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DHS Announces Additional Support for Childcare Providers

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) is pleased to announce additional financial support for childcare providers. The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides $3.5 billion in discretionary funding for the Childcare and Development Block Grant, also known as the Childcare Development Fund (CCDF). DHS received a supplemental allocation of $31.9M on April 14, 2020, and developed a COVID-19 Childcare Sustainability Plan to dispense these funds to support childcare providers during the pandemic.

Many families have lost their jobs and cannot afford to continue to pay for childcare services. Childcare businesses rely on fees from enrolled families for the majority of their revenue. These providers still have expenses they must pay, such as rent or mortgage, even if children are not attending. Providers who do not have sufficient funding during the crisis may permanently close. We need to ensure access to childcare for essential workforce during the emergency and we need to ensure access to childcare after the emergency. DHS tailored this sustainability plan to address these key considerations.

DHS' COVID-19 Childcare Sustainability Plan will use CARES Act funds to:

- Provide a monthly stipend of $2,000 to open licensed centers and $500 to open registered homes,
- Provide an additional monthly stipend of $2,000 to licensed centers and $500 to registered homes providing a 25 percent discount to essential services personnel,
- Pay providers for unlimited absences and full-day care for school-age children,
- Provide hand sanitizer and other cleaning supplies directly to providers,
- Cover the cost of background checks for employees at temporary emergency sites,
- Waive CCA family co-pays and provide full tuition amounts to providers serving CCA families,
- Provide a rejuvenation grant to providers who have closed to assist them in re-opening.

DHS worked collaboratively with stakeholders and community partners in the development of this plan and we appreciate their input. We are also grateful to our providers for their robust participation in our survey, which helped to inform our approach. DHS will closely monitor these efforts and will continue to work with our partners to address their ongoing needs.

Providers must meet certain criteria to be eligible for CARES Act funding through DHS. Find more details in the COVID-19 Childcare Sustainability Plan here, and view frequently asked questions (FAQs) here. You can also find additional information on the DHS website.

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