INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES IN MISSOURI IN 2020

Alycia Hardy & Stephanie Schmit | June 2024

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) serves as the primary source of federal funding for states to help families with low incomes afford child care and to support broader child care quality. However, limited federal investments, state funding constraints, and restrictive policies mean subsidy access is out of reach for far too many children and families. Finding affordable care can be particularly burdensome for families with low incomes and even more so for those who experience compounding racial inequities such as those faced by Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, and other communities of color.

In 2020, CCDF subsidies only reached 21 percent of all potentially eligible children in Missouri based on state income eligibility, or 28,700 children. Overall subsidy receipt in Missouri was higher than the national rate based on state income eligibility of 14 percent.

MISSOURI CHILDREN POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE A CCDF SUBSIDY

CLASP estimates that 977,436 children ages 0-13 lived in Missouri during 2020, and 14 percent of these children (135,326) were potentially eligible to receive a subsidy through CCDF based on state income eligibility limits. Like many other states, Missouri sets its initial state income eligibility limit lower than the federal maximum income limit allowed by federal rules. The state’s maximum allowable family income (136 percent FPL) is only 51 percent of the federal limit (265 percent FPL). An increase to the state’s income threshold to match the federal maximum would mean an estimated 162,964 additional children would have been eligible, a 120 percent increase. Child care access is a critical support for economic stability and growth, especially for families with low incomes, therefore expanding subsidy access is critical to supporting those families as well as broader state economic growth.

MISSOURI CHILDREN SERVED THROUGH CCDF

In 2020, of the estimated 135,326 potentially eligible children in Missouri, 21 percent were served through CCDF, for a total of 28,700 children served. Of those children served, Black/African American and white children accounted for a total of 76 percent of children served through CCDF and Asian, Hispanic/Latino, multiracial, Native American/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander children accounted for 10
Due to data limitations, including sample size limitations in the American Community Survey and/or missing and/or invalid CCDF data from the Administration for Children and Families, we were not able to conduct analyses on potential eligibility and CCDBG access for children by race and ethnicity in Missouri.

These analyses show that overall access to CCDF was low in Missouri, with 14 percent of all children under age 13 being potentially eligible. Due to data limitations, we could not conduct further analyses by race and ethnicity. However, well-documented broader systemic inequities rooted in racism and compounded by economic inequality have created increased need and additional access barriers for families of color. When coupled with low overall access, this demonstrates a clear and immediate need for significant and sustained increases in federal funding to states, as well as policies that intentionally address compounding racial and economic inequities. Both are essential to addressing the historic underfunding, present inequities, and ongoing recovery from COVID-19 that have created rippling instability and exacerbated need.

CONNECTING DATA AND POLICY, IMPROVING POLICIES, AND INCREASING INVESTMENTS TO CENTER EQUITY

Source: CLASP estimates of the number of children served by race/ethnic category are based on “FY 2020 Preliminary Data Table 1 - Average Monthly Adjusted Number of Families and Children Served” (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/data/fy-2020-preliminary-data-table-1) and “FY 2020 Preliminary Data Table 12a - Average Monthly Percent of Children In Care By Race and Ethnicity” (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/data/fy-2020-preliminary-data-table-12a).
ENDNOTES


3 Due to data limitations, including sample size limitations in the American Community Survey and/or missing and/or invalid CCDF data from the Administration for Children and Families, we were unable to conduct analyses on potential eligibility and CCBG access for all racial and ethnic groups in Missouri. Instead, this fact sheet outlines overall potential CCDF subsidy eligibility and receipt for children ages 0-13 in Missouri. For more information, please see the data limitations and methodology document https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/inequitable-access-2024/.


6 The number of potentially eligible children is based on CLASP analysis of American Community Survey 5-year (2017-2021), 1-year (2019), and 1-year (2021) data. Estimates are based on children under age 13, whose available parent(s) was working, with household incomes at or below 295 percent FPL.

7 Based on CLASP analysis of the total number of potentially eligible children, according to each state’s income eligibility limit, and the total number of children served through CCDF in 2020.

8 The number of potentially eligible children is based on CLASP analysis of American Community Survey 5-year (2017-2021), 1-year (2019), and 1-year (2021) data. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

9 CLASP estimates are based on analysis of American Community Survey 5-year (2017-2021), 1-year (2019), and 1-year (2021) data on children under age 13 and the proportion of those children whose available parent(s) was working, with household incomes at or below 295 percent FPL.


12 For the purposes of this analysis, children whose ethnicity was identified as Hispanic/Latino are analyzed together, regardless of their race (including children whose race was labeled as “some other race”). All non-Hispanic/Latino children are identified by their racial group (Asian, Black/African American, multiracial, Native American/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and white).

13 CLASP estimates of the number of children served by racial/ethnic category are based on “FY 2020 Preliminary Data Table 1 - Average Monthly Adjusted Number of Families and Children Served” (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/data/fy-2020-preliminary-data-table-1) and “FY 2020 Preliminary Data Table 12a - Average Monthly Percent of Children In Care By Race and Ethnicity” (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/data/fy-2020-preliminary-data-table-12a).