

GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES \$70 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS CHILD CARE DESERTS

Funding Will Support New Child Care Programs in Areas Without Sufficient Child Care Slots

Applications Open Mid-April 2022

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced that \$70 million in grant funding will be available to newly licensed, registered or permitted child care programs in areas of the state without sufficient child care slots, known as child care deserts. The funds, which are part of the \$100 million child care desert initiative approved in the 2021 Enacted Budget, are being made available through the American Rescue Plan Act and will be administered by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. The grants will help new child care providers in underserved areas build their program, cover start-up and personnel costs, recruit, train, and retain staff, and support staff in accessing COVID-19 vaccines. Grant applications will open in mid-April and run through May 19, 2022—with award announcements slated for June.

“Child care is one of the most critical engines to build back New York stronger from the pandemic, and it will provide countless opportunities for working parents,” **Governor Hochul said**. “These federal funds will go a long way towards ensuring that no New Yorkers will be without child care. New York will always remain committed to eradicating the problems of child care deserts and will work tirelessly to ensure all parents have access to this vital lifeline.”

For this funding opportunity, child care deserts are defined as census tracts where there are three or more children younger than five for each available child care slot, or there are no available child care slots in the tract. Based on this criteria, more than 60% of New York State is considered a child care desert. All census tracts in New York State have been mapped depending on the number of available slots, and potential child care providers can review the [child care desert map](#) to discern appropriate locales. Additional details on eligibility and requirements of the grant can be found in the [RFA](#).

Representative Adriano Espaillat said, “One of the most critical lessons we have learned during the pandemic is that day care providers are essential to the support and wellbeing of families. We cannot recover if we leave child care providers behind, and our families need their support today more than ever. I commend Governor Hochul for today’s announcement allocating this federal funding which I helped secure through the American Rescue Plan Act to support day care providers as they rebuild to give families throughout our communities the support and assistance they need along our journey toward recovery.”

Representative Joe Morelle said, “Safe and reliable childcare is essential for families, but right now, too many are struggling to access it. I’m grateful to Governor Hochul for making this issue a priority, and I’m proud to have delivered these funds for New York

through the American Rescue Plan. I'm committed to continuing my work in Congress to make childcare more accessible and affordable to ease the burden on working families."

Representative Jamaal Bowman said, "New York State is one of the most diverse states in America but also one of the most unequal. Access to child care is especially low among certain populations, affecting mostly families of color, low-income families and many living in rural areas and in neighborhoods classified as child care deserts. For too long, the federal government has underfunded child care, leaving many communities without adequate child care options, something especially problematic because it affects children in their formative years when their experiences are shaping the cognitive, language, and socio-emotional skills that influence future learning. This lack of funds for child care assistance and state-administered child care subsidies for low-income families has led many to make a choice between spending a significant portion of their income on child care or leaving the workforce altogether to become a full-time caregiver. Federal action is necessary, and I will support any effort made to increase funding for child care assistance and to expand access to early learning."

Chair of the Children and Families Committee Representative Mondaire Jones said, "High-quality, affordable child care is critical for children, families, and our economy. But in communities across New York and throughout our country, there simply aren't enough child care providers to meet demand, forcing parents to go to extraordinary lengths to find care for their families. This new funding, which I was proud to help secure as part of the American Rescue Plan, will help change that. As we continue fighting to make universal child care a reality at the federal level, I'm proud that New York is working to ensure every family in our state has the high-quality child care they need and deserve."

OCFS Commissioner Sheila Poole said, "This funding further recognizes the acute shortage of infant and toddler child care and the lack of available child care outside of standard business hours and days. We are also ensuring that diversity and equity components are built into the funding opportunity so that communities of color who were hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic are prioritized and supported in building back child care slots."

Chair of the Children and Families Committee Assemblymember Andrew Hevesi said, "Access to child care must not depend upon someone's zip code. This money will be used to bring child care to parts of the state that have been starved for services. I'm grateful to Governor Hochul and Commissioner Poole for their diligent work to get this funding into the hands of those who need it and address child care deserts across our state, implementing one of last year's budget victories. I look forward to working with them, leadership, and my colleagues to secure even more successes for children and families in this year's budget,"

Chair of the Children and Families Committee Senator Jabari Brisport said, "Decades of treating and funding child care as a private service rather than vital public infrastructure has left the system on the verge of collapse. These funds from last year's

budget are a desperately needed life-support that underscore the urgency of passing Universal Child Care in New York. We cannot continue to leave parents and child care providers in a state of perpetual anxiety as they struggle to keep their heads above water between funding streams.”

All applicants must complete the OCFS online [orientation](#) before applying for the grant. Please visit the OCFS [website](#) for more information. Programs applying to become a NYC DOHMH Article 47 day care center must attend a [pre-permit orientation](#) before applying for a new permit.

Applicants needing assistance with starting child care programs can contact their county’s [OCFS Regional Office](#) or their local child care resource and referral [agency](#) (CCR&R), which can help with the licensing process.

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