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Thursday, September 10, 2020

Governor Cuomo Announces $88.6 Million In CARES Act Funding Available to Assist Child Care Providers During COVID-19 Pandemic

Federal CARES Act Funding Will Assist Child Care Providers in Reopening Under Enhanced Health and Safety Protocols

Application Period Open Next Week Through December 31

$48.3 Million Awarded to Assist Child Care Providers with Reopening Plans

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced $88.6 million in federal CARES Act funding is available to assist child care providers through NY Forward grants as they adjust their programs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding is in addition to $30 million made available in the spring and $48.3 million recently awarded to assist child care providers with reopening or restructuring their physical plans to meet new social distancing requirements.

"Child care is essential to getting people back to work and continuing our New York Forward economic reopening," Governor Cuomo said. "Every working parent deserves the peace of mind that goes with having a quality child care program where their child can grow and learn in a space that has been adapted to meet the health and safety requirements of this extraordinary time. I urge child care providers

to take advantage of this grant opportunity to help ensure the health and safety of the children in their care."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities that already existed in our society, particularly among working women, and nowhere is that more present than with child care," Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul said. "As co-chair of the Child Care Availability Task Force, I have heard from child care providers throughout our state about how important this funding is as they continue to operate safely with adequate social distancing to keep both staff and children safe. In order to build back our economy better and more inclusive than ever before, we must reduce the stress and cost burden of child care and continue the call for additional federal funding that is critical for New York's working families and providers."

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services administered the federal CARES Act grants. Child Care Resource and Referral agencies across the state will process payments to providers.

Congresswoman Nita Lowey said, ""Child care providers are essential to fighting the spread of the coronavirus throughout the Lower Hudson Valley and mitigating its impact on our families. This federal funding provides critical support to those working on the front line of the coronavirus pandemic by providing health care workers, emergency first responders, and other essential workers with a safe, reliable place for their children while they fight to end this public health crisis. In addition to helping New York's child care providers stay open, these funds are necessary to help providers overcome the decrease in enrollment or complete closures related to COVID-19. I will continue working to bring safety and security to our families and provide federal funding to businesses and service providers throughout Westchester and Rockland."

Congressman Eliot Engel said, "The CARES Act, which I fought hard to pass, is helping bring much needed relief to New York families. I am pleased to join Gov. Cuomo in announcing this funding, which will help child care providers support New York in re-opening. Child care is vital to families across the state and are essential to our recovery. I'm continuing to work with my colleagues in the Delegation to get additional funding so that our state can continue to recover strongly from this crisis."

Congressman Brian Higgins said, "Our child care providers are another vital and necessary part of our community that was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proud to offer this federal funding that will help facilities and families deal with the financial burdens of this outbreak by providing assistance for rent, reopening under new COVID-19 guidelines, and scholarships for the children of our essential workers who risk their lives for our community."

Congressman Thomas Suozzi said, "We voted to provide this federal funding because our essential workers must have safe, secure, and reliable childcare. Our daycare providers have been devastated by lost tuitions and now smaller capacity and they need our help. I applaud Governor Cuomo for his efforts on behalf of our essential workers and their families."

OCFS Commissioner Sheila J. Poole said, "I am delighted that we are able to assist child care providers in adapting to new requirements and helping families in need of care as parents return to work. Child care is foundational to our economic recovery and we are proud to support programs in adapting to the health and safety changes necessary to operate in our current climate."

The $88.6 million in grant funds will be used as follows:

Twenty million will support child care scholarships for children of essential workers. Essential workers include first responders such as health care providers, pharmaceutical staff, law enforcement, firefighters, food delivery workers, grocery store employees and others who are needed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Child care costs will be covered for families of essential workers whose income is less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level - or $78,600 for a family of four - and will be paid up to market rate for each region statewide. The funding will support 5,400 children in child care for 14 weeks.

Another $20 million is being made available for rental assistance for school-based child care programs that have been displaced by the pandemic. It will support 2,300 school-age child care programs with $2,000 in monthly rental assistance for four months. Programs may also use the funding for transporting children to the new location.

Twenty million would support grants for closed child care programs to reopen or restructure under new guidelines for social distancing. This may cover partitions, short-term rental space, supplies or broadband access.

The remaining $28.6 million will provide grants for child care providers to pay for half of the cost (up to $6,000) to open a new classroom. Temporary funds would be phased out in the second and third months as parents enroll more children in child care.

Child care providers may apply for the funding at https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/. Applications will be posted later this month and will be accepted on a rolling basis until December 31, 2020.