



South Dakota
Department of
Social Services

DIVISION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
CHILD CARE SERVICES
910 EAST SIOUX AVENUE
PIERRE, SD 57501
PHONE: 605.773.4766 or
800.227.3020
FAX: 605.773.7294
dss.sd.gov

February 25, 2021

Ellen Wheatley Ph.D.
Acting Director, Office of Child Care
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families

Dear Ellen,

South Dakota respectfully submits our plan for spending the additional CCDF funds appropriated to our state through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Act (CRRSA). This plan has been approved by our administration.

South Dakota CRRSA Funding Plan

Direct Child Care Services (Subsidies)

The lead agency intends to use funds to provide increased direct child care services by temporarily eliminating copayments for families receiving child care subsidy as an increased support to low income families who are continuing to be impacted by the economic effects of the pandemic.

Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices

Funding will be used to support grants for providers that may be used to address virus mitigation efforts in line with the Centers for Disease Control and the South Dakota Department of Health. Grant funds may be utilized for costs to maintain safe environments for children including personal protective equipment (PPE).

Grants or Assistance (Other than Subsidies) to Stabilize Child Care Providers

Stabilizing childcare providers is a priority and funding will be used to offer stabilization grants to all licensed or registered providers to pay for increased operating expenses related to COVID-19. Funding would also be used to support training including social emotional training and materials, expansion of play therapy specialists, and to assist providers with various certification and training fees.

Assistance to Providers Not Participating in the Subsidy System Prior to the Pandemic

Supporting a broad network of childcare providers including informal, in-home, and relative providers is key in meeting the needs of working families. Funding will be used to provide stabilization payments that will strengthen this network of providers and ensure these settings can maintain operations to meet the needs of families. Funding will also be used to recruit new providers with a specific focus on family day care providers. There is demand for this provider type in a variety of communities across the state and have set a goal to recruit up to 200 additional providers.

Other

Supporting Families by Reducing or Eliminating Out of Pocket Child Care Expenses:

Reduced income and increased expenses have strained family resources otherwise used for childcare expenses. Funding will be used to reduce out of pocket costs for families on a temporary basis ensuring families have needed resources for other expenses including food, rent, and heating costs.

Using Technology to Enhance Access and Support Families:

The agency utilizes a mainframe technology solution that is over 25 years old. The system lacks the ability to interface real time with providers and families and takes significant resources to maintain. In a frontier state like South Dakota, providers may need to travel great distances to attend required training or to access tools and training that support children and families. Funding would be used to modernize several aspects of the program including:

- Development of an on-line, mobile friendly application for families
- Tools for providers to bill for subsidy payments
- On-line user-friendly tools for providers to facilitate licensing
- Development of on-line required training to reduce staff time traveling to various training sites.
- Increase provider accessibility to training required in the proposed SD Quality Recognition and Information (QRIS) framework

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

/s/

Laura K. Menning
Program Administrator, Child Care Services
Division of Economic Assistance



CC: Karen Knoll-Moran, Regional Program Manager
Michelle Boyer, Program Specialist
Carrie Johnson, Division Director
Virgena Wieseler, Chief of Children and Families