



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

Wyoming received \$4.1 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act and fully obligated these funds.

The state identified child care as a “critical part of Wyoming’s infrastructure, allowing essential systems to function” and therefore, beginning May 1, permitted child care providers to reopen under alternate health and safety recommendations, such as smaller group sizes and screening procedures.

Before instituting a plan for CARES Act funding, in March and April, Wyoming conducted a survey of over 200 child care programs and other organizations serving youth throughout the state to understand the needs of those businesses and organizations.

Wyoming then used \$1.5 million in supplemental CCDBG funds to offer a one-time stipend for all licensed providers and paid subsidies to providers based on enrollment, rather than attendance through May.

Programs that were open were required to prioritize child care for the children of essential personnel and to register as an Emergency Child Care Facility. The state created a portal to update essential workers who needed child care on the daily capacity of each emergency child care provider. Wyoming also created a website for providers to find substitute workers.

The state also used \$1.5 million for one-time grants to licensed centers and \$1.8 million for grants to other providers including those that are license-exempt. These grants were distributed using a third party, Kids First.

Finally, the state allocated an additional \$1.5 million to offer payments to families that experienced an increase in child care expenses as a result of the pandemic. Families could apply from October 1 to December 15.

At time of publication, the state had not announced any new plans to support child care providers or working parents in 2021.