



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY FACILITATED ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

WDINY.ORG/CHILDCARE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Workforce Development Institute's **Child Care Subsidy Facilitated Enrollment Program** (WDI CCSFEP) was implemented in 2003 and works strategically to reduce the hardship gap that families face when their wages are too high to qualify for public assistance programs, but do not earn enough to make ends meet. The application process is responsive to the needs of working families, providing continuous support and flexibility in enrollment options. The WDI CCSFEP is currently serving working families in Albany, Erie, Monroe, Oneida, Onondaga, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties with incomes up to 275% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

Since 2003, the WDI CCSFEP has enrolled **7,752** families and has assisted **11,210** children in attending day care, before and after school, and summer camp programs. Many working families' household budgets cannot accommodate the cost of licensed/registered child care without subsidy assistance. The WDI CCSFEP provides a means of improving the quality of care for children and eliminates a predominant employment barrier for families. As a result of enrollment in the WDI CCSFEP, families are provided the opportunity to develop new job skills, increase work hours, earn higher wages and advance in their careers.

The goal of the WDI CCSFEP is to provide stability for working families through equitable access to quality, affordable child care. Without child care, families are unable to participate in the workforce. As New York State makes the necessary steps to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, child care will continue to serve as the backbone of our economic recovery. Child care is a critical workforce support and the WDI CCSFEP prioritizes improving access to and affordability of child care through eliminating regional inequities and strengthening the child care workforce.

This report is intended to illustrate the impact of the WDI CCSFEP on children, working families and employers. Program initiatives that have improved access to and awareness of child care will also be highlighted throughout the report. Additional programmatic details can be found within the corresponding appendices: A: Program History, B: Program Goals, C: Program Requirements, D: Eligibility Requirements, E: Demographic Information, and F: Program Process and Structure.



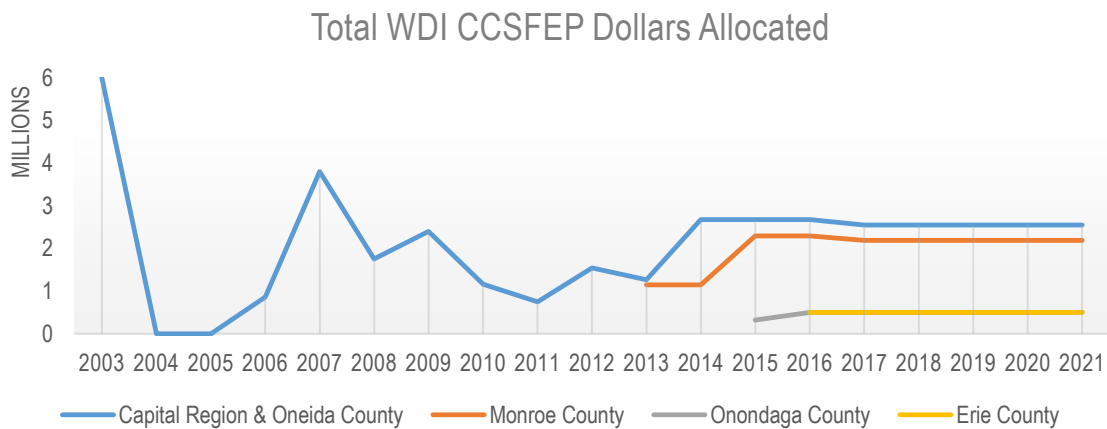
I have no idea how I would get by without this program. This program has allowed me to plan for the future, and has given us our life back. It is a blessing.

- WDI CCSFEP Recipient Family



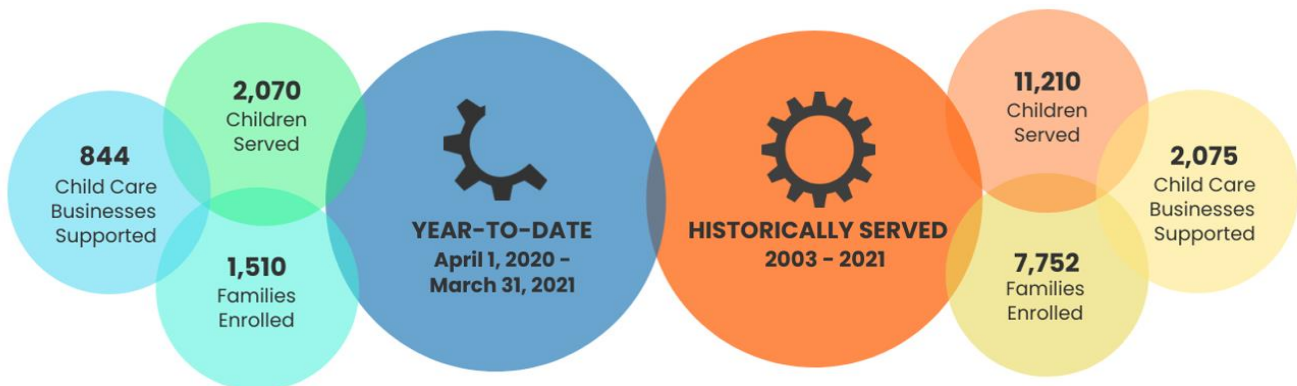
APPROPRIATIONS

As of the state fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, WDI's CCSFEP has been funded at a total of \$67,098,444. Of this amount, WDI receives 10% to be allocated for administrative services (wages, benefits, space, equipment, supplies, etc.). In addition, the county Department of Social Services (DSS) receives a 5% allocation for their administrative support. The remaining portions are allocated directly to the eight participating counties for income-based child care subsidies for working families.



IMPACT

WDI implemented the CCSFEP in the Capital Region and Oneida County in 2003. Expansion of the program extended to Monroe County in 2013, Onondaga County in 2015, and Erie County in 2016. The image below provides a snapshot of the current and historical impact that the CCSFEP has had on children, families and child care providers in New York State:



AGES OF CHILDREN SERVED

There are a total of 2,070 children who were served by the WDI CCSFEP across Albany, Erie, Monroe, Oneida, Onondaga, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties during the reporting period of 4/1/2020 to 3/31/2021. Their ages (at the end of the reporting period) are broken down as follows:

Infant: 308	Pre-School: 549
Toddler : 412	School Age: 801



CHILD CARE PROVIDERS UTILIZED

One of the primary goals of the WDI CCSFEP is to elevate the quality of child care choices available to working families. WDI does this by providing parents with information on selecting a developmentally appropriate provider. This includes contact information for the local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agency and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYS OCFS) website and its child care provider search capability. The type of child care providers selected by WDI CCSFEP families are demonstrated below:



WDI continues to be successful in moving children into regulated (licensed or registered) care:

- **82% of placements were in a licensed or registered site**
- **18% of placements were in a legally exempt site**

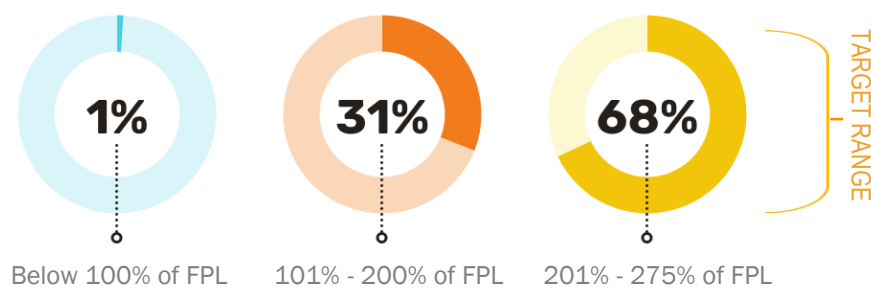
When searching for child care, WDI CCSFEP parents indicate that cost, hours of operation and location continue to be most important factors considered when selecting a child care provider, followed by licensing/accreditation, flexible scheduling, structured environment, payment options, curriculum, staff to child ratio and nutrition, respectively.



FEDERAL POVERTY LEVELS SERVED

WDI CCSFEP funding is targeted to serve working families with incomes between 200% and 275% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). However, given flat or decreased funding at the federal, state and local levels over the past several years, local districts have been forced to decrease their maximum income eligibility level for low income child care subsidy cases, resulting in the WDI CCSFEP serving fewer median income families within the target range. The diagram below reflects the reduced FPL levels counties are currently serving:

WDI CCSFEP Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) Served



*FPL Levels for Families Served by WDI CCSFEP during the reporting period of 4/1/2020-3/31/2021
See Appendix D: Eligibility Requirements for Federal Poverty Income Levels*

COVID-19

As a result of COVID-19, counties were able to apply for temporary waivers that increased the affordability of care for parents and stabilized the sector for providers. These waivers included raising eligibility up to 85% of the State Median Income (SMI), waiving parent co-payments and paying providers for absences. This had a profound impact on working families during the pandemic and allowed the WDI CCSFEP to provide increased support in a time of need.

New York's dedicated child care professionals served as an integral component of the pandemic infrastructure by caring for the children of essential workers. As we make the necessary steps to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, child care will continue to serve as the backbone of our economic recovery.

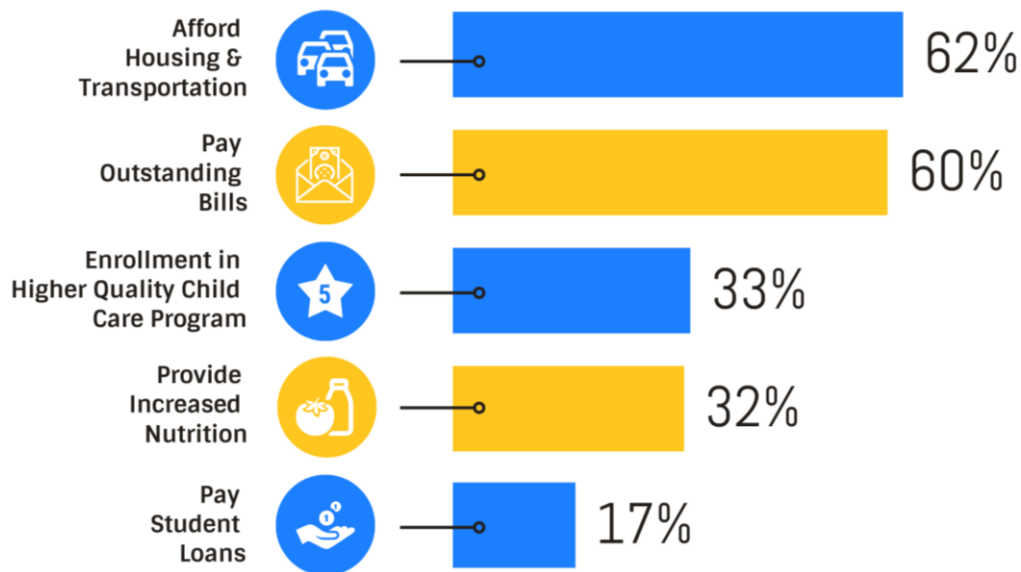
“ We truly would not be able to work in the medical field helping others if the WDI Child Care Subsidy Program was not available to us. **”** - WDI CCSFEP Recipient Family



FAMILY SURVEYS

Electronic surveys are sent annually by WDI to families who are actively enrolled in the CCSFEP. The results once again highlight the positive impact of enrollment in the program. The reported benefits extend far beyond the ability to afford child care and often have a significant impact on a families' ability to provide basic necessities for the household. Personal benefits as a result of enrollment in the WDI CCSFEP are reported below:

Personal Benefits as a Result of WDI CCSFEP Enrollment:



If the WDI Child Care Subsidy Program was unavailable I would not be able to provide for me or my children. This program gives us the opportunity to work full-time, meaningful jobs while knowing our children are in a safe, loving and healthy environment.

Without this we would have nothing. - WDI CCSFEP Recipient Family



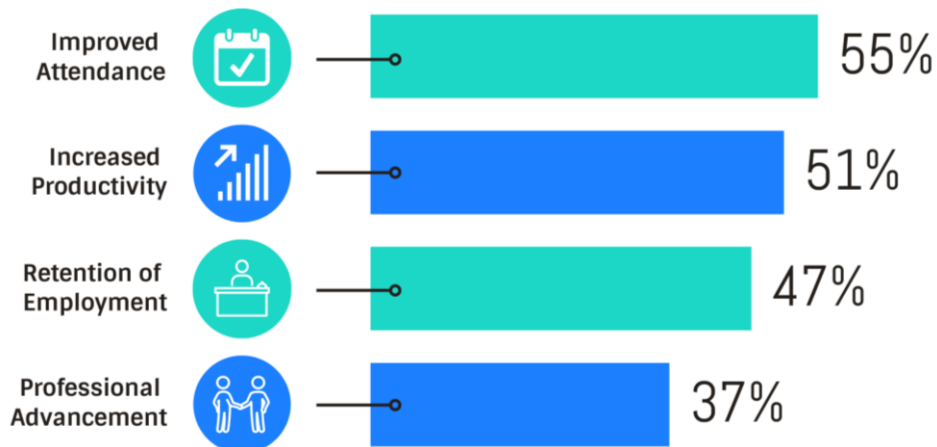
WORKFORCE SUPPORT

Employers regularly identify access to high-quality, affordable child care as a persistent challenge for their workforce. Public investments in child care provide a multi-generational approach that have a proven high rate of return for employers and the community at large. These investments support the current workforce by enabling parents to work productively, and support the future workforce by increasing access to developmentally appropriate child care with quality learning opportunities. As we rebuild our infrastructure to recover from COVID-19, it is essential to reduce employment barriers that diminish the labor supply pool and constrain economic growth.

Increasing awareness of the child care crisis beyond traditional stakeholders is a key element to developing solutions that provide stability for working families. WDI has focused on educating employers and collaborating with workforce and economic development entities to design strategies that address regional needs. Through this work, WDI has been able to assist with improving access to and affordability of child care in new and strategic ways.

The current child care crisis impacts all professional levels within the workforce. WDI CCSFEP families self-identify their professional levels as 19% upper-level, 69% mid-level and 12% entry - level. This data demonstrates the widespread reach of child care issues on both the workforce and the economy. Professional benefits as a result of enrollment in the WDI CCSFEP are reported below:

Professional Benefits as a Result of WDI CCSFEP Enrollment:



APPENDIX A: PROGRAM HISTORY

Organized labor, through the New York State American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (NYS AFL-CIO), has long sought to help working families by promoting better working conditions and compensation. They understood that an investment in child care is an investment in our future and fought hard to advocate for increased child care subsidies and expanded income eligibility levels at which families are served. As a result of this advocacy, WDI received funding in the New York State Budget for Fiscal Year 2003-2004, with the support of the New York State Legislature, for a pilot demonstration project in the Capital Region (Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Counties) and Oneida County to serve working families with incomes less than 275% of the FPL. The pilot was later expanded to include Monroe County in 2013, Onondaga County in 2015 and Erie County in 2016.

The New York Union Child Care Coalition (NYUCCC) of the NYS AFL-CIO and the Capital District Area Labor Federation's Child Care Advisory Committee supported WDI in the development of a plan for the pilot project in the Capital Region and Oneida County which was consistent with state and federal law and subject to the approval of the NYS OCFS. The NYUCCC continues to serve as a vehicle through which the program builds support by cultivating diverse partnerships and strives to increase access to child care subsidies for working families in both Upstate NY through the WDI CCSFEP and in NYC through the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE).

APPENDIX B: PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the WDI CCSFEP, as set forth in the legislation and in the WDI contract with the NYS OCFS, are to:

- Improve working families' access to child care assistance through a process that is user-friendly and efficient. The program was designed to make the process of applying for child care subsidies and enrolling in child care services easier for working parents.
- Extend access to child care subsidies to more moderate income working families with children under the age of 13 and earning up to 275% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL); targeting those who earn between 200% and 275% of FPL.



APPENDIX C: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The activities required by and outlined in the plan include:

- Facilitated enrollment of families in the child care subsidy program: including application assistance, advocacy when appropriate, and coordination with DSS
- Delivery of information critical to accessing quality, developmentally appropriate child care
- Enrollment of families up to 275% of the Federal Poverty Level (when funding is available)
- Community outreach to and education of families on child care subsidy eligibility
- Data collection, retention and analysis
- Composition and distribution of bi-monthly and annual progress reports

APPENDIX D: ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to participate in the WDI CCSFEP a family is required to:

- Reside in Albany, Erie, Monroe, Oneida, Onondaga, Rensselaer, Saratoga or Schenectady County
- Have a child(ren) under thirteen (13) years of age
- Each parent in the household works a minimum of 25 hours per week
- Have a qualifying gross income under 275% of the annual Federal Poverty Level (based on family size)

Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guidelines 6/1/2020 - 5/31/2021

Household Size	100% FPL	125% FPL	150% FPL	175% FPL	200% FPL	250% FPL	275% FPL
2	\$17,240	\$21,550	\$25,860	\$30,170	\$34,480	\$43,100	\$47,410
3	\$21,720	\$27,150	\$32,580	\$38,010	\$43,440	\$54,300	\$59,730
4	\$26,200	\$32,750	\$39,300	\$45,850	\$52,400	\$65,500	\$72,050
5	\$30,680	\$38,350	\$46,020	\$53,690	\$61,360	\$76,700	\$84,370
6	\$35,160	\$43,950	\$52,740	\$61,530	\$70,320	\$87,900	\$96,690

WDI CCSFEP Reporting Period of 4/1/2020-3/31/2021 primarily resides within the 6/1/2020-5/31/2021 FPL range. Updated U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines for child care subsidies in NYS were implemented 6/1/2021.



APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Participating county general demographic information on population, age ranges of children and family population by poverty level is provided below. The information included is derived from the 2019 United States Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) results. This provides a general background when reviewing WDI CCSFEP data.

County Population and Age of Children

County	Total Population	Under Age 5	Ages 5 to 9	Ages 10 to 14
Albany	305,506	15,203	13,656	17,098
Erie	918,702	50,101	47,483	54,877
Monroe	741,770	40,284	37,893	47,901
Oneida	228,671	12,458	13,485	14,095
Onondaga	460,528	25,831	25,022	29,054
Rensselaer	158,714	8,147	8,383	8,499
Saratoga	229,863	11,422	12,166	12,863
Schenectady	155,299	8,311	10,538	9,633

2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates - AGE AND SEX

<https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2019/>

County Family Population by Poverty Level

County	Total Number of Families	Families Below 125% of FPL	Families Below 150% of FPL	Families Below 200% of FPL	Families Below 300% of FPL
Albany	73,408	7,196	8,776	11,967	21,604
Erie	232,865	29,590	37,137	51,268	81,861
Monroe	176,863	20,837	25,119	36,045	59,199
Oneida	54,481	7,517	9,597	12,694	21,535
Onondaga	106,955	13,589	16,892	22,780	36,442
Rensselaer	41,217	3,773	4,916	7,617	13,649
Saratoga	62,501	2,414	3,888	7,568	13,956
Schenectady	39,331	5,219	6,487	9,033	14,882

2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates – POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS OF FAMILIES

<https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/data-profiles/2019/>



APPENDIX F: PROGRAM PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

STAFFING

WDI has 5 staff with responsibility for the CCSFEP across the eight counties:

- (1) Program Manager
- (3) Full-time Program Associates
- (1) Part-time Program Associate

Regional assignment of the 5 program staff includes:

- (1) Capital Region Counties
- (1) Monroe County
- (1) Onondaga County
- (.5) Oneida County
- (1) Erie County

Program Manager

Responsible for overall program management and additional hands-on activities.

Program Associate

Responsible for data entry, eligibility pre-screening, distribution of application packets, office management, and database management. This position also includes some responsibility for outreach and event staffing.

COORDINATION WITH COUNTIES

WDI partners closely with Albany, Erie, Monroe, Oneida, Onondaga, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady Departments of Social Services in the provision of service to clients. A working relationship has been established and maintained through the development of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WDI and the county DSS.

Completed applications are submitted to the counties by program staff (usually on a weekly basis) and county caseworkers interact with WDI staff routinely. Reduced or flat county DSS child care funding has continued to have a serious impact, resulting in reduced staffing and a decrease in the number of resident families served.



Federal, state and local funding issues have forced local districts to decrease their maximum income eligibility level for low income child care subsidy cases and increase the portion that families are responsible to pay towards the cost of subsidized child care, resulting in the WDI CCSFEP serving fewer median income families between the targeted range of 200% to 275% FPL.

WDI funding continues to provide assistance to many families below 200% of FPL who have found themselves over income for county Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding because of the lowered income eligibility levels. WDI has worked with our partner counties to provide continued services to as many working families as possible.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

WDI has been able to simplify the application process for families. Many families, however, still view the paperwork and documentation requirements as a barrier. WDI CCSFEP staff work closely with families and support them throughout the process.

In an effort to simplify the process and remove perceived barriers, WDI incorporated the following into program procedures:

- An online prescreening process accessible 24/7
- A streamlined application process
- Affording families the choice of scanning/emailing, faxing, mailing or dropping off the application and required documentation
- Accessible individual application assistance during and after regular business hours
- Communicating by phone or email and not requiring an office visit at any time (although a parent could come to the office if they desired)
- Attending employer, community and organized labor networking events in an effort to broadly disseminate project information

SUBSIDY

The WDI CCSFEP funding is dependent on annual New York State budget appropriations. As a result of the impermanent nature of the funding stream, eligible CCSFEP families receive support with the understanding that it is dependent on funding availability. When funding levels permit, and the family remains qualified, families may re-certify for an additional six months to one year depending on their county of residence. The WDI CCSFEP does not serve any families who are receiving family assistance. These families are currently served by the local DSS funding.

