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.

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 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 and 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, FY2017 saw the lowest number of children served by the grant in nearly 20 years.

Average Monthly Number of Children Served in CCDBG in the United States (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Children Served</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1.80 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1.32 million</td>
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Fewer than 1 out of 6 children eligible for CCDF are being served

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WHY CCDBG MATTERS IN ALABAMA

In FY18, Alabama received a historic $40.7 million increase in CCDBG discretionary funding. This new funding enabled the state to increase base payments to child care providers serving families receiving assistance, increase access to training for child care providers, and build upon the state’s quality rating and improvement system.

The increase in CCDBG funding also enabled the Alabama Department of Human Resources to virtually eliminate the waitlist for child care subsidies. Previously, Alabama parents had to wait three years or more to get help paying for child care. Now, it takes just a few weeks for families to be approved for subsidy.

While this is great news, it highlights the importance of sustaining CCDBG funding to avoid taking away child care from these working families. In addition, more CCDBG funding could help expand access to families just above the qualifying threshold. Currently, Alabama families must be at 130 percent or less of the federal poverty level to qualify. But with the average cost of infant care ranging from $5,000 to $6,000 per year in Alabama, even families well above the threshold struggle to afford quality care. An increase in CCDBG funding could allow Alabama to increase the subsidy eligibility rate, enabling these families to access care as well.

Finally, with the passage of the Alabama Child Care Safety Act last year, efforts are still underway to ensure all child care facilities that receive state and federal funds are licensed by August 1, 2019. These efforts will require additional health and safety training for faith-based providers, as well as an expansion of the state’s licensing and monitoring system. More CCDBG funding would help sustain these efforts and ensure more of Alabama’s children are in safe, quality environments.

HOW CONGRESS CAN HELP IN 2019

CCDBG remains underfunded, despite the funding increase in FY 2018 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.