



Delaware's Response to COVID-19: Child Care Actions

Fact Sheet | January 2021

On March 27, 2020, the CARES Act was signed into law, including \$3.5 billion in supplemental appropriations for the Child Care and Development Block Grant to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus. This funding represents a 60% increase in total discretionary appropriations for fiscal year 2020, which amounts to \$9.326 billion. States were given broad flexibility for how to use this funding and have therefore taken a variety of approaches to help address needs of working families and providers through COVID-19. However, as the funds ran out during the ongoing crisis, many states began pulling from other sources to continue supporting parents and providers alike. This fact sheet explains the actions Delaware took to support the child care industry and working parents through 2020.

Delaware received \$9.7 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act and deemed child care an essential business during the pandemic.

The state's first action was a phased economic reopening plan from June 1 to June 15, that allowed licensed providers designated as Emergency Child Care Sites to serve the children of essential workers. These programs received "Enhanced Reimbursements" for the first and second half of the month to cover costs of health, sanitation, and wages. Such reimbursements were determined by vacant slots. For closed sites, reimbursements were made depending on whether staff were continued to be paid wages.

Phase 2 of Delaware's reopening plan commenced on June 15, allowing all licensed child care providers to reopen. During this phase, closed providers remained eligible for reimbursements for wages until July 1. Providers were required to comply with health and safety regulations developed by the Office of Child Care Licensing. Protocol included restrictions on group sizes, and requirements on face coverings, cleaning and sanitization, and social distancing.

Delaware's Enhanced Reimbursement Program allocated over \$75 million between April and September 2020 to help child care providers pay staff, meet health guidance, and cope with increased operating costs.

In the fall, the state also used \$1 million of their CARES Act funds to support licensed child care facilities that offer remote learning for school-age students. These Child Care Remote Learning Grants were available to providers for specific expenses and were distributed between August 4 and December 30 to assist remote learning for school-age children. Grants ranged between \$500 and \$7,500, depending on the needs of the child care provider.

As Delaware fully obligated their CARES CCDBG funding, it began to use the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) as well as CCDBG funds to continue enhanced subsidy payments based on enrollment, a policy that was in place through the end of the year. At the end of November, Delaware had spent \$115 million of the CRF on supporting the child care industry.

At the time of publication, Delaware had not announced any new grant programs to support the child care industry in 2021.