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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Early Education and Care

EMB FY 2015-01	EEC Management Bulletin
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Subject: Opening Access to Remove Families from the Waitlist

Date Issued: August 15, 2014

Effective Date: Immediate

For Use By: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCRRs)

Synopsis: Clarifies the policies and procedures to implement the child care waitlist reduction funding opportunity set forth in EEC's FY15 budget.

Further Info: bulletinquestions@massmail.state.ma.us

Supersedes: EMB FY 2014-01

Relevant Links: The EEC Financial Assistance Regulations and Policy Guide are located at:

<http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/regs-policies/20130118-revised-financial-assistance-regs.pdf>

<http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/regs-policies/20130117-financial-assistance-policy-guide.pdf>

Introduction

The purpose of this EMB is to provide CCRRs with clarification and guidance for issuing vouchers to children on EEC's centralized waitlist as part of the FY15 waitlist reduction funding opportunity (the 3000-4040 account¹). EEC anticipates providing child care subsidies to 2,500 new children through this funding opportunity.

1. Issuance of Available Funding Letters to Children on the Waitlist

CCRRs shall issue available funding letters to families placed on the EEC waitlist on a first come, first served basis (i.e., the families that have been waiting the longest shall receive the first

¹ The 3000-4040 account is the line item established by the FY15 budget for purposes of waitlist remediation this fiscal year. The 3000-4060 account is the general account for income-eligible families in Massachusetts.

offers for this funding opportunity). In determining the families that have been waiting for child care financial assistance the longest, CCRRs must use the household "application date" reported on EEC's waitlist. By utilizing the household "application date", EEC can ensure that families that have been waiting the longest, including all the children listed in the household, will have an opportunity to receive a voucher.² The new appropriation account for placements will not be available on CCIMS until Friday, August 29, 2014. Therefore, child placements cannot start prior to September 1, 2014. However, you may begin to release Funding Availability Letters now.

It is important for CCRRs to remind families that this is a limited funding opportunity and time is of the essence. Vouchers will only be issued to families that respond immediately and provide sufficient eligibility documentation to the CCRR. Families must respond to funding availability letters within 15 days of the date of the letter to schedule an appointment. Failure to respond will result in the removal from the EEC Waiting List. If a family that has been removed from the waiting list contacts a subsidy administrator within 30 days of their removal, the family may be placed back on the waiting list using their original placement date provided that information that the family provides demonstrates eligibility for child care financial assistance.

Children currently receiving EEC child care financial assistance (i.e., child has an open/active contract slot or an open/active voucher) are not eligible to receive a voucher through this funding opportunity. The 3000-4040 vouchers shall only be issued to children not currently in EEC subsidized care.

2. Allocation of Vouchers by Region

The allocation to each CCRR has been proportionally distributed in relation to the number of children on the waitlist by region and is listed below:

CCRR	3000-4040
New England Farm Workers' Council	344
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc./ABCD	625
Children's Aid & Family Service, Inc.	321
Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc./QCAP	160
Community Day Care Center of Lawrence, Inc.	674
People Acting in Community Endeavors, Inc./PACE	295
Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands, Inc.	81
Grand Total	2,500

² For example, Family A opened a waitlist application on January 1, 2010, which at the time only included Child X. On March 15, 2013, Family A amended its waitlist record to add an infant, Child Y. Despite the fact that Child Y was not part of the initial application, the application date for the entire "family" remains January 1, 2010. As a result, Family A would receive an available funding letter for both Child Y and Child X, provided that the family's application date is at or near the top of the list.

EEC will closely monitor regional placement and reserves the right to amend the voucher allocations to ensure that the areas of greatest need are being met and to provide the best value to the Commonwealth.

3. Appropriate Funding Accounts to Monitor Placement

Based on its allocations, a CCRR must place new children through the 3000-4040 account. A CCRR may place children through the 3000-4060 account who require continuity of care or to backfill the CCRR's sibling and military voucher allotments. **Be advised that there is no access for new children in the 3000-4060 account.** A CCIMS application enhancement has been implemented to allow CCRR staff to select the new 4040 funding account when placing children. All children funded through the 4040 account must receive a funding availability letter; each funding availability letter will contain a unique correspondence ID for each child. The correspondence ID will be a mandatory field entry on the placement screen. This enhancement will allow CCRRs and EEC to track the number of subsidized children placed through the waitlist reduction funding to ensure eligible children are placed timely and to ensure that EEC does not exceed its budget authorization.

Since the funding associated with this opportunity is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2015, CCRRs will be required to issue multiple vouchers at the initial assessment for families eligible for child care subsidies beyond June 30, 2015. To illustrate this process, Family A is eligible from September 1, 2014 through August 31, 2015. To issue this voucher, CCRRs will write an initial placement from September 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015 and select the new 4040 funding account, then write a second placement for July 1, 2015 through August 31, 2015 and select the 4060 funding account.

4. Sustain the Allocated Voucher Number throughout the Fiscal Year

Each CCRR will continue to manage and fill its allotted vouchers throughout the fiscal year (i.e., until June 30, 2015). The CCRR will continue to track all awarded vouchers regardless of program placement and sustain utilization of all its allocated vouchers. By utilizing the CCIMS enhancement described above, CCRRs will be able to monitor and track placements throughout this process. Understand that the CCRRs must make best efforts to backfill all "unutilized" vouchers (i.e., child leaves care, child is terminated from care, etc.), as soon as possible.

5. Children Removed from the Waitlist Seeking Reinstatement

In accordance with EEC's Financial Assistance Policy, families removed from the EEC waitlist may be reinstated to their original application date (i.e., the application date prior to the removal notice), when they contact a waitlist agent (i.e., CCRR, Mass 2-1-1, etc.) within 30 days of the removal date. Families that have been removed may be eligible for this funding opportunity provided that their original application date falls within the range of oldest

applications on the waitlist (i.e., if a CCRR is issuing letters with an application date between January 1, 2012 and March 31, 2012, the reinstated application date should fall within this range, in order to be issued an available funding letter). Families shall not be negatively impacted for failure to renew their waitlist application, provided that they respond to the removal notice and request waitlist reinstatement within 30 days.

6. Responsibility of Reassessments Remains with the CCRRs

The CCRRs will be responsible for reassessing all allocated 4040 vouchers; vouchers issued through the 3000-4040 account will be reassessed by the CCRRs, not the contracted providers.

7. Reporting and Communication Requirements

CCRRs will be required to track and report to EEC weekly all placements and continued utilization, using the EEC-approved template that has been provided under separate cover. The template tracks allotments (2,500) in 4040, and sibling (759) and military (25) allotments in 4060. Mandatory weekly conference calls with EEC will continue to be scheduled for Mondays from 12:30 - 1:00 PM for CCRR Directors or their designees.

8. Goals for Placement of New Vouchers

Each CCRR shall use its best efforts to ensure children are placed by September 30, 2014, in accordance with its voucher allocation.

EEC appreciates your continued service and cooperation to provide assistance to as many low income families as possible while remaining fiscally responsible to the citizens of Massachusetts.