



# DCCECE Commission Report

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**Website Information:** DCCECE has continued to update the COVID 19 landing page on our website for quick and easy access for providers and parents seeking information. This landing page has hyperlinks provided for answers for essential employee eligibility, licensing requirements, cleaning guidance and many other resources. It also contains an interactive map that can be utilized to find open childcare facilities. In addition, direct links are provided to the Arkansas Department of Health website, and the CDC website so that providers can obtain further guidance and information on topics related to COVID.

- DCCECE Website: <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/dccece>
- DCCECE COVID-19 Information: <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/divisions-shared-services/child-care-early-childhood-education/important-covid-related-information/>
- Open Facilities Interactive Map (scroll to the bottom of this web page to find the map): <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/covid-19/dhs-response-to-covid-19/updates-for-clients/>

**Child Care Provider Monthly Calls:** DCCECE is continuing to host monthly Zoom calls with child care providers. These calls occur the first Tuesday of every month at 12:00 p.m. The next call will be held on May 3, 2022.

- To join by phone: 301-715-8592 (ID: 959 5436 3354)
- To join by computer: [Click Here](#) (ID: 959 5436 3354)

**Child Care Development Block Grant Fund/Family Support Unit:** Family Support has continued to work in partnership with the Federal Child Care Development Fund Regional Office to implement the following resources.

- **ACF Children's Bureau Learning and Coordination Center Project** –Arkansas was one of only two states selected to discuss our work on behalf of young children with challenging behaviors. DCCECE staff and Behavior Help team partners were interviewed and recorded for a video to be released later this year.
- **Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) Funding-** DCCECE received \$119,264,607 in February 2021. DCCECE has obligated 100% of the funding awarded.



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- **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**- Final approval September 17<sup>th</sup>,
  - Stabilization – \$286 Million- 90% or \$258 Million of these funds must go directly to providers who were operating before March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This funding can be accessed through grant applications in three areas, quality improvement, operational expenses, and expansions for existing facilities. Opening application on October 1<sup>st</sup>. for existing Facilities. \$25 Million is set aside for Supply Building through public\private partnerships. \$3 Million for Administration

- **Grants Awarded:**

Grant Type	# of Facilities Paid	Amount Paid
Operational	1,218	\$29,883,500
Quality Improvement	1,037	\$72,055,986
	<b>Total</b>	\$101,939,486

- **Expansion and Supply Building Grants:** The expansion grants for existing facilities licensed on or before March 11, 2021, are currently under review. The supply building grant applications are due April 15, 2022.
  - Supplemental Discretionary – \$175 Million - This funding covers \$130 million for Essential Worker Child Care assistance. \$40 million TEACH scholarships for early childhood teachers to obtain a degree in the field. \$ 8 million for administration. Expended \$38.6 million for essential workers
- **Child Care Assistance for Essential Workers** - Current essential worker families-15,896. New and existing Essential Worker authorizations will continue to be renewed until funding has been exhausted.
- **Deep Cleaning Reimbursement-** DCCECE is keying claims to reimburse licensed child care providers for deep cleaning following a positive COVID-19 case in either a staff member or child. DCCECE has provided over 95 reimbursements for this funding resource since March 2020. This resource has allowed providers to continue to safely operate during the pandemic, to assist parents who are essential workers. Invoices should be sent to [DeepCleaning@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:DeepCleaning@dhs.arkansas.gov) within one month of services provided. This will be continued with the CRRSA relief funding until funding is exhausted.



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- **2020 CARES Act Federal Child Care Funding Expended: \$119m (100% of award)**
- **Better Beginnings Tiered Quality Improvement System –**
  - Level 1 - 820
  - Level 2 - 234
  - Level 3 – 677
- By June 30, 2022, all facilities that accept child care vouchers must reach Better Beginnings Level 2 or higher.
  - 373 facilities receiving vouchers are currently Level 1. Of those, 293 (78.5%) have applied for Level 2; 59 (16%) have said they will not apply; and 21 (5%) have not taken action.

## **Health and Nutrition Unit: All waivers will remain active until June 30, 2022.**

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided several national waivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the waivers have different start dates and end dates.  
See a list of the waivers below:
- ***Non-Congregate Feeding Waiver:*** Allows non-congregate feeding in CACFP programs, including offering meals offsite, via “grab and go,” and through delivery, extended through June 30, 2022 ([fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-2](https://fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-2)).
- ***Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-Up Waiver:*** Allows parents or guardians to pick up non-congregate meals for their children, extended through June 30, 2022 ([fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-5](https://fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-5)).
- ***Meal Times Waiver:*** Allows CACFP meals to be served to children outside traditional times to maximize flexibility for meal pick-up, extended through June 30, 2022 ([fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-1](https://fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-1)).
- ***Waiver of Area Eligibility in Afterschool Programs and Family Child Care Homes:*** Allows schools and afterschool care providers to serve At-Risk afterschool meals and snacks to students at the free rate regardless of their location. The waiver also allows family child care homes to automatically receive the highest (Tier 1) reimbursement rate regardless of their location. This waiver is effective through June 30, 2022 ([fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-93](https://fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-93)).



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- **Meal Pattern Flexibility Waiver:** Allows specific meal pattern modifications when certain foods are not available due to the COVID-19 pandemic and simplifies food procurement rules, extended through June 30, 2022 ([fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-4](https://fns.usda.gov/cn/covid-19-child-nutrition-response-4)).
- **Monitoring Requirements Waivers:** Allows State agencies and sponsoring organizations to conduct virtual monitoring activities via a desk audit or other means to maintain program integrity while supporting social distancing. These waivers remain in effect until 30 days after the end of the public health emergency ([fns.usda.gov/cn/child-nutrition-monitoring-nationwide-waiver](https://fns.usda.gov/cn/child-nutrition-monitoring-nationwide-waiver)).
  - **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** - On January 15, 2022, applications for the 2022 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) will be open to all School Food Authorities (SFA) **ONLY** and will open to all Non-Profit Institutions on February 15, 2022.
  - **Federal Management Evaluation-** July 12-23, 2021 Completed. There were 15 findings and 8 observations. The HNU team have submitted the Corrective Action Plan and are awaiting a response.

## Commodities Unit:

- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Food Distribution Comparison:

### January – March 2022

Award	# of Cases	Value	Pounds
TEFAP	89,028	\$2,802,685.83	2,013,037.50
BBB	128,590	\$1,805,247.87	1,017,246.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>217,618</b>	<b>\$4,607,933.70</b>	<b>3,030,283.50</b>
NSLP	59,285	\$3,844,633.34	2,118,241.00
CACFP	912	\$20,761.52	36,252.00



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<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>60,197</b>	<b>\$3,865,394.86</b>	<b>2,154,493.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>277,815</b>	<b>\$8,473,328.56</b>	<b>5,184,776.50</b>

- Average number of clients served per month (based on entire year):
  - 2019: 147,000
  - 2020: 179,642
  - 2021: 162,581
- The Commodity Distribution Unit is in the process of applying for two (2) grants with USDA. The first grant is for just under \$600k which will allow for improving infrastructure at the distribution site level to increase TEFAP distribution to underserved areas of the State. The second grant of approximately \$3.7 million will purchase food from local farmers who are considered socially disadvantaged and distributing those foods to underserved areas of the State.

## **Child Care Licensing:**

DCCECE currently has 1,948 licensed facilities.

1. Child Care Licensing team is working closely with providers to make sure their classroom measurements are correct so they can take advantage of ARPA funds to do expansion and supply building.
2. Child Care Licensing is working on a new enterprise licensing system (will replace the current CCLAS system) for licensing specialists to be able to monitor facilities and give accurate data.
3. Onika Luster, Program Manager for Child Care Licensing came up with a focus on reading to young children which is now “10 Minutes Matter” encouraging early childhood professionals and families to read to children.
4. Arkansas providers across the state celebrated Arkansas Children’s Week starting April 3, 2022.



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