



Child Care Helps America Work and Learn



Administration for Children & Families

Issue No. 3, April 2010

Recovery Act Supports Providers and Program Accountability in Region V

I'm happy to share the latest issue of the Child Care Bureau's *Child Care Helps America Work and Learn* series. This issue highlights exciting ways that Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region V States are using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) funds to help providers increase quality and boost program accountability.

Thanks to the Recovery Act, efforts are underway to help license-exempt providers increase quality by offering tools, information, and help in attaining health and safety standards. New funds are also helping promote children's skills and abilities for their later success in school and supporting parents so they can work or go to school.

In addition, program accountability is a high priority for Region V States. One State is using funds to identify and prevent fraud in the child care assistance program and support continuous improvements already underway. Another is using Recovery Act dollars to support a Web-based system that provides vital information to families about program quality.

ACF is pleased with Region V's commitment to quality and accountability and looks forward to continuing its partnership with these States as they work to provide the best support possible for children and families.

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Region V States Use Recovery Act for Direct Services to Low-income Families

- 3,000 additional children have been served in **Illinois** with Recovery Act funds.
- 3,500 additional children have been served in **Indiana** because of Recovery Act funds.
- 58 scholarships and 46 bonus incentives have been given to child care providers in **Minnesota** as a result of Recovery Act funds.
- 59,624 children will continue receiving subsidies in **Ohio** because of the Recovery Act.

School Readiness Gets a Boost in Minnesota

Minnesota is using Recovery Act funds to continue its School Readiness Connections (SRC) pilot project for providers with high concentrations of children receiving child care assistance.



Created by the State legislature in 2007, the project focuses on quality enhancements for these providers by offering them incentives to promote school readiness. Among many benefits, they may receive reimbursements of up to 25 percent higher than the State average. These benefits help providers boost quality, which in turn increases low-income families' access to better care for their children.

The project has notable differences compared with Minnesota's regular Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). In addition to higher reimbursements, providers in the pilot program can charge higher rates to cover school readiness services. Also, while CCAP has set limits on the number of per-child absences each year, SRC has a simpler framework requiring that children attend an average of 25 hours per week.

Evaluation data reveal that the following project goals are being met:

- Promote skills and abilities that children need to succeed in school;
- Improve the quality of child care;
- Improve the continuity of child care; and
- Continue to support parent employment or schooling that leads to employment.

Parents also are showing high levels of satisfaction with the program. Given these positive indicators, Minnesota has extended the pilot project for an additional 2 years.

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Indiana Helps License-exempt Providers

Thanks to an infusion of Recovery Act funds, Indiana is launching new efforts to improve child care quality among license-exempt providers.

Through a Voluntary Certification Program (VCP), Indiana is helping ensure basic health and safety needs of children in legally licensed exempt and unlicensed registered ministry settings. VCP offers tools, information, and help in attaining health and safety standards with a focus on four areas: food and nutrition, health, safety, and infant and toddler standards. The State expects this assistance may help some providers receive higher reimbursements through Indiana's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS).

In central Indiana, the State is launching a Central Indiana Child Care Ministry Improvement Project, through which registered child care ministries can meet the requirement to participate in the State's QRIS Paths to QUALITY program. The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and Bureau of Child Care are spearheading this effort, with help from United Way of Central Indiana. The initiative provides mentoring, mini-grants, and building improvements for registered child care ministries.



States Focus on Accountability

Region V States are providing more support—and requiring more accountability—for child care providers as a result of the Recovery Act.

With its Recovery Act dollars, **Wisconsin** is supporting the Program Integrity Unit within the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families to identify and prevent fraud in the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program. Among other tasks, the Program Integrity Unit is providing direct support to the continuous improvement efforts already underway across the State. The influx of Recovery Act funds will enable this unit to work more quickly and efficiently to help providers with accountability and quality issues.

Ohio is purchasing new laptops for its licensing and quality specialists to better support an online Web-based information system for both providers and the public. The system uploads information from licensing specialists in the field, archives it, and makes it available on the State's child care licensing and subsidy Web sites.

CCDF Highlights in Region V

Recovery Act Investments Enhance Child Care

- Using Recovery Act funds, **Illinois** has expanded funding for Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers), the State's wage supplement program that rewards eligible providers for receiving higher education course credit earned in early care and education and remaining at their current places of employment.
- **Michigan** has set aside Recovery Act funding for consumer education and other quality enhancements.



Region V States (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) and Tribes have been allocated a total of \$301,679,925 in Recovery Act funds.

ABOUT THE RECOVERY ACT

The **Recovery Act** (Public Law 111 5) provided \$2 billion in supplemental funding to the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) for grants to States, Territories, and Tribes for child care assistance to low income families and investments for improving the quality and availability of child care. **Section 1512 of the Recovery Act** requires recipients of Recovery Act funds to submit quarterly reports detailing the use and impact of the funds, including jobs created and retained. The reports are available to the public at www.recovery.gov.

About the Child Care Bureau

The **Child Care Bureau** administers the **CCDF** program, a multibillion-dollar Federal and State partnership to support access to high-quality child care for working families. The Child Care Bureau helps States, Territories, and Tribes administer their CCDF programs through program support, policy guidance, technical assistance, and research.