



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Child Care Workers in New Mexico Eligible for \$1,500 Incentive Payments

SANTA FE - Today, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) announced that it will issue one-time incentive payments of \$1,500 to New Mexico child care professionals – including teachers, administrative staff, cooks, and bus drivers – in recognition and appreciation of their dedicated work since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. This grant specifically recognizes the unique challenges that these essential workers faced while caring for and nurturing children, day in and day out, during the past 20 months.

“The dedication that child care workers have shown to this state’s children and families throughout this public health emergency is nothing short of heroic,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “Even during the darkest days of the pandemic, child care professionals showed up every day to create safe and nurturing learning environments for our children. These one-time payments are a small way we can recognize and celebrate the invaluable service they have provided to our communities.”

Despite the critical role child care professionals play during children’s most important years of growth and development, they are among the lowest paid workers in our economy, often earning little more than \$10/hr. One of the primary objectives laid out in ECECD’s strategic plan is to advance a well compensated, credentialed, and diverse early childhood workforce, and ECECD has already taken several bold steps towards achieving these goals, including:

- Awarding \$157 million in grants to help child care providers stabilize their businesses and recruit and retain staff
- Increasing child care subsidy payments to support a higher base wage for child care workers
- Tripling enrollment in the ECECD wage supplement program for teachers making less than \$16/hr
- Launching a PreK pay parity program to better align private sector PreK teacher salaries with public school PreK teachers, increasing qualifying teachers’ annual income between 10 and 20 thousand dollars
- Creating an \$1,500 bonus for early childhood educators who are certified bilingual

- Doubling the number of early childhood education scholarships we provided to early childhood educators seeking a professional certification or advanced degree

Approximately \$18 million, funded through the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation (CRSSA) Act, will support these one-time payments. To be eligible, applicants must be a) employed full- or part-time in a licensed or registered child care program and b) up to date with their background check. Applications for the one-time incentive payment are open until Dec. 1, 2021.

ECECD is committed to ensuring a fair and simple distribution process for this grant opportunity.

For more information, visit <https://www.nmececd.org/one-time-incentive-payment-for-child-care-professionals/>

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The New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) launched in 2020, one of only four cabinet level agencies nationwide that consolidated all early childhood agencies under one roof. ECECD's mission is to optimize the health, development, education, and well being of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers through a family-driven, equitable, community-based system of programs and services. Learn more about how ECECD supports children, families, and the early childhood professionals that serve our communities at nmececd.org. On Facebook and Twitter as @NewMexicoECECD.

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