

## Frequently Asked Questions for STABLE 4ward

Please be sure to read the STABLE Application Guidance for details about STABLE 4ward. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

### STABLE Application - Availability

#### **Will I be able to apply for STABLE 4ward in the future?**

STABLE 4ward applications were accepted in October 2021, February 2022, June 2022 & October 2022.

At this time there are no plans for additional STABLE 4ward applications to be accepted

#### **Who can apply for STABLE?**

The STABLE application is available for programs in the following categories because they have met all Office of Child Care health and safety requirements as of the date of their application submission.

- Licensed Child Care Learning Centers
- Licensed Family Child Care Learning Homes
- Child Care Learning Centers that have been issued a Temporary License and have had an Initial Licensing Visit
- Family Child Care Learning Homes that have been issued a Temporary License and have had an Initial Licensing Visit
- Licensed child care partners for Head Start and/or Early Head Start grantees that are in the categories above

#### **Are programs that just opened able to apply for STABLE 4ward even though they were not open prior to the pandemic?**

Yes, if you are a provider that meets the criteria under “Who can apply for STABLE?” during the application period, you can apply.

#### **My program had to move locations since a prior round of STABLE funding, can I still apply?**

Yes, if you are a provider that meets the criteria under “Who can apply for STABLE?” during the application period, you can apply.

#### **Are licensed exempt providers able to apply for STABLE funding?**

No, license exempt providers are not able to apply for STABLE.

#### **Are after-school programs able to apply for this benefit?**

Yes, if you are a provider that meets the criteria under “Who can apply for STABLE?” you can apply.

#### **What does it mean for a program to operate primarily as an after-school program?**

This means that the typical, or most common, way in which your program operates is providing care to children after school hours have concluded. This time frame is usually between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Does my child care program have to be Quality Rated to receive STABLE funding?**

No, being Quality Rated is not a requirement for STABLE 4ward.

**The DECAL web site has a list of eligible and ineligible applicant types. Programs still under temporary COVID closure are not listed under either. Will they be eligible to apply?**

Yes. Programs that are temporarily closed can still apply as long as the program meets the criteria under “Who can apply for STABLE?”.

**I am a FCCLH provider, and I am at full capacity. Does that mean I don't qualify for the stable 4ward? Do we have to have missing children to qualify?**

All programs that apply can receive funding even if they are currently operating at full capacity.

**We are in the process of acquiring a new center. Would I be able to apply if we were not able to get the license before the STABLE 4ward application window?**

No, you must be a provider that meets the criteria under “Who can apply for STABLE?” during the application period to apply.

**[STABLE Application – Federal Reporting](#)**

**If the director changes after I apply, do I have to change my application?**

No, if your director changes after submitting the application you do not have change the application. You will be able to update that information at the next possible quarterly report period.

**[STABLE Application – Affirmations](#)**

**Regarding affirmations related to staffing, does this mean that if there is a COVID exposure in our center that forces a closure or quarantine, we will need to continue paying affected staff at their standard weekly pay?**

That is correct based on the federal guidelines as this is considered involuntary. You are required to continue pay them at least the amount of wages and benefits that they typically received prior to your application or if they began employment after you application, the their typical amount of wages and benefits during normal operations. You do not have to pay them more than that amount during closures or involuntary absences. Example: if typical hours worked is 30 hours, 30 hours is their minimum that must be paid. You can't pay less but you don't have to pay more.

**Regarding affirmations related to staffing, do we need to pay staff who are sick and quarantining for reasons unrelated to the center closing?**

That is correct based on the federal guidelines as this is considered involuntary. You are required to continue pay them at least the amount of wages and benefits that they typically received prior to your application or if they began employment after you application, the their typical amount of wages and benefits during normal operations. You do not have to pay them more than that amount during closures or involuntary absences. Example: if typical hours worked is 30 hours, 30 hours is their minimum that must be paid. You can't pay less but you don't have to pay more.

**Do we need to continue paying staff in cases in which they take a leave of absence for reasons other than a COVID quarantine/closure?**

No, if their leave or reduced hours are voluntary, they asked or initiated time off, you are not required to pay those hours. DECALS recommends having the employee sign a voluntary

acknowledgement form for such cases. Also, please know that if the employee is on leave for 6 months or more, they must redo their CRC.

**While receiving STABLE payments, do providers have to continue paying an employee who is out due to an illness of their child or spouse?**

In accordance with STABLE requirements, programs are not required to provide paid leave for an employee that requests leave to care for a family member or close relative. DECAL recommends that programs follow their own leave policy that was in place at the time the employee was hired.

**Must the employer take the employee's word that they are sick, or can they require a doctor's note?**

This question falls into the employer/employee arena as to what an appropriate standard is. DECAL cannot comment or offer any guidance in this area.

**If the employee (admin) can work from home and the employer offers the employee work, but the employee refuses, does the employer still have to pay the employee?**

This question falls into the employer/employee arena as to what an appropriate standard is. The department can't comment or offer any guidance in this area.

**At what point can the employer stop paying an employee?**

Under Stable 4ward, the provider can stop paying or reduce pay for an employee only if the employee voluntarily reduces their hours, asks for a voluntary leave of absence, or is terminated.

**If a provider has an employee who got very sick with COVID by contracting it while the center was closed. The employee's doctor wants her to take another 30 days of medical leave due to the side effects of COVID which she did not contract as part of her employment. Is the provider required to pay the employee for that 30 days?**

Under Stable 4ward, the provider can stop paying or reduce pay for an employee only if the employee voluntarily reduces their hours, asks for a voluntary leave of absence, or is terminated.

**If the employee says they are not feeling up to returning to work after that 30 days? Can payment be terminated after that 30 days?**

The department can't comment or give advice on the employer/employee relationship. Under Stable 4ward, the provider can stop paying or reduce pay for an employee only if the employee voluntarily reduces their hours, asks for a voluntary leave of absence, or is terminated.

**Do providers have to continue to pay their employees for sick leave for any illness an employee contracts, or is it limited to COVID related illness?**

Yes, based on the federal guidelines as this is considered involuntary. You are required to continue pay them at least the amount of wages and benefits that they typically received prior to your application or if they began employment after you application, the their typical amount of wages and benefits during normal operations. You do not have to pay them more than that amount during closures or involuntary absences. Example: if typical hours worked is 30 hours, 30 hours is their minimum that must be paid. You can't pay less but you don't have to pay more.

**While receiving STABLE payments, do providers have to continue paying an employee who is out due to an illness of their child or spouse?**

In accordance with STABLE requirements, programs are not required to provide paid leave for an employee that requests leave to care for a family member or close relative. DECAL recommends that programs follow their own leave policy that was in place at the time the employee was hired.

**The information provided in the FAQ says pay may be reduced when the employee takes a voluntary leave or reduces the number of hours worked. Would this be the case in the following examples?**

- 1. Routine doctor's or dentist appointment (well care)**
- 2. Day off for personal reason such as shopping, visitors at home, etc**

In accordance with STABLE requirements, programs are not required to provide paid leave for an employee that requests leave routine appointments or personal days off. DECAL recommends that programs follow their own leave policy that was in place at the time the employee was hired.

**[STABLE Application – Attendance](#)**

**What is the period of time for the attendance reported in the STABLE 4ward application?**

Please enter the total attendance for the month of September 2022. If you were not granted permission to operate in September 2022, use October 2022 attendance from the date of PTO to the application date. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**When we upload September 2022 numbers, we are only reporting children who actually attended, not enrolled children who did not attend at all in September?**

Yes. The exception being CAPS children for which payment was received should be counted as well.

**Do CAPS kids who no longer attend, but we are getting paid for them anyway under current policy, count in our September 2022 enrollment numbers?**

Yes. That is specifically addressed in the instructions. Applicants must count those children in their attendance. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**Should we count our SOLVE kids that are attending our programs as well?**

Yes, any child that attends should be counted according to the application instructions. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**Do we have to count the children of staff that received free childcare?**

No, only count children for which the program received funding from a parent or DECAL (CAPS, Pre-K).

**For FCCLH programs, do we have to count children that are related that received free childcare?**

No, only count children for which the program received funding from a parent or DECAL (CAPS, Pre-K).

**I have children in care but do not see their age group in my application. What do I do?**

The age groups shown on each application are based on how the license has been managed. If an age group is missing it is because an amendment was not submitted to DECAL to tell us that age group was being cared for. To add an age group, providers will need to submit a licensing amendment to DECAL in their DECAL KOALA account. This process can take 30 days to be completed. For STABLE 4ward, providers should submit their amendment but can go ahead and count children in the next closest age group shown in the application.

**How is pre-pandemic attendance determined?**

For STABLE 4ward, it is necessary to establish an estimate of pre-pandemic attendance for all applicants. This presents a significant challenge because it is necessary to use a consistent way that applies to all providers in a relatively equal way. It was determined that the most appropriate way to achieve this was for DEACL to use a formula based on each programs total capacity to provide each program with an estimate of pre-pandemic attendance to use for calculating their STABLE 4ward award amount. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.decals.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**If my center was not open before the pandemic, how will my pre-pandemic attendance be determined?**

For child care learning centers that were not open prior to the pandemic, the pre-pandemic attendance is determined by the current capacity for the program and calculates funding in a way to programs of similar size that were open prior to the pandemic. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.decals.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**If my attendance changes after I apply, do I have to submit those changes?**

Yes, but only through the quarterly reporting process. STABLE 4ward funding will not change based on future changes to attendance if the provider is in continuous operations. If a provider remains closed for a significant period or reports no attendance, DECAL has the right to reduce or cease funding.

**[STABLE Application – Budget Questions](#)**

**Do I have to budget STABLE 4ward funds to all budget categories?**

No, you do not have to use all categories.

**Can I budget 100% of STABLE 4ward for workforce expenses?**

Yes, an applicant can budget 0-100% to the Workforce Support category.

**Do I have to budget STABLE 4ward funds in the Tuition Relief category?**

No, an applicant can budget 0-100% to the Tuition Relief category. While providers are encouraged to budget funds to this category they are not required to do so.

**Can providers change their percentages after their application is approved? If so, how do they do that?**

The percentages on the original STABLE 4ward applications cannot be changed.

STABLE recipients must use their stabilization funds for cost incurred in a manner consistent with their application budget. That said, providers will have some flexibility relative to the budget they submitted in their application. Ultimately, at least 70% of all STABLE funding must be used for Workforce Support and Tuition Relief for Families. Regardless of the budgeted percentage for these areas, providers will be able to spend funds as they see fit as long as they meet the 70% minimum. This means that if a provider submits a budget of 35% for Workforce Support and 35% for Tuition Relief for Families, they can use the funds any way they chose in those two categories as long as 70% of all funding is used for those two categories. This means that no more 30% of all STABLE funding can be applied to cost for Facilities Cost and Operational Supplies, Materials, and Food.

**[STABLE Application – Funding Amount](#)**

**How is STABLE 4ward funding determined?**

Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**If I am a Quality Rated provider, does that impact how my funding is calculated?**

No, a provider's Quality Rated level does not have any impact on the STABLE 4ward calculation. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**If you reported a number higher than your licensed capacity in round 1 of STABLE, will they use that number or your licensed capacity to determine the impact funding amount?**

For each previous round, attendance over capacity was not factored into any payments. For STABLE 4ward, it is necessary to establish an estimate of pre-pandemic attendance for all applicants. DECAL is using a formula, supported by data, that is an accurate way to determine a close approximation of actual pre-pandemic attendance for most providers. For providers that did not exist prior to the pandemic, it treats them like similar sized programs. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**Is STABLE a grant or a loan?**

STABLE is a grant and not a loan. Repayment would only be necessary if it is determined through the auditing and compliance process of DECAL.

**Are STABLE funds taxable?**

Yes, STABLE payments are considered taxable income. Maximus Inc. will send a 1099 to each program where CAPS and/or STABLE payments are greater than \$600 for the calendar year. For questions about your 1099 please contact Maximus Inc. by email at [ECT2@maximus.com](mailto:ECT2@maximus.com) or by phone at 1-877-755-6522. If you do not have a provider PIN when calling you may dial 9 to be connected to a representative.

**Will programs be allowed to increase their licensed capacity during the grant period and, if so, will that affect grant amount?**

STABLE 4ward does not prevent a provider from changing their capacity. However, once they apply and begin receiving payment, a change in capacity will not change their STABLE 4ward payment amount.

**[STABLE Application – General Questions](#)**

**If a child care operator has more than one location, operating under same tax ID #, can we apply for STABLE for each center?**

Yes, an owner may submit a STABLE application for each location that meets the criteria under “Who can apply for STABLE?”.

**I made a mistake on my application. Can I edit it or make a change?**

Yes, the same link for the application can also be used to edit your submitted application. Once your changes are made, you will need to submit again. Be sure that you receive the confirmation for the new application. You can edit and submit as many times as is necessary during the application window. Once the application window closes, no changes to the application can be made.

**If I apply for STABLE 4ward in any of the previous application windows, do I have to apply again in a future round?**

No, once you apply and have an approved application, you will not need to reapply for STABLE 4ward again.

**[STABLE Payments](#)**

**When will providers receive their STABLE payments each month?**

DECAL can not guarantee a specific date each month, that a deposit will be available in a provider’s bank account.

The STABLE payment process begins on the first Wednesday or Thursday of each month, depending on how the dates fall. Providers should begin seeing deposits by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Example:

The first Wednesday in June is June 1<sup>st</sup>

The first Wednesday in July is July 6<sup>th</sup>

Given the difference in days, in this example providers could see deposits later in July than they did in June.

If a STATE Holiday occurs during the first two weeks of the month, this may delay the monthly STABLE deposit.

**When will STABLE 4ward payments end?**

Programs will receive the last monthly STABLE 4ward payment in September 2023.

**We have a new bank account. How do we go about getting our account information updated?**

To update your bank account, please contact Maximus Inc. by email at [CAPSCOVID-19Compliance@Maximus.com](mailto:CAPSCOVID-19Compliance@Maximus.com) or by phone at 1-877-755-6522. If you do not have a provider PIN when calling you may dial 9 to be connected to a representative. You will have to complete an updated direct deposit form for the new account.

**Do you have to use STABLE 4ward funds right away?**

Yes. Programs are required to use STABLE 4ward funds to maintain continuous operations to the greatest degree possible. Therefore, 50% of each monthly STABLE 4ward payment amount must be used within 90 days of receipt. Programs that do not meet the minimum spending will be at risk of having their STABLE 4ward payments reduced or cancelled.

**Is it necessary or recommended to get a separate account for the STABLE 4ward payments?**

No, it is not necessary. STABLE 4ward will be paid to the account that is provided to Maximus Inc. At this time, this will be the same account they will use for CAPS payments.

**Will the STABLE 4ward payments be a separate deposit or lumped in with CAPS?**

Unlike prior rounds, deposits will be separate from CAPS deposits.

**[STABLE Quarterly Reporting Requirements](#)**

**What is the schedule for Quarterly Reporting?**

<b>STABLE 4ward Quarterly Reporting Schedule</b>				
#	Quarterly Reporting Period (Spending totals should be a cumulative total)	Enter Attendance for the Month of	Quarterly Reporting Start Date	Quarterly reporting Deadline
1	03/11/2021 thru 03/31/2022	March 2022	5/1/2022	5/31/2022
2	Total Spending thru 06/30/2022	June 2022	8/1/2022	8/31/2022
3	Total Spending thru 9/30/2022	September 2022	11/1/2022	11/30/2022
4	Total Spending thru 12/31/2022	December 2022	2/1/2023	2/28/2023
5	Total Spending thru 03/31/2023	March 2023	5/1/2023	5/31/2023
6	Total Spending thru 06/30/2023	June 2023	8/1/2023	8/30/2023
7	Total Spending thru 9/30/2023	September 2023	11/1/2023	11/30/2023
8	Total Spending thru 12/31/2023	December 2023	2/1/2024	2/28/2024
9	Total Spending thru 03/31/2024	March 2024	5/1/2024	5/31/2024
10	Total Spending thru 06/30/2024	June 2024	7/1/2024	7/31/2024



**How do I access Quarterly Reporting?**

Providers may access quarterly reporting for each site when logging into their DECAL KOALA self-service account during the reporting dates shown in the schedule above.

**Am I required to add a Secure Key for my Quarterly Reporting?**

No, Providers will have the ability to set up a Secure Key to access the application. This **optional** feature is designed to enhance security of information contained in the STABLE application.

**What if I created a Secure Key for STABLE but can't remember what it is?**

If a provider does not remember the Secure Key, contact the STABLE team at 470-367-5017 or [stable@decalfga.gov](mailto:stable@decalfga.gov) for assistance with the STABLE Secure Key.

**Are the Secure Key for POWER and STABLE the same?**

Although you can use the same Secure Key for both POWER and STABLE, they are each separate and resetting one will not automatically reset the other. The STABLE team can reset the Secure Key for STABLE, however the Provider will need to contact the POWER team at [supplementalpayments@decalfga.gov](mailto:supplementalpayments@decalfga.gov) in order to reset the Secure Key set up for POWER.

**I made a mistake on my quarterly report. Can I edit it or make a change?**

Yes, the quarterly report can be edited by clicking on the Submit STABLE quarterly report button. Once your changes are made, you will need to submit again. Be sure that you receive the confirmation for the submission of the quarterly report. You can edit and submit as many times as is necessary during prior to the reporting deadline. Once the reporting deadline passes, no changes to the quarterly report can be made.

**What if I don't complete my quarterly reporting prior to the reporting deadline?**

We encourage you to complete the quarterly report as soon as possible to avoid a delay in the monthly STABLE payments.

Failure to complete all reporting within the reporting period will result in the suspension of STABLE 4ward payments. Failure to complete all reporting within the reporting quarter will result in the closure of the STABLE 4ward application and cancellation of all suspended and future payments.

**Will I be required to report how I have used STABLE 4ward funds when doing the quarterly reporting?**

Yes, providers will have to tell DECAL how much of the funds were used in each budget category for the time period associated with each report.

**Do I need to provide receipts for quarterly reporting?**

You will not be required to provide receipts when completing quarterly reports. However, providers should maintain accurate records for how they have used STABLE 4ward funds to complete quarterly reports. Also, accurate records will be necessary in the event your program is audited by DECAL.

**Will details of reconciliations and reporting requirements be provided in advance?**

Yes. All STABLE 4ward recipients will be provided details and requirements of quarterly reporting in advance.

**If STABLE 4ward payments end in September 2023, why does quarterly reporting continue until June 2024?**

Programs have until June 30, 2024, to spend all STABLE 4ward funds.

**Using STABLE Funds**

**What is the time frame for spending STABLE 4 funds?**

Programs may apply cost incurred from March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021, through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Also, programs must spend at least 50% of all funds within 90 days of deposit and spend 100% of funds received by no later than June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Can 100% of STABLE 4ward funds be used for workforce expenses?**

Yes.

**How does the "workforce support" category apply to FCCLH programs? As sole proprietors, are we able to pay ourselves to satisfy this category?**

Yes. As owner and sole employee, FCCLH programs may use STABLE 4ward funds to pay themselves salary.

**Are providers required to provide tuition relief to families?**

No, while providers are encouraged to provide tuition relief to families, there is no required that they do. If a provider chooses to provide tuition relief, the provider has the discretion to determine amount and who it is provided to. Providers will need to keep detailed records for how they go about providing relief to families.

**Can STABLE 4ward funds be used for playground repairs?**

Yes, recipients may use STABLE 4ward funds to improve playground equipment or areas. This type of cost should be budgeted for in the Facilities Cost category. The Facilities Cost category is subject to budget and spending limitations. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**Can STABLE 4ward funds be used for new equipment?**

Yes, recipients may use STABLE 4ward funds to add or replace equipment necessary for operating. This type of cost should be budgeted for in the Facilities Cost category. The Facilities Cost category is subject to budget and spending limitations. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**Can STABLE 4ward funds be used for facility upgrades?**

Yes, recipients may use STABLE 4ward funds improvements to the facility necessary for operating. This type of cost should be budgeted for in the Facilities Cost category. The Facilities Cost category is subject to budget and spending limitations. Please see the STABLE Application Guidance for a detailed explanation. The guidance can be accessed in the application at <https://www.decalkoala.com/Default> as well as our DECAL website at <http://www.dec.al.ga.gov/BftS/Stable.aspx>.

**Change of Location**

**If my center moves to a new location, will my STABLE payment stop?**

Once a provider submits a change of location request, this will put their license into a “Pending Close” status. With a Pending Close status, a program is not eligible to receive STABLE 4ward payments. Once the provider has relocated to the new location, have a temporary license or fully licensed AND have had an initial licensing visit, STABLE 4ward payments can resume.

Our recommendation would be to communicate with your DECAL consultant on the timing of the submission of your change of location request. If a provider submits their change of location request prior to the time they are ready to make the move, they could go several months without a STABLE 4ward payment. Waiting until they are ready to make the move, will decrease the amount of time they will go without the monthly payment.

Once a provider makes the move and is licensed for the new location, AND has had an initial licensing visit, we will be able to make any back STABLE 4ward payments that were missed during the move.

**Change of Ownership**

**If I purchase a child care program, will their STABLE payments transfer to me?**

No, STABLE is a benefit of having a child care license and all STABLE awards are tied specifically to the program that applied for and received the funding. This benefit cannot be transferred to another owner because the change of ownership creates a new licensed owner that has yet to apply.

If the purchase is a stock purchase where the buyer buys the sellers corporation or LLC and the Grant is awarded to the corporation or LLC owning the school then nothing changes upon the completion of this transaction including the EIN number, sales tax number, etc. In this case the Stable 4ward grant will continue.

**If I sell my program, what happens to my STABLE payments?**

In the event that a child care program is sold to a new owner, STABLE payments will cease once DECAL receives the Change of Ownership notification. All unspent funds must be returned to DECAL upon after ownership ends.

If the purchase is a stock purchase where the buyer buys the sellers corporation or LLC and the Grant is awarded to the corporation or LLC owning the school then nothing changes upon the completion of this transaction including the EIN number, sales tax number, etc. In this case the Stable 4ward grant will continue.

**Prior STABLE Payment Information**

**Where can we get a copy of all our prior stable applications?**

Please email [stable@decalfga.gov](mailto:stable@decalfga.gov) to have summaries of prior rounds resent.