



COLORADO

Office of Early Childhood

Department of Human Services

State and Federal Stimulus Strategies

Support the Early Care and Education Workforce

The Office of Early Childhood supports the early care and education workforce, to expand the number of educators in the state, and equip them with the tools they need to nurture and teach children in their care.

Activity 1: Sustainability Grants for Workforce Retention

«» This activity will provide early care and education workforce retention grants to any of the nearly 4,700 eligible licensed child care providers to support the retention of more than 24,000 early childhood professionals in Colorado. Eligible child care providers may use their grant for areas including employee benefits, employee compensation, professional development, and hiring additional staff. • COVID-19 has affected the child care industry in Colorado with approximately 10% of child care businesses closing and a 23% decline in the early childhood workforce according to research done by Early Milestones. The child care system was fragile before COVID-19 and is now even more vulnerable to a collapse. This activity will help child care providers sustain their workforce, a vital component to keeping facilities open and operating. • Funding Source: CRRSA & ARP • Funding Amount: \$49,817,600 (\$35,000,000 CRRSA; \$14,817,600 ARP)

Activity 2: Workforce Recruitment & Retention Programs

«»  This activity will create an Early Care and Education (ECE) Recruitment and Retention Grant and Scholarship Program that will provide 1,200 current and potential early childhood professionals with financial assistance to draw from a menu of options, adaptable to local needs, to support their access to education and training in order to help them earn credits, credentials, and degrees, and meet child care licensing requirements to serve as qualified workers or obtain a higher level of qualification. The program will help address the early childhood workforce need in Colorado by providing educators a variety of pathways to the profession. • Colorado, like many states, is facing a shortage of early childhood professionals, and the implementation of universal preschool will only increase demand. This activity will result in an increase in qualified early childhood professionals, alleviating workforce shortages and better preparing the state for universal preschool. • Funding Source: CRRSA & CCDF Base • Funding Amount: \$11,732,524 (\$9,332,524 CRRSA; \$2,400,000 CCDF Base)

Activity 3: CCCAP Teacher Salary Increase

«» This activity implements a grant program to support increased compensation for assistant early childhood teachers and early childhood teachers employed by Colorado Shines high-quality programs (Levels 3-5) that enroll children participating in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP). Doing so will further incentivize child care providers to accept CCCAP, raise the wages and job stability of approximately 2,400 child care workers at approximately 375 eligible child care programs, and mitigate the negative impacts that educator shortages and turnover has on programs and families. • Studies have shown that workers often leave the early childhood sector because of low pay. This high turnover rate causes administrative burden for providers and inconsistency for children and families. This activity will improve provider pay and retention, and support consistency for children and families participating in CCCAP. • Funding Source: CCDF Base • Funding Amount: \$3,000,000

Activity 4: Free 101 and 103 Coursework

📍📄 This program will provide the minimum coursework to become Early Childhood Teacher Qualified, ECE 101 and ECE 103, for free for two years to 1,000 - 1,500 individuals per year. Offering early childhood education (ECE) courses for free will not only help bring new professionals into the field, but will also address Colorado's overall unemployment concerns because it will give unemployed individuals, immigrants, and recent graduates seeking work a pathway to employment as an ECE educator without having to take on an up-front cost. • The need for ECE professionals in Colorado is significant, and expected to grow by 33-42% in the next 10 years due to population increases and the launch of universal preschool. This activity will make accessing necessary coursework more affordable and attainable for prospective ECE professionals, a crucial need as part of COVID-19 recovery, according to a report from the Colorado Department of Higher Education. • Funding Source: ARP • Funding Amount: \$2,600,000

Activity 5: Apprenticeship Program

📍📄 This program seeks to increase the number of high-quality early childhood educators through alternative career pathways to support the influx of families seeking early care and learning with the universal preschool implementation in fall 2023. This strategy complements the CRRSA-funded flexible recruitment and retention programs, specifically free 101 and 103 courses, which, when combined with the work experiences through the apprenticeships program, would make the individuals licensed to teach in an Early Care and Education classroom. Apprenticeships provide an opportunity for professionals to obtain paid work experiences while also pursuing credentials or degrees. • Hiring and retaining a qualified early childhood workforce is a top challenge for many child care center directors. This program will connect new and existing child care professionals to help encourage retention throughout the sector, and ensure child care centers have adequate staffing to serve the increasing demand for child care in Colorado. • Funding Source: ARP • Funding Amount: \$2,600,000

Activity 6: Teacher Peer Mentorship

« » This program creates a teacher peer mentorship program to improve the retention of new teachers of children birth through five across the state. The program will increase teacher retention by ensuring that child care programs are developing leadership from within their programs, giving experienced teachers an opportunity to continue developing their skills, and helping new teachers improve their teaching skills. It incentivizes existing educators and directors to serve as mentors to new early childhood professionals with one-time payments. • Hiring and retaining a qualified early childhood workforce is a top challenge for many child care center directors. This program will connect new and existing child care professionals to help encourage retention throughout the sector, and ensure child care centers have adequate staffing to serve the increasing demand for child care in Colorado. • Funding Source: CRRSA & ARP • Funding Amount \$374,464 (\$124,464 CRRSA; \$250,000 ARP)

Activity 7: Free Online Director Training

⤴ This activity develops a free Director Training Sequence for child care center directors through the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS). The free online training, done in collaboration with higher education, will be a six-hour eLearning course available in both English and Spanish. It will focus on administration and business, instructional leadership, and teacher development, giving directors the professional development resources to be both the child care quality leader and small business leader of their child care center. • As the demand for child care across the state increases in the coming years, the need for qualified directors of both large and small child care centers will also increase. Directors are key to the successful operation of child care centers, and with additional training and education can be better prepared to support their employees, which in turn improves retention and increases the overall quality of the care provided at the center. • Funding Source: CRRSA • Funding Amount: \$276,930

Related Office of Early Childhood Wildly Important Goals (WIGs):

Ensure there are enough diverse and qualified early childhood professionals to provide care and education to children birth to five by increasing the workforce by 5% by June 2022.

Key:

CRRSA - Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

ARP - American Rescue Plan

CDF - Child Care & Development Fund

« » - Strategies that stabilize the early childhood sector

⤴ - Strategies that grow and expand the early childhood sector

🏠 - Strategies that support the OEC's capacity WIG

👤 - Strategies that support the OEC's workforce WIG

Revised September, 2021



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Percentage of Spending Breakdown Support the Early Care and Education Workforce

Workforce - \$70.5M



** These funds will be spent across two fiscal years, FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23.