



Child Care Helps America Work and Learn



Administration for Children & Families

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Recovery Act Supports Employment and Builds Capacity in Region VIII

This issue of the Office of Child Care's *Child Care Helps America Work and Learn* series showcases exciting ways that Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region VIII States are using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) dollars to support working families with young children and increase the availability of high-quality care.

Ensuring continuity of care is a priority for Region VIII States, as illustrated by their development of child care assistance programs for parents who experience employment gaps. Service expansion and quality enhancement are other priorities given these States' efforts to support child care business development and increase provider participation in quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS). Additionally, Region VIII States are focusing on increasing provider training to ensure children receive high-quality care.

ACF acknowledges the great strides Region VIII has made to ensure that low-income families have access to high-quality services for their children during challenging financial times, and looks forward to helping build on this success.

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Utah Program Promotes Employment

Utah used \$55,000 of its Recovery Act funding in FY 2010 to support an innovative initiative, the Kids in Care (KIC) program, to help ensure that recently unemployed parents have access to regulated child care as they search for work.

Operated by the Office of Child Care at the Utah Department of Workforce Services (the Child Care and Development Fund Lead Agency), KIC reimburses regulated child care providers for up to 100 hours of drop in care for each eligible family they serve.

To receive KIC assistance, parents must meet financial eligibility requirements and participate in formal job search activities. Such activities include attending interviews, job fairs, and résumé building classes; performing Internet job searches at public libraries or Department of Workforce Services employment centers; visiting prospective employers to inquire about job opportunities; completing applications; and/or participating in job shadowing or unpaid internship opportunities.

In FY 2010, 161 children received care funded through KIC, and 97 parents used the program—31 of which found employment. One appreciative parent shared how the program has benefitted her family: "With the help I received from your [program], I now have a full-time job and am on my way back to a balanced, healthy, independent life for myself and my son."



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

- 2,279 additional children were served each month in **Colorado** with Recovery Act funds, representing a 6 percent caseload increase.
- 192 additional families are being served each month in **Montana** with Recovery Act funds, representing a 6 percent caseload increase.
- 2,159 families are benefiting in **South Dakota** since the State used Recovery Act funds to reduce the child care co-payment from 15 percent to a maximum of 7.5 percent of a family's gross monthly income.
- 360 additional children are being served each month in **Wyoming** with Recovery Act funds, representing an 8 percent caseload increase.

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North Dakota 'Grows' Business Development and Quality

North Dakota is using \$3.6 million in Recovery Act funds for Growing Child Care in ND, a new initiative of the statewide child care resource and referral (CCR&R) network to improve the quality of early and school-age care and education programs. For the next 2 years, goals of the initiative are to recruit and train 100 new family child care providers in communities of need, support child care business startup activities, and provide training to strengthen an additional 100 programs.

Thanks to the Recovery Act, the CCR&R network has increased the scope of its consultation efforts. It now deploys three full-time early childhood business consultants, six full-time child care health consultants, five new professional development consultants, and eight new early childhood consultants who focus on helping programs increase quality.

Business consultants in Growing Child Care in ND work with individuals and communities to create new child care businesses and build capacity in their areas. New and prospective child care providers also can utilize the CCR&R business center to develop business plans and launch their child care operations. In addition, the initiative provides up to \$1,500 for home-based programs (\$750 for family licenses and \$1,500 for group licenses) and up to \$9,500 for child care centers to cover startup costs. Early childhood consultants offer help with facility and curriculum development along with 6 months of followup visits to help providers implement quality programs that meet rising standards.



CCDF Highlights in Region VIII: Recovery Act Investments Enhance Child Care

- **Colorado** used Recovery Act funds to extend job search as an eligible activity from 30 days to 180 days in a 12-month period. Of its quality target funds, the State used \$200,000 to help lower quality programs pay to participate in the State's QRIS, which involves an initial QRIS rating, the development of a quality improvement plan based on results of the initial rating, coaching for a 12-month period, and a followup rating. In addition, the State used \$222,000 to meet the demand for increased child care referrals; \$500,000 for professional development to help providers meet increased licensing requirements; \$720,000 for Expanding Quality in Infant Toddler Care training; \$100,000 to advance the work of a Shared Services pilot project; and \$1.3 million to advance work in local communities to expand the availability, affordability, and accessibility of quality care.
- **Montana** used \$1.6 million of its Recovery Act funds to help programs make facility improvements, enhance its capacity to provide early childhood trainings and conduct facility assessments, and publish startup kits for providers who volunteer to participate in the STARS to Quality QRIS.
- **South Dakota** has used \$272,533 of its Recovery Act funds for an extended job search program that offers 2 months of child care assistance to parents who are seeking employment after losing their jobs. The program began June 1, 2009, and as of September 2010, has served 194 families—thereby providing a direct impact on 287 children.
- **Wyoming** has obligated \$337,000 of its Recovery Act funds to develop a system of early childhood credentials. As part of this effort, the State has developed a curriculum and launched training for mentors and instructors. This system will also offer incentives to practitioners who earn credentials.



Region VIII States (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming) and Tribes have been allocated a total of \$67,618,829 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. CCDF Lead Agencies must obligate their CCDF Recovery Act awards by September 30, 2010, and expend all CCDF Recovery Act awards by September 30, 2011. 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 Office of Child Care

The Office of Child Care (OCC) was established in September 2010 and replaces the former Child Care Bureau. OCC administers the CCDF program, a multibillion-dollar Federal and State partnership to support access to high-quality child care for working families. OCC helps States, Territories, and Tribes administer their CCDF programs through program support, policy guidance, technical assistance, and research.