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First Period Child Care Counts Payments Set

Second Period Applications Open Today

(MADISON) – The Department of Children and Families (DCF) awarded just over $32 million to 2,367 early care and education providers through the first period of the Child Care Counts: COVID-19 Emergency Payment Program. The application window for the second period of funding opens today.

“I want to thank the thousands of early care and education providers and educators who stepped up in this time of crisis,” said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. "Unfortunately, many of those folks are struggling in the wake of the pandemic - with many considering permanent closures. Our payment program is a key part of making sure families have access to safe, high-quality, and affordable child care."

The first round of payments, totaling $32.21 million covers child care provider activity from March 12 to April 11. Eligible child care providers who applied during the first payment window will begin receiving their payments this week through direct deposit and paper checks. Payments ranged from a low of five dollars to a high of $77,695, with the median average payment equaling $8,465.

The department estimated demand from eligible child care providers and set maximum amounts for the payment criteria according to those estimates. Because the amounts requested applicants exceeded the funds available, adjustments to the payment amounts were required. A full schedule of payment criteria for the first period of payments can be found on the department's website.

The Child Care Counts: COVID-19 Emergency Payment Program is broken into three smaller programs targeted at the most common circumstances early care and education providers are facing in the wake of the public health emergency. The individual payment programs and the amounts allocated to them during period one are detailed below. Additionally, the department is issuing payments across three application periods: May 18 to May 29, June 8 to June 19, and June 29 to July 10. Providers are encouraged to apply during all eligible phases and may be eligible for funding through multiple programs. Child care providers can begin applying for the second period today.

Funding to Care for Essential Workforce Families – $24.43 million for period one

This program is designed to support the costs of providing care for essential workforce families. Funds are to be used for paying staff, reimbursing families, or other allowable expenses.

Incentive Pay – $5.38 million for period one

The Incentive Pay program provides additional wages for child care providers and individual educators. Funds are required to be used to increase base pay during the State of Emergency for current employees, providers, and individual educators.

Support for Temporarily Closed Child Care Programs – $2.41 million for period one

To assist providers who were forced to close, this program helps defray costs associated with retaining staff and reopening child care programs as Wisconsin’s workforce returns to work. Funds are required to be used for reopening within 30 days of receiving funding. The money received is required to be used for paying staff, reimbursing families, or other allowable expenses.

To learn more about DCF, visit www.dcf.wisconsin.gov and follow @WisDCF on Twitter and Facebook. This release is also available as a pdf file.

NOTE: Data on provider payments can be accessed online. The department recently launched an initiative to connect families with local child care, including an interactive map that displays open, available care and an application for families in need of child care.