

REFERENCE TITLE: child care; grant program; fund

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fifty-seventh Legislature
Second Regular Session
2026

HB 2239

Introduced by
Representative Blackman

AN ACT

AMENDING TITLE 41, CHAPTER 14, ARTICLE 1, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY
ADDING SECTION 41-1971; RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Title 41, chapter 14, article 1, Arizona Revised
3 Statutes, is amended by adding section 41-1971, to read:

4 41-1971. Child care grant program; child care infrastructure
5 fund; administration; purpose; definitions

6 A. THE CHILD CARE GRANT PROGRAM IS ESTABLISHED TO GRANT MONIES TO
7 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS TO PROVIDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SERVICES TO FAMILIES
8 IN THIS STATE WITH CHILD CARE NEEDS:

9 1. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES THAT
10 HAVE HISTORICALLY EXPERIENCED A LACK OF ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE CHILD
11 CARE, INCLUDING RURAL AREAS.

12 2. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE IN LOW-INCOME AND MODERATE-INCOME
13 COMMUNITIES.

14 3. CHILD CARE DURING NONSTANDARD WORKING HOURS, SUCH AS EVENINGS
15 AND WEEKENDS.

16 4. CHILD CARE FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS.

17 5. CHILD CARE FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE DISABILITIES.

18 B. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE GRANT PROGRAM AND MAY ADOPT
19 RULES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION.
20 AN ELIGIBLE APPLICANT SHALL SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR A GRANT ON A FORM
21 PRESCRIBED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

22 C. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO GRANTEEES RELATING TO
23 ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

24 1. CHILD CARE FACILITY AND CAPACITY EXPANSION.

25 2. BUSINESS STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS SUPPORT AND TRAINING.

26 3. INCREASING OR ENHANCING EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE CAPACITY
27 FOR FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBES, NATIONS OR COMMUNITIES.

28 D. THE DEPARTMENT MAY CONTRACT WITH A QUALIFIED COMMUNITY PARTNER
29 ORGANIZATION IN THIS STATE TO ASSIST IN ADMINISTERING THE GRANT PROGRAM.

30 E. THE CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND IS ESTABLISHED CONSISTING OF
31 LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS, GRANTS, GIFTS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND DEVICES. THE
32 DEPARTMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND. ON NOTICE FROM THE DEPARTMENT, THE
33 STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST AND DIVEST MONIES IN THE FUND AS PROVIDED BY
34 SECTION 35-313, AND MONIES EARNED FROM INVESTMENT SHALL BE CREDITED TO THE
35 FUND. MONIES IN THE FUND ARE CONTINUOUSLY APPROPRIATED AND MAY BE USED TO
36 PAY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THIS SECTION AND TO ESTABLISH
37 THE CHILD CARE GRANT PROGRAM PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION. MONIES MAY ALSO BE
38 USED FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

39 1. PLANNING AND DESIGNING HIGH QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD
40 CARE INFRASTRUCTURE.

41 2. ACQUIRING PROPERTY FOR HIGH QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD
42 CARE INFRASTRUCTURE OR CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

43 3. REPAIRING, IMPROVING AND RENOVATING EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD
44 CARE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WOULD EXPAND THE CAPACITY OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE.

- 1 4. CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, INCLUDING DIRECT
2 PROJECT MANAGEMENT COSTS.
- 3 5. CONTRACTING WITH THIRD PARTIES, INCLUDING NONPROFIT
4 ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, TO ASSIST
5 IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIVITIES.
- 6 6. CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION COSTS AND EXPENSES.
- 7 7. CHILD CARE START-UP EXPENSES, INCLUDING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT,
8 LICENSING, INSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION.
- 9 8. EARLY CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE ADAPTATIONS REQUIRED BY A
10 LICENSING AGENCY IN THIS STATE.
- 11 9. PROVIDING SUPPORT TO ESTABLISH OR EXPAND CHILD CARE PROVIDER
12 OPERATIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING TRAINING AND TECHNICAL
13 ASSISTANCE.
- 14 10. ANY OTHER COSTS THAT THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES TO BE NECESSARY
15 TO CARRY OUT EARLY CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIVITIES IN THIS STATE.
- 16 F. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION:
- 17 1. "CHILD CARE" HAS THE SAME MEANING PRESCRIBED IN SECTION 36-881.
- 18 2. "CHILD CARE FACILITY" HAS THE SAME MEANING PRESCRIBED IN SECTION
19 36-881.
- 20 3. "CHILD CARE PROVIDERS" HAS THE SAME MEANING PRESCRIBED IN
21 SECTION 46-801.
- 22 4. "ELIGIBLE APPLICANT" MEANS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:
- 23 (a) A CHILD CARE FACILITY.
- 24 (b) A CHILD CARE PROVIDER.
- 25 (c) A PERSON THAT IS INTERESTED IN OPENING A CHILD CARE FACILITY OR
26 BECOMING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER IN THIS STATE.
- 27 (d) A PERSON THAT IS ENGAGED IN UNLICENSED OR UNCERTIFIED CHILD
28 CARE AND THAT IS INTERESTED IN BECOMING A LICENSED OR CERTIFIED CHILD CARE
29 PROVIDER IN THIS STATE.
- 30 5. "QUALIFIED COMMUNITY PARTNER ORGANIZATION" MEANS AN ENTITY WITH
31 DEMONSTRABLE EXPERIENCE IN EITHER:
- 32 (a) PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS IN THIS
33 STATE.
- 34 (b) SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OR EXPANSION OF CHILD CARE
35 PROVIDERS IN THIS STATE.
- 36 Sec. 2. Legislative findings
- 37 The legislature finds that:
- 38 1. Early educational investments are severely underfunded.
- 39 2. There is a shortage of affordable and accessible child care in
40 this state.
- 41 3. Early learning and child care providers have limited finances to
42 facilitate expansion of robust child care infrastructure.

1 4. High quality early child care investment promotes regional
2 economic growth by increasing the number of jobs available within the
3 workforce and providing consistent, accessible and reliable child care
4 that is necessary to allow parents to participate in the labor force.

5 5. Quality early learning and child care facilities are
6 developmentally appropriate, inclusive of children with disabilities and
7 create a healthy and supportive environment for a child's brain
8 development are needed for the well-being of children and early learning
9 and child care staff.

10 6. Sustained public investment and technical assistance are
11 necessary to overcome constraints and to incentivize the development and
12 expansion of early learning and child care resources in this state.

13 7. The purpose of this act is to provide financial assistance to
14 eligible applicants for activities that promote increased early learning
15 and child care capacity across this state.