DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

News stories

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State awards first emergency child care grants

Round one of funding totals $9.8 million to support family child care providers and centers serving children of essential workers

April 21, 2020

More than 1,200 Minnesota child care providers will receive about $9.8 million to continue serving children of essential workers through the first round of emergency state funding announced Monday by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

The grants, proposed by Gov. Tim Walz and authorized by the Minnesota Legislature last month, will help family child care providers and child care centers ensure there is enough capacity to serve these families during the state's COVID-19 response. A total of $30 million has been authorized by the state to assist child care providers. Whether or not they received a grant in the first round, child care providers will have the opportunity apply for grants in the second and third rounds in mid-May and mid-June.

"These grants are an important step to ensuring those who are working on the front lines of this crisis will have qualified professionals to care for their children," said Minnesota Human Services Commissioner Jodi Harpstead. "With child care providers struggling to keep their doors open, we know there is high demand for additional support. Fortunately, they will have an opportunity to apply for the second and third round of grants."

The grants were awarded through Child Care Aware of Minnesota, which received applications from 5,380 state licensed child care programs and 22 tribally licensed programs. Implementation of the Peacetime Child Care Emergency Child Care Grants has been a successful partnership between the Minnesota Children's Cabinet, Child Care Aware and the Department of Human Services.

“Child care providers are critical to the state’s response to COVID-19. They are the heroes on the frontline supporting our children and families,” said Erin Bailey, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director. “Additional resources are critical to ensuring that providers are able to stay open and continue to provide care and education to our littlest Minnesotans.”

Selected applicants will receive an award on a month-to-month basis. Monthly grant awards start at $4,500 with up to $15,500 additional funding based on added services and capacity. The grants are intended to provide about $10 million per month over three months to make sure child care is available. Child care programs receiving the grants will be able to continue charging fees for families still attending their programs. The grant funding will help support expenses not covered due to decreased enrollment.

Providers who meet eligibility criteria may apply for future rounds of grants through the Child Care Aware website at www.childcareawaremn.org/providers/emergency-child-care-grants/ (https://www.childcareawaremn.org/providers/emergency-child-care-grants-2/).

There are approximately 420,000 children under the age of 12 who live in a household that has essential workers in a sector that is considered critical. Of these, the state estimates that during this peacetime emergency, about 270,000 children will need care and approximately 120,000 are likely to need and use licensed child care settings.

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