



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

South Carolina received \$63.7 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act.

The state primarily used these funds to offer child care assistance for parents who were deemed essential workers. Parents did not have to meet any income guidelines for this time-limited program. South Carolina also used these supplemental funds to offer one-time cleaning grants to help providers cover additional cleaning and sanitation costs during this time. Centers could apply for \$600, and family and group homes were eligible for \$300. Effective August 31, the South Carolina Department of Social Services began paying subsidies based on attendance.

The state did not announce plans to provide further funding for child care providers through the fall. However, in order to ensure families had access to affordable school-age care, the state released guidance indicating that child care providers could receive subsidy

payments for care provided to school-age children during remote learning hours.

Additionally, on August 1, South Carolina began taking applications for Certificates of Temporary Operations from organizations interested in providing school-age care during the fall.

In early January, Gov McMaster (R) dedicated \$7 million of his Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund for early childhood spending. The funds will be used for extended day and extended year programming in the state's 4K program that targets four-year-old children who are eligible for Medicaid, free or reduced lunch, SNAP/TANF, or experience homelessness. At the time of publication, the state had yet to announce any plans to offer support dedicated to child care for 2021.