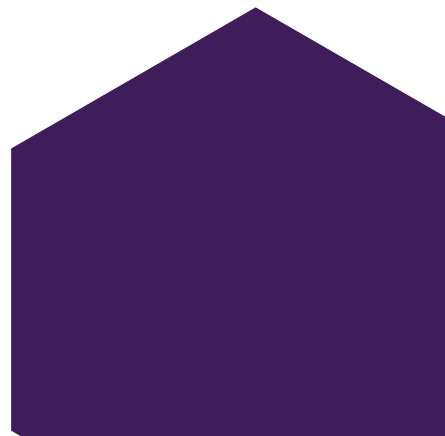
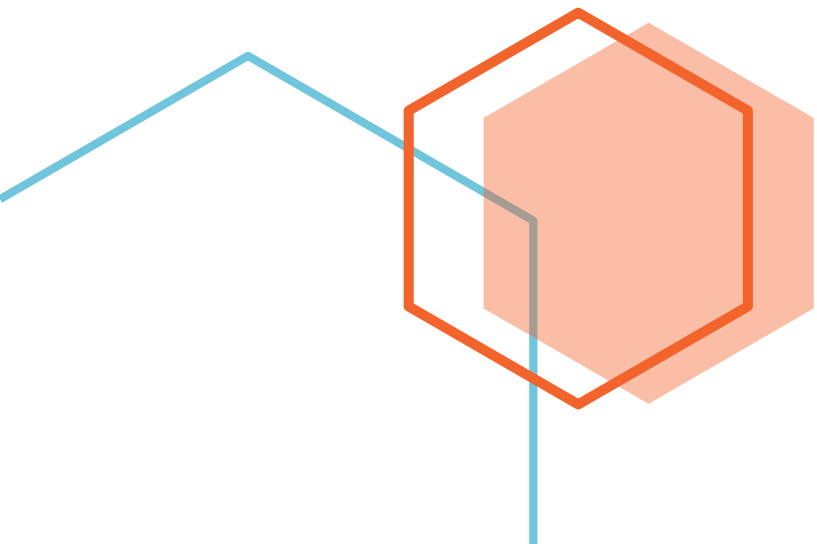




Relief Funding Feedback Survey

Report of Results: Spring 2021
Prepared by the Child Care
Program Office

The Child Care Program Office administered a statewide survey to child care providers with the intent to collect their input on how the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) funds could best serve program's needs.



Summary

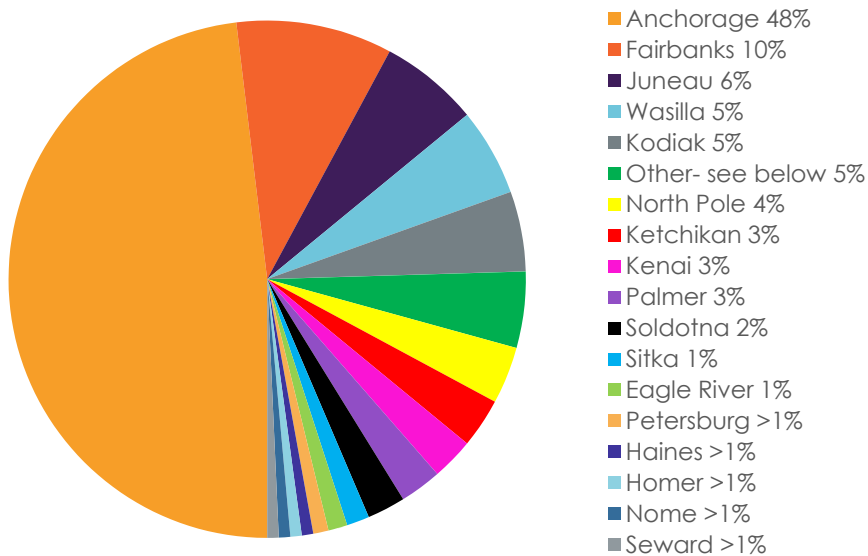
Of the providers who participated in the survey 60% are open and fully operational. The main concern for potential operational status changes is due to not meeting financial needs. Previous Covid-19 funding or supports were used primarily to cover the cost of added PPE supplies, other center supplies, and to pay staff salaries and benefits.

Moving forward, providers have voiced anticipated needs for financial support with operational costs, staffing costs, and PPE or health and safety supplies. Primary supports needed for staff during the Covid-19 pandemic are wages and bonuses, incentives for recruitment and retention, and professional development. Primary supports needed for families during the Covid-19 pandemic are financial assistance for private pay families, family copays, and families with school aged children.

Providers statewide are creative and resilient supporting families who can no longer afford their tuition with scholarships and finding innovative ways to keep in touch with families when normal pick-up and drop-off is now done curbside. It is clear provider's in Alaska care for the children and families in their programs with many voicing concerns about the unknown circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic affecting and keeping children in their program safe. Additional relief funding is an urgent need for providers to be able to continue operations and support their programs anticipated needs through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Communities Represented

The communities represented in the survey responses are below:



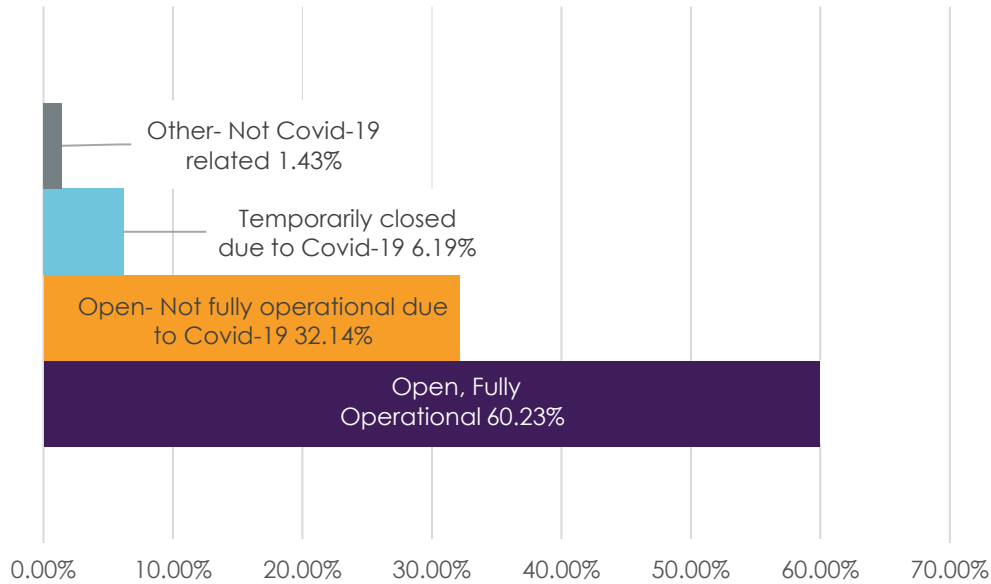
Other: Representation by one or two facilities in the communities of Angoon, Chugiak, Cordova, Craig, Dillingham, Douglas, Girdwood, Healy, Nikiski, Seldovia, Skagway, Valdez, & Yakutat

Survey Details

- The Relief Funding Feedback Survey was administered from 3/2/2021 to 3/15/2021 through Survey Monkey
- A total of 420 responses were collected with a 98% completion rate
- Survey questions were primarily multiple choice or check box answers with some free form responses at the end that were not required to be completed
- On average, it took providers 8 minutes to complete the survey
- 30 Alaska communities represented

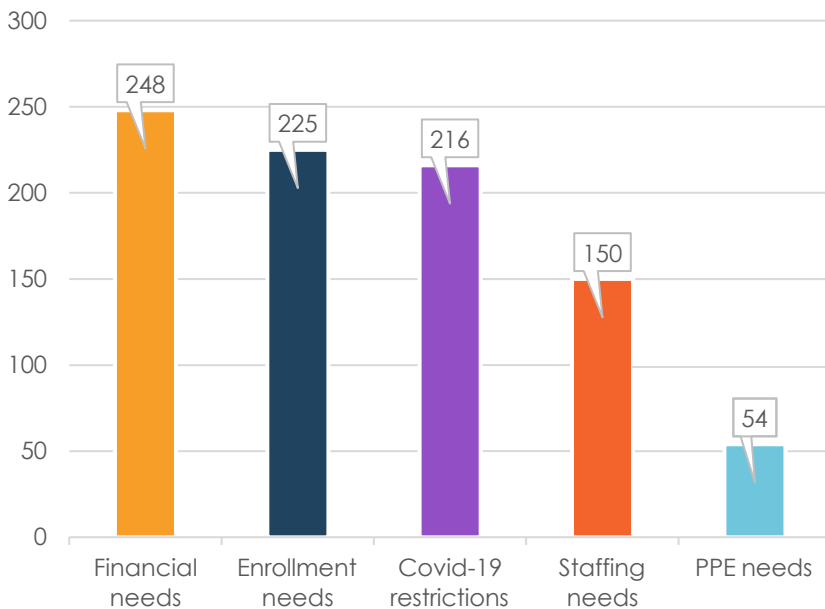
Current Program Status

Approximately 60% (253) of facilities are open and fully operational, 32% (135) are not fully operational due to Covid-19, 6% (26) are temporarily closed due to Covid-19, and 1% (6) are at reduced operations or closures not related to Covid-19.



Concerns About Program Status Changing

Of the 420 respondents, over 87% are concerned about the possibility of their program's operational status changing. Of the 5 areas of concern, the top reason programs are concerned about their current operational status changing was due to financial needs



THERE WERE 29 OTHER RESPONSES, 13 OF WHICH FOCUSED AROUND POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES AFFECTING ENROLLMENT OR STAFFING.

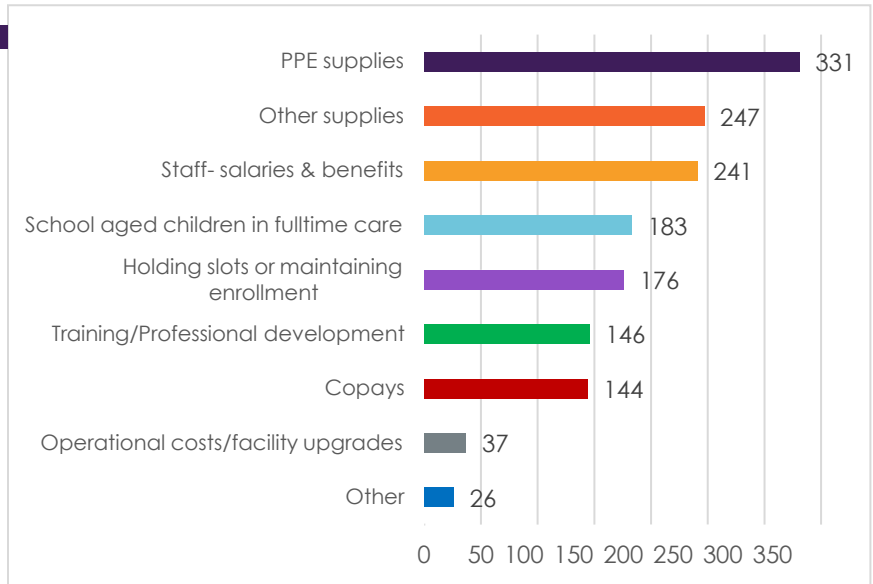
ONE PROVIDER STATED, "I HAVE CONCERNS ON HOW TO KEEP THE CHILDREN SAFE FROM COVID-19".

Previous Covid-19 Supports and Funding Usage

We asked providers if they had received previous financial supports or additional child care assistance funding during Covid-19 and what it was spent on. Almost 79% of providers reported that they spent previous funding on extra PPE supplies needed to support their programs during Covid-19.

THERE WERE 26 OTHER RESPONSES, SOME OF WHICH FOCUSED ON FACILITY UPDATES MADE TO MEET COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ON RATIOS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING.

A PROVIDER IN JUNEAU STATED THEY SPENT EXTRA FUNDING ON, "ADDITIONAL PLAY AREA TO SOCIAL DISTANCE" AND ANOTHER IN SOLDOTNA STATED THEY ADDED AIR PURIFIERS, ADDITIONAL VENTILATION, AND TOUCHLESS FIXTURES.



Anticipated Needs for Future Funding

Providers ranked their anticipated needs for future child care funding. The top three anticipated needs are PPE/health and safety supplies, staffing costs, and operational costs. Below are the details of the first and second choice rank responses:

Operational costs 159

Staffing costs 96

PPE/health and safety supplies 45

To reopen- if temporarily closed 45

Family payments 21

Child care supplies 19

First Choice



PPE/health and safety supplies 94

Staffing costs 86

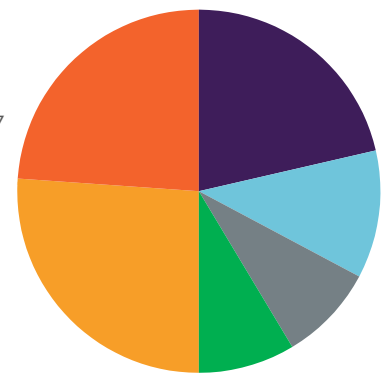
Operational costs 77

Child care supplies 41

Child care furniture, other equipment 31

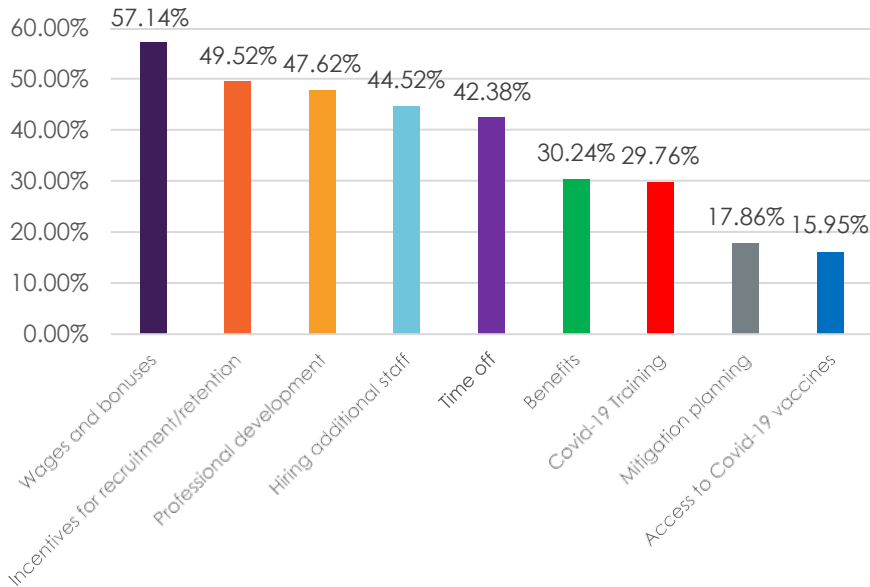
Enrollment, increase capacity 31

Second Choice



Staff Supports

We asked providers what staff supports are needed for their facility during the Covid-19 pandemic. The primary needs currently are wages and bonuses, incentives for recruitment and retention, and professional development. About 19% (81) providers stated they did not need additional staff supports at this time.

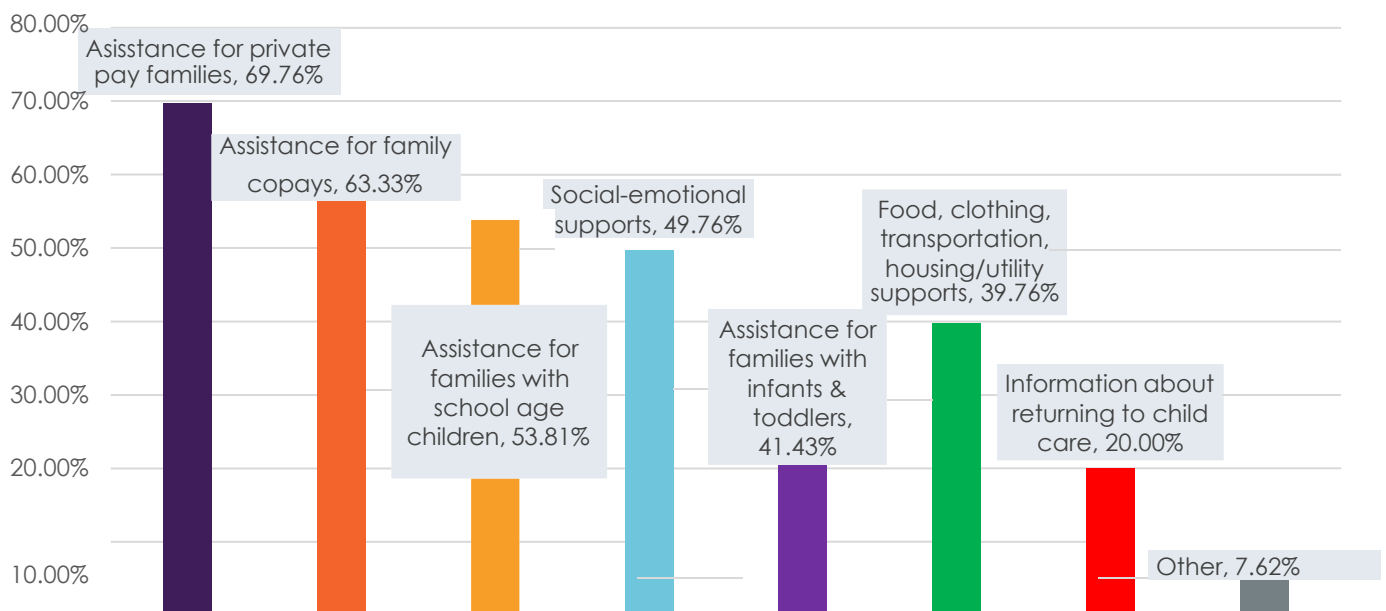


THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 16 OTHER RESPONSES, 6 WERE RELATED TO HOME CHILD CARE PROGRAMS WHERE THERE IS ONLY 1 STAFF.

ONE PROVIDER STATED THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO PAY STAFF FOR RETENTION IF THE FACILITY WERE TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE DUE TO COVID-19.

Family Supports

We asked providers what family supports are needed for their facility during the Covid-19 pandemic. The primary needs currently are additional financial assistance for private pay families, family copays, and for families with school age children.



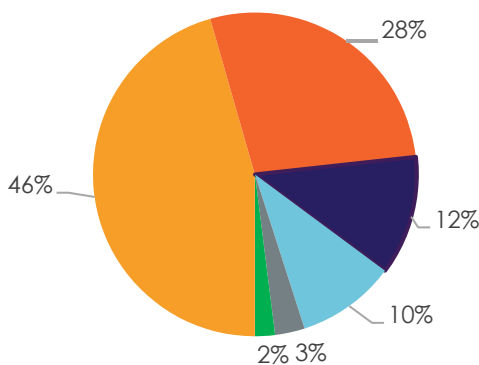
How Else Can We Best Support Child Care Needs

Providers were asked if there was anything that was not included in this survey that they wanted to share to help the Child Care Program Office to best support child care needs, their answers were given in short answer form. Below is a word cloud of their requests:



Suggestions and Feedback

It was important for the Child Care Program Office to hear feedback and suggestions from providers statewide. There were some trends within the free response feedback, these trends are shown in the chart below:



- Urgent Need for Financial Support
- Need Staff/Compensation Funding
- Social Emotional/Mental Health Supports
- Covid-19 Concerns or Fear
- Transparency on Funding Payments
- Need for CDA Support

“WE ARE ASKING OUR CHILDCARE WORKERS TO BE ESSENTIAL WORKERS. FUNDING TO INCREASE STAFF WAGES AND ALSO HIRE ADDITIONAL STAFF IN ORDER TO DECREASE GROUP SIZE WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL. A STATEWIDE PROGRAM FOR BENEFITS (RETIREMENT AND HEALTHCARE) FOR CHILDCARE WORKERS AND HELP NAVIGATING THIS SYSTEM WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IN HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH MORE EDUCATION.”

“EXTEND FREE [NO-COST] TRAINING FROM THREAD”

“STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THE FRONT LINE THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC SHOULD BE

COMPENSATED FOR HAZARDOUS WORK, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE PAID LOW WAGES TO BEGIN WITH.”

“ENROLLMENT IS DOWN DUE COVID-19. PARENTS ARE SCARED OR JUST CAN'T AFFORD IT”

“THE EMOTIONAL TOLL THAT THIS PANDEMIC IS TAKING ON BOTH STAFF, PROGRAM DIRECTORS AND FAMILIES IS TERRIBLE. MORE SUPPORTS WOULD BE NICE”



Final Thoughts

Providers were given a chance to share any final thoughts, comments, or feedback. Below is a sample of what was shared:

"Thank you for gaining additional funds for childcare during this time! It has kept us open and able to offer care to families."

"Thank you for giving me the chance to give my input!"

"Just thank you. We wouldn't have been able to stay open without these additional funds."

"Thank you for your continued support for all of us providers"

"Thank you for reaching out to providers instead of just making decisions without input from the people doing the front-line work. I feel as if child care providers have been overlooked in the "essential workers" scope."

"Thank you for all support that the Childcare Program Office is given to us providers. This is very much appreciated for all of us!!"

Thank you for sharing the funding in whatever ways you are able.

"I appreciate the funding that's available to help us meet the needs of working families in our community."

"Keep up the good work"

"Thank you for asking about my needs"

"A lot of people are hurting, families need help."

"What an impactful time to be in this industry! Thank you for continuing to support providers. We look forward to continuing to serve our community"

"Please get help out to providers quickly. We do not want to lay off staff or stop serving families because we cannot pay our bills."

"Thank you for all the assistance provided to my center! I am so very grateful!"

