



## **Child Care Providers Need Assistance Now: Survey Results From the Front Lines**

The current crisis has laid bare just how essential child care is and always has been to families and our economy. Without it, the 9 million families -- including single parents who work and married couples with both parents in the labor force -- that have children under the age of 6<sup>1</sup> could not work, and the businesses, institutions and organizations that rely on them could not operate. And yet, the child care workforce has been chronically underpaid, and the system itself has been historically underfunded. The crisis that already existed in our nation's child care system is being made much worse with the current pandemic, and this will have devastating and long term negative impacts on women and particularly women of color, if bold and decisive action is not taken now.

From its earliest days, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vital role that early care and education plays in making America work. As states mobilized in response to the emergency, child care workers were called on to tend to the children of other essential workers -- so health care workers could staff our hospitals, clerks could staff our pharmacies and grocery stores, and transit workers could ensure that they all made it to their jobs -- all of them risking their lives and the health of their families to respond to the crisis.

At the same time, as businesses across the country shuttered and workers were laid-off, furloughed, or told to work from home, many early educators joined those ranks, too. With states ordering schools and non-essential enterprises to close, and fearful and out of work parents keeping their children at home, even those providers that were permitted to remain open found themselves serving fewer children, and deprived of the payments by families that ordinarily kept their businesses afloat. This has been devastating for child care providers, child care workers, and families. In April, one-third of the jobs in the child care sector were lost. While additional federal aid has been made available to help unemployed workers and struggling businesses, and the CARES Act provided \$3.5 billion dollars for child care, it is not enough to address the current crisis in child care. Much more funding going directly to the child care system is necessary to ensure that child care providers do not go under during this crisis, child care workers are able to remain on the job, and the child care centers have the supplies they need to safely reopen and help America get back to work.

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Characteristics of Families -- 2019." April 21, 2020. See Table 4. Families with own children: Employment status of parents by age of youngest child and family type, 2018-2019 annual averages. Available at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/famee.pdf>



As the economic crisis driven by COVID-19 unfolded, child care providers -- directors of child care centers and owners of home-based programs, as well as teachers and other child care staff -- began recounting its effects on our facebook page, Childcare Changemakers, and its related facebook group. Building off these reports, we developed a survey to capture the pandemic's impact on the child care providers sharing their stories in this venue, provide a forum for the voices of owners and workers directly impacted by the crisis, and help inform the policy response to the pandemic. (See Appendix A for the full survey and methodology). The survey results, detailed below, highlight the crisis facing child care providers, many of which, without additional aid, will shut their doors forever. They also illuminate the economic hardship that child care providers and workers are facing during this crisis. And the results show the safety concerns that child care workers have, which must be addressed as states begin to reopen.

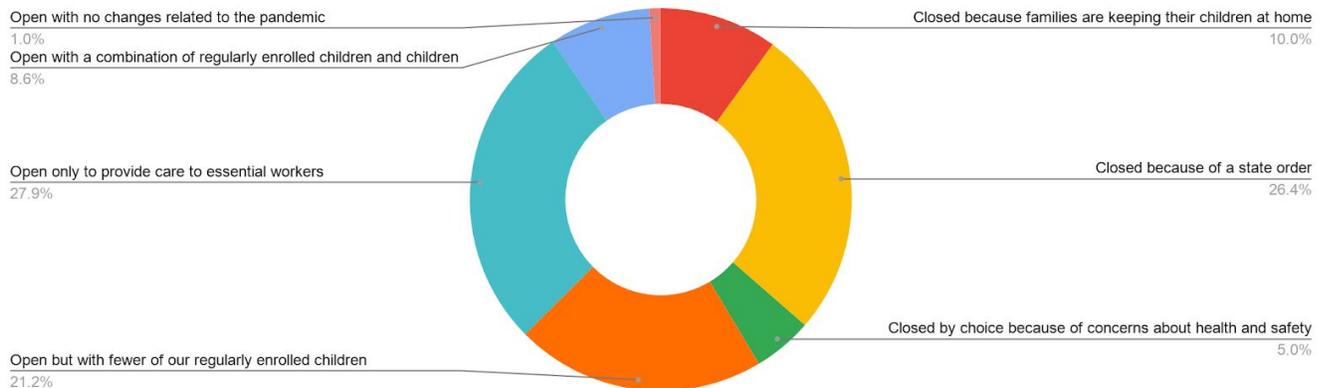
The stories from child care providers, highlighted throughout this survey, make real the crisis happening across the sector, and give voice to the need for urgent, immediate and decisive action. To address the current crisis, Congress should invest \$100 billion dollars to stabilize our critical child care infrastructure, and make sure care can continue to be provided safely, now and into the future.

### **Key Findings From Those Surveyed**

#### **1) The impact of the crisis on the child care sector has been extensive:**

- Only 1% of providers reported operating unchanged since the pandemic hit. Of these 15, 12 were either home-based programs or providers of family, friend or neighbor care.
- 41.4% of providers are closed, either by choice, by state order, or because families are keeping their children at home.

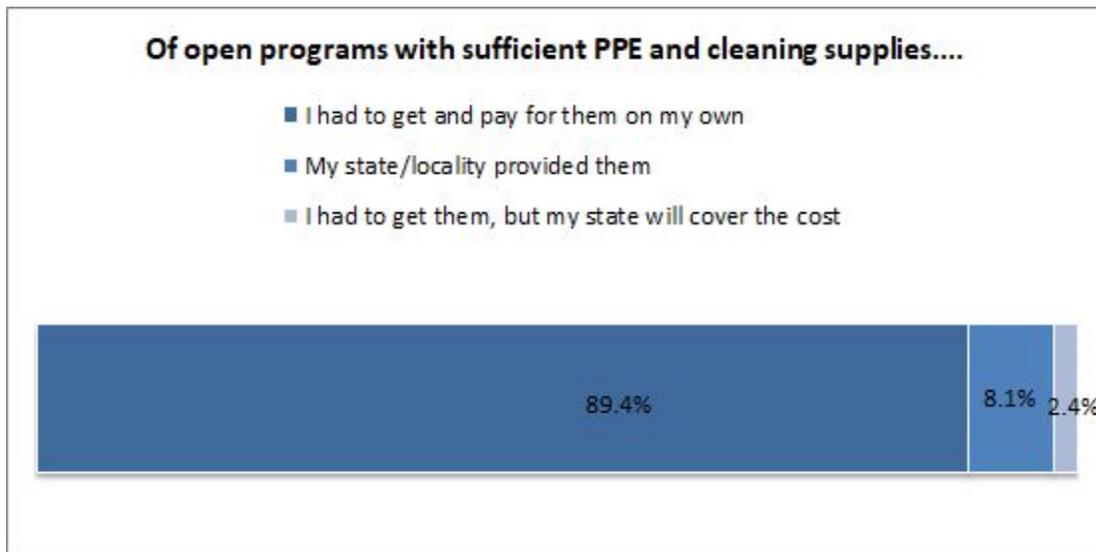
### Program Status



2) **Unless states and localities can secure residents' health and safety, efforts to reopen their economies are likely to stall as both parents and providers hesitate to return to work.** More than one third (36.2%) of programs were either open with fewer regularly enrolled children, closed by choice because of concerns regarding health and safety, or closed because families were keeping their children home.

3) **Programs that have remained open have received little support to obtain and pay for necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies to protect the health and safety of providers.**

- Just over 14% of respondents that were open said that their programs did not have the PPE and cleaning supplies they needed to operate safely.
- More alarmingly, around 14% of programs that were only open to provide care for children of essential workers reported not having the health and safety supplies they needed.
- Of open programs that reported having adequate supplies, almost 9 in 10 (89.4%) had to obtain and pay for them on their own. In an environment where PPE and cleaning supplies have been hard to come by, only 8.1% reported receiving them from their respective states.



*"We are told we can begin opening in June. Yet we have no protective gear, we can't find the proper cleaning supplies anywhere and we are give [sic] no clear guidance on how to safely open with young toddlers in our program." #851, Owner of a child care center in California*

*"We need supplies. We have to be able to sanitize our facility and there's no bleach, no hand sanitizer, no rubber gloves etc. we can't open without the supplies." #852, Owner of a child care center in California*

*"As we prepare to reopen. The state is not sure they have any supplies left - they already gave away all they gathered. To programs who were open. Even though they had our reopening date. We can not secure supplies such as thermometers and disinfectants, we can not open..." #843, Teacher or support staff at a child care center in New Hampshire*

*"As a daycare provider I feel that I was left behind, I chose not to close because this is my only source of income. Supplies have been very hard to find, worst part is that I can't get any because I'm not an essential worker, I feel that I am an essential worker I feel as the Daycare Provider that they just forgot about us." #952, Owner of a home based program in California.*

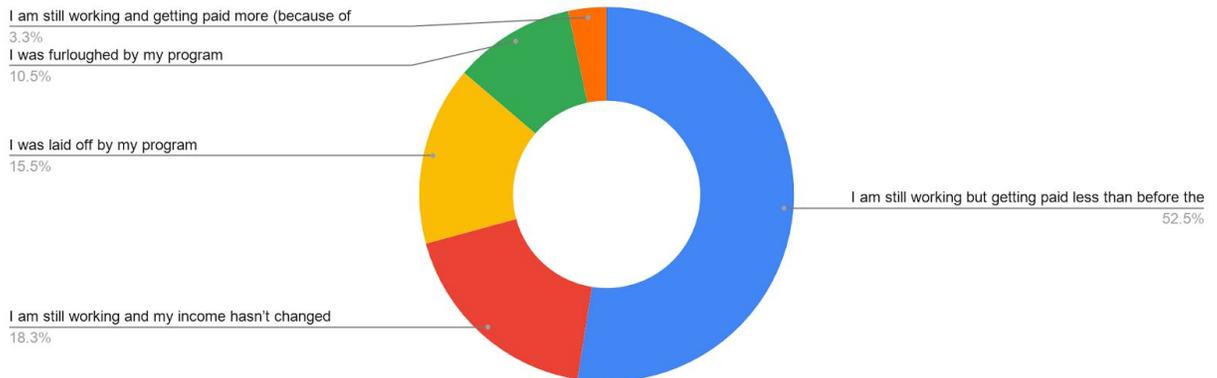
*"Very hard to get cleaning supplies. Masks and Gloves. We should get help!!!" #922, Owner of a home based provider in Illinois.*

**4) Closures and reductions in the number of children attending care, along with the added cost burdens of PPE and cleaning supplies, are jeopardizing programs'**

**financial viability.** Even before the pandemic, too many child care programs were financially fragile, operating on thin margins and plagued by unstable funding, limited public investment, and high staff turnover.

**More than three-fourths of respondents (78.5%) reported having been laid-off or furloughed from their programs or are either continuing to work but earning less or have seen reductions in program revenue.**

Personal Impact (Top 5 Responses)



*“With my business being closed I don’t know how many families will return to care once we are allowed to reopen. I am a single mother and my business is the only income I have to support myself and my children. I am worried that I could lose my business and then my home 😞.” #903, Owner of a child care center in Pennsylvania.*

*“We will not have the same number of children when we re-open which will continue to affect finances for months. We did a survey of our parents and about half say they will wait until the new school year in August. A fourth said they would wait until June as see what happens. A fourth said they would return.” #912, Owner of a child care center in Florida*

*“My child care center was closed for a few weeks while we tried to figure out how to keep our business financially viable. My business partner are physically and emotionally exhausted while trying to run an essential business and do our part to care for children of families who need care. “We are worried if we can sustain this level of energy and work.” #886, Owner of a child care center in Maine.*

*“I didn’t have a huge income but with nothing at all coming in, it really hits hard.” #841, Owner of a home based program in Missouri.*

*“We are now open but our enrollment is so low. We are not sure we will survive. It is scary.” #831, Owner of a child care center in Utah.*

**5) Child care providers are struggling financially as job and revenue losses grow.** Even in the best of times, child care work has been characterized by low wages and few benefits.<sup>2</sup> Now, with reduced income and revenues, they are struggling to make ends meet, falling behind on housing and other obligations, and reaching out for assistance to provide for their families’ basic necessities, as outlined in Figure 1. Notably, 14.8% of respondents reported experiencing three or more of the hardships in the two months that lapsed from the beginning of the pandemic’s impact in the U.S. through the time of the survey.

**Figure 1: How has the impact on your work affected you and your family?**

Family Impact	Number of Respondents* <sup>3</sup>	Percentage of Respondents
I am behind on paying my rent	161	10.49%
I am behind on paying my mortgage	245	15.96%
I have delayed paying other bills (e.g. utilities, medical bills, credit card)	769	50.10%
I am relying on friends or family for financial help	162	10.55%
I have applied for public assistance (SNAP/food stamps, Medicaid, TANF/cash assistance, etc.)	174	11.34%

<sup>2</sup> It is telling that the \$600 weekly *supplement* to unemployment benefits provided by the federal government in the last economic relief package is 40% higher than the national median weekly wage of a child care worker. See Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, “Early Childhood Workforce Index 2018.” University of California, Berkeley.  
<https://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2018/06/3-Earnings-Economic-Security.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> \*Total exceeds 1535 as many respondents identified multiple impacts.

<b>I do not have enough money to buy groceries. I am relying on food banks/food pantries/nonprofits for food assistance.</b>	130	8.47%
<b>I cannot pay my health insurance</b>	106	6.91%
<b>I do not have the money to pay for necessary prescriptions</b>	71	4.63%
<b>No significant impact</b>	365	23.78%
<b>Other</b>	147	9.58%

Many of those who have not yet experienced one of the hardships outlined above have resorted to savings to make up for lost income:

*"I'm quickly depleting the small savings I have spent years building up." Owner of home based program in Iowa*

*"I've kept up with mortgage, rent, utilities so far but will run into trouble if this goes on many months." Owner of a home based program in Illinois*

*"I have used all my savings and maxed out credit cards, took out loans." Owner of a home based program in Oklahoma*

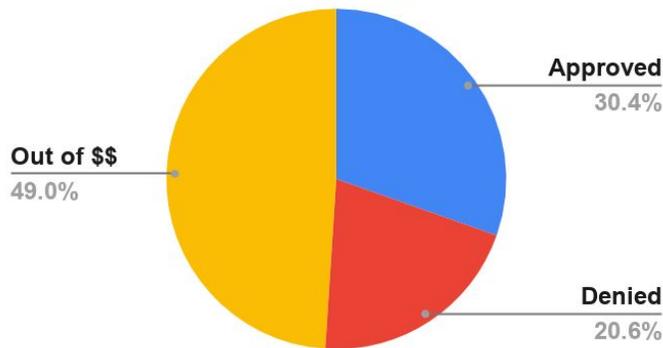
**6) Federal relief has been inaccessible and insufficient to meet the needs of child care providers.**

Congress provided financial support to small businesses -- like child care providers -- through the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) included in the CARES Act and CARESII. This relief is vital; as a child care owner from North Carolina relayed, "I can pay my bills bc of the PPP." However, only a fraction of providers have been able to access small business relief or unemployment compensation to defray lost revenue.

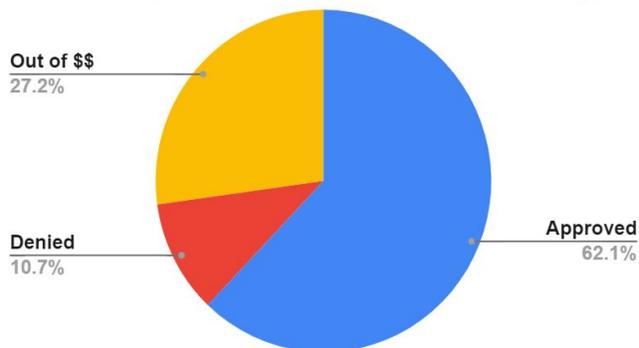
- Around 4 in 10 (40.1%) of those who had been laid off or furloughed reported receiving unemployment insurance or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA).
- More than half of respondents (53.4%) reported that they had not applied for UI; 58.8% of those who hadn't applied reported that they were still working but earning less because of the pandemic.
- 15.4% of respondents had applied for UI and were still waiting for their applications to be processed.

- Respondents from 13 states (AZ, AR, DC, FL, ID, IN, KS, MD, OK, PA, TN, WI, WY) reported that their states' PUA programs were not yet open.<sup>4</sup>
- Fewer than one in three (30.4%) of childcare center and home-based child care owners who applied received Economic Injury Disaster Loans; 49% reported that the program was out of money by the time they applied.
- Almost two-thirds of those who applied (62.19%) received assistance from the Paycheck Protection Program, but that program, too, was out of money by the time that more than one quarter (27.2%) of program owners applied.
- Just under 1 in 4 owners (23.3%) of home based child care owners reported not having applied for assistance because they either weren't aware that help was available or because it seemed too complicated to apply.

**Child Care EIDL Applications**



**Child Care Applications for Paycheck Protection Program**



<sup>4</sup> This does not include the twelve (12) states (AL, CA, DE, GA, IL, MA, MN, NM, NY, NC, OH, and TX) where some respondents reported that the state's PUA program was not open and others reported receiving PUA, suggesting that there was either a lag in operation and/or insufficient publicity of the availability of benefits.



*"Worried about next month, unemployment has not come through and the PPP really was not given to many FCC." Owner of a home based program in New York*

*"I just know that I have been a child care provider for 39 yrs and my husband is disabled so I am the \$ earner. I also am his care taker ( no wage earned for that) do [sic] I cannot go work out of the home and leave him . I still do not have all my spots full but when I make more than \$224 per WK unemployment will drop me !! Wow how can I make it on \$224 per WK?? Nobody's back to work nor are they looking for daycare yet. I'm advertising nobody's called." #882, Owner of a home based program in Colorado*

*"I have all private pay clients and since none of them were "essential workers " I was mandated to close by the Governor's Order. I did apply for EIDL received the 1k grant but have NOT been offered a loan. My states PUA is NOT available yet." #935, Owner of a home based child care program in Illinois.*

*"My income has been affected, with only being able to care for 6 children. It's very difficult to obtain cleaning and sanitizing supplies even face mask. I have not been approved for the EIDL or PPP LOAN they ran out of money 1st and now they have funds and I'm just waiting, they don't tell anything. CHILD CARE HERE IN ILLINOIS NEEDS TO BE FIXED FOR NOW AND THE FUTURE. This current way have doing business IS NOT WORKING, WE NEED LONG TERM SOLUTIONS." #969, Owner of a Home Based Program in Illinois.*

*"All of our staff hours were cut and all applied for unemployment. We then received the PPP and everyone had to go back full time but our enrollment is down 70%- MN is still under shelter in place. Completely useless to have all staff at full time with no children but need to in order to ensure that the ppp will be a grant and not a loan. We need to be able to use that money over more than 8 weeks or it should not start until the shelter in place is lifted. Our center lost \$60,000 the month of April. We can not sustain those type of losses and stay open." #957, Teacher or support staff at child care center in Minnesota.*

*"The payroll protection loan will only cover payroll for 8 weeks, nothing else. It's based off our 2019 taxes and in January 2020 all employees received a raise so my payroll is higher that what my loan actually was. I have no extra money to cover bills. I need the ccap money even though children aren't attending. We have zero cash flow." #949, Owner of a child care center in Illinois.*

*"We have children attending our program, my teachers are back to work only because of the PPP loan, when it runs out I may have to lay off again due to many parents still not back to work. We only have one child on subsidy." #945, Owner of a child care center in Washington*

*I turned down the loan for PPP because our state is not allowing us to reopen until June 29. The funds had to be used within 8 weeks in order to be forgiven and we would not be back to work yet. So I laid myself off and collecting. We receive about 6,000 per month from subsidized childcare. We are running at about a 5 thousand dollar per month loss with that taken into consideration. Not sure how we will be able to pay bills if our enrollment is down once we get back (either because parents do not feel comfortable or state will reduce our license capacity.)#828, Owner of a child care center in Massachusetts*

- 7) Providers are concerned about the risks of exposure to themselves and their families without adequate PPE, cleaning supplies, and clear directives from states that are financially feasible for them to implement.** Even those whose health is most at risk are not financially secure, because most states have not provided hazard pay to compensate providers for lost revenue as slots are limited, either to comply with new health and safety regulations or because of the reduction in normal attendance. Almost 7 in 10 (68%) providers that are open only to provide care to essential workers report that they are getting paid less or that their programs have lost revenue.

*"Stress levels are at an all time high! Childcare workers need to be recognized as front line heroes! [sic] We put our health and our families health at risk daily not knowing who our families have come in contact with that might make us sick. Yet day after day we show up! With a smile on our face ready to be the consistency and continuity of care our children deserve!" #933, Teacher or support staff at a child care center in Texas.*

*"I have a home based daycare, I put myself and my family at a higher risk everyday, yet we do not get any extra pay. Our small community has at least 3 confirmed cases of covid so people are nervous." #948, owner of a home based program in Minnesota*

*"Being that I am a high risk employee, I am very concern as to the environment and situation when it is "ok" to return back to the facility." #902, Teacher or support staff at a child care center in South Carolina*

*"We are working with families at close contact and staff and parents are scared to send children. We do not know how we will fill our spots!" #914, Owner of a child care center in Tennessee.*

*"I took 4 weeks off, living on his disability. signed up for UI, have not heard yet. may need to open up even if not feeling ready or safe." Owner of a home based program in Wisconsin*

- 8) **Without additional federal support, providers face an uncertain future. Unless they can secure funding to survive so they can reopen and operate under new COVID-related strictures, many could be forced to close permanently. As the owner of a child care center in Florida stated starkly, “Without the PPP loan we would be closed.”**

*“Though my program is closed for the safety of families and workers. They can only continue to pay all the employees for remote working from home for so long. The funds are starting to run out, grants are ending. What is the next steps?” #896, Teacher or support staff at a child care center in Connecticut*

*“We laid off around 70 employees and have kept about 15 leadership staff on payroll. We are working hard to create policies and procedures to reopen our business safely. We are stressed and worried about the business, our teaching staff and our children and parents.” Owner of a child care center in Ohio*

*“I don’t know if my Daycare will be able to reopen. Closed after 20 years of no licensing issues. Denied PPP, denied Application to provide Emergency Care, I don’t know if families will come back. Programs have been closed March 23-June 29- who knows when it will be lifted or what the new health policy will look like.” #838, Owner of a home based program in Massachusetts*



## Appendix A: Methodology & Survey

### **Methodology**

The survey was distributed as part of our Online to Power (O2P) initiative, an organizing strategy that uses digital tools to identify, target, and activate directly-affected individuals to build social movement. As part of O2P, we purchased facebook advertisements that would run in all 50 states. The ads invited providers to take a survey that would help us advocate for emergency relief and policy change. The ads ran from May 1st through May 12th.

In addition to the ads, the Childcare Changemakers facebook community promoted the survey on our page and group, encouraging our followers to fill it out. Grassroots partners engaged in Community Change's Child Care Cohort in Minnesota and New Mexico distributed the survey during online meetings and posted it on their facebook pages as well.

The results digested in this brief reflect the responses of the self-selected sample of 1536 child care providers that replied to the survey from May 1st through 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 13th. The high response rate reflects the scope and urgency of the crisis facing the child care sector. A full tabulation of the share of surveys corresponding to each source point is forthcoming.

## The Survey



Type welcome message here...

Childcare providers are suffering under COVID-19. Many are losing their jobs and may have to close their doors forever.

We are a community of providers, educators, and parents and we are surveying providers about their experience in order to advocate for **emergency relief and policy change**.

This survey will take approximately 4-5 minutes to complete.



\*



1

Let's get started! First off, what's your zip code?

\*



2

What type of childcare program and role do you work in? (Please select the best match)

- Owner of a childcare center
- Owner of a home-based program
- Teacher or support staff at a childcare center
- Teacher or support staff at a home-based program
- Teacher or support staff at a Pre-K program
- Teacher or support staff in a Head Start program
- Care provider for a family member, friend, or neighbor
- Other



✓ 3

My childcare program is currently:

- Closed because of a state order
- Closed because families are keeping their children at home
- Closed by choice because of concerns about health and safety
- Open only to provide care to essential workers
- Open but with fewer of our regularly enrolled children
- Open with a combination of regularly enrolled children and children of essential workers
- Open with no changes related to the pandemic

🔍 jumps to 5 4

✓ 4 Does your program have the personal protective and cleaning supplies you need to operate safely?

- Yes, but I had to get and pay for them myself
- Yes, I had to get them but my state/locality will cover the cost
- Yes, my state/locality provided them
- No

🗨️ → comes from 3

✓ 5 How has the pandemic personally impacted your work?

- I was laid off by my program
- I was furloughed by my program
- I am still working and my income hasn't changed
- I am still working but getting paid less than before the crisis/my program has lost revenue
- I am still working and getting paid more (because of emergency or hazard pay)

🗨️ → comes from 3

✓ 6

How has the impact on your work affected you and your family?

- I am behind on paying my rent
- I am behind on paying my mortgage
- I have delayed paying other bills (e.g. utilities, medical bills, credit card)
- I am relying on friends or family for financial help
- I have applied for public assistance (SNAP/food stamps, Medicaid, TANF/cash assistance, etc.)
- I do not have enough money to buy groceries. I am relying on food banks/food pantries/nonprofits for food assistance.
- I cannot pay my health insurance
- I do not have the money to pay for necessary prescriptions
- No significant impact



\*



7

The government created new programs to support people and small businesses that lost income because of the crisis, like Pandemic Unemployment Assistance for workers who were self-employed. If you lost income, are out of work, or your program is closed, this section asks about access to those programs:

Unemployment: (Please check the best match)

- I have not applied for unemployment benefits
- I applied for unemployment and my application is being processed/I am waiting for benefits
- I applied for unemployment and was denied
- I am receiving unemployment benefits
- I am receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance
- My state's Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program is not open yet



8

If you are a family child care provider or an owner of a child care center, have you tried to access small business support? Please check all that apply.

- I applied for an Emergency Disaster Loan and was approved
- I applied for an Emergency Disaster Loan and was denied
- I applied for an Emergency Disaster Loan but the program was out of money
- I applied for the Paycheck Protection Program and was approved
- I applied for the Paycheck Protection Program and was denied
- I applied for the Paycheck Protection Program but the program was out of money
- I did not apply for assistance because the process was too complicated
- I chose not to apply for assistance for another reason
- I did not know this assistance was available
- N/A

\*  9 What state are you located in?

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- > View all choices

\*  10 Is  still paying child care subsidies?

- Yes, for essential workers
- Yes, even if families aren't attending
- No
- Partially
- I don't know

\*  11 Is  covering family copays?

- Yes, for essential workers
- Yes, for families who are not attending
- No
- I don't know

 12 Is there anything else you would like to share about how the COVID pandemic is impacting you, your family, business, or community?

\*  13 Almost done! We're working to get relief and information out as fast as possible. What's the best phone number to reach you at?

 14 Your Email (Optional)

 15 Final question: What's your name? (Will not be shared publicly)

 A Thank you for completing the survey! Are you interested in sharing your story publicly? [Visit our website to record a video message to your elected officials.](#)

We are a community of childcare providers, educators, and parents coming together to make high-quality early education and care available to every child and family. For more info, [like us on Facebook.](#)

[Thank you!](#) 