

RFI Category and Number:

RFI 11 – Child Care Resources

RFI Question 11:

The Committee requests a written response on the following:

- a) What factors impact willingness to become or remain a family care provider? Incentives/disincentives?
- b) What is the current enrollment in the Family Child care (FCC) program? What is the shortfall or waiting list for this program?
- c) Is fee assistance available to Service members who place children in care with an FCC?
- d) What is the average timeframe to certify an FCC?
- e) Address the portability of an FCC's certification to another installation? Must a previously or currently certified FCC undergo the full certification process upon transfer to a different installation?
- f) What challenges confront the Services in recruiting and retaining FCCs?

RFI Response:

Navy's FCC program (or Child Development Homes) is part of our "system of care" that also includes Navy operated Child Development and Youth Centers and the Military Child Care In Your Neighborhood program. Navy certifies FCC providers both within military and commercial/private housing.

The same as across all DoD, to become a Navy certified FCC provider, individuals and anyone residing within them must complete required background checks, training, and submit to monthly unannounced inspections by Navy personnel. Once a FCC provider becomes certified by the Navy, their certification transfers with them if they relocate to other Navy locations so long as there is not a break in service within a specified period of time. However, at their next location they must have their new home re-certified. Additionally, if operating a home where there is state licensing jurisdiction requirements in addition to Navy FCC certification, they must comply with the applicable state requirements as currently state licensing requirements do not transfer between states.

All Navy FCC providers receive parent fee subsidies based on the delta of the market rate and what eligible families pay based on their family income (the same as military operated Child Development and Youth Centers). Additionally, Navy offers FCC providers additional subsidies for high demand or specialty care such as infant only homes, extended or after hours care, and care for special needs children. As independent businesses, Navy certified FCC providers chose how they manage the types of care they wish to provide. A complete list of Navy subsidies available to FCC providers as well as potential income earning examples is provided in Attachment A.

Prior to 2019, the average time to become a Navy certified FCC provider averaged 3-6 months (or longer), primarily due to the time to complete background checks. However, starting in March 2019, Navy and DoD implemented a policy change that allows for a provisional

certification upon completion of a finger print background check and homes can now open in 30 days or less.

Navy currently has 500 certified FCC providers providing care to 2,800 children. Navy's total unduplicated waiting list for childcare is 9,000 children including: 3,200 for Military Child Care In Your Neighborhood; 5,480 for Child Development Centers; and 320 for FCC providers (note: many families have requested care for each of the Navy's delivery systems simultaneously but Navy's waiting list system does not duplicate them if they have requested multiple options or if they have accepted one delivery system and yet chose to wait for their preference).

The three biggest challenges with the FCC delivery system are: 1) number of individuals interested in starting/operating their own in-home child business; and 2) the hours of operation of those homes compared to what military families state are their childcare requirements (e.g. as opposed to Child Development or Youth Center an FCC provider works alone and providing care for the same hours a Center may be open is challenging); and 3) parental stigmas that FCC programs are not as safe as Center based care that have multiple staff and camera systems. The National Association for Family Child Care has also reported an overall decline in the number of nation-wide.

The FCC program is an important component of the Navy's overall childcare delivery system and we continue with ongoing recruitment/retention efforts to grow the program.

Office responsible:

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