

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | FEBRUARY 15, 2022

**More working families in N.D. can now qualify for help with child care costs**

*Child Care Assistance Program increases qualifying income level to 85% N.D. median income*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Child care is a key part of the infrastructure of our communities and is vital for families and employers. The North Dakota Department of Human Services is striving to support strong, stable families and communities by making investments in programs that increase access to quality child care that is affordable so that parents can participate in the workforce.

As part of this investment, the department has changed the qualifying income level for the state’s Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) from 60% to 85% of the state median income (SMI). More North Dakota families will now qualify for help paying for the child care they need while they work, attend school or training, or apply and interview for jobs.

With the new increased income criteria, a North Dakota family of three with a household income of \$6,193 a month can now qualify. Previously, the qualifying monthly income for a household this size was \$4,372. Details about qualifying income levels by household size are on the department’s website at [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/childcare.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/childcare.html).

“Families may think they won’t qualify, but we encourage them to apply,” said Child Care Assistance Program Administrator Emily Kerns. “The cost of child care is a heavy burden for most working families and assistance is available for many households.”

Kerns said, the amount of assistance provided varies by household and is based on the age of the child, type of licensed child care setting, and whether care is provided on a full-time or part-time basis. A young family with one infant under 18 months of age who attends a licensed child care center full-time would, for example, qualify for up to \$913 a month in child care assistance for their child’s care. A chart showing the maximum amount of assistance by type and amount of care and child’s age is online on the department’s website.

Child care assistance is paid to the licensed child care providers caring for children of participating families. The program can also help families with registration fees charged by licensed child care centers and licensed group and family child care programs.

Families can apply for child care assistance online at [www.applyforhelp.nd.gov](http://www.applyforhelp.nd.gov) or at a local [human service zone office](#) (formerly known as the county social service office).

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From July to December 2021, the program served an average of 3,075 North Dakota children per month and paid, on average, \$715 per child, per month.

Due to the pandemic, the program is currently paying all care costs up to the maximum state rate. Once the additional pandemic-related federal funding ends, the program will again require family co-payments, which vary by family income. Qualifying families with higher incomes would pay higher co-payment amounts.

With support from Gov. Burgum and state lawmakers, the department is helping to build a strong North Dakota by investing in children and families through programs supporting quality, early childhood experiences, grants to child care providers, and increased assistance to families struggling to afford child care.

During the November 2021 special session, lawmakers approved the state allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funds to support child care needs in North Dakota, including the increased access to child care assistance.

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