



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

To: Interested Parties

From: DHS Office of Policy Development

Date: April 13 , 2022

Subject: Proposed Rules and Regulations Governing the Early Childhood Care and Education Fund

In accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, the Department of Human Services is advertising the following proposed DHS rules. This rule is being proposed in compliance with state and federal law and good practice.

RICR Title 218 – Rhode Island Department of Human Services
Chapter 70 – Office of Child Care Licensing
Part 12 – Rules and Regulations Governing the Early
Childhood Care and Education Fund

These new rules and regulations govern the Rhode Island Early Childhood Care and Education Capital Fund, which was a legislatively referred bond question and was approved at a Special Election on March 2, 2021. The approval authorized the state to issue bonds in an amount no to exceed \$15 million for physical improvements to and development of licensed early childhood care and education facilities through an Early Childhood Care and Education Capital Fund.

Early learning centers and public school buildings suffer from deferred maintenance. Early Childhood Facilities Needs Assessment indicate that more than half of buildings used for early childhood classrooms were in “poor” condition, and the majority of outdoor play spaces posed significant safety concerns. This funding would be distributed through small grants for urgent health and safety needs and provide for quality improvement and reconfiguration of space; a larger pool to address the creation or rehabilitation of vacant or blighted properties to create new, high quality spaces; and a set aside for intensive project technical support, training and compliance.

These proposed rules are accessible on the DHS website (<http://www.dhs.ri.gov>), the RI Secretary of State website (<http://sos.ri.gov/ProposedRules/>), and available in hard copy upon request (401-462-2018 or RI Relay, dial 711). **A public hearing will be held to consider the proposed regulation on Wednesday, April 27, 2022 from 5:00pm-7:00pm at the Louis Pasteur Building, 25 Howard Avenue, Bldg. 57, Cranston, RI 02920, in the West Wing Conference Room.** Persons wishing to testify may do so by signing up at the hearing or by submitting written testimony no later than 11:59pm on May 13, 2022 to Tara Borges, Office of Policy Development, Department of Human Services, Louis Pasteur Building, 25 Howard Avenue, Bldg. 57, Cranston, RI 02920.

The seating capacity of the West Wing Conference Room will be enforced and therefore the number of persons participating in the hearing may be limited at any given time by the hearing officer, in order to comply with safety and fire codes.

The Louis Pasteur Building is accessible to the handicapped. Individuals with hearing impairments may request an interpreter's presence by calling 711 or Relay RI 1-800-745-6575 (Voice) and 1-800-745-5555 (TDD). Requests for this service must be made at least 72 hours in advance of the Hearing date. The Department of Human Services does not discriminate against individuals based on race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religious belief, political belief or handicap in acceptance for or provision of services or employment in its programs or activities.