



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
CHAIRMAN RICHARD E. NEAL

Family Care for Essential Workers in the Heroes Act

Essential workers – healthcare workers of all kinds, emergency response workers, sanitation workers, grocery store and supply chain workers, public safety officers, to name a few – have continued to work during the pandemic despite personal risk. Many of them have struggled to find care for their children, or for parents or adult children incapable of self-care, as many day care facilities close and essential workers are asked to work around the clock.

This section provides a \$850 million to states, the District of Columbia, and all U.S. territories to assist in providing dependent care for essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Jurisdictions must use the funds to provide care for members of the households of essential workers that are incapable of self-care, including children and adult family members that require care while the essential worker is at work.

Jurisdictions have several options for providing care, including reimbursing workers directly for care they obtain themselves, paying child care and adult care providers, and setting up emergency child care.

In cases where the state or territory works with child care providers or sets up child care facilities, they would be required to follow state and local licensing laws unless the state determined that a specific requirement would prevent them from providing the services, in which case they are required to report specifically to the HHS Secretary on the requirement and why it is an impediment.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What kinds of workers would be able to get family care assistance through this fund?

We expect that the biggest group would be health care workers of all kinds, but states can use the funding to support child care and adult care for any group of workers they deem to be essential for in-person work, including sanitation and public safety workers, grocery store employees and other workers in the supply chain, and other workers designated by the state. Depending on the state's public health orders, eligibility may vary by state.

What kind of family care assistance can states provide?

States would have flexibility to reimburse care providers, set up emergency childcare facilities for groups of workers (directly or in cooperation with localities and employers), or reimburse workers directly for their costs, including for informal childcare. States could use as many of those methods, in any combination, as needed.

How much funding would my state receive?

The funding would be distributed using the formula for the Social Services Block Grant, which distributes funding according to state population. That means states, territories, and Washington DC would receive a share of \$850 million proportionate to the state's share of U.S. population.

Will U.S. Territories receive funding?

Yes. Under the SSBG formula, grants to Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and Northern Mariana Islands are based on their share of Title XX funds in FY1981. Grants to American Samoa are based on the relative size of its population compared to the population of the Northern Mariana Islands.

What do we expect states to do with the funds?

Many states are already setting up emergency child care programs or supports. This [webpage from the National Governors Association](#) lists gubernatorial efforts that states could build on using these SSBG funds.

Would states have to follow licensing rules for the childcare they provided?

States would be allowed to reimburse individual workers for unlicensed and informal child care and adult day care, in keeping with the realities of social distancing and other public health guidelines. If they provided care through contracts with existing providers or set up their own facilities, the state would have to comply with state and local licensing laws unless a specific requirement was a direct impediment to providing care in this situation, in which case the state could waive it, but would have to provide documentation to the HHS Secretary of the reasons for the waiver.

How does this funding relate to other childcare funding provided in the Heroes Act?

The Family Care for Essential Workers is specific to essential worker support, and will work together with other childcare funding that is available for broader purposes. The essential worker funding can be used to augment other child care funding, including new child care funding provided in the Heroes Act, or may be used to reimburse costs which would not be eligible for funding from other sources, like direct reimbursement to essential workers for out-of-pocket care costs and to support the operational costs associated with setting up emergency child care facilities in communities.