and feedback.

Some questions Lead Applicants may ask to prompt constructive discussion about potential allocation methods include, but are not limited to:

1. How has the addition of remote learning support services impacted program operations?
2. How has it impacted staffing?
3. What is the greatest impact on program expenses?
4. Are there adjustments to classroom or care settings, or physical spaces that have been, or need to be, made for programs to be able to support remote learners?
5. Are families paying for remote learning support? What is the cost range across programs?
6. Are there needs that are not currently being met among remote learners, that grants could support?
7. Are students who are vulnerable or priority populations within the district enrolled in remote learning programs? What are their needs? Are there additional students from these populations who might enroll in remote learning, with financial support?
8. Do we, as a community, need to increase our capacity for remote learning support in order to meet the needs of families? What is the best route to do so?

NOTE: If EEC Licensed programs are considering expansion and require increased space or capacity, EEC has expedited processes to facilitate approval of these requests. Local coordination to identify potential space and support expansion will help facilitate expedited processes further.

It is not incumbent upon the Lead Applicant to reach consensus among the prospective Designated Recipient programs regarding the funding allocation approach, but instead to rely on ideas and feedback to shape an approach that is collaborative and tailored to the needs and assets of each city or town.

To facilitate the application process, each Designated Recipient included in the application must complete the *Designated Recipient Agreement Form*. These forms should be collected by the Lead Applicant and submitted as part of the application. As part of the *Designated Recipient Agreement Forms*, all organizations must agree that they:

- will provide any documentation required in order to facilitate payment;
- are approved or licensed by EEC to provide remote learning support services;
- will use funding to defray costs for families participating in remote learning support programs;
- will remain open at appropriate times during the school day to meet family needs through the end of the calendar year, barring COVID related health and safety closures or quarantine as instructed by the Local Board of Health;
- will provide documentation of spending and related grant reports, as requested, to confirm spending on allowable uses; and
- will not use funding from any other source, including local, state or federal agencies for the same costs supported by this grant funding.

### **Allowable Uses**

Allowable uses of funding include expenditures from September 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020 for:

- Equipment and supplies to provide safe and effective remote learning support services, including cleaning, COVID-19 testing, PPE, and internet service (NOTE: since funding has already been provided to Local Education Agencies to support the provision of individual tablets or laptops to all students, funding should not be used to purchase individual technology or equipment for program participants);
- New rental space or renovation of existing space to accommodate remote learning support services;
- Salary and stipends for staff to support remote learning support services, and monitor student and family engagement in remote learning; and

- Financial assistance to economically-disadvantaged families who would not otherwise be able to afford enrollment in remote learning support services.

**Funding Distribution**

The Commonwealth will distribute funds in two ways:

1. Through intermediaries that serve as Community Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) and Family Child Care Systems (FCC Systems) through the RFR 2017 Child Care Resource and Referral Services - SRF 180006, 2010 EEC FA PRIOR POP STPH RFR, and 2009 EEC IECCFAP 026 RFR, respectively. Funding will be distributed through the FCC Systems and the CCR&Rs to the Designated Recipient.  
or
2. If a Designated Recipient does not have an agreement with a CCR&R or FCC System, they will be paid directly by the Department of Early Education and Care in its role as the fiscal administrator of the grants.

**Application Timeline**

Grant Award Notification Letters and Application Materials sent:	Tuesday, October 13, 2020
Lead Applicant submits Program Identification Form and completed Designated Recipient Agreement Forms from all entities listed in the Program Identification Form	No later than Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at 5:00 PM
Lead Applicant and Designated Recipients notified of final award distribution	On a rolling basis, upon satisfactory completion of all application materials

**Application Requirements**

1. Complete the Program Identification Form
2. Provide Designated Recipient Agreement Forms completed by each provider listed in the Program Identification Form