

Enhancing the supply and quality of care

- ✓ The Small Business Administration (SBA) announced several [actions](#) to support child care businesses, including: new funding opportunities to support small businesses in the child care sector through SBA's Women's Business Center program; the development of a child care business development guide to provide a one-stop resource on issues including capital, licensing, and tax considerations; and a lender campaign to highlight the resources SBA has available to support small, minority-owned and women-owned businesses, including child care businesses.
- ✓ The Department of Labor (DOL) released [\\$195 million in grants](#) available to expand Registered Apprenticeships to support the Investing in America Agenda. These grants are meant to expand access to Registered Apprenticeships in high-demand sectors, including care.
- ✓ HHS, through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released [new guidance](#) outlining how states can use worker registries for Medicaid-funded Home and Community Based Services to ensure beneficiaries have awareness of and access to qualified workers to deliver these critical services. The guidance details best practices for states in developing worker registries and how they can receive enhanced federal funding to develop and maintain them.
- ✓ HHS, through the Administration for Community Living (ACL), launched the [Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center](#) to help sustain and build on the \$37 billion in American Rescue Plan Act funding for home and community-based services. The Center will address the shortage of direct care professionals through technical assistance to states and stakeholders.
- ✓ HHS, through ACF, [finalized a rule](#) that directs states to pay child care providers more fairly and on time, improving financial stability for 140,000 child care providers and

Boosting job quality for care workers

- ✓ The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Administration on Children and Families (ACF), [proposed a rule](#) that would boost Head Start teacher wages by \$10,000, on average.
- ✓ For child care providers serving families benefiting from federal child care assistance, HHS, through ACF, adopted [a pay floor](#) that will increase payment rates for nearly 47,000 center- and home-based child care providers.
- ✓ HHS, through ACF, released [guidance](#) to federal early childhood grantees on how existing funds can be used to support the mental health and well-being of the early care and education workforce, including those who serve children in the Head Start and CCDBG programs.
- ✓ DOL [awarded](#) \$16 million through its Critical Sectors Job Quality Grants Program to support organizations in 12 states as they pilot strategies to improve job quality and increase the availability of good jobs in the care, climate resiliency, and hospitality sectors.
- ✓ The Department of Education (ED) awarded [\\$13 million in grants for its Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools \(CCAMPIS\) program](#), which is enabling 34 colleges and universities to extend child care to student-parents. For the first time, ED encouraged CCAMPIS applicants to prioritize the quality of services they provide, including considerations around the compensation and supports received by early educators. Twenty-six of the 34 grantees are advancing this priority.
- ✓ HHS, through CMS, proposed rules to ensure that home care workers get a bigger share of [Medicaid payments](#); and [establish minimum staffing standards](#) in nursing homes receiving Medicare and Medicaid funding.

incentivizing more providers to participate in the federal child care assistance program.

- ✓ HHS, through CMS, announced a national campaign to support staffing in nursing homes. CMS will work with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and other partners to make it easier for individuals to enter careers in nursing homes, investing over \$75 million in financial incentives such as scholarships and tuition reimbursement. This staffing campaign builds on other actions through the [HHS Health Workforce Initiative](#), including the [recent announcement that HRSA](#) awarded more than \$100 million to train more nurses and grow the nursing workforce.

Lowering care costs

- ✓ The Department of Defense (DOD) [reduced the amounts that lower-earning Service members](#) pay out of pocket for child care, lowering child care costs for the families of more than 32,000 children aged 0-12 enrolled in installation Child Development Programs. Military Families earning \$45,000 would see a 34% decrease in the amount they pay for child care.
- ✓ HHS, through ACF, [finalized a rule](#) that will reduce the cost of child care for more than 100,000 low-income working families.

Advancing care as a supportive service in federally funded programs

- ✓ DOL, in consultation with HHS, is developing technical assistance materials on best practices for encouraging supportive services, including child care and long-term care, in federal investments. This includes best practices and example strategies for Federal agencies, funding recipients, and others when designing high-quality, affordable, reliable, accessible care for workers.

- ✓ DOL, to provide compliance assistance and best practices materials for domestic workers, has [published sample employment agreements](#) in seven languages as a tool for illustrative purposes so that domestic home care, child care, and long-term care workers working in private homes, and their employers, can help ensure all parties better understand the terms of employment and their rights and responsibilities.

- ✓ HHS and DOL released a [summary](#) of their progress in reviewing available data sources about the home- and community-based workforce. The agencies' work is helping identify opportunities to address gaps in information about this critical workforce and better inform policy decisions at the federal, state, and local levels. The agencies have sought feedback from key stakeholders and will release recommendations based on their findings later this month.

- ✓ HHS, through CMS, adopted the [Nursing Staff Turnover Measure](#) in the value-based payment program for nursing homes beginning in 2026. This measure has been collected and publicly reported on Care Compare and assesses the stability of the staffing within a nursing.

- ✓ DOL will publish an analysis of early childhood and home care workers' pay in comparison to the pay of other workers with similar levels of training, requirements, and working conditions. This will also include guidance to help States and localities conduct their own analyses of care workers pay relative to other occupations in their respective jurisdictions.

- ✓ ED released [guidance](#) on how Title I funds can support access to high-quality preschool services, including in our Head Start programs. The guidance makes clear that these funds can also be used to support our early educators, including through boosting compensation. ED also released a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) encouraging state, local, and school leaders to ensure early school success by aligning programming between early childhood settings and the early grades. ED and HHS also released a joint [Dear Colleague](#)

- ✓ The [Department of Energy](#), the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), and the [Department of Transportation](#) have released funding opportunities that encourage applicants to extend supportive services, including care, to workers who are delivering on federally funded projects.

Expanding and improving federal support for care

- ✓ ED, for the first time in 20 years, has released [draft guidance](#) on the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, the Department’s primary program to support before, after, and summer school for school children. The draft guidance emphasizes the importance of state education chiefs working closely with administrators of the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to better support children during out-of-school time by aligning licensing and monitoring requirements, professional development, and quality enhancements across programs.
- ✓ The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has [publicly requested information](#) from Executive departments and agencies on their child care subsidy programs to determine the Federal workforce’s needs and to potentially support expanded investments in agency child care programs. This initiative will result in updated child care standards responsive to agency model employer objectives and workforce interests and will identify new opportunities to strengthen access to affordable child care, particularly for those individuals who need assistance the most.
- ✓ AmeriCorps, as a part of its [funding priorities for state and national grants](#), will prioritize programs focused on implementing or expanding access to high-quality early learning and those that prepare AmeriCorps members to enter early learning careers.

[Letter](#) on ensuring that we grow a system of mixed delivery as we invest in preschool expansion.

Supporting family caregivers

- ✓ HHS, through CMS, finalized a rule [establishing Medicare payment for practitioners to train and involve caregivers](#) to support patients with certain diseases or illnesses (e.g., dementia) in carrying out a treatment plan. Medicare will pay for these services when furnished by a physician or a non-physician practitioner under an individualized treatment plan or therapy plan of care.
- ✓ HHS, through CMS, released a [memorandum](#) to states making clear that family caregivers should have access to Medicare beneficiary information during the hospital discharge planning process, so that their caregiver knows how to better support them after they leave the hospital.
- ✓ HHS, through CMS, announced its [Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience \(GUIDE\) Model](#) to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia, reduce strain on unpaid caregivers, and help people remain in their homes and communities.
- ✓ HHS, through ACF, [announced](#) \$20 million in new funding opportunities to develop, test, and disseminate new approaches to supporting family caregivers. This builds on HHS’s efforts to implement the [National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#).
- ✓ The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched [a pilot program](#), known as the Virtual Psychotherapy Program for Caregivers (VPPC), to provide mental health counseling services to family caregivers caring for our nation’s heroes. The program successfully completed its pilot phase and is now a permanent program. Since October 2023, the program has provided over 4,937 psychotherapy sessions to family caregivers.

Improving access to home-based care for veterans

- ✓ VA has expanded the [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) (PCAFC) to veterans of all eras as of October 1, 2022. The PCAFC offers enhanced support for family caregivers of eligible veterans, which may include a monthly stipend, access to health insurance, and mental health counseling. As of April 3, 2024, the VA has received approximately 155,800 applications for participation in the expanded PCAFC.
- ✓ VA is expanding its Veteran-Directed Care and Home-Based Primary Care programs, which provide medical care and caregivers services to housebound veterans, along with its Medical Foster Home program which provides housing and services to veterans who otherwise would be in nursing homes.