



March 23, 2020

To: Michigan Congressional Staff

From: Matt Gillard, President and CEO, Michigan's Children

RE: Network Learnings Informing COVID-19 Investment Response

WIC Recipients

Many stores are out of the items that WIC is intended to support, like toiletries and other things. Not sure if there could be some kind of priority for WIC families, like they are doing with medical supplies, or how to deal with that, but it is an issue.

NEED TO ENSURE THAT FAMILIES USING WIC CAN ACCESS RESOURCES CURRENTLY IN SHORTAGE

Families can't use their WIC for curbside pickup, online ordering, or delivery, they have to be present inside the building to use WIC benefits. These families should be able to take advantage of the same social distancing that others can, and shouldn't be made to take their children into stores.

EASE WIC RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF FUNDS FOR PURCHASING FOOD WHILE MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING.

Health Departments are still waiting for rule change from the federal government that allow them to bring new moms/babies on without requiring them to come into the office. They have heard that those are coming, but at this point, they are still having to do in-person to certify. This is completely different from what is happening to programs like Unemployment Insurance, where they are waiving all in person requirements for certification.

ACCELERATE RULE CHANGE ALLOWING WIC RECIPIENTS TO BE ENROLLED REMOTELY.

Adult and Alternative Educators (Incl. High School Equivalency, Employment Skills Training)

While many programs are figuring out ways to continue to educate individuals during the disease outbreak, adult and alternative education providers have expressed concern for the progress of students who may not be able to access to viable digital learning options.

PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR INTERNET ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WHO MAY LACK SUCH ACCESS WHEREVER THEY ARE DURING QUARANTINE/SOCIAL DISTANCING/SHELTER-IN-PLACE.

Program leaders are following state guidance on paying staff for now. However, in the current absence of state action or guidance regarding how schools may or may not commence over the summer, program leaders are concerned about upcoming issues paying staff over the summer.

ENSURE THAT INCOME SUPPORT STRATEGIES ARE INCLUSIVE OF ADULT AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATORS WHO MAY EXPERIENCE LAY-OFFS OVER THE SUMMER.

Educators remain concerned about meeting post-testing requirements and performance measures due

to the disruptions caused for many students, as well as requirements around allowable uses of funds that might make it difficult to respond to disease-related disruptions, like purchasing learning software. PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON HOW TO MAINTAIN AND RECOGNIZE ADULT/ALTERNATIVE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES DURING THIS DISRUPTION AND GUIDANCE ON APPROPRIATE USE OF FEDERAL ADULT EDUCATION FUNDS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS.

Michigan's adult and alternative education providers understand that the current need is to maintain public health, including student health, while finding every opportunity to still advance student learning. However, programs are concerned with their ability to meet WIOA Title II grant application deadlines for the next fiscal year while scrambling to transition their program and students to the new realities posed by the outbreak of COVID-19.

ALLOW FLEXIBILITY IN APPLICATIONS FOR WIOA TITLE II GRANT FUNDING AS WELL AS INCREASED FLEXIBILITY WITH BUDGET AMENDMENTS THAT CHANGING CONDITIONS MAY NECESSITATE.