



PRESS RELEASE

April 21, 2021

AMERICAN SAMOA RECEIVES \$49.6 MILLION TO ADDRESS COVID-19 RELATED NEEDS OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS AND FAMILIES

Governor Lemanu P.S. Mauga is pleased to announce that American Samoa, through the Department of Human and Social Services (DHSS), received grant awards from the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care (ACF OCC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in the amount of \$49,606,689 through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. This is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's \$39 billion in American Rescue Plan funding to rescue the child care industry so the economy can recover.

The ARPA that was passed by the U.S. Congress on March 10, 2021 and enacted into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021, appropriated funding for states, territories, and tribes to address the child care crisis caused by COVID-19 to provide a lifeline for child care providers, provide a safe and healthy learning environment for children, and help parents, especially mothers, get back to work. American Samoa's share is through two funds: (1) \$30,355,786 in child care stabilization funding for child care providers, and (2) \$19,083,903 in flexible funding to make child care more affordable for more families. ARPA funds will be available through September 30, 2024.

Governor Lemanu stated, "I am grateful to the Biden-Harris Administration for placing a priority on addressing the child care crisis caused by COVID-19 and for including American Samoa and other territories in this funding. Like child care supplemental funds that have been made available to us through the CARES, Act and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, ARPA resources will also be dedicated to addressing the needs of child care providers and families resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The DHSS Child Care Division will work closely with their ACF OCC Region IX counterparts to develop and submit a plan that aligns with the intents and requirements for these ARPA funds."

As the lead agency for the CCDF program in American Samoa, the DHSS Child Care Division will integrate these funds to supplement initiatives that mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 across our early learning and care system that are data-driven, child-focused, family-friendly, fair to providers, and supportive of workers.

More information about service enhancements and initiatives that will be available through this funding will be shared by the DHSS with child care stakeholders and the general public once a plan is approved by the Region IX Office.