



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

Idaho received \$20 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act and deemed child care an essential service.

The state planned to use 40% of its supplemental funds to continue subsidy payments for providers if they closed or had decreased attendance, and 20% to pay direct grants to providers for who closed or had decreased attendance. Idaho planned to use remaining funds to support providers caring for the children of essential workers as well as providing sanitation and cleaning supplies.

At the end of May, the state offered one-time, noncompetitive Child Care Emergency Grants to help providers that were open throughout the summer. Funds could be used to cover the costs of operation, such as a rent, staff salaries, and cleaning supplies. These grants ranged from \$15,000 to licensed, center-based providers to \$2,000 for home-based providers. This program was expected to use at 75% of the state's supplemental CCDBG funds provided in the CARES Act.

On July 28, the state launched a second round of grants to help providers remain open during periods of low enrollment and to cover costs of providing care through the fall. This noncompetitive grant opportunity was available to providers who were open or planned to open

by September 15. Recipients received monthly awards ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 and were based on facility size. All eligible applicants received at least two monthly payments.

Funds were intended to cover expenses such as rent, utilities, supplies and payroll, as well as support for additional health and safety measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Early in the year, Idaho began to provide subsidy payments to providers based on enrollment, rather than attendance. At the time of publication, Idaho had not announced whether it would continue to offer subsidies based on enrollment, or revert to an attendance-based policy.

In early August, Beth Oppenheimer, executive director of the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children warned lawmakers that, "The entire industry is literally on the verge of collapse. "Without help, the vast majority of Idaho's child care providers could potentially be out of business, leaving working parents without many options." However, Idaho did not announce any additional support for the child care industry through the fall or winter.