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LOUISIANA TO AWARD $11 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT CHILD CARE PROVIDERS DURING PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Oct 15, 2020

Fourth and final round of funding aids providers for costs incurred from pandemic

BATON ROUGE, La. -- The Louisiana Department of Education today announced it will award $11 million in federal funding to child care providers. The Louisiana Child Care Assistance Provider (LaCAP) relief grant is designed to help child care providers offset the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This fourth and final round of LaCAP grants will support Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) providers for costs incurred from the pandemic, including balances from the inability of some CCAP parents to pay out-of-pocket costs.

The funding stems from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security, or CARES, Act. It is intended to support early learning sites that safely remained open or reopened during this unprecedented time. The deadline for submitting the LaCAP Round 4 Grant application (will open in new tab) is October 22, 2020.

"This global pandemic further illuminates the need for high quality early childhood efforts across our state," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Cade Brumley. "While greater funding is needed to close the gaps in access to high-quality child care, these much needed funds will help our centers keep their doors open for the children they are currently serving."

The impact of the pandemic on the child care sector and Louisiana's most vulnerable families is significant. A survey (will open in new tab) conducted by the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children found the majority of child care providers have reported a loss in revenue. A significant number of child care providers are facing temporary or permanent closures. As child care providers become operational again or remain open, they face additional costs related to increased cleaning and sanitation requirements detailed in the Office of Public Health Guidelines for Child Care (will open in new tab) and other activities necessary to maintain operations. While this LaCAP grant opportunity is necessary, more financial support is needed to ensure the long-term viability of Louisiana's early childhood system.

Without additional financial support for child care, this pandemic has the potential to further exacerbate the significant gaps in access to high-quality child care in Louisiana. Prior to the pandemic, less than 7 percent of economically disadvantaged children birth through age two and less than 33 percent of economically disadvantaged three-year-olds were able to access early care and education through public funding. Because of the financial impacts of the pandemic, Louisiana child care providers are still at risk of

closing their doors permanently, which would be devastating to children, families and Louisiana's economy.

A Blue Ribbon Commission has been studying the needs in early childhood for the past two years. The Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Commission has demonstrated the incredible need for increased funding to serve additional children birth through age three in its report, Funding Our Future: LA B to 3 (will open in new tab). The Commission will convene for a third year beginning this fall and will make recommendations regarding funding for early care and education to the Louisiana Legislature in January of 2021.

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