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Ask the Mayor

Muriel Bowser
Mayor

Mayor Bowser Announces Additional $2.8 Million in Financial Supports for the District's Child Care Sector

Friday, December 18, 2020
District Launches Emergency Grants for Providers and Increases Subsidy Payment Amounts

(Washington, DC) – Today, Mayor Muriel Bowser announced an additional $2.8 million in emergency grants to support child care providers and help them stay in business through the public health emergency. The District will also implement a new Public Health Emergency Subsidy Rate that will increase the daily, per-child payment rate for open subsidized child care providers.

"Protecting the District's supply of high-quality child care is essential – for children, for families, and our local economy," said Mayor Bowser. "Child care providers have been hit hard by the pandemic. These increased financial supports will help us maintain our progress toward building and expanding access to affordable, quality childcare options for families."

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is working with the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) to make $2.8 million in emergency grants available to both subsidy and non-subsidy child care providers in early 2021. Distribution of the emergency grant funds will prioritize child care providers serving children and families with low incomes, as well as underserved neighborhoods. The $2.8 million allocated for the grants is what remains of the District's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) provision of Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds after standing up emergency child care services for health care and other essential workers, and paying all subsidized child care providers based on enrollment from the beginning of the pandemic through the end of the 2020 fiscal year. Additional information on the emergency grants, including how to apply, will be shared with child care providers in January 2021.

The 2021 emergency grants will build on the $5 million DC Child Care Provider Relief Fund, announced in September by Mayor Bowser, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), and OSSE, which made grants available to all licensed child care providers. OSSE 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.

The new Public Health Emergency Subsidy Rate, administered by OSSE, will go into effect in January 2021. The rate increase will support subsidized child care providers,

which continue to operate and serve children and families during the public health emergency and face increased costs due to health and safety requirements. The Public Health Emergency rate is authorized for the duration of the public health emergency and will be updated every three months as public health conditions evolve. All current subsidized payment rates will be increased by the same percentage. The initial rate increase will be released by OSSE in early January and will retroactively apply to payments for December child care services, which are distributed in January.

"The Public Health Emergency Subsidy Rate is an important complement to other District strategies supporting family access to child care and helping the District's child care providers to preserve the supply of child care for the future," said Interim State Superintendent Shana Young. "We will continue to do everything we can to support children, families and providers, including continuing to explore ways to use existing funds to bolster the District's child care providers."

OSSE also 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.