



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

Kansas received \$30.77 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act.

The state used this money to create a Hero Relief Program which expanded child care subsidies to essential workers, specifically health care workers and first responders. The state capped eligibility for this program at 250% of the federal poverty level (or \$54,300 for a family of three).

The Hero Relief Program also directly supported child care providers by providing grants to help with operations during the pandemic. Funds were intended to help providers pay for operational expenses such as rent or mortgage, wages, and necessary health and safety supplies such as gloves and disinfectants. The state also offered a one-time bonus (Workers Support Bonuses) for child care staff who worked at providers who remained open to care for children of essential workers during the pandemic.

On July 26, Governor Kelly (D) expanded the Hero Relief program to include a revenue replacement grant for all licensed child care providers who lost income from child care subsidies during the pandemic. The deadline to apply for the Hero Relief programs was available through September.

In the fall, Kansas announced a new program, funded with \$4.9 million of its federal Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars, to connect licensed child care providers with health consultants to learn about meeting CDC health and safety recommendations during the pandemic.

Also in the fall, Kansas allocated \$1.7 million of its federal Preschool Development Grant to the creation of five

subgrants to develop and test local solutions to the needs and gaps in Kansas' early childhood care system. The goals of the program are to increase access to child care, particularly in rural communities, and improving quality of care, both particularly useful in light of the changes to the market during the pandemic. Many funded projects will receive multi-year support in alignment with the federal grant to create long-term, sustainable changes.

Kansas used \$40 million of its federal Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars for remote learning support grants to ensure that school age children could have access to safe and secure settings while engaging in remote learning. The grants also provided support for child care providers to help cover their new operational costs and payroll demands and to expand their services to accommodate school age children throughout the fall. Applications for the Remote Learning Grants closed on December 6. Funds must have been expended by December 30 to comply with federal law.

This fall, the state dedicated \$8 million in CARES Act dollars to reimburse early childhood professionals and other essential workers for lost wages and medical expenses directly attributable to COVID-19 testing and treatment, incurred between March 12, 2020 and December 1, 2020.

On November 24, the state announced more than \$2.1 million in grant funding to fuel 59 'All in for Kansas Kids' Quality Subgrants. Funding for the subgrants was made possible by the federal Preschool Development Birth Through Five Renewal Grant, a 3-year grant awarded to Kansas in April 2020.