NJ Human Services Opens Grant Applications to Help Child Care Providers Meet Increased Costs Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Licensed Centers and Registered Family Child Care Providers Open by Oct. 1 Can Apply; Funding Can Be Used for COVID-related expenses such as PPE, Cleaning, Classroom Modifications & Staffing

Sept. 29, 2020

(TRENTON) – New Jersey Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson today announced licensed child care centers and registered family child care providers can begin applying for grants to help meet the increased costs of reopening and remaining open during the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.

Up to $50 million will be available and it must specifically be used for COVID-19 related expenses, such as personal protection equipment (P cleaning and sanitation, classroom modifications, air quality and ventilation enhancement and added staffing costs to meet new COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.

“This is another step forward in our commitment to supporting child care providers through this challenging time,” Commissioner Johnson said. “I urge child care centers and family child care providers to apply and access this funding to help with the COVID-related costs associated with sustaining your operations. This is an opportunity to assist child care providers while enhancing services for children and families.”

Licensed child care centers and registered family child care providers open by Thursday (Oct. 1) can apply through the New Jersey Child Care Information System (NJCCIS).

Grants will range from $8,000 to $17,000 for licensed child care centers, based on a center’s capacity, and $2,500 for registered family child providers. Providers must note how they plan to use the funds in the application, and the funding must be spent by Dec. 30.

The grants are being managed by Human Services’ Division of Family Development and funded through the state’s allocation of the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund. The Division will host a webinar next week for child care providers interested in applying for grant funding. A notice will be sent to all providers with more details.

“Supporting child care providers is crucial,” Human Services Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said. “By helping child care providers through these grants, we’re supporting New Jersey’s children and working families while we continue to navigate these difficult times.”

“We urge child care providers to seek this funding,” said Human Services Assistant Commissioner Natasha Johnson, who directs the Division of Family Development. “This funding can help with the added operational costs to meet new COVID-19 health and safety guidelines.”

The grants are part of several initiatives announced by Governor Murphy to provide additional support to children, families and child care providers.

Human Services recently opened applications for the COVID-19 child care tuition assistance program the Murphy Administration has created to help families with child care costs as schools open remotely. The $150 million program provides child care tuition assistance to families with incomes up to $75,000 that are in need of either full or part-time child care due to their child’s remote learning schedule.

Families can apply for this assistance by completing the online application at www.ChildCareNJ.gov. Those applying will need proof of income and a notice or announcement from their child’s school of a remote learning schedule. Tuition assistance will be available through Dec. 30 for eligible residents with school-age children, 5 to 13 years old.

The Department is also providing state child care subsidies for families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level during the school day for children aged 5 to 13 through Dec. 30. Families that receive state child care subsidies for before and after school care for school-age children are being contacted directly to identify their school-day needs.

Human Services is also supporting centers that make it a priority to serve children receiving the child care subsidy by providing supplemental payments of $75 per subsidy-eligible child, per month, including infants, toddlers, and school-age children to providers through the end of the year.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Murphy Administration has taken several steps to support child care for families and to support the sustainability of providers including:

- Increasing investments in child care, including more than $125 million through two key actions: creating and funding state-subsidized emergency child care for essential workers at the peak of the crisis and having provided the state’s child care subsidy to centers based on prior enrollment throughout the spring and summer;

- Providing grants during the summer to child care centers and youth camps to assist in meeting COVID-19 related health and safety guidelines;
- Waiving parent co-pays in the state's child care subsidy program for parents who requested it due to impacts from COVID-19; and
- Delivering PPE to emergency child care centers and family child care providers.

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