

April 7, 2020

Shannon Christian, Director
Office of Child Care
Administration for Children and Families
Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C ST SW, Room 4502
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Ms. Christian,

On Friday, March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump issued a proclamation declaring the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States as a national emergency. In addition, on that date, Texas Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster in all Texas counties due to COVID-19. Further, on March 31, 2020, Governor Abbott required the continued closure of all state educational programs through May 4, 2020.

To respond to the child care needs of Texas communities, Texas seeks the following waiver from the Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Texas will submit a State Plan amendment within 60 days of the effective date of these waivers reflecting all the approved policies put in place to respond to COVID-19.

Waiver of Matching Fund Requirements

TWC establishes annual requirements for Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) to identify and certify local match. This local match enables the state to meet its matching requirements as set forth in 45 CFR §98.55. In Fiscal Year 2020, Boards must certify \$41 million in local match in order to draw down \$82.7 million in federal matching funds. Boards rely heavily on institutes of higher education and public school districts to meet their annual matching fund requirements. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of these programs have closed and are no longer providing child care services. Identifying other sources of local match during the COVID-19 pandemic will be very challenging and may preclude local staff from focusing their efforts on responses necessary to assist their communities during this crisis.

To enable an effective response to this pandemic and management of funds, TWC seeks relief from the §98.55 requirement to expend an amount of non-Federal funds for child care services in order to receive Federal matching funds, and requests that the state's match requirement be reduced by \$41,353,024. This will allow Boards to access \$82,706,048 in federal funds, which we estimate generally supports about 15,300 average children served per day in a year.

TWC certifies that the health, safety, and wellbeing of children served through CCDF will not be compromised by this waiver.

Effective dates: Federal Fiscal Year 2020 (10/1/19 through 9/30/20).

Respectfully,

Reagan Miller Division Director Child Care & Early Learning Division Texas Workforce Commission
CC: Ed Serna, TWC Executive Director
Bryan Daniel, TWC Chairman & Commissioner Representing the Public
Julian Alvarez, TWC Commissioner Representing Labor
Aaron Demerson, TWC Commissioner Representing Employers