

Child Care & Development Block Grant in Arkansas

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.

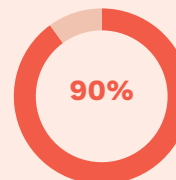


In Arkansas,

33%

of children ages 0-6 are eligible for a CCDBG subsidy under federal rules on average each month.¹²

However, of these children



are **not served** due to insufficient federal funding.¹³

CCDBG by the Numbers in Arkansas

225,564 Children Under 6¹

62% Population Under 6 with All Parents in the Workforce²

9,234 Children Ages 0-6 Served by CCDBG and Mandatory Funds³

854 Providers Accepting CCDBG Subsidies⁴

81% Children Currently Served by CCDBG Who Are Under the Age of 6⁵

\$88,207,384 CCDBG and Mandatory Funds⁶

\$4,624,086 CCDBG State Match⁷

\$625,322,271 CCDBG COVID-Relief Allocations: CARES⁸ | CRRSA⁹ | ARPA (CCDF + Stabilization)¹⁰

\$0 TANF Transferred to CCDBG¹¹

Income Eligibility

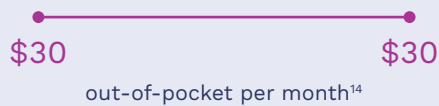
Given CCDBG is a federal block grant, state Lead Agencies have the flexibility to design their own subsidy programs in compliance with established eligibility and quality requirements and may choose to set their own additional requirements.

The Lead Agency in Arkansas is the Arkansas 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.

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

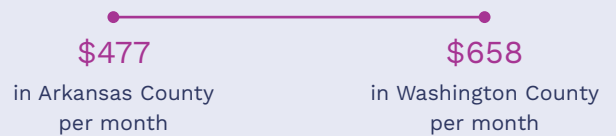
In Arkansas, a family receiving a CCDBG subsidy pays between



Children with special needs, children experiencing homelessness, families receiving TANF are exempt from copayments.¹⁵

Families that don't receive subsidies pay significantly higher costs.

For instance, center-based infant care ranges in price from:¹⁶



Find more information on child care prices by age and care setting in your state or county [here](#).¹⁷

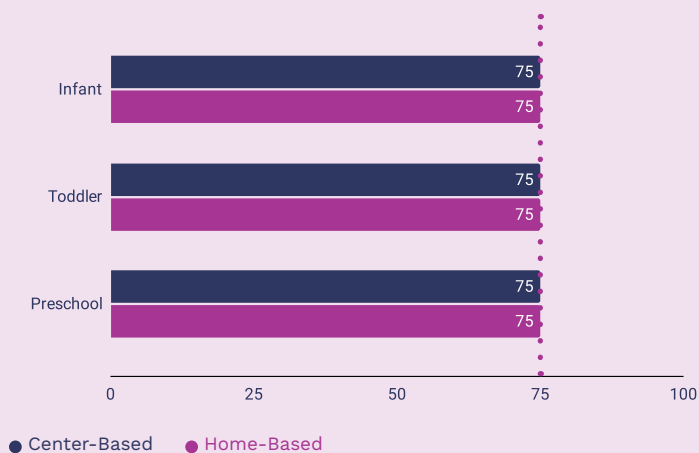
Provider Reimbursements

ACF recommends that Lead Agencies set provider reimbursement rates at the 75th percentile of the market rate.¹⁸ 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 Arkansas¹⁹

In percentiles of market rate



Arkansas reimburses at the federally recommended reimbursement rate. Higher payment rates are critical in supporting providers to stay financially afloat and provide high-quality learning experiences. They also help low- and middle-income working families afford quality child care.

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, 2022:²⁰

2,585 child care programs in Arkansas received American Rescue Plan Stabilization support, impacting up to 235,700 children.

Providers in 100% of Arkansas counties have received funds, including:



2,300
child care centers



Most common use of funds:
Goods and services necessary to operate the program



285
family child care homes



Most common use of funds:
Goods and services necessary to operate the program

American Rescue Plan Act Spending Spotlight²¹

Funds have been used for quality improvement grants. These grants could be used for whatever is necessary to improve the quality of care provided, such as new staff sign-on bonuses, substitutes, professional development, and mental health services for children and families, among other uses.

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. Ibid.
15. 100% of the federal poverty level is \$23,030 annually
16. United States Women's Bureau, National Database of Child Care Prices
17. United States Women's Bureau, "National Database of Childcare Prices"
18. 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.
19. CAP, "States Can Improve Child Care Assistance Programs Through Cost Modeling"
20. ACF, "Child Care Stabilization Funding State Fact Sheets"
21. Arkansas Department of Human Services