



Child Care Helps America Work and Learn



Administration for Children & Families

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Recovery Act Brings Major Benefits for Region II Children and Families

This issue of the Child Care Bureau's *Child Care Helps America Work and Learn* series focuses on the exciting work of States and Territories in Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region II as they allocate funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act). These funds have led to a variety of innovative, high-quality initiatives to serve children and families more efficiently and effectively.

Thanks to the Recovery Act, efforts are underway to improve care for the youngest children and most vulnerable families. In addition, funds are being used for technology to improve access to high-quality services and the performance of child care subsidy programs for children and families.

ACF is pleased to highlight Region II's work to improve the lives of children and families using Recovery Act funds and looks forward to continued partnerships with these States and Territories as they build on this progress.

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Scholarships Support New Jersey Infant and Toddler Caregivers

Infant and toddler services are receiving top priority from New Jersey leaders. The State is using \$1 million in Recovery Act funds for scholarships to help infant and toddler practitioners complete the required college coursework for the New Jersey Infant/Toddler Credential.

Two-hundred and eighty noncompetitive scholarships of up to \$4,000 were given to infant and toddler caregivers. Scholarships cover tuition, fees, and book stipends. Recipients must work full time (defined as 30 hours per week) with infants and toddlers in licensed child care centers.

New Jersey's First Steps Infant/Toddler Initiative distributes the funds. This initiative is housed at three of New Jersey's regional child care resource and referral agencies and administered in cooperation with the Coalition of Infant/Toddler Educators.



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

- \$166,472,339 in Recovery Act funds have been allocated to Region II States, Territories, and Tribes (New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands).

Child Care and Development Fund Highlights in Region II Recovery Act Investments Enhance Child Care

- New Jersey** will provide temporary child care assistance to the 6,000 children on its waiting list.
- New York** plans to use \$3 million of its Recovery Act funds for quality grants to providers.
- The **Virgin Islands** provided subsidies to 117 children.



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Puerto Rico Reaches Out to At-risk Families

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency in Puerto Rico is using \$1.1 million of its Recovery Act funds to develop model child care respite and family support programs in four towns: Loiza, Ponce, Moca, and Camuy. These programs, which focus on adolescent parents, children with special needs, and children at risk of abuse and neglect, work to reduce the effect of destabilizing family circumstances and develop innovative forms of self-directed services for families.

Through the program, every participating child can receive temporary care in licensed child care facilities for up to 12 hours daily for 30 nonconsecutive days per year. Respite care contractors must provide family centered services through demonstrated partnerships with health, mental health, and family support services.

New Technology Benefits New York Families, Providers

The Recovery Act has provided New York with an exciting opportunity to develop the Web-based Child Care Time and Attendance System, an innovative effort to improve administration of the CCDF program so that it is more child, parent, and provider friendly. Through a competitive bid process, the State awarded \$5.3 million in Recovery Act funds to a vendor to develop and implement this time and attendance system with goals to:

- Improve the timeliness and accuracy of CCDF subsidy payments;
- Automate processes to relieve burden on local districts and child care providers;
- Increase fiscal accountability, including efforts to prevent fraud; and
- Improve the recruitment and retention of child care providers who care for subsidized children.

One notable innovation in this system is the way it allows parents to sign subsidized children in and out of care electronically. Caseworkers also can use the system to calculate co-payment amounts and automatically determine program eligibility.

After a two-county pilot and a three-phase rollout, the State will fully implement the system in all districts outside of New York City by July 31, 2011.



Virgin Islands Launches PSA Campaign to Inform Parents, Community

A public service announcement (PSA) campaign in the Virgin Islands is playing a vital role in sharing information about quality child care. The Territory is using \$30,000 of its Recovery Act funds to mount Quality Child Care, a 60-second PSA to educate parents about essential attributes of optimal child care facilities. The Office of Child Care and Regulatory Services (OCCRS) produced this PSA after recognizing the need to intensify social marketing for promoting child care quality during its efforts to design a quality rating and improvement system. The Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Committee, early childhood professionals, and private citizens provided input in the development of the campaign, which began airing in February 2010—in both English and Spanish—on television and radio stations.

The PSA is currently broadcast on the NBC cable affiliate, which is available in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The PSA is the first in a series envisioned by OCCRS to focus on child care issues.

ABOUT THE RECOVERY ACT

The Recovery Act (Public Law 111-5) provided \$2 billion in supplemental funding to 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.