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)](chart.png)

Fewer than 1 out of 6 children eligible for CCDF are being served.
WHY CCDBG MATTERS IN MAINE

The historic increase of $7 million in FY2018 allowed Maine to increase child care subsidy payment rates to providers to the federally recommended 75th percentile. This means more providers will be able to afford to accept children on subsidy, expanding access for these families. In addition, the funds are supporting the state in meeting the criminal background check requirements for providers.

However, as the state continues to struggle under the opioid epidemic and difficult economic conditions, and with the cost of child care rivaling or exceeding the cost of college tuition in Maine, more CCDBG funding is needed in order to expand access to families. Currently, Maine has a large unmet demand for child care and an underdeveloped early care and education infrastructure. A staggering 73 percent of children in Maine ages 0-5 have all parents in the workforce, and the state is just one of three nationwide that lacks comprehensive child care resource and referral services. This makes it difficult for families to find available resources and select child care programs that best suit their needs.

Moreover, the early care and education field experiences high rates of turnover, with many child care providers closing their doors permanently. A primary cause is that early educators (often referred to as child care workers) are historically paid low wages. In fact, the average wage in Maine is just $11.18 per hour, and many full-time early educators lack benefits and even qualify for public assistance themselves.

Increased CCDBG funding will help Maine develop the infrastructure to better support families, recruit and retain high-quality early educators, and ensure all children have a strong early childhood foundation.

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.