MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care

CCFA FY25 Regulatory Changes

Policy and Procedure Information Sessions

Housekeeping



Please feel welcome to ask questions in the chat



When facilitators ask for questions, please “raise your hand” to be called on



Please keep your microphone on mute to reduce feedback until you are looking to make a statement or ask a question

Key Regulatory Changes

The FY25 budget required changes to the Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) Program Regulations **effective January 1, 2026**

- Key Regulation Changes:
  - Increase initial eligibility to families with incomes at and up to **85% of State Median Income (SMI)**
  - Add **priority access** for families **at or below 50% SMI**
  - **Formally establish (6) priority access categories** for waitlist placement and priority offers of funding
  - Extend **Eligibility for Children Reaching Maximum Age during the school year**

Policy and Procedure Updates

CCFA Policy Updates to Implement Regulatory Changes

- Household income eligibility:
  - Changes to SMI
  - Two (2) more non-countable income sources
- Waitlist management changes
- Authorizations for children reaching maximum eligibility age

Effective January 1, 2026 the updated CCFA policies will be in effect for all families currently receiving child care financial assistance and families on the CCFA waitlist.

Household Income Eligibility: SMI Changes

Update: Families with a household income at or below **85%** of the state median income (SMI) will be income-eligible for CCFA

- FAAs will use 85% of SMI as the benchmark for eligibility
- There is no change to the income eligibility determination process/procedure

IT Updates:

- CCFA and KinderWait will be updated to capture the new threshold of 85% SMI

Reminder: Voucher access for Income-eligible families is currently limited to continuity of care and sibling access

Household Income Eligibility: Non-Countable Income

Update: Policy now includes these two additional categories of non-countable income:

- Income of siblings who are not receiving CCFA
- Earned income of any minor child

Countable Income

- Wages
- Self-employment income
- Alimony
- Lottery earnings
- Retirement income
- Unemployment benefits
- Workers' Compensation
- Net rental income
- Dividends or income from trusts or estates

Non-Countable Income

- Child support, including in-kind support
- Veteran's Disability Benefits
- Income from legal guardians, foster parents, caregivers, dependent children
- Income from household members not included in the reported household composition
- Income from relatives or unmarried partners that do not share a common child
- Rental allowance and other rental assistance or housing stabilization funds
- Income from mileage or cell phone reimbursement
- Federal and state tax credits
- DTA benefits (SNAP/TAFDC)
- Social Security Income or SSDI
- **Income of siblings who are not receiving CCFA**
- **Earned income of any minor child**

Waitlist Management Changes: Priority Status

Update: There is a new status code for families “at or below 50% SMI”.

Families assigned to any of these priority access codes are given equal priority access to funding:

- **Families with income at or below 50% SMI**
- Early Education and Care staff
- Families with child(ren) that have a documented disability
- Families experiencing homelessness
- Families headed by a parent younger than 24 yrs
- Families with a parent experiencing a situation of domestic violence

Reminders:

- No previous priority access codes can be used for waitlist placement or priority offers of funding.
- Other codes may continue to be used for informational purposes only.
- FAAs will continue to use the soft eligibility process to assign priority access codes in KinderWait and select all codes that apply.

Waitlist Management Changes: Assigning the New “At or Below 50% SMI" Code

Families on the waitlist before 1/1/2026:

- FAAs assign the new “at or below 50% SMI" code when updating the existing family’s record with reported info, making funding offers, or other family updates
- FAAs must use info in the family record and request updates from the family to confirm that this code can be assigned to the family

Families added to the waitlist after 1/1/2026:

- FAAs assign this priority code as appropriate when adding new families to the waitlist.

IT Updates:

- KinderWait will be updated to add the priority code: "At or below 50% SMI"
- There will be no batch assigning of codes to existing families on KinderWait.

Reminder: Family information in KinderWait must be updated at least once a year for them to stay on the waitlist

Waitlist Management Changes: Offering Funding For “At or Below 50% SMI" Code

When offering funding for the **"At or below 50% SMI" priority status,** FAAs shall:

- Search for families who have been assigned the code

AND

- Search for families on the waitlist before 1/1/2026 that have not yet been assigned this priority code by filtering the waitlist by date (prior to 1/1/2026).

Reminders:

- There is no change to the FAAs process for offering funding to families. Equal consideration shall be given to families with priority status codes when making an offer of funding

Authorizations for Children Reaching Maximum Age

Update: When a child reaches the maximum age for eligibility during the school year, the child remains eligible for child care services until the end of the school year in which they reach maximum age or until the end of the current authorization, whichever comes later.

- **If a child turns 13 (or 16 if they have a documented disability) during the school year, the master authorization shall be extended to June 30.**
- When a child reaches the maximum age for eligibility during the summer break, the authorization is not extended.
- The FAA must submit a Helpdesk Ticket to request an extension.

Process to Extend Authorizations

When a child ages out during the school year and the family's authorization is ending before the end of the school year, the master authorization shall be extended to June 30 using the following process:

- FAA will identify the family has a child who reached max age during the school year and issue the 60-day reauthorization notice to family
- When the family contacts the FAA:
  - FAA will ask about required change reporting.
    - If there are changes, FAA will use the change reporting process to update the case.
  - FAA will share with family their authorization is being extended to June 30th and their reauthorization process will happen at that time.
- The FAA must submit a Helpdesk Ticket to request an extension.

Reminder: There is no need to collect documentation when asking if there are any changes that need to be reported.

Authorizations for Children Aging Out During School Year

If the child reaches the maximum eligibility age during school year and the...

Authorization ends during the **school year**	**Authorization is extended to June 30 (FAA submits a helpdesk ticket)**	Example: A child with a disability turns 16 in January and the family's authorization ends in March, the authorization should be extended to June 30th.
Authorization ends during **summer break**	**Authorization is not extended**	Example: A child turns 13 in May and the family's authorization ends in August before school starts, the child's eligibility ends in August.
Authorization ends during the **next school year**	**Authorization is not extended**	Example: A child with a disability turns 16 in October and the family's authorization ends the next September, the child's eligibility ends in September.

Authorizations for Children Aging Out During Summer Break

If the child reaches the maximum eligibility age during summer break and the…

Authorization ends during the **school year**	**Authorization is not extended**	Example: A child with a disability turns 16 during the summer and the authorization ends in October; the child's eligibility ends in October.
Authorization ends during **summer break**	**Authorization is not extended**	Example: A child turns 13 in August, and the authorization ends the next July. The child remains eligible for the remainder of the authorization (11 months after the child turns 13).

Questions

Next steps

EEC hosts information sessions

December 18 & January 7, 2026

CCFA & KinderWait System Updates

New regulations and policies go into effect

January 1, 2026

Policy Advisory Release Date

January 7, 2026

Office Hours for additional questions/support

January 1-16, 2026