

WEST VIRGINIA
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROVIDER
QUARTERLY



**New Developmental
Milestones Released**

**Child Care Relief Acts:
Supporting WV Child Care Providers**

CARES Act Success Stories

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WV Early Childhood Provider Quarterly is a project of West Virginia Early
Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative proj-
ect of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/
Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education;
Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three;
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Program and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Devel-
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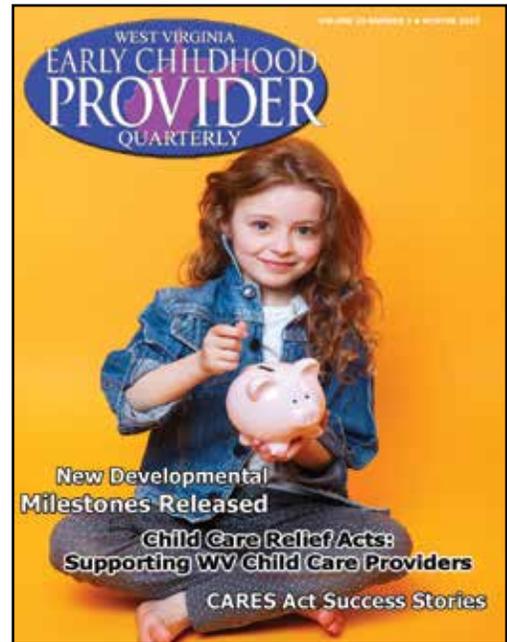
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The opinions expressed in the WV Early Childhood Provider Quarterly are not
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tributions to the WV Early Childhood Provider Quarterly by West Virginia's early
childhood professionals are welcomed and encouraged. Articles submitted to WV
Early Childhood Provider Quarterly are reviewed by the editorial board for content,
length and technique. They may be edited from their original format. Please send
your contributions to the editorial offices.



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Child Care Relief Acts: How is the Money Being Used to Support West Virginia Child Care Providers

Submitted by Deidre Craythorne, M.A., Child Care Program Manager, Division of Early Care and Education, Bureau for Family Assistance, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources



Providing quality child care is expensive and providing quality child care during a pandemic is even more so. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the cost of doing business for child care, already in operation on a razor thin budget prior to the pandemic, continues to see increased costs and reduced income due to lower capacities and enrollment. Since March 2020, the Federal government has passed several bills that included targeted funding designed to help child care providers weather the storm.

The first relief act that passed on March 27, 2020, was the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES). West Virginia received \$23.1 million from the CARES Act and used the funds to assist essential workers in paying for child care and to continue to pay providers based on

their enrollment, even if they had to close their doors temporarily due to the pandemic. Funds were also used to provide relief payments to retain the supply of providers and to assist providers in offsetting increased costs in sanitation supplies, personal protective equipment, and other necessary items for pandemic response.

The second relief act passed on December 27, 2020. The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act provided \$66.8 million specifically for child care. Funds were used to increase reimbursement rates, support child care for essential workers, and increase the accredited child care program rate from \$4 to \$6 per day, as well as the rate for programs who have achieved the higher quality standards for Tier II rate from \$2 to \$3 per day. Additionally, these funds continue to support quality bonuses and capacity grants for existing providers and created a start-up grant for new providers. These grants are still available through West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources for eligible programs who have not yet received them. Information is available at <http://www.wvearly-childhood.org/>.

The third relief act, the American Rescue Plan, was passed by Congress on March 11, 2021. This relief act provides targeted child care funding for West Virginia in the amount of \$260 million. Child care providers are receiving this funding through the monthly Child Care Stabilization grants. Eligible providers will receive this funding monthly through September 30, 2023. Information on the Child Care Stabilization grants is available here: [https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/ece/COVID/Pages/American-Rescue-Plan-\(ARP\)-Stabilization-Funds-.aspx](https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/ece/COVID/Pages/American-Rescue-Plan-(ARP)-Stabilization-Funds-.aspx).

For more information on these funding opportunities, please visit the above websites or contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency. You can also email the Division of Early Care and Education at ECEproviders@wv.gov.



Concerned about your CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

Help Me Grow, a free developmental referral service, provides vital support for children from birth to age five including:

- Information and community resources to aid development
- Free developmental screening questionnaire
- Coordination with your child's doctor

Talk to a care coordinator and schedule a developmental screening for your child today.

Help Me Grow: 1-800-642-8522
www.dhhr.wv.gov/helpmegrow



Help Me Grow

West Virginia

CARES Act Funding Proves Helpful for One Child Care Center

Submitted by Jane Haddox, Early Education Station



I remember Friday, March 20, 2020, as if it was yesterday. Brain research tells us we remember events much more clearly when they involve our emotions. Well, my emotions were extremely high on that particular Friday! Maybe it was nervousness. Maybe it was that “take charge” feeling that all directors get when they know a decision needs to be made after they have spent much time gathering input from others. Maybe it was simply fear!

Truth be told, it was probably all those emotions rolled into one. I had left work for a break around 1:30 pm on my Harley Davidson be-

cause riding my bike is when I do my best thinking and relaxing. I wanted to keep our child care center open for our families and provide care for the children, especially considering that Mason County Schools had closed one week earlier. We had all of our families relying on us to be there for them so they could work. But I also knew we needed to keep our children safe. There were just so many unknowns about this new virus called COVID-19.

Within 10-15 minutes of the ride, I knew I needed some more advice from my sister, who happened to be the director of the Mason Coun-

ty Health Department. I knew she could help me with this huge decision because she had helped me numerous times within the previous weeks with resources and information about COVID. The conversation was short when I called. I could tell in her voice, and her lack of time to speak with me, that it was time to temporarily close our child care center.

That afternoon was a whirlwind. Around 6 pm that evening, I so clearly remember walking through the empty building thinking this was such a nice place for children and now we couldn't safely allow them

to come. Sadness was certainly the feeling I had. I could not imagine at this time that this terrible virus could result in anything positive for our children and families in care. I did not know that the topic of child care would become such a focus point during the pandemic.

Looking back now, over the past two years, I can clearly see how much our government has helped the child care industry. The CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan put funding into our programs like I had never seen during my 30 years of work in the early childhood field. The extra funding has, without a doubt, helped our program in every area, and ultimately helped/improved our community and the future.

Our child care staff had always been slightly over minimum wage with very little benefits. Early Education Station opened back up on June 1, 2020, with an additional \$3.00/hour COVID bonus pay. We still are able to continue this bonus and are in the process of securing health insurance and retirement for our employees. While the value of a child care worker is much more, this increase has saved us during the current worker shortages.

The extra funding for payroll has allowed us to operate all 15 classrooms without merging children together in the morning and evening.

This was a huge safety factor at the height of the spread of COVID.

We have also been allowed to staff additional educators in the classrooms for more individual care when needed. We have created a new position of educational coordinator, which was only a dream before when we ran an extremely tight budget.

Health and safety needs were met with extra funding. Masks. Oh, the masks we have gone through!! We purchased so many sanitizing/cleaning supplies, air purifiers, plexiglass, and more.

Families have benefited greatly with extra funding. The “essential worker” funding has allowed families to save more money for their family and allowed many families to utilize child care verses leaving their children with grandparents, who of course are the most vulnerable during this time.

The Mason County community has benefited with extra child care spaces due to the increased funding for child care. While numerous people over the years told me there was a huge need for child care in the upper area of Mason County, we did not feel comfortable to expand under previous funding methods. With the West Virginia subsidy program paying on enrollment verses attendance,

we were financially able to afford to open Early Education Station 2 in July of 2021.

When I started in the field in 1992 under the direction of Dr. Norma Gray, I was taught on-the-job about brain development, the importance of the early years and child care, and the return on investment in early education. I clearly remember quoting brain development and return on investment facts to so many people. It’s interesting how a terrible pandemic helped so many people understand that. I feel many emotions now looking back at the positive results for child care over the past two years. Certainly, joy for the children because their quality of care has increased significantly due to the extra funding. Excitement for the future as we have made so many improvements to our facilities. But also, great fear that we may lose the extra funding in the future, be required to take things away, and have to go back to scraping along financially while trying to provide quality care.

Ultimately, the school family of Early Education Station will keep following our motto of “Starting Children on the Right Track” and know that we are fulfilling our mission: To make a positive difference in the world by providing quality early childhood experiences.

Many Thankful for the Extra Support

Submitted by Tiffany Hall, Administrative Assistant, River Valley Child Development Services/West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources

During my time at River Valley Child Development Services/WVECTCR, as an Administrative Assistant, I have had the honor of processing applications and distributing CARES Act funds to child care providers throughout the state.

West Virginia has over 1,200 providers including in-home child care, facilities, centers, and out-of-school time centers. In assisting the providers with their applications and gathering other documents necessary to receive the funding, there is one common statement I hear from everyone and that is they need and truly appreciate this assistance. Most say they will use the money for cleaning/sanitation supplies, utilities, mortgage/rent, and payroll.

There is not a day that goes by that I don't hear sincere appreciation from the providers I work with. Some examples of that appreciation include...

A Director of a child care center in Central WV said they are continuing to grow, and the funding will help with adding nap mats, so each child has their own and won't have to share.

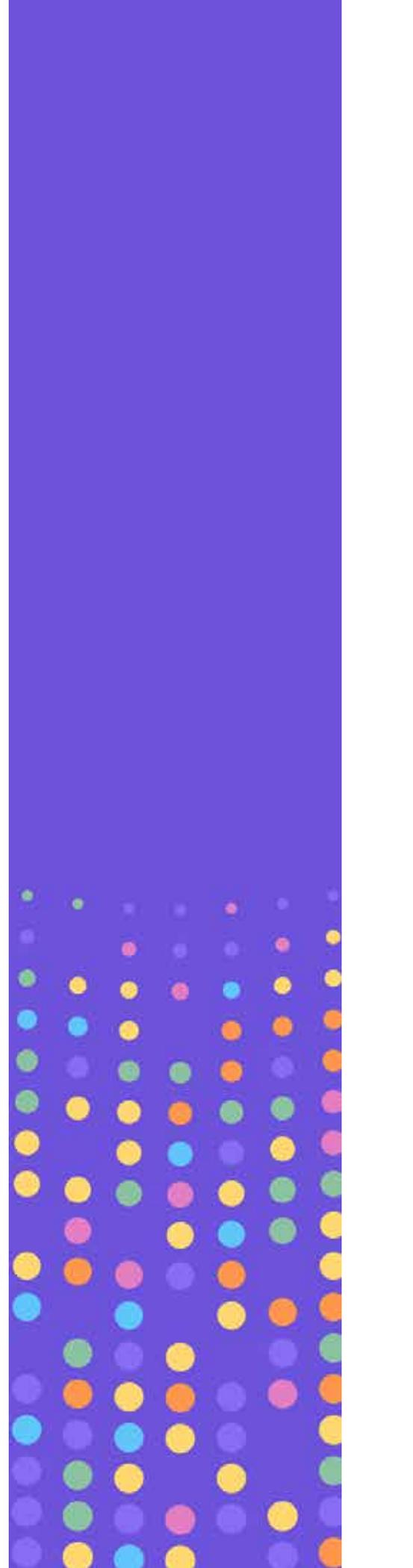
A Director in the Northern Panhandle, who has been in business for 37 years, says they have struggled over the past two years in relation to school closings and she truly appreciates the help.

The President of the Board of Directors for a center in the Eastern Panhandle shared what a significant gift the funding was for them, particularly in these perilous economic times. She said they deeply appreciate the confidence that was shown in their center by awarding this grant.

The Director of Development for a center in the Eastern Panhandle said, “We have a mission to create better futures for children, families, and our community. We strive to accomplish this mission through our many programs. Whatever your reason for giving – maybe you resonate with our mental health and prevention services for kids, our youth emergency shelters, our Transitional Living Program, Youth Mentoring Network or Winter Freeze Shelter – you are part of the cycle of giving and receiving that makes this community thrive. Every dollar makes a difference in the life of the person on the receiving end.”

The Director of Marketing & Development for a center in Central WV said, “We have 14 locations and provide adoption, foster care, and emergency child shelter care statewide. Last year, we cared for over 16,000 children and families. It is our core belief that all children deserve a lifetime family, a family to call their own. Although many children are abused and neglected each day, we strive to promote the well-being of all children. While nurturing and protecting these vulnerable children, we work to enhance and strengthen their families. It is the support and dedication of individuals such as you that enables us to continue this important work.”

Whether it be an established child care provider or those who are just starting out, all have needed extra support during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am so happy I've had the opportunity to do a small part to help.



Watch Me!

Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns

A FREE Online Training Course



Early care and education providers play a critical role in the health and wellbeing of children in their care and their families.

“Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns” is a free, 1-hour online CEU course that helps early care and education providers better identify and monitor developmental milestones; recognize signs of potential delays; and share observations with parents. This training offers tools and best practices to support professionals and help children reach their full potential.

www.cdc.gov/WatchMeTraining

Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Announces the Release of Revised Developmental Milestones

Submitted by Learn the Signs. Act Early. www.actearly@cdc.gov

Since 2004, CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program has offered developmental milestone checklists and other free materials to help caregivers track children's milestones and take action on early developmental concerns. Recently, the materials, and nearly all of the developmental milestones within them, have been revised to make them even more useful, relevant, and timely.

Approach to Updating the Developmental Milestones

In partnership with CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) identified and convened eight early childhood developmental experts. These experts established criteria for revising "Learn the Signs. Act Early." (LTSAE) milestones and conducted a comprehensive literature review, cross-referenced with current developmental resources, to inform the revisions.

Most (75 percent or more) children would be expected to demonstrate the milestone at the specified age. The updated criteria for milestones included:

- Easy to observe milestones in natural settings

- Descriptions that use plain language and avoid vague terms like "may, can, and begins"
- Show progression of skills with age, when possible

Here is what's new:

- Updated nearly all of the developmental milestones included in existing materials to improve clarity, reduce confusion, reflect the current evidence for milestones, and reduce the likelihood of a "wait and see" approach to missed milestones
- Developed 15- and 30-month milestone checklists
- Revised and expanded the tips and activities to support children's development for all ages
- Added open-ended questions to help facilitate conversations with healthcare providers and others
- "Red flags/warning signs" are now embedded within the milestones to reduce confusion about when to take action on missing milestones

However, you will find that what you liked most about the materials has remained the same...

- They're FREE,
- Available in English and Spanish,
- Written in family-friendly format.

Where Can I Find the New Materials?

Online: To access the new milestones by age and view or download a milestone checklist visit www.cdc.gov/Milestones.

Print Materials: Order free copies of the Milestone Moments booklet in English or Spanish (in limited quantities) from www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Orders. To access the customizable print files, please email us at ActEarly@cdc.gov.

Mobile App: As of Feb. 8, 2022, CDC has updated all milestone materials with the revised milestones; however, there may be a brief (1-2 week) delay in the release of the updated Milestone Tracker app due to some additional requirements.

If you have questions about these updates, please email ActEarly@cdc.gov.

Managing Milk Allergies

Submitted by Karen Gilbert, RM, West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources

The following information was excerpted from the publication “A Guide to Managing Milk Allergy” by Kids with Food Allergies, A Division of Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

“Cow’s milk allergy (usually just called “milk allergy”) is a very common food allergy. A milk allergy is an immune system reaction to milk protein. It can cause a severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis [an-na-fih-LACK-sis]. Milk allergy is different than lactose intolerance (an inability to digest the milk sugar known as lactose)” (Guide to Managing Milk Allergy, p. 1).

“Milk can be found in almost any type of food. Foods that contain milk include ice creams, frozen desserts, cakes, pies, cookies, cream sauces, pasta dishes, casseroles, mashed potatoes, breaded meats, and much more” (Guide to Managing Milk Allergy, p. 2). During the holidays children can be especially susceptible to ingesting food containing an unknown milk product.

Kids With Food Allergies, a Division of Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, has a publication called, “A Guide to Managing



Milk Allergy”. This publication is a 4-page downloadable document that contains important information to help your child care program navigate safely caring for children with milk allergies.

Topics in the publication include symptoms of an allergic reaction to milk, how to prevent milk allergy reactions, how to read labels, whether goat’s and sheep’s milk can replace cow’s milk, cooking and baking products to use instead of milk, whether to eat baked milk or eggs, preventing cross-contact, and a list of various names for milk (pp. 1-4).

Visit the link below to download the free publication.

Source:

Kids With Food Allergies, A Division of Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. (Nov. 2021). A guide to managing milk allergy. Retrieved from <https://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/media/3450/your-guide-to-managing-milk-allergy.pdf>

Why Should WV Child Care Professionals Consider Infant Mental Health Endorsement?



Myth: Endorsement is only for those who have lots of degrees and experience.

FACT: Neuroscience tells us that the first three years of life are critical to lifelong health and well-being, making the role and responsibilities of home visiting professionals incredibly important to family and community success. The IMH Endorsement® recognizes professionals who work with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. It's the largest and most recognized IMH credentialing system in the United States, and it's available to you here in West Virginia! Anyone in the early childhood field can work toward earning Endorsement, including directors, supervisors, child care professionals, and service coordinators.

Why should I pursue Endorsement?

Good for You: Earning IMH-E® enhances your credibility and confidence in working with or on behalf of infants, toddlers, and their families. You'll gain recognition and belong to a cross-systems, multi-disciplinary network of Endorsed professionals in WV.

Good for Babies and Families: Infants, toddlers, and families receive culturally sensitive, relationship-based early childhood services provided by a workforce that demonstrates a common set of core competencies.

Good for Communities: IMH-E® provides assurance to families that early childhood professionals meet high standards of care and are prepared to support optimal development of infants, young children, and their families.

Good for Programs: IMH-E® professionalizes the early childhood field and ensures consistency of professional standards across programs, no matter the curriculum, location, or services.

The IMH Competencies® naturally align with Early Childhood work

IMH-Endorsement® supports the belief that positive social-emotional development is foundational to other learning, and that healthy development happens within the context of nurturing relationships and environments.

IMH competencies® provide a professional development "road map" for acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to attend to the often complex nature of early social and emotional development and parent-child relationships.

Financial assistance is available for Endorsement. Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies have funds available to provide financial assistance for those seeking Endorsement within the Early Childhood field.

For more information, please contact the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association or visit www.nurturingwvbabies.org

Special thanks to the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health for sharing information

Do you know a child who is not *moving *hearing *seeing * learning or *talking like others their age?

By 3 months,
Does your baby...

- grasp rattle or finger?
- hold up his/her head well?
- make cooing sounds?
- smile when talked to?

By 6 months,
Does your baby...

- play with own hands/feet?
- roll over?
- turn his/her head towards sound?
- holds head up/looks around without support?

By 9 months,
Does your baby...

- sit alone or with minimal support?
- pick up small objects with thumb and fingers?
- move toy from hand to hand?

By 12 months,
Does your baby...

- wave goodbye?
- play with toys in different ways?
- feed self with finger foods?
- begin to pull up and stand?
- begin to take steps?

By 18 months,
Does your baby...

- cling to caretaker in new situations?
- try to talk and repeat words?
- walk without support?

By 24 months,
Does your baby...

- point to body parts?
- walk, run, climb without help?
- get along with other children?
- use 2 or 3 word sentences?

If you are concerned about your child's development, get help early.

Every child deserves a great start.

WV Birth to Three supports families to help their children grow and learn.

To learn more about the
WV Birth to Three services
in your area, please call:

1-866-321-4728

Or visit www.wvdhhr.org/birth23



WV Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.



Parent Blocks

NEWSLETTER



“Providing resources to parents throughout West Virginia”

Volume 18, Issue 2, Winter 2022

West Virginia CARES Act Funds

In December 2021, Governor Justice provided a detailed breakdown of the State’s allocation of remaining discretionary funds appropriated to the state by Congress through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act

(CARES Act). As part of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), West Virginia received \$1.25 billion in funding. This funding can only be used for coronavirus-relat-

ed expenditures. No other expenditures are authorized.

West Virginia Checkbook provides an accounting of the monies at the State and local level once entities start spending money.

Previous allocations of CARES Act dollars resulted in a remaining balance of approximately \$122.8 million.

The remaining funds have now been allocated as follows:

Nursing program: \$48 million

Announced on Tuesday, this program will improve and expand nursing education, retention, and recruitment in the state.

WV Parent Blocks Newsletter is a project of West Virginia Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources, a collaborative project of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources/Bureau for Children and Families/Division of Early Care and Education; WV Head Start State Collaboration Office; Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/West Virginia Birth to Three; and West Virginia Home Visitation Program and is supported and administered by River Valley Child Development Services.

Permission to photocopy

Back-to-Work initiative: \$22 million

This money will be transferred to Workforce West Virginia to set up a back-to-work program. More details will be announced soon.

Emergency Management Crisis Fund: \$10 million

This fund will be created at DHHR and provide resources that will help all first responders across our state.

Support for food pantries/homeless shelters: \$7.25 million

Support includes \$5,000 being provided to each of West Virginia's 600 food banks, plus \$1 million to each of the state's two largest food banks – Facing Hunger Food Bank and Mountaineer Food Bank – to provide resources to better serve those facing food insecurity. Another \$500,000 will go to the West Virginia National Guard's Rock Branch emergency food bank facility for the purchase of a large-scale combination cooler and freezer that will allow for proper cold storage.

Additionally, \$250,000 will be provided to each of the following organizations to help citizens find shelter, food, and medical care:

Union Mission
Clarksburg Mission
Huntington City Mission
Martinsburg Union Rescue Mission
Bluefield Union Mission
Union Mission of Fairmont | WV Rescue Ministries
Faith Mission Homeless Shelter

Salvation Army Potomac**Division: \$6 million**

Funding will go to the Salvation Army Potomac Division, serving Raleigh, Wyoming, Fayette, Green-

brier, Nicholas, Webster, and Pocahontas counties to help expand their programs and provide basic necessities, food, and shelter to citizens in need.

Shepherd University research program: \$500,000

This will fund a new, cutting-edge program that will aim to reduce the impact of deadly diseases such as COVID-19, and will also help with pain treatment to help fight the ongoing opioid crisis.

Remote work facilities: \$3 million

This funding will go to WVU to help expand remote work facilities across West Virginia, which will be open to the public and have free WiFi available.

West Virginia State Fairgrounds: \$1.5 million

Due to the pandemic, the use of this facility has been expanded to include COVID-19 response activities at their mass vaccination location in Greenbrier County. These funds will provide additional resources to support this effort.

West Virginia Game Changers: \$2 million

This funding will go toward the WV Game Changer program, which has been vital during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the increase in drug use. WV Game Changers is a student-powered, substance misuse prevention movement, connecting West Virginia students and the educators who care about them through a coordinated, comprehensive prevention education program.

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources:**\$2.7 million**

Pandemic-related costs, such as COVID-19 testing and vaccine distribution.

Do it for Babydog Vaccination Sweepstakes: \$1.3 million

Additional Do it for Babydog: Save a Life, Change your Life vaccination incentive sweepstakes funds.

Administrative costs: \$3.3 million
COVID-19-related administrative costs.

Additional eligible COVID-19 costs for state agencies: \$15.2 million

These funds will go to state agencies to recover costs for frontline employees who have served tirelessly throughout the entirety of the pandemic.

Source: <https://governor.wv.gov/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Governor-Justice-provides-update-on-allocation-of-remaining-CARES-Act-funds.aspx>





**SOMETIMES YOU NEED MORE
THAN AN INTERNET SEARCH.
YOU NEED A CONVERSATION.**



Certain issues are hard to navigate. You're not alone. Call 2-1-1 – it's free and confidential. 2-1-1 specialists are available 24/7 to provide information and connect you to local programs and services that can help. Friendly, non-judgmental people are waiting to assist you!



**DIAL 2-1-1
VISIT 211.ORG
TEXT YOUR ZIP CODE TO 898-211**

Concerned about Development?

How to Get Help for Your Child



Talking to the doctor is the first step toward getting help for your child if you are concerned about his or her development (how your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves). **Don't wait.** Acting early can make a real difference!

1 Make an appointment with your child's doctor

- When you schedule the appointment, tell the doctor's staff you have concerns about your child's development that you would like to discuss with the doctor.

2 Complete a milestone checklist

- Before the appointment, complete a milestone checklist by downloading CDC's free [Milestone Tracker mobile app](#) from the App Store or Google Play or printing a paper checklist from www.cdc.gov/Milestones.
- Write down your questions and concerns; take these with you to the doctor's appointment.

3 During the doctor's appointment

- Show the completed milestone checklist to the doctor**
 - If your child **is** missing milestones, point them out, and share any other concerns that you have.
 - If your child **is not** missing milestones but you still have concerns, tell the doctor about them.
- Ask the doctor for developmental screening for your child**
 - Developmental screening is recommended whenever there is a concern. It gives the doctor more information to figure out how best to help your child.
 - For more information about developmental screening, go to www.cdc.gov/DevScreening.
- Ask the doctor if your child needs further developmental evaluation**
 - If your child does, ask for a referral and call right away. If you have difficulty getting an appointment, let the doctor know.

4 Make sure you understand what the doctor tells you, and what to do next

- Before you leave the appointment, check the notes you have written and make sure all of your questions have been answered.
- If you do not understand something, ask the doctor to explain it again or in a different way.
- When you get home, review your notes and follow the steps the doctor has given you. Remember, you can always contact the doctor's office if you have any questions.

You Know Your Child Best

If your child's doctor has told you to "wait and see," but you feel uneasy about that advice:

Talk with others (doctor, teacher, another provider) to get a second opinion

AND

Call for a free evaluation to find out if your child can get free or low-cost services that can help.

- If your child is under age 3:** Call your state's early intervention program. Find the phone number at www.cdc.gov/FindEI.

- If your child is age 3 or older:** Call the local public elementary school.

You do not need a doctor's referral to have your child evaluated for services.

Find more information, including what to say when you make these important calls, visit www.cdc.gov/Concerned.

Don't wait.
Acting early can make a real difference!



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Download CDC's free Milestone Tracker app



Learn the Signs. Act Early.