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Ask the Mayor

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

Mayor Bowser Announces $5 Million in COVID-19 Relief Funding for DC Child Care Providers

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(Washington, DC) – Today, Mayor Muriel Bowser announced the DC Child Care Provider Relief Fund will provide $5 million in emergency operational funding to local child care facilities. As part of the District's COVID-19 recovery efforts, relief will be granted to all licensed District child care providers to ensure a supply of child care for families as the public health emergency continues.

"Expanding access to high-quality child care is one of the most effective ways to put families on the pathway to healthy and successful lives," said Mayor Bowser. "This grant will ensure more families, particularly our working families who are sacrificing so much during this public health emergency, have access to the child care and support they need and deserve."

Mayor Bowser, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) are partnering to deliver this relief to child care providers. The Washington Area Community Investment Fund (WACIF) will manage the disbursement of program funds.

It is Mayor Bowser's intent to award relief to all child care providers currently licensed through OSSE. Award amounts will vary depending on the type of provider and the number of children the provider is licensed to serve (pre-COVID capacity). All District child care providers licensed by OSSE have been contacted about next steps.

"We know that child care providers are small and local businesses as well," said Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development John Falcicchio. "They are essential small businesses that provide invaluable services to the families of Washington, DC and this relief helps businesses and families as we continue to recover together."

Early in the public health emergency, the District took immediate action in marshaling financial resources to support child care providers across the city. Those efforts include stabilizing the early childhood care and education sector through the subsidized child care program by continuing to cover family copayments through the beginning of the pandemic and providing public subsidy payments to participating providers, even those who were closed, based on past average monthly payments. OSSE has committed to continue payments this way through the end of this fiscal

year.

"We have always known how important it is for families to have access to quality, affordable child care, and the ongoing pandemic has only made it even more clear how critically important our child care providers are to our families, community and economy," said Superintendent Hanseul Kang. "We are proud to partner with our colleagues at DMPED to provide this emergency relief funding, and will continue to provide information, resources and the assistance needed for providers to responsibly open back up and continue serving families safely."

In addition to partnering with DMPED to support the distribution of this relief, OSSE worked with its partners at the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) to provide more than $400,000 in grants for the DC Access to Quality Child Care Expansion COVID-19 Emergency Response Grant which supports past recipients of Mayor Bowser's DC Access to Quality Child Care Expansion (A2Q) grant program. Funds were intended to cover at least one month of operating expenses for any month during which COVID-19 has impacted the operations of the program.

OSSE also made personal protective equipment (PPE) available to any child care facility in the District to ensure the health and safety of staff, children and families, and help reduce the financial burden for providers.

OSSE continues to serve as an information hub for child care providers throughout the District, regularly providing updated guidance, financial resources and technical assistance, and engaged with more than 300 child care providers in ongoing, live stakeholder calls. OSSE's Guidance and Resources for COVID-19-related Closures and Recovery can be found on the OSSE website.

While OSSE remains in a partial telework posture, the Strong Start program, which provides early intervention services and supports for DC's youngest learners, is still open and accepting referrals. The program is serving more than 1,400 Strong Start children and families via telehealth during the public health emergency. The program is actively working to make the referral process more family-friendly and increase awareness of Strong Start services among families in the District.