

Date of Notice: April 13, 2022

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE-MAKING**

In accordance with the R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 42-35, as amended, as amended, the Department of Human Services (DHS) hereby proposes to amend the following DHS rules:

**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**

In accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, the Department is proposing new rule-making of the Rules and Regulations Governing the Early Childhood Care and Education Fund. Effective April 13, 2022 the Department proposes the following:

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.

In the development of these rules, consideration was given to the following: (1) alternative approaches; and (2) overlap or duplication with other statutory and regulatory provisions. No alternative approach or duplication or overlap was identified based upon available information.

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 regulations 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 11:59 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.