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)

1.80 million
1.32 million

Fewer than 1 out of 6 children eligible for CCDF are being served

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WHY CCDBG MATTERS IN MISSISSIPPI

In FY2018, Mississippi received a historic $29.7 million increase in CCDBG funding. However, increased CCDBG funding is still necessary in order to increase access to high-quality child care for children and families in the state.

The average single parent in Mississippi pay 27.8 percent of their income for center-based care for an infant. Married parents of 2 children living at the poverty line pay 40.6 percent of their household income for center-based child care. And the cost of infant care in Mississippi is nearly the same as the annual cost of college tuition at a four-year college. Access to the child care subsidy is critical for working families; without it, many would not be able to access child care at all.

With an average income of just $18,930, which is below the national average, it is difficult to recruit and retain high-quality teachers in Mississippi. This not only harms the child care workforce, but it decreases the supply of high-quality programming for children, leaving Mississippi’s children at risk. More CCDBG funding could help directors recruit and retain quality early educators and provide environments conducive to development and readiness.

Finally, in Mississippi there is a need to support teachers educating children with special needs. Currently educators do not receive support in child care environments for children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Increased CCDBG funding could be used for technical assistance in those classrooms to help ensure that children with individualized needs are supported by increasing teachers’ access to formal support in their classroom practices, lesson planning, and social-emotional support and differentiation for children who have individualized special needs.

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.