

The Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CCAMPIS)

Student-Parent Families at the Center

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Although the share of student parents remained steady from 2002–15, campus child care centers declined substantially over the same period (<https://urban.is/3R0juSP>). For student parents, particularly women, these closures take a heavy toll, as studies demonstrate that women whose children are cared for at off-campus locations face higher transportation expenses and have less time to study than their counterparts (<https://urban.is/3R4HDHz>). To support parenting students with low incomes, the federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School grant program (CCAMPIS) provides funds for accredited, licensed child care services and other wraparound supports.

HOW CCAMPIS WORKS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Colleges are eligible to receive a CCAMPIS grant if they issue total Pell grant awards of at least \$250,000 (<https://urban.is/3SoslCF>). The maximum grant award to each institution is capped at 3 percent of their total Pell awards in the prior fiscal year, which increased from a 1 percent cap in 2022. The minimum grant is \$90,000 per year, which also increased in 2022. Student parents with low incomes may apply for CCAMPIS services if they are Pell eligible, in good academic standing, and attend a school that has the grant. Although no required structure exists for how colleges use CCAMPIS funds, most subsidize child care expenses for parenting students. Care can be offered during daytime, evening, or flexible hours, as long as it is nationally accredited or on a pathway to accreditation. At some colleges, all CCAMPIS funds are directed toward existing child care centers or used to create staff positions to support child care placement and subsidy navigation. Many CCAMPIS programs offer supplemental support services and programming, such as financial counseling, peer support, and college navigation services.

BENEFITS OF CCAMPIS

When describing the support offered by CCAMPIS, a student parent at a community college noted that the program covered approximately 75 percent of her childcare costs (<https://urban.is/3dvrCwE>). She also shared with a local newspaper, “There’s a bunch of us in the program, and...if it wasn’t for [CCAMPIS], we probably would not be in school because we couldn’t afford the before- and after-school day care, and we wouldn’t have the support we have through each other in the program.” A Leadership Council member shared her perception that CCAMPIS parenting students who

In the 2021 fiscal year, the average CCAMPIS grant was **\$157,000** (<https://urban.is/3Ls3wzH>).

More than 300 grantees received **\$51 million in CCAMPIS grants**, a substantial increase from \$16 million awarded across 153 grantees in fiscal year 2017 (<https://urban.is/3Ls3wzH>).

In fiscal year 2022, the program has an estimated **\$38.5 million available** (<https://urban.is/3SoslCF>).

Approximately **49 percent of four-year public colleges and 44 percent of community colleges** offered campus child care in 2015, which are 6 and 9 percentage points lower than 2003, respectively (<https://urban.is/3R0juSP>).

receive wraparound supports are often more successful than student parents with a full state voucher who do not receive additional supports. In fact, at her college, many students who receive state vouchers still attend CCAMPIS workshops.

LIMITATIONS OF CCAMPIS

The reach and capacity of CCAMPIS often fluctuates, and the Trump Administration's proposed 2018 budget called for eliminating the program entirely, but pushback from advocates resulted in a funding increase rather than a cut (<https://urbn.is/3LsCuYR>, <https://urbn.is/3SICdsO>). One Leadership Council member said, "CCAMPIS is great because it supports student parents directly, but it's incredibly insufficient—only 2 percent of student parents benefit." The program also lacks strong provisions for ensuring grants support both high-quality child care and enrollment in high-need postsecondary programs, which presents a missed opportunity to improve outcomes for children and parenting students (<https://urbn.is/3SmJc4G>).

Applying for a CCAMPIS grant can be administratively cumbersome, as colleges must go through federal grant processes for what may be a relatively small award. Colleges must use data to estimate the eligible student population on campus, and the guidance can be unclear. Some colleges may believe they need to name individual providers, while others may write the grant broadly for any eligible provider. Providers must be accredited by a nationally recognized agency and licensed through their state, or, if they are a new provider, develop a plan to achieve accreditation within three years.

POLICY OPTIONS TO IMPROVE CCAMPIS FOR PARENTING STUDENTS

By improving CCAMPIS, policymakers and institutions can better support student parents, particularly women, in their studies. To ensure that parenting students are put in the best position to succeed, the Department of Education could do the following:

- Increase appropriations for CCAMPIS. The current appropriation can only cover care costs for fewer than 100,000 student parents (out of almost 4 million undergraduate parenting students in the US)
- Align the CCAMPIS grant period with the academic calendar. The federal grant cycle begins October 1, which can leave student parents without child care for a month at the beginning of the school year. Colleges could be allowed a planning period before the next term starts, and the agency could push the funding renewal and notification earlier so grantees can plan for continued (or discontinued) awards
- Allocate more funds to community colleges, especially those that partner with a four-year institution
- Redesign the CCAMPIS application to be more user-friendly and provide more support for applicants and grantees (e.g., with data collection, partnership development and maintenance, etc.)
- Create a CCAMPIS grantee learning community, which may include potential applicants, and publicly share information about program structures, design, and outcomes to increase understanding and support

Colleges can also take steps to better support parenting students through CCAMPIS, including the following:

- Apply for CCAMPIS grants if they do not already; making this change will likely require advanced planning to build a strong model and in past years, the government has not allocated the entire CCAMPIS appropriation
- Collect better data on parenting students to help inform successful CCAMPIS applications
- Create student-parent support offices from other institutional funds so as to conserve limited CCAMPIS grants for wraparound supports. Alternatively, colleges can situate a CCAMPIS-funded staff member alongside other student services to easily connect parenting students to college supports
- Develop partnerships to bridge between community college CCAMPIS programs, four-year college CCAMPIS, and other child care programs to promote a smooth and supported transfer
- Promote success stories from CCAMPIS programs, around campus, and to policymakers