



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

September 6, 2023

Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

From: Kiran A. Ahuja, Director

Subject: **Data Call in Support of Strengthening Federal Workforce Childcare Subsidy Programs**

This memorandum announces the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) data call to Executive Departments and Agencies, and Office of the Inspectors General (OIG), for information on Federal Childcare Subsidy Programs, in support of Executive Order (EO) 14095, Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers, and as provided for by 5 CFR 792.204.

Background

Federal agencies are authorized by law (40 USC 590 (g)) to provide subsidies for childcare to employees with incomes falling below an agency-determined threshold. While numerous agencies offer childcare subsidy programs, relatively small numbers of Federal employees are benefiting from these programs, resulting in a need to review and retool workplace offerings. Given rising childcare costs, subsidy programs can present an opportunity for Federal agencies to expand their supports for employees with childcare responsibilities, yielding potential recruitment and retention benefits for both employees and agencies.

Agencies have the discretion to offer a subsidy and to consider various factors such as, mission priorities, budgetary planning, and the demographics and needs of their employee population when deciding to offer the program. Agencies are also given broad latitude in determining program parameters, including income ceilings and amounts to be disbursed.

Increasing Access

It is the policy of the Biden-Harris Administration to enable all families to have access to affordable, high-quality care and to have support for and resources as caregivers. EO 14095 calls for "Executive departments and agencies (agencies) to do what they can within their existing authorities to boost the supply of high-quality early care and education and long-term care and to provide support for family caregivers." Through this order, agencies are directed to make all possible efforts and support for caregivers, increase access to affordable care for families, and provide more care options for families. Coupled with its robust model employer objectives for agencies, nationally the Administration has prioritized subsidizing childcare, considering the growing number of households with multiple working

family members. There is a pressing need for affordable childcare, with childcare costs representing the largest percentage of incomes for low-income and single-parent families.

Under EO 14095, and in keeping with existing OPM authority under 5 CFR 792.204, OPM has been authorized with a variety of activities that include updating its data call questionnaire, conducting an analysis and assessment of current offerings, and making recommendations for potential program improvements. The data collection will support a Spring 2024 release of an updated government-wide childcare status report, followed by issuance of refreshed agency childcare guidance and criteria to best enable agency decision-making. The EO directs employing agencies to consider methods of expanding employee access to childcare services through use of enhanced childcare subsidies, as well as through improved access to Federal childcare centers or contracted care providers.

Data Collection

The goal for the data collection effort is to better inform OPM and employing agencies regarding workforce childcare needs, priorities and value propositions, allowing senior leaders and program managers to make evidence-based decisions when determining talent management and budgetary investments in Childcare Subsidy Programs. Furthermore, OPM will analyze the government-wide results to identify opportunities for increasing access to affordable childcare. A government-wide report will be distributed in FY 2024.

Next Steps

In order to collect data from employing agencies, we request that Chief Human Capital Officers identify and provide a designated childcare Point of Contact (POC) to CCSPStudy@opm.gov, no later than Thursday, September 28, 2023. OPM's Work-Life team will be engaging with agency POCs to complete the data call survey. In advance of this survey administration, OPM will host an educational training session for employing agencies that will include how to complete the survey tool; a copy of the planned data call questions; and additional guidance for designated child care POCs. Agencies are required to complete the childcare data survey no later than Wednesday, October 18, 2023.

OPM's Work-Life staff are available to assist with any additional questions or inquiries. Please direct any questions to worklife@opm.gov.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs)
Deputy CHCOs
Human Resources Directors