Certification requirements for license exempt child care centers paid by the Child Care Assistance Program

TOPIC
Child Care Assistance Program changes for license exempt centers effective August 1, 2018 and September 30, 2018 as a result of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 and the 2017 state legislative session.

PURPOSE
Provide information and instructions on policy changes.

CONTACT
Contact your Child Care Assistance Program policy specialist or submit your question through PolicyQuest.

SIGNED
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TERMINOLOGY NOTICE
The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.
I. Background

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps approximately 15,000 families pay for child care serving 30,000 children throughout Minnesota.

During the 2017 legislative session, many changes were made to CCAP. Most of these changes were required under the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. Additionally, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is implementing other CCAP changes required under the CCDBG Act of 2014 that did not require legislative action at the state level.

Changes in this bulletin relate to changes that are effective September 30, 2018:

- Certification of license exempt centers

This bulletin is related to the Phases 1-4 series of bulletins covering recent state and federal changes to CCAP.

II. Certification requirements

Effective September 30, 2018, to continue receiving CCAP payments and remain registered with CCAP, license exempt centers must demonstrate compliance with federal health and safety requirements by completing the certification process required in Minnesota Statutes, section 245H. DHS is rolling out this change in two stages. This bulletin will provide guidance on the certification process rollout.

A. Policy information

1. **Stage 1: Registering license exempt centers between August 1, 2018 and September 29, 2018**

   Beginning August 1, 2018, centers must **apply to be certified before** they can be registered as a CCAP provider.

2. **Stage 2: Registering license exempt centers on and after September 30, 2018**

   Beginning September 30, 2018, centers must **be certified before** they can be registered as a CCAP provider.

3. **License exempt centers registered before August 1, 2018**

   License exempt centers that were registered before August 1, 2018 are being tracked and onboarded to the certification process by DHS. DHS will notify your agency if a center’s registration must close due to certification requirements.
B. MEC² system changes

MEC² system changes will be installed so a provider’s certification status will be updated through a nightly batch with the licensing database, similar to how information about licensed providers is shared with MEC² from the licensing database. System changes are expected to be installed in the fall of 2018.

**DHS Licensing Interface**

There is an existing file transfer from the DHS licensing database to MEC². The interface cross-references each provider’s licensing status and address. Interface data updates Monday through Friday in a nightly batch job and populates the Licensing and Address windows. As programs are certified by the licensing unit, certification information will begin to be included in the file transfer. When certification system logic is installed, certification information included in this file transfer will be processed according to CCAP policy.

**Certification system logic**

System logic will be installed to require license exempt providers to have an approved certification status to be registered with an “Active” status in MEC². On-going, if a provider’s certification status changes to an unapproved status, the provider will have their registration and any open Service Authorizations closed in MEC² with a 15 day adverse action notice.

**Provider module changes**

Some titles in MEC² will be changed from the term “License” to “License/Certification.” For example, the Licensing tab will be renamed the Licensing/Certification tab. Additional fields specific to certified license exempt centers will be added to the License/Certification tab.

**Add Provider Workflow changes**

DHS will update the “Add Provider Workflow” for license exempt centers to include the “Licensing/Certification” tab. Workers must enter the provider’s certification number in the new Certification number field.

- Click “New”
- In the **Certification Number:** field, enter the provider’s certification number
- Click “Certification” validation button

The License/Certification validation accesses information stored by the interface. Since the provider is certified by the State of Minnesota, the provider name and certification is auto-filled via the DHS Licensing Interface. For MN DHS certified providers, no fields on the License/Certification tab will be updatable. The functionality will be the same as for MN DHS licensed providers.

**Conversion job**

When new system logic is installed, license exempt centers with active registrations will be updated. DHS will update certified providers by uploading their certification numbers into MEC². This will allow
information about certification status to be validated through the information stored in the DHS Licensing Interface.

*License exempt centers that have an approved certification status*

License exempt centers that have an approved certification status will remain open. If information changes in the licensing database, it will be automatically updated in MEC² through the DHS Licensing Interface. Workers will get alerts if information about a certified center is updated through this batch process.

*License exempt centers that do not have an approved certification status*

License exempt centers that do not have an approved certification status will have their registration closed with a 15 day adverse action notice. If the program’s certification status changes to an approved status during the adverse action period, the CCAP agency can reopen the provider’s registration without a gap. If the program completes the certification process after their registration is closed, they must re-register to be a CCAP provider.

*License exempt centers that are not participating in certification*

DHS CCAP and licensing have collaborated over the last nine months to monitor license exempt centers registered for CCAP payments that must become certified. DHS CCAP has been instructing CCAP agencies to close registrations for providers that have declared that they will not participate in the certification process. DHS CCAP will continue to instruct CCAP agencies to close registrations through the rollout of certification. DHS expects all license exempt centers that are not participating in certification to have closed registrations before the conversion job is run.

**C. County and tribal agency actions needed**

1. **When registering a license exempt center between August 1, 2018 and September 29, 2018**

Providers that are re-registering with your agency after a gap in registration of less than 12 months or providers that are actively registered with other CCAP agencies do not need to submit information about the certification application to register with your CCAP agency. DHS is tracking these providers.

License exempt centers that are registering for the first time with CCAP or have not been registered for CCAP by any county or tribe for the last year, must document that they have applied for certification before their registration can be approved. Once the provider has completed the process to apply for certification, they will receive a certification number. Providers must submit their certification number to the CCAP agency when registering to confirm that they have applied for certification.

Licensing and CCAP are developing a guide to applying for certification. CCAP agencies are encouraged to print and send this guide to license exempt centers that want to register for CCAP. The guide will be published on SIR when it is completed.
2. When registering a license exempt center on or after September 30, 2018

License exempt centers must provide their certification number on their provider registration form when registering to be a CCAP provider. When system changes have been installed, follow the Add Provider Workflow and validate the provider’s certification number on the License/Certification window.

II. Training and resources

A. Training opportunities

1. Webinars and videoconferences

   **MEC² Mentor meeting – August 15, 2018**
   This meeting is open to all workers. For more information visit [SIR > MEC² > MEC² Mentors](https://sir.mncppc.org). A SIR login is required.

   **MEC² Mentor meeting – September 12, 2018**
   This meeting is open to all workers. For more information visit [SIR > MEC² > MEC² Mentors](https://sir.mncppc.org). A SIR login is required.

B. Forms and other documents

1. Revised forms and other documents

   - [CCAP Licensed Exempt Provider Registration and Acknowledgment (DHS-5191)](https://sir.mncppc.org) Updated version will be published as version 08/18.

C. Other tools and resources

DHS Certification webpage

DHS has developed a [new webpage for certification](https://sir.mncppc.org) on the DHS website. It includes information on certification requirements and training opportunities. Providers and the public can sign up to receive email updates about certification on this site. To find it through the main DHS webpage, click on Partners and Providers > Licensing > Child Care and Early Education > Certified Child Care Centers.

**CCAP policy manual**

Updates to [the CCAP policy manual](https://sir.mncppc.org) will be made in late September to reflect new policy. DHS will notify CCAP agencies when updates have been made.
Provider Workbook

The Provider Workbook and other training materials will be updated with new procedures when new system logic is installed.

SIR > MEC² > Worker resources

A SIR login ID is required to access these resources.

- Guide to Applying for Certification (will be published soon)

VI. Legal References

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 119B

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 245H

The Child Care Development Block Grant Act of 2014, Public Law Number 113-186

Federal Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. § 98

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