Faculty Dependent Care Travel Fund

Please Note: To support the needs of faculty during COVID-19, the purpose and eligibility criteria of this program have been modified for FY21 & FY22.

COVID-19 Faculty Dependent Back-up Care Fund

Cornell's Faculty Dependent Care Travel Fund program normally offers eligible faculty up to $1,000 per fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th) indirect expenses for qualified, short-term, dependent-care expenses due to eligible professional travel.

In addition to care needs due to professional travel, the program has been temporarily modified to also support faculty who incur back-up childcare expenses as a result of care disruption due to COVID-19 and whose care needs are incurred while:

- teaching (virtually or in-person) when usual dependent care arrangements are temporarily not available due to COVID protocols or precautions.
- writing a grant proposal or meeting an external publication deadline that is due within 6 months from the date of the fund application.

The purpose of the fund is to help alleviate the financial burden of a breakdown in dependent care incurred by single caregivers or individuals in a domestic partnership/marriage whose spouse/partner is not available for back-up care due to work obligations or other extenuating circumstances.

Funding for this program is limited and may reach the maximum budget prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Application Form

Qualifications and Eligible Expenses

Who qualifies as an applicant?

Tenure track associate and assistant professors and full professors.

Who qualifies as a dependent?

A dependent is defined as:

- a minor who resides with the applicant and for whom the applicant provides primary support (up to age 13) or
- a disabled adult/elder who spends at least eight hours per day in the applicant’s home and for whom the applicant has caregiving responsibility.
Which expenses will be eligible?

Recipients must certify that funds requested for dependent care are due to:

- teaching (specify course number and times).
- an upcoming grant deadline (specify the agency and due date of the grant),
- a pending publisher deadline (letter noting the deadline),
- travel to conferences or to research-related activities

Faculty must submit information about the existing dependent care breakdown and about the grant/publication/teaching obligations. Examples: notice of child care/school classroom closure, a link to funding agency deadline. In dual caregiver situations, an attestation of the spouse's/partner's unavailability must be provided as well.

Payment will be made after care is arranged, provided, and paid for. The Application Form and all receipts/documentation must be submitted by July 15, 2022 to be eligible for funds from the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Failure to submit by the July 15, 2022 deadline will result in expenses being applied to the 2022-2023 fiscal year and will count towards the recipient’s $1000.00 cap for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Is this considered taxable income?

The funds through the Faculty Dependent Care Travel fund are considered taxable income. If approved, Cornell will add an additional 25% of the final expenses when the payment is issued to help defray the tax burden. The Back-up Dependent Care Fund is considered a Hardship fund as expenses are due to the COVID-19 national disaster. The funds will not be included in recipient’s W-2 taxable income for the calendar year in which the funds are dispersed.

Application Process

Faculty can apply online through the secure two-step login process. Documentation to support the request may upload as part of the online application process. The application is confidential and will be reviewed by the Faculty Dependent Travel and Back Up Care Fund Application Committee. Applications are reviewed weekly and payments will be included in the next paycheck following an application’s approval. Decisions regarding any award are final. Program provisions are subject to change from time to time, and the existence of the program is no guarantee of the availability of funds or the award of grants. For questions, please contact Work/Life in Human Resources at worklife@cornell.edu.

The Application form, the Travel Verification form, and all receipts/ documentation must be submitted within two weeks after dependent care has been provided. Applicants will be informed of the funding decision within two weeks of their submission.

Eligible faculty can submit more than one request (and receive more than one grant) within a given fiscal year, up to the annual maximum ($1,000).