

ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE FUNDING ESSENTIAL

Until recently, most states have managed to maintain their child care assistance programs, largely thanks to an additional \$2 billion in Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding for 2009 and 2010 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). However, as states exhaust these funds, and as state budget gaps persist, many will be forced to scale back child care assistance for families unless additional federal funding is provided. The continuing resolution that funds the government through March 4th does not include the additional money for child care that is needed. Already, a number of states and communities have begun to cut back on child care assistance. These cuts force low-income parents to find a way to pay for child care themselves while struggling to pay other bills or prevent them from getting the child care they need to work. The cuts cause children to lose access to the stable, good-quality child care that encourages their learning and development and prepares them for school success. The cuts also can make it difficult for child care programs to fill their classrooms, leading them to lay off staff or close their doors entirely.

- **Arizona** has cut the number of children receiving child care assistance from 48,000 to 29,000 since February 2009.
- **Arkansas** used the economic recovery funding to provide child care assistance to over 12,000 additional children and as a result reduced its waiting list for assistance. However, the state's waiting list grew from 2,727 children as of February 2010, to approximately 15,000 children as of August 2010.
- **California's** governor is proposing to eliminate child care assistance for eleven- and twelve-year-olds, lower the income eligibility limit for child care assistance from 75 percent of state median income to 60 percent of state median income, and reduce reimbursement rates to child care providers serving children receiving child care assistance—which would likely result in families being forced to make up the difference.
- **Florida's** waiting list for child care assistance increased from approximately 67,000 children in early 2010 to 89,000 children as of December 2010.
- **New Mexico** has been placing all families with incomes between 100 percent of poverty (\$18,310 a year for a family of three) and the state's income eligibility limit of 200 percent of poverty (\$36,620 a year for a family of three) who apply for child care assistance on the waiting list since January 1, 2010. Families receiving child care assistance prior to January 1, 2010, including families with incomes between 100 and 200 percent of poverty, can continue to receive it as long as they remain eligible. In September 2010, the state used federal economic recovery funds to avoid cutting child care assistance for families, yet 5,000 families with incomes between 100 and 200 percent of poverty will lose their child care assistance as of May 1, 2011 without an additional \$2.5 million in funding. In addition, the state has cut reimbursement rates for child care providers by 4 percent.

- **North Carolina's** waiting list for child care assistance increased from approximately 37,900 children in early 2010 to nearly 45,700 children in December 2010.
- **Oregon** used ARRA funds to maintain prior improvements in its eligibility limits, parent copayments, and provider reimbursement rates for child care assistance. However, as of October 1, 2010, Oregon—which had been providing child care assistance to families with incomes up to 185 percent of poverty (\$33,874 for a family of three) and previously had no waiting list—capped enrollment in its Employment Related Day Care program at 10,000 families. Families enrolled in the child care assistance program prior to October 1, 2010 are able to continue to receive child care assistance through the end of June 2011, due to emergency funding. The state began placing families who applied for child care assistance after October 1, 2010 and who had not received TANF in Oregon for one of the prior three months on the waiting list. In January 2011, families on the waiting list were able to receive child care assistance due to attrition from the program, but the cap on the total number of families that can be served remains in place.
- **Pennsylvania** was able to serve all of the children on its waiting list for child care assistance as of May 2010, but the waiting list began increasing again and had nearly 11,700 children on it as of January 2011.
- **Washington** lowered its income eligibility limit for child care assistance from 200 percent of poverty (\$36,620 a year for a family of three) to 175 percent of poverty (\$32,043 a year for a family of three) as of October 1, 2010. About 2,500 families were affected.
- **Denver, Colorado** stopped taking applications for child care assistance for 18 months.