

Middle Rio Grande, Uvalde School Shooting – Child Care Response Discussion Paper

Background

On Tuesday May 24, 2022, an individual in Uvalde entered Robb Elementary school, shot and killed 19 students and two teachers, and wounded 17 others. The Texas Workforce Commission’s (TWC) three-member Commission (Commission) can consider several actions to assist the community in addressing the impact of this tragic event – the deadliest school shooting in the United States in nearly a decade.

Issue 1 – Existing Authorized Disaster Response Strategies

The Commission previously approved the [Texas Statewide Child Care Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response Plan](#). The Plan outlines several strategies that can immediately be implemented, with approval from TWC.

The following emergency provisions may be authorized for families for up to three months:

- **Extension of CCDF eligibility recertification periods** for affected families in Uvalde County
- Extension of the three-month period of continued child care for affected parents in Uvalde County who are not working, attending education/training (e.g., **allow for up to 6 months of continued child care, rather than up to 3 months**)
- Exceptions to attendance standards for families in Uvalde County (ex. **extend absences through the summer, so parents/children remain eligible, and child care programs continue to be paid**)

The following emergency provision may be authorized for child care providers for up to four weeks:

- **Continuing reimbursements to child care providers** in Uvalde County who may need to temporarily close in the immediate aftermath of a disaster (Note: if families are provided with exceptions to attendance standards for three months, providers will continue to receive payment for CCS referrals during the three-month period)

Issue 2 – Uvalde Emergency Child Care Program

The Commission can dedicate funding, estimated at up to \$1 million, for a new Uvalde Emergency Child Care program and authorize child care through the Summer of 2022 (until the next public-school year begins). This new program will be established under the federal Child Care Development Fund “protective services” parameters, which allow the state to define any new class of protective services child care, and which allow child care to be provided without regard to income or employment status.

Eligible families are those

- With children who were enrolled in Robb Elementary school
- Who had a family member who worked at Robb Elementary school
- Were first responders to the Robb Elementary school shooting
- Other families impacted by the event, as determined by the Board

Families will self-attest to their eligibility, based on the criteria outlined above.

1 **Issue 3 – 2022 Child Care Relief Fund, Uvalde County Application Deadline Extension**
2 Child care providers who are eligible for the 2022 Child Care Relief Fund (CCRF) must submit their
3 application to TWC by May 31, 2022. The Commission can consider extending the application
4 deadline for providers in Uvalde County through Friday June 10, 2022.

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6 **Issue 4 – Mental Health Counseling**

7 The Commission can dedicate funding, estimated at up to \$1 million, to support mental health
8 counseling within all regulated child care providers, estimated at 80 providers, in Uvalde. TWC can
9 coordinate mental health counseling within child care providers with counseling resources available
10 through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

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12 **Decision Points**

13 Staff seek the Commission’s direction on:

- 14 • Notifying the Board about the existing emergency response provisions outlined in Issue 1;
- 15 • Authorizing a new Uvalde Emergency Child Care Program, estimated at \$1 million, as outlined
16 in Issue 2;
- 17 • Extending the 2022 CCRF deadline for child care providers in Uvalde County through June 10,
18 2022 as outlined in Issue 3; and,
- 19 • Dedicating funding to support mental health counseling, estimated at \$1 million, as outlined in
20 Issue 4.