

Extend the Short Term Training Child Care Pilot

May 2014

Last year, legislation was enacted to expand access to child care assistance to enable parents to participate in short-term training. Established as a pilot, the Short Term Training Child Care Pilot is set to expire December 31, 2014.

The Child Care Assistance Program (“CCAP”) provides subsidies to parents to help pay for early learning programs for their young children and for safe after school care. To qualify, the parent must be working or in training (under the pilot) at least 20 hours per week and have income less than 180% FPL (\$36,622 for a family of 3). Prior to the implementation of the pilot, the subsidy could only be used for child care needed while the parent is “on the job”, leaving parents who wanted to participate in education or training to improve their job skills to find other child care arrangements. The Short Term Training Child Care Pilot allows unemployed parents to use subsidized child care during time spent in short-term job training programs.

Parents can access child care for training that prepares them for available jobs. There are a number of existing programs that use a “train and place” model, where community agencies work with employers to provide customized training for existing jobs. These programs are typically of 12 -13 weeks duration. Without the child care provided through the Short Term Training Child Care Pilot, parents with young children are unable to participate in these programs if they can’t afford necessary child care, even though they would be eligible for child care assistance once they started the new job.

Legislation introduced by Representative Ruggiero (**H7733**) and Senator Goldin (**S2486**) would extend the Short Term Training Child Care Pilot through June 30, 2015 to provide sufficient time to test the need and efficacy of the program. Under current law, the pilot is set to expire December 31, 2014.

The pilot implementation required coordination between the Governor’s Workforce Board staff – who defined the approvable training programs – and the DHS staff who are responsible for CCAP eligibility and payment. Integrating this new program into the existing system took longer than expected. The program became available in February and intensive outreach is now underway to let training providers and parents know about it.