



Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

December 1, 2021

The Honorable Larry Hogan
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
H-101 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis MD 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
State House, H-107
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Growing Family Child Care Opportunities (GOFCC) Pilot Program MSAR #13271

Dear Governor Hogan, President Miller and Speaker Jones:

Enclosed is a report outlining the details regarding the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities (GOFCC) Pilot Program (HB 944/SB711). The report includes updates on the following:

- Overview of GOFCC
- Implementation of a Statewide replication of GOFCC

Thank you for the opportunity to share the details of the program with you. If you need additional information, please contact Ary Amerikaner, Chief of Staff at ary.amerikaner@maryland.gov or by phone at (410) 767-0090.

Best Regards,

Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools



Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program

Division of Early Childhood

December 2021 Legislative Report



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Deputy Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

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Assistant Superintendent, Division of Early Learning

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LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT

In the 2021 legislative session, the Maryland Assembly passed House Bill 944/Senate Bill 711. The bill, later signed into law, established the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). On or before September 1, 2022, at least three grants, each of which does not exceed \$150,000, are to be awarded to establish and support family child care providers in the State. Jurisdictions or jurisdictions jointly with the Child Care Resource Center are eligible to apply for the grants and administer the local program. These would be pilot programs to test effective strategies to be evaluated for possible future expansion to additional jurisdictions.

Grant funds must be used to establish and support local pilot programs in increasing the supply of family childcare providers and ensuring their sustainability in areas with above average rates of poverty, unemployment, or areas with a lack of available childcare providers. Subgrantees must raise local matching funds, including in-kind matching resources at a 1:1 match. They must also collaborate with existing family childcare providers during the implementation of the program, provide multilingual outreach to recruit individuals to become registered family childcare providers, and provide technical assistance, financial incentives, and start-up assistance to become registered family childcare providers.

In addition, entities awarded grants must assist newly registered and established family childcare providers through technical assistance to achieve quality benchmarks, peer-to-peer mentoring, and financial incentives. They must also establish partnerships with local chambers of commerce, or other local or State organizations for family childcare providers that support small businesses and women and minority-owned businesses to provide assistance to recruited individuals or registered family childcare providers in implementing best business practices and assistance in achieving financial sustainability.

On or before December 1, 2021, and each December 1 thereafter, the MSDE is required to report to the general assembly on the status of the program and an evaluation of local pilot programs in meeting the program goals. This report provides information on the status of the program, but an evaluation will not yet be implemented until after grantees have been awarded in FY 2023.

GROWING OPPORTUNITY FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE

In *Addressing the Decreasing Number of Family Child Care Providers in the United States*, the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance reports that more than 90,000 licensed family childcare homes closed in the United States between 2005 and 2017.¹ Unfortunately, the trend holds true for Maryland as well: the number of registered family childcare providers in Maryland has been declining precipitously for more than two decades, from 12,380 in June, 1996 to 4,702 in June 2021.² From the start of the pandemic until November, over 600 family child care providers closed their doors. Data analysis by Maryland Family Network projects a further decrease of about 27% from 2021 to 2025.³

The declining number of family childcare homes brings a tremendous degree of unmet need. Many families depend on family childcare providers to care for their children so parents can work and go to school. With fewer family childcare homes, it is harder for families to find and afford childcare. In communities without enough childcare options, business and economic growth can suffer.

¹Information from an unpublished analysis by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance of data collected from the 2005 and 2017 National Association for Regulatory Administration Child Care Licensing Programs and Policies Surveys conducted in March 2020. https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/addressing_decreasing_fcc_providers_revised_march2020_final.pdf

²Maryland State Department of Education. <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/data>

³https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/MFN_Trends_Feb2021%20%20FINAL_0.pdf

GOFCC STATEWIDE REPLICATION/EXPANSION

The MSDE has partnered with Maryland Family Network (MFN) to release the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the replication and expansion of GOFCC statewide. The RFP was published on November 1, 2021, with information sessions planned for December 2021 and the deadline for submission of a proposal is January 14, 2022. Decisions will be announced by March 4, 2022. MFN will publicize this opportunity through social media, the MFN website, the MFN newsletter, the MCCRCN, the MSDE weekly update to childcare providers, and the Statewide Early Childhood Advisory Council, convened and supported by MSDE.

The MSDE will support a planning period and award local applicants with up to \$75,000. A local match is encouraged but not required. The planning period is from March 4, 2022 through August 31, 2022. The implementation RFP will be posted on July 1, 2022, due by August 1, and then a minimum of three implementation grants of \$150,000 each will be awarded by August 29, 2022.

The RFP and technical assistance information for the Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program can be found on the MFN website.⁴

CONCLUSION:

Under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (HB-1300), the state is charged with establishing and implementing a mixed-delivery system of voluntary prekindergarten for all three- and four-year old children. Maryland Ready: A Path to School Readiness and Success, the state's prenatal to age eight strategic plan envision a world where all young children and their families thrive. Family childcare providers will play an important role in the expansion of high-quality early learning, expanding the availability of childcare for working families, and ensuring more children enter school ready to succeed. The Growing Family Child Care Opportunities Pilot Program will assist the state in progressing towards its goals.

⁴ <https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/for-providers/request-for-proposals>