

RFI Category and Number:

RFI 10 – Child Care Resources

RFI Question 10:

The Committee requests a written response with the 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 quality for receipt of fee assistance, including:

- a) What regulations and policies govern fee assistance programs?;
- b) How many Service members are receiving fee assistance?;
- c) How many were denied fee assistance and any reasons for denial?;
- d) Information on proposed or pending changes and initiatives;
- e) 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;
- f) If a Service member is receiving fee assistance and a space becomes available in the installation child care facility, is the Service member required to move their children to the on-base care facility?;
- g) What challenges impact the provision of fee assistance?;
- h) Are Service members denied assistance due to lack of funding?

RFI Response:

The Navy's fee assistance program, entitled Military Childcare In Your Neighborhood (or MCCYN), is administered in accordance with Title 10 U.S.C. §1798 and DoDINST 6060.2 "Child Development Programs."

Navy's MCCYN program is designed to provide fee assistance to Active Duty Sailors and Navy Civilian personnel in qualifying commercial programs in locations where there is no military operated childcare available or in locations where there are long waiting lists for military operated programs. Qualifying commercial programs must be state licensed, meet minimum background check requirements of their personnel, and be nationally accredited or in lieu of national accreditation have an approved exemption by the Navy.

Fee assistance is determined by individual families income (the same as military operated programs) and families pay the same rate they would in operated programs up to a prescribed market cap (\$1,100 per month in low cost areas and \$1,300 per month in high cost areas). Families are responsible for any additional fees the commercial program charges above the applicable market cap.

Currently there are 6,100 children enrolled in Navy's MCCYN and there is a waiting list of 3,200 children. No families have been denied access into the MCCYN program, however, due to funding limitations and community capacity shortfalls Navy does have a waiting list. Children are placed from the waiting list based on the DoD-wide priorities for placement that gives highest priority to single and dual active duty, the same as military operated programs.

Once an eligible family is enrolled in the MCCYN program from the waiting list they are eligible to remain in the MCCYN program at the eligible commercial program they selected even if they are near a military operated program and a space opens up. However, if they are living/working near a military operated program and they have declined an available military space within the last year of being offered an MCCYN space, they are not eligible for MCCYN (unless there is a hardship circumstance which are reviewed on a case by case basis). Additionally, when changing commercial providers/relocating to other localities they are required to go back on the waiting list in their priority order, the same as if changing military operated programs.

For the Navy, the challenges impacting the MCCYN program are: 1) available funding and 2) commercial childcare capacity shortfalls. Navy, along with DoD, is working on additional community partnerships to increase the availability of commercial child care as well as working with Congress on additional funding for its MCCYN program as well as other expanded childcare programs to meet Sailor demand.

Office responsible:

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