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.
WHY CCDBG MATTERS IN OHIO

In Ohio, only about 40 percent of family child care and center-based programs are participating in the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Step Up To Quality (SUTQ). This equates to 60 percent of the nonrated programs being reimbursed at less than the 20th percentile of the 2016 Market Rate Survey. Many of the programs serving Ohio’s most economically disadvantaged children have parents pay for subsidizing the state-funded children to break even or may be operating at a loss each year. When providers are unable to cover these costs, there are fewer child care opportunities for families.

For FY 2020-2021, Governor DeWine is proposing to increase reimbursement rates using the current annual increase of $73 million in federal CCDBG funds. The governor’s proposal raises the base rates to greater than 25 percent of the 2018 market rate or the rates in place at the time of the update.

While higher rates may increase families’ access to high-quality care, it will still leave many providers well below the amount they need in order to offer and sustain quality care. With more CCDBG funding, the rates could be increased to a level that would better serve both families and programs in Ohio. Governor DeWine wants to raise eligibility for publicly funded child care subsidies from 130 percent of the federal poverty level to 150 percent federal poverty level. There is also a need to expand access to the state’s subsidy program. In order to serve an additional 22,000 children, an additional $73 million in CCDBG funding is necessary. Additional CCDBG funding could be used to help more families access this program.

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.