



Year Two Final Report: Survey Results from the Guaranteed Income Program

Grantee: Ventura County Community Foundation (Grant ID: 2025-106)

CBO Partner: Child Development Resources (CDR)

Program Overview

The Guaranteed Income Program, a collaborative initiative funded by the Rhode Futures Foundation and the Isabella Project, is designed to support women home-based child care providers in Santa Paula. The goal of this program is twofold: to ensure every child in our community has access to high-quality, full-time early care and education, and to promote economic stability and mental well-being among child care providers who serve as critical pillars of early childhood development.

We are deeply grateful to the Rhode Futures Foundation and the Support for Moms Fund for making this work possible. This pilot is a proof of concept for what becomes possible when communities invest in women caregivers and trust them to lead. The Isabella Project Steering Committee and Countywide Co-Chairs are now actively working to bring this model to communities across all of Ventura County, energized and inspired by the results you will find in this report.

This narrative summarizes findings from a recent participant survey, from July to March of 2026, aimed at evaluating the program's impact on providers' financial security, stress levels, and family well-being.

Program Participation and Fund Distribution

The Guaranteed Income Program served a total of 9 child care providers during the course of the initiative. While the original grant was designed to support 8 providers, one provider left the program during the first quarter. As a result, CDR recruited a new provider approximately three months into the program to maintain participation levels.

To date, a total of \$100,032 has been distributed through the program. These funds cover the two-year program period from April 2025 through March 2027.

The distribution of funds among participants reflects the timing of enrollment and participation in the program. Seven providers received \$12,504, totaling \$87,528. One

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provider who participated for a shorter portion of the program received \$10,941, and the provider who joined later in the program received \$1,563.

Overall, these funds have provided consistent financial support to participating providers, helping strengthen the stability of their child care programs and the families they serve.

Metrics and Observations — Who Participants Are and How the Program Has Impacted Them

All nine participants across the program period are women who operate small family child care homes in Santa Paula, serving primarily low-income families in one of Ventura County’s most underserved communities. Seven of the eight active providers successfully enrolled infants and toddlers during this grant period, which is a direct expansion of child care capacity in a community where more than two-thirds of young children previously had no access to licensed care.

One provider grew from zero enrolled children to six, purchased a vehicle to offer transportation services, and is now licensing a larger home to serve 12–14 children.

The unrestricted nature of the funds was consistently identified as critical: prior state programs prohibited investments in vehicles and property — the very assets small child care businesses need most to grow.

CDR’s technical assistance — home visits, reflective coaching, and peer networking — served as a powerful multiplier alongside the income stipends.

Participant Metrics Summary

Based on the March 2026 final survey (7 of 8 active respondents): 100% reported their lives and/or their families’ lives changed for the better. 71% used funds for basic necessities (food, housing, utilities, transportation); over time, spending on necessities declined as providers stabilized, with “Other Essentials” — business materials, equipment, supplies for children — becoming the leading category by March 2026, signaling a meaningful shift from survival toward investment.

100% reported reduced stress. 100% reported improved mental wellbeing, up from 75% at Month 3 and 88% at Month 9. 100% reported a positive impact on their children and families, up from 50% at Month 3 and 88% at Month 9. Every metric improved across every survey period — reflecting the compounding power of sustained financial stability.

Key Findings

1. Financial Challenges Before Enrollment

Before joining the program:

- **71%** of participants reported facing challenges affording basic necessities.

2. Use of Guaranteed Income Funds

After enrolling in the program:

- **71%** of participants used the guaranteed income to pay for basic necessities.
- **29%** did not use the funds for these needs, using them for other priorities such as savings, professional development, or child care resources.

This has decreased from the previous survey; however, there was one individual who did not complete the survey which caused a drop in this reporting.

Breakdown of how funds for necessities were used:

July 2025 Results

Food: 27%
Housing: 12%
Transportation: 12%
Utilities: 15%
Clothing: 0%
Other Essentials: 15%

January 2026 Result

Food: 17%
Housing: 14%
Transportation: 14%
Utilities: 17%
Clothing: 14%
Other Essentials: 24%

March 2026 Result

Food: 21%
Housing: 13%
Transportation: 17%
Utilities: 17%
Clothing: 0%
Other Essentials: 34%

These numbers reveal that most funds were used for critical daily living expenses, with *Other Essentials* being the most common category.

3. Stress Reduction

When asked about stress levels:

- **100%** of participants reported a **reduction in stress** due to the financial support.

This has maintained from the previous survey, where 100% reported a stress reduction.

4. Mental Well-Being

The program also had a notable effect on participants' mental health:

- **100%** of providers reported an **improvement in mental well-being**.

This has increased from the previous two surveys, where 75% was initially reported in July 2025 and then 88% was reported in January 2026. Each period noted an improvement in mental health well-being.

5. Impact on Families and Children

The impact on providers' families and the children in their care increased:

- **100%** of participants reported a **positive impact** on their family or children.

This has increased from the previous two surveys, where 50% was initially reported in July 2025 and then 88% was reported in January 2026. Each period noted reported an improvement in total impact on Families and Children.

Conclusion

The combined results from the July 2025, January 2026, and March 2026 surveys demonstrate that the Guaranteed Income Program has had a consistently positive and strengthening impact on participating family child care home providers in Santa Paula. Prior to enrollment, a significant majority of providers (71%) struggled to afford basic necessities, highlighting the financial vulnerability many early childhood providers face.

Across all three survey periods, participants reported using the guaranteed income primarily to address essential living expenses such as food, housing, transportation, and utilities. While the exact distribution of spending categories shifted slightly over time, the data consistently shows that funds were directed toward critical household needs, with "Other Essentials" becoming the most frequently reported category by March 2026. These shifts may also reflect evolving financial priorities as providers stabilize their immediate needs and redirect resources to other necessary expenses.

Most notably, the program's impact on stress reduction and mental well-being has remained exceptionally strong. All participants in the most recent survey (100%) reported reduced stress and improved mental well-being as a result of the financial support. This represents a continued improvement from earlier surveys, where mental well-being gains increased steadily from 75% in July 2025 to 88% in January 2026, and ultimately to 100% in March 2026.

The positive effects of the program have also extended beyond the providers themselves. Reports of positive impacts on families and children rose from 50% in July 2025 to 88% in January 2026 and reached 100% by March 2026. This trend suggests that increased financial stability for providers directly contributes to stronger family environments and improved outcomes for the children in their care.

Overall, the combined survey results indicate that the Guaranteed Income Program is successfully supporting both the economic stability and mental well-being of home-based child care providers. By reducing financial stress and strengthening providers' ability to meet basic needs, the program is helping to create more stable environments for families and higher-quality care for the children they serve. Continued investment in

initiatives like this can play a critical role in sustaining the early childhood workforce and supporting community well-being.

We are deeply grateful to the Rhode Futures Foundation, not just for the financial investment, but for the belief behind it: that women caregivers deserve to thrive, not merely survive.

This pilot has shown what is possible when unconditional support meets expert partnership and community trust. We are so excited to now proactively work to expand this program and to continue to build on the success and strengths of this pilot effort.

These providers were held by a network of partners who refused to work in silos: CDR, the Isabella Project Steering Committee, the Economic Development Collaborative for Ventura County, Poder Popular, VCCF, and a full community of funders and advocates who share a conviction that every child deserves a strong, loving start. The combination of the unrestricted funding, coupled with this intensive network of support, has really led to beautiful and life-changing results, impacting the women, their families, and the families and children in their care year after year.

Looking Ahead: Countywide Expansion

The results of this pilot have generated tremendous energy and momentum across the Isabella Project network. In conversations with the Isabella Project Steering Committee and Countywide Co-Chairs, the findings in this report have been deeply motivating. There is broad, enthusiastic agreement: this model works — and it is most powerful when implemented as part of an integrated ecosystem, not in isolation. CDR's county-wide expertise across all 10 cities in Ventura County makes them an ideal anchor partner for scaling this approach.

Our vision for expansion includes: continuing this effort in Santa Paula with a new cohort of women child care providers; piloting the model in at least two additional Ventura County communities; integrating family-level feedback surveys to capture the full chain of impact; building the research base to support state-level advocacy and investment; and deepening our partnership with funders, like the Rhode Futures Foundation, as national thought leaders.

We plan to present these findings broadly — to funders, policymakers, peer organizations, and community members — because this is a best practice worth lifting up and replicating.

To the Rhode Futures Foundation and the Support for Moms Fund team: thank you.

Thank you for trusting us with this work, for the flexibility that made it transformational, and for the hope it has given to eight women who are now building something lasting for

their families and their community. We are honored to be part of your national network and look forward to growing this partnership in the years ahead.

Direct Quotes from Providers

1. This money has truly been like an angel for me, helping me when I didn't know what to do. I was very stressed and sick from so much worry—many expenses and very little income. I didn't have a car, my refrigerator broke, and the apartment where I live was very uncomfortable because the owner and the manager didn't want me to work with children there. Today I have been able to reach 6 children and I have 5 on a waiting list. The parents themselves have recommended me, and I have found a new house that is very spacious and beautiful for the children. I am applying for my license. I was able to buy a new refrigerator for the daycare, and I also got a car to transport the children who need rides. Thanks to this program, I had the strength to expand my daycare and take another big step. I looked for loans, but because of my low income I was not approved. This money has multiplied. Thank you so much!
2. First of all, I am very grateful for the opportunity. I feel very fortunate to participate and to have received this help, which has definitely changed my life and especially the lives of the children. I feel supported and very motivated to continue helping the community of moms and dads who trust me with the care of their children.
3. This program has been very beneficial for me, my families, and the children because I was able to move forward with the advancement of my center and purchase learning materials for my little ones. Thank you.
4. The payments were used to support my business by adding a carport. The program has been very helpful in allowing me to continue operating my business and improving its stability. I appreciate the support provided.
5. The payments helped support the stability and sustainability of my child care program. I used the funds to cover operating costs, purchase learning materials and supplies for the children, and make small improvements to my program. Participating in this program has been very helpful in allowing me to continue providing quality care and a safe environment for the families in my community.
6. The payments were used to acquire modern toys with safe and positive features for the children that motivate them to learn.