LOUISIANA TO AWARD NEARLY $10 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS IMPACTED BY PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Apr 16, 2020

BATON ROUGE, La. -- The Louisiana Department of Education today announced it would award nearly $10 million in federal funding to child care providers to offset the financial impacts of the ongoing Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. The funding is intended to support early learning sites to stay open and provide care to the children of essential personnel or to reopen after this unprecedented time.

The funding stems from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. It will benefit approximately 900 child care providers statewide who participate in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and in turn, serve over 58,000 children birth through age 13.

Child care providers interested in receiving this financial assistance must complete an application (will open in new tab)by April 23. The state aims to distribute the money by early May.

"In normal times, child care providers are a linchpin of our society. In these scary and uncertain times, the work of those remaining open is a matter of life and death," said Assistant Superintendent Jessica Baghian, who oversees early childhood education, echoing her recent Op-Ed emphasizing the importance of child care. (will open in new tab) "Louisiana has taken steps to provide support to child care providers during this extraordinary time. But we must do more."

Child care providers that remain open are offering an essential service of caring for children of frontline healthcare and other critical infrastructure workers. They face challenging work conditions and increased staffing costs related to guidelines regarding limited group sizes and other mitigation practices. It is also challenging for the nearly 70 percent of child care providers in Louisiana that have closed their doors to pay their bills and sustain their staff.

The new grant funding builds on steps Louisiana has taken in recent weeks to support child care providers. The Department has:

- Paid providers based on the enrollment of students receiving a subsidy, not attendance, to help them make closure decisions based on safety alone;
- Issued rapidly-evolving safety guidance for child care centers that remain open;
- Connected child care workers to the important feeding programs run by school systems to ensure the people who care for children don't have to worry about putting food on the table for their own and those they educate; and
- Enabled essential personnel to go to work with confidence their children are in good hands by opening the CCAP to essential workers (will open in new tab) across the state.

It also follows a new report by the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (will open in new tab) on the financial impact of COVID-19 on Louisiana child care providers. A survey of providers, conducted from March 16-March 23, showed:

- 78 percent of child care providers in Louisiana had experienced a loss in revenue, with collective losses due to COVID-19 totaling almost $1.7 million;
- 72 percent of closed child care providers were no longer collecting tuition from families; however, 51 percent of these providers were continuing to pay their employees;
- One-third of child care providers reported an extended closure will form them to permanently close, impacting approximately 12,500 children and over 2,000 full- and part-time staff members; and
- More than 90 percent of child care providers indicated grants to pay employees during closures would support their response to COVID-19 both now and in the future if their program or business must close.

But, because the survey was conducted before the spread of the virus accelerated and led to additional temporary closures, the losses are likely much greater.

"The child care sector, which already operates on thin financial margins, is experiencing serious, negative impacts from COVID-19," the report states, "and the full extent of those impacts is yet to be seen."

For more information and resources, visit the Department's COVID-19 page on its website. (will open in new tab)

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