

INFORMATION PAPER

15 Aug 19

SUBJECT: DACOWITS RFIs for September 2019 Quarterly Business Meeting (HQDA-190731-2R35)

1. Purpose: To reply to the DACOWITS Child Care Resources request for information, questions 10a i-viii.

Question 10a i: Specific regulations and policies that govern fee assistance programs, including the eligibility of Service members for fee assistance, the criteria for on- and off-installation care providers, and facilities to qualify for receipt of fee assistance. What regulations and policies govern fee assistance programs?

Response 10a i: Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6060.02, paragraph 8.b.(1) authorizes child care fee assistance for eligible active duty and DoD civilian employees. It requires providers to be nationally accredited by a DoD-approved accrediting agency and annually inspected to be eligible to receive DoD fee assistance on behalf of Families. Headquarters Department of the Army Executing Order 221-13 establishes fee assistance eligibility for Active and Reserve Component Soldiers and Department of Army Civilians that meet minimum work or school requirements.

Question 10a ii: How many Service members are receiving fee assistance?

Response 10a ii: Total Army fee assistance supported 12,579 Army children and 8,977 Army Families in June 2019 as follows:

- a. 5,183 Active duty Soldier children and 3,771 Families
- b. 3,452 Department of Army Civilian children and 2,366 Families
- c. 2,513 Army National Guard children and 1,737 Families
- d. 582 Army National Guard Technician children and 501 Families
- e. 697 Army Reserve children and 500 Families
- f. 152 Army Reserve Technicians children and 102 Families

Question 10a iii: How many were denied fee assistance and any reasons for denial?

Response 10a iii: No families who meet eligibility requirements and enroll with eligible providers have been denied Army fee assistance. We do not know how many Families do not receive fee assistance due to failure to meet enrollment requirements.

Question 10a iv: Information on proposed or pending changes and initiatives (e.g., in June 2019 the Army briefed it was “reforming” its fee assistance program).

Response 10a iv: With transition in Army leadership, it is not clear if reforms to Army fee assistance will be implemented.

Question 10a v: Indicate whether Service members on a waiting list are automatically eligible for fee assistance even if they otherwise might not qualify; and if not, why not?

Response 10a v: Army Families on installation wait lists may request a letter of non-availability to become eligible for Army fee assistance.

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Question 10a v: Indicate whether Service members on a waiting list are automatically eligible for fee assistance even if they otherwise might not qualify; and if not, why not?

Response 10a v: Army Families on installation wait lists may request a letter of non-availability to become eligible for Army fee assistance.

Question 10a vi: If a Service member is receiving fee assistance and space becomes available in the installation child care facility, is the Service member required to move their children to the on-base care facility?

Response 10a vi: Army Families are not required to relocate to installation care when a space becomes available. A pending reform requires children be moved to installation care when there is a vacancy and there is no wait list to fill the space.

Question 10a vii: What challenges impact the provision of fee assistance?

Response 10a vii: Challenges of managing fee assistance include:

a. A national shortage of civilian child care providers who meet DoD quality standards limits access.

b. Civilian child care can be expensive for Families and impacts are multiplied for Families with multiple children, especially in high-cost areas.

Question 10a viii: Are Service members denied assistance due to lack of funding?

Response 10a viii: Army Families are not denied fee assistance due to the lack of funds or capacity. A pending reform will implement a maximum enrollment capacity to manage enrollments and fill future vacancies based on DoD priorities for care.