

Questions asked by Manager Giesbrecht; answered by Joni Johnson

1. If an applicant checks the box that the childcare need is not COVID related, is it the group's expectation that funding would still be provided for that household?

Our understanding of CARES Act funding is that this money cannot be utilized if not COVID-related. So the answer would be no. The thought has been that after the new year, if families still need assistance, then providers would help with the application for state assistance because it is a longer-term need and the finances from the year of COVID would reflect that need.

We have updated the application question to the following:

How has your family been harmed by the COVID-19 Pandemic? Check all that apply.

- o Work hour reductions, layoffs, furloughs or other actions directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic that reduced or limited work availability at your regular job*
- o Medical bills, mandatory quarantines, interrupted travel, or other unexpected expenses directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic*
- o Paying childcare as a result of the adjusted school schedule.*
- Other (explain)*

2. Has the group approached Petersburg School District on this issue?

Yes, Heather Conn has been working with the group from the get-go and initiated the effort, recognizing that finding a safe place for children would be an issue.

3. Has the school made any decisions on whether they will be providing after-school care?

Superintendent Kludt-Painter stated at the School Board meeting that the school is not in the childcare business. Heather has commented that doing so would require 17 additional employees to maintain small group size.

4. Your proposal includes an estimate of 20 children in need of the assistance. How was this number developed and how will the group determine the eligibility of household applicants to the program?

The Stedman Elementary survey indicated that 16 students' families would like financial assistance, with 80% of the surveys submitted at the time. Proportionally, if 100% of the surveys were completed then the estimate is 20 children. The proposal is being expanded to include preschool because Head Start is now virtual through December. An estimated 10 families are in need of financial assistance, going off of the information provided by daycare providers.

5. Do current child care providers have the capacity for 20 (or more) new children? What is the current number of "open slots" in the licensed childcare facilities in Petersburg?

Capacity is another beast all together, as no, providers do not currently have capacity to meet the demand. From the Stedman Elementary survey and scheduling work completed by Heather Conn, there are five students who do not currently have the childcare desired. Daycare providers for preschool kiddos have a wait list of more than five.

6. Your proposal states that the request is not just about childcare, but about helping families in financial hardship. Outside of the childcare details, does your group intend on accepting applications for the funding from any Petersburg citizen that shows financial need? I am not nitpicking here, but the Borough continues to receive requests from many people who are asking for assistance. It is very important for the request to be inclusive of all groups it is directed at, but also specific to how the money will be allocated so the Borough can explain any issues to our auditors or the Treasury Department on how the CARES Act money was spent.

Interesting point. This proposal focuses on families that have the financial hardship of having to budget for childcare when this would not typically be an expense, so no, no funding for any Petersburg citizen that shows financial need.

As Karin McCullough has said, the childcare system is imperfect and early childhood education does not receive the support that it should. The COVID pandemic has exacerbated those imperfections. The goal of PiE, SHARE, PMHS, Stedman Elementary and the daycare providers - Serendipity/After School Academy, Petersburg Children Center/Eagle's Nest, Kinder Skog, and Good Beginnings is to provide a safe place for as many kiddos as possible through supporting families.