

Child Care & Development Block Grant in Colorado

The Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary federal grant program that allows states to provide child care assistance to low-income working families with children under age 13.

The majority of these funds serve children 6 years or younger, with the remainder supporting care for older children during out-of-school time.


Subsidies help remove barriers to affordable, high-quality child care, whether in center- or home-based settings. They give working parents the ability to access quality care and choose the type of care that works best for them. The majority of funds go directly to providing early learning experiences, but states can also use the funding to:

- Recruit and retain a well-qualified, fairly compensated, and effective workforce
- Support continuous quality improvement
- Meet the child care needs of families working nontraditional hours

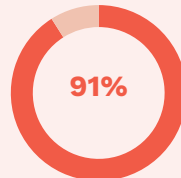
How CCDBG Funds Flow

Using an established federal formula, states, territories, and tribal entities receive grant awards from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

- **Parents**
Families can use vouchers to help cover the cost of care if a provider/program agrees to accept them.
- **Providers**
Grants and contracts represent agreements between the subsidy program and child care providers to designate slots for subsidy-eligible children.



In Colorado, **32%** of children ages 0-6 are eligible for a CCDBG subsidy under federal rules on average each month.¹²



However, of these children **91%** are **not served** due to insufficient federal funding.¹³

CCDBG by the Numbers in Colorado

398,626 Children Under 6¹

63% Population Under 6 with All Parents in the Workforce²

11,286 Children Ages 0-6 Served by CCDBG and Mandatory Funds³

1,891 Providers Accepting CCDBG Subsidies⁴

66% Children Currently Served by CCDBG Who Are Under the Age of 6⁵

\$105,582,656 CCDBG and Mandatory Funds⁶

\$22,093,884 CCDBG State Match⁷

\$626,462,243 CCDBG COVID-Relief Allocations: CARES⁸ | CRRSA⁹ | ARPA (CCDF + Stabilization)¹⁰

\$1,048,581 TANF Transferred to CCDBG¹¹

Income Eligibility

Given CCDBG is a federal block grant, state Lead Agencies have the flexibility to design their own subsidy programs in compliance with established eligibility and quality requirements and may choose to set their own additional requirements.

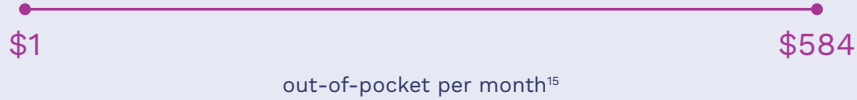
The Lead Agency in Colorado is the Colorado Department of Human Services.

Families that meet income eligibility and work/job training/education requirements can apply to the Lead Agency for a subsidy. Many families are required to pay a copay, but states may waive those requirements. Families who receive a subsidy may choose any participating child care provider, including center-based care (including faith-based programs), home-based care, and in-home care.

In Colorado, eligibility is capped at 61% of State Median Income (SMI). This means that a family of 3 is eligible for a subsidy if they make: \$3,895 or less per month (\$46,743 per year).¹⁴

Receiving subsidies results in much lower out-of-pocket costs for families.

In Colorado, a family receiving a CCDBG subsidy pays between



Children experiencing homelessness are exempt from copayments.¹⁶

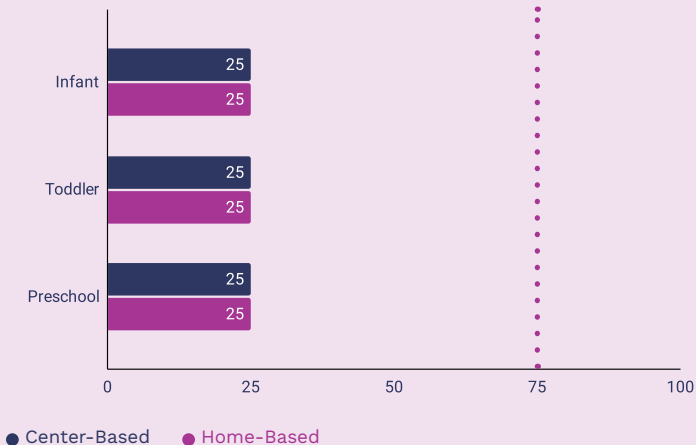
Provider Reimbursements

ACF recommends that Lead Agencies set provider reimbursement rates at the 75th percentile of the market rate.¹⁷ This is the price the lowest 75% of child care programs included in the market rate survey reported charging.

However, market rates often do not reflect the actual costs of providing high-quality care as programs must charge what families can afford in order to fill slots. Therefore, there is a significant gap between how much providers are reimbursed and how much it costs to provide care. Find answers to the most frequently asked questions about provider reimbursement rates [here](#).

Provider Reimbursement Rates in Colorado¹⁸

In percentiles of market rate



In Colorado, providers are reimbursed at a far lower rate than recommended by the federal government. Low payment rates make it difficult for providers to stay financially afloat and provide high-quality learning experiences. They also force low- and middle-income working families to pay higher child care fees to compensate.

CCDBG in COVID-19 Relief

Throughout the pandemic, there was strong bipartisan support for federal relief funding to keep the child care sector afloat. CCDBG was the primary mechanism for providing this relief to child care providers and ensuring access to child care for thousands of working families through CARES, CRRSA, and ARPA. As of December 31, 2022:¹⁹

3,475 child care programs in Colorado received American Rescue Plan Stabilization support, impacting up to 265,700 children.

Providers in 98% of Colorado counties have received funds, including:



2,410
child care centers



Most common use of funds:
Personnel costs and keeping programs staffed.



1,065
family child care homes



Most common use of funds:
Rent and mortgage payments, typically their largest operating expense.

American Rescue Plan Act Spending Spotlight^{20, 21}

Funds have been used to support and stabilize the workforce through increased employee compensation, retention bonuses, professional development, and hiring additional staff while offsetting operational expenses for child care programs.

Federal pandemic relief funding, which buttressed an already struggling child care market, expires in September 2024. As this temporary funding expires, Congress must come together to strengthen and invest in our federal early learning and care programs so families can access the reliable, high-quality, affordable child care they depend on.

1. Census
2. Census
3. Office of Child Care (OCC), "FY2020 CCDF Preliminary Data Tables"
4. Administration for Children and Families (ACF), "FY 2020 Preliminary Data Table 9 - Average Monthly Percentages of Children in Care by Age Group"
5. ACF, "FY 2020 Preliminary Data Table 7- Number of Child Care Providers Receiving CCDF Funds"
6. OCC, "GY2021 CCDF Allocations (Based on Appropriations)"
7. Ibid.
8. OCC, "CARES Act CCDBG Supplemental Funding Allocations for States and Territories"
9. OCC, "Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) of 2021 Allocations for States and Territories"
10. OCC, "American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Supplemental Stabilization and CCDF Discretionary Funding Allocation Tables for States and Territories"
11. ACF, "TANF Financial Data - FY2021"
12. OCC, "FY 2019 Preliminary Data Table 1"; OCC, "FY 2019 Preliminary Data Table 9"; Center for American Progress (CAP), "Early Learning in the United States: 2021"; Census, "2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates Population Under 18 Years by Age"
13. CAP, "Early Learning in the United States: 2021"
14. ACF, "ECE State Profiles" Data from 2019
15. Ibid.
16. 100% of the federal poverty level is \$23,030 annually
17. Market rate surveys (MRS), which must be completed every three years, examine the fees that child care providers charge for services in the priced market.
18. CAP, "States Can Improve Child Care Assistance Programs Through Cost Modeling"
19. ACF, "Child Care Stabilization Funding State Fact Sheets"
20. Colorado.gov/governor
21. Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab