

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4198

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to award grants for providing evidence-based caregiver skills training to caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 12, 2022

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, to award grants for providing evidence-based caregiver skills training to caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Autism Family Care-
5 givers Act of 2022”.

1 **SEC. 2. CAREGIVER SKILLS TRAINING PILOT PROGRAM.**

2 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary, acting through
3 the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services
4 Administration, shall carry out a program, to be known
5 as the Caregiver Skills Training Pilot Program, under
6 which the Secretary shall award grants to eligible entities
7 to provide evidence-based caregiver skills training to care-
8 givers, including family caregivers, of children with autism
9 spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities, for
10 the purposes of—

11 (1) improving the health outcomes and quality
12 of life of such children and their caregivers; and

13 (2) teaching caregivers of such children evi-
14 denced-based intervention strategies to promote—

15 (A) improvement in the mental and phys-
16 ical well-being of such children and their care-
17 givers; and

18 (B) the greater inclusion of such children
19 in family and community life.

20 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive an award
21 under subsection (a), an entity shall be—

22 (1) a nonprofit or other community-based orga-
23 nization;

24 (2) a Federally qualified health center;

25 (3) an academic health center;

26 (4) a health system; or

1 (5) a collaboration or consortium of 2 or more
2 entities listed in paragraphs (1) through (4).

3 (c) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity wishing to re-
4 ceive a grant under this section shall submit to the Sec-
5 retary an application that includes—

6 (1) a description of—

7 (A) the applicant’s experience delivering
8 evidence-based caregiver skills training to care-
9 givers, including family caregivers, of children
10 with autism spectrum disorder and other devel-
11 opmental disabilities;

12 (B) the activities that the applicant pro-
13 poses to carry out through the grant; and

14 (C) how such activities will achieve the
15 purposes described in subsection (a); and

16 (2) a plan for—

17 (A) coordination with community-based or-
18 ganizations, State and local early intervention
19 providers, State Medicaid systems, schools, and
20 other providers of early intervening services;

21 (B) collaboration with health care payors
22 (including public and private insurance), State
23 departments of insurance, health plans, and
24 other relevant payors;

1 (C) expanding the skills training program
2 proposed to be carried out through the grant;
3 and

4 (D) achieving sustainability of such pro-
5 gram.

6 (d) SELECTION OF GRANTEES.—

7 (1) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In awarding a
8 grant to an eligible entity or a collaboration or con-
9 sortium of 2 or more entities described in subsection
10 (b), the Secretary shall require at least one of the
11 recipients to—

12 (A) have at least 3 years of demonstrated
13 experience—

14 (i) delivering evidence-based, cul-
15 turally competent caregivers skills training
16 programs described in subsection (a), in-
17 cluding in medically underserved commu-
18 nities;

19 (ii) providing services to children with
20 autism spectrum disorder and other devel-
21 opmental disabilities, and collaborating di-
22 rectly with their families;

23 (iii) providing individual caregiver
24 coaching as part of skills training to care-
25 givers of children with autism spectrum

1 disorder and other developmental disabil-
 2 ities; and

3 (iv) working with self-advocates or
 4 adults with autism spectrum disorder and
 5 other developmental disabilities; and

6 (B) demonstrate the ability to access re-
 7 sources from and collaborate with—

8 (i) health care providers;

9 (ii) allied health professionals;

10 (iii) educators;

11 (iv) social workers; and

12 (v) nonprofessional family caregivers
 13 who assist with daily living and develop-
 14 mental activities, including for children
 15 with autism spectrum disorder and other
 16 developmental disabilities.

17 (2) REDUCING DISPARITIES.—In awarding
 18 grants under this section, the Secretary may con-
 19 sider, as appropriate, the extent to which an eligible
 20 entity can deliver evidence-based, culturally com-
 21 petent caregivers skills training programs for chil-
 22 dren with autism spectrum disorder and other devel-
 23 opmental disabilities from diverse racial, ethnic, geo-
 24 graphic, or linguistic backgrounds.

1 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—The recipient of a grant under
2 this section shall use the grant to provide—

3 (1) evidence-based caregiver skills training to
4 caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder
5 and other developmental disabilities; and

6 (2) such training in areas related to children’s
7 learning and development, including—

8 (A) communication skills;

9 (B) social engagement;

10 (C) daily living skills; and

11 (D) caregiver response strategies to ag-
12 gressive behavior.

13 (f) REQUIREMENTS.—

14 (1) NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS AND STATES.—

15 The Secretary shall award grants under subsection
16 (a) to not fewer than 25 eligible entities in not fewer
17 than 15 States.

18 (2) AMOUNT.—The total amount of each grant
19 awarded under subsection (a) shall be not less than
20 \$500,000 over a 5-year period.

21 (g) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Amounts made
22 available to carry out this section shall be in addition to
23 amounts made available to provide for—

1 (1) behavioral, medical, habilitative, and other
2 services covered by the Medicaid program or private
3 health insurance;

4 (2) services provided under the Individuals with
5 Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);
6 or

7 (3) adaptations of a training program using evi-
8 dence-based approaches to serve children of different
9 ages, communities, and underrepresented groups.

10 (h) ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARY.—The Sec-
11 retary, acting through the Administrator of the Health
12 Resources and Services Administration, shall—

13 (1) assist recipients of grants under subsection
14 (a)—

15 (A) in the implementation of caregiver
16 skills training programs using lessons learned
17 from other evidenced-based activities or care-
18 giver programs conducted or supported by the
19 Health Resources and Services Administration;

20 (B) in ensuring their programs assist
21 medically underserved communities, when pos-
22 sible; and

23 (C) in developing plans for achieving sus-
24 tainability of their programs;

1 (2) conduct an annual evaluation of activities
2 funded through grants under subsection (a), in con-
3 sultation with the grant recipients, including evalua-
4 tion of the effectiveness of such grants at improving
5 health outcomes and quality of life for children with
6 autism spectrum disorder and other developmental
7 disabilities and their family caregivers; and

8 (3) convene at least one national or regional
9 meeting of grant recipients to discuss best practices.

10 (i) REPORTS.—

11 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 6 months
12 after awarding the first grant under subsection (a),
13 the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Ap-
14 propriations of the House of Representatives and the
15 Senate, and to other appropriate congressional com-
16 mittees, a report on the implementation of this sec-
17 tion. Such report shall include—

18 (A) how many grants have been awarded;

19 (B) the name and location of the grant re-
20 cipients;

21 (C) the communities impacted by the
22 grants;

23 (D) a description of the kind of activities
24 to be carried out with the grants;

(E) an analysis, conducted by the Health Resources and Services Administration, based on the evaluation under subsection (h)(2), of the effectiveness of such grants at improving health outcomes and quality of life for children with autism or other developmental disabilities or delays and their family caregivers; and

(F) best practices to increase access to caregiver skills training programs described in subsection (a) in medically underserved communities.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than the end of fiscal year 2027, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and to other appropriate congressional committees, a final report on the implementation of this section, including—

(A) the information, analysis, and best practices listed in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of paragraph (1); and

(B) recommendations on how to expand and extend the program under this section.

(j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “family caregiver” means an adult family member or other individual who has a

1 significant relationship with, and who provides a
2 broad range of assistance to, a child between the
3 ages of 0 and 9 diagnosed with autism spectrum dis-
4 order and other developmental disabilities.

5 (2) The term “Federally qualified health cen-
6 ter” has the meaning given the term in section
7 1861(aa) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
8 1395x(aa)).

9 (3) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary
10 of Health and Human Services.

11 (k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry
12 out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated
13 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2027.

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