CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

We ask that Congress increase CCDBG funding by an additional $5 billion in FY2020, in order to help states meet the 2014 requirements and increase the number of children served by the grant.

2019 Agenda

THE HISTORY OF CCDBG

Established in 1991, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary federal grant program that provides child care assistance for families in need. CCDBG is administered to states in block grants. States use the program to subsidize child care for working families with low incomes. Most of this assistance is administered through vouchers or certificates, which can be used by parents to select the high-quality provider or program that works best for their family.

Congress reauthorized CCDBG in 2014 with overwhelming bipartisan support. The CCDBG Act of 2014 improved child care health and safety standards, and provided funding to help make quality child care available to more families with low incomes. The 2014 law also mandated that states meet new requirements on comprehensive criminal background checks and disaster preparedness/response planning, among other critical improvements.

A JOB NOT FINISHED

Despite the reauthorization, Congress failed to provide sufficient funding to help states make quality child care available to millions of families that need it. Today, states use resources from other federal funding streams, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), to ensure families don’t lose critical access to child care.

The lack of adequate funding has hampered states’ ability to provide quality child care to working families. Currently, only 1 in 6 families who qualify for child care assistance receive it.

States continue to request and receive waivers from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to delay implementation of the new requirements, particularly background checks. Additionally, FY2016 saw the lowest number of children served by the grant in nearly 20 years.
WHY CCDBG MATTERS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

In FY2018, New Hampshire received a historic increase of $4.4 million. While this funding has helped improve the child care system in New Hampshire, there is still more that needs to be done. Currently, there is a deficit of more than 22,000 licensed child care spaces across the state of New Hampshire. With more than 53,000 children under the age of 6 in working families across the state, this means that 2 in 5 children in working families do not have access to licensed child care while their parents are at work. This is particularly the case for infant/toddler care. Additional funding would assist the state to increase its capacity to serve our youngest children.

In addition to access, increased funding could help improve the quality of care in New Hampshire, particularly by expanding incentives to assist child care programs in improving the quality of their care. Since New Hampshire’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is voluntary, increasing quality incentives is necessary to encourage broader participation. The additional funding would also allow for more tuition assistance for child care professionals seeking to further their education, which would result in better staff qualifications. School-age programs could also receive more support in the form of higher Child Care Scholarship Program payments to support the field of after-school professionals.

HOW CONGRESS CAN HELP IN 2019

CCDBG remains underfunded, despite the funding increase in FY 2019 of $2.4 billion. While this funding allowed states to begin the intense work of revising their child care systems to help thousands of children and families gain access to high-quality care, it did not fully meet the critical need for high-quality child care.

In fact, even with CCDBG’s historic increase, federal funding for child care is still $1 billion less than FY2001 levels, when adjusted for inflation.

Given the population growth since 2001, it is clear that states still do not have enough funding to meet the needs of families.

For this reason, we ask that Congress increase CCDBG funding by an additional $5 billion in FY2020. This will help states meet the 2014 requirements and increase the number of children served.