



Georgia'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 Georgia took to support the child care industry and working parents through 2020.

Georgia received \$144.5 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act.

The state established a new priority under the existing child care subsidy system to help parents deemed essential personnel (law enforcement, public safety, medical staff, and child care personnel). Parents working in these fields and whose household income did not exceed 50% of the state's median income (\$32,000 for a family of three) were eligible to receive a child care subsidy for at least three months. The state paid up to the maximum reimbursement rate for each child, but the family may have still been charged a copayment or fee. The state anticipated \$3 million of Georgia's supplemental CCDBG funding would support this program.

In the spring, the state reported 1,700 of the state's 4,500 licensed child care facilities remained open. As such, Georgia continued to provide subsidies to child care providers that were temporarily closed.

On May 1, all child care providers were able to apply for Short Term Assistance Benefit for Licensed Entities, or STABLE, payments. These payments, based on pre-pandemic enrollment, were intended to help cover staff wages and benefits, in addition to tuition relief for families, lease or mortgage payments, utilities, cleaning

supplies, classroom materials or supplies, unreimbursed food, and other supplies required by CDC guidelines. In the first round of STABLE payments, the state awarded more than \$38.8 million in financial support to 3,789 licensed child care providers.

After these payments were made, Georgia surveyed providers to establish a plan for spending the rest of their CARES Act allocation.

As of November, 3,322 of the state's providers had reopened. In mid-November, Georgia opened another STABLE payment which providers could apply for through December 2. The state established a newer, expedited application to provide the awards more quickly than the prior round. The state used \$54 million for this second round, and all payments were provided after the application closed. This time, 3,677 providers received \$240 per child who attended in-person care in October.

At the time of publication, Georgia had not announced any new plans to provide support for the child care industry into 2021, despite reportedly having still unspent one third, or \$52 million, of its supplemental CCDBG funding from the CARES Act.