



Board and Commission Council Committee Agenda Item Request

Name of Board or Commission: Early Childhood Council

Request Number: 20151014- 6bi

Description of item: Request for \$500,000 of current unallocated FY2016 social services funding from the Health and Human Services Department for the Continuity of Care Program. The program provides childcare to children of low income parents in two particular circumstances: during gaps in subsidy eligibility resulting from job loss or other circumstances and also "up front" while parents hunt for a job. The program is currently funded by Travis County and this funding would help to increase the number of children served.

Board or Commission Vote to refer item to Council: 7-0-1

Date of Approval of Request: 10/14/2015

Attachments: Yes No

If yes, please list the attachments: Council Committee Agenda Item Request 20151014-6bi Attachment A

Attest:

Signature of Board/Commission Chair or Staff Liaison

MAYOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY

Council Committee Assigned:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audit & Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Community Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning & Neighborhood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AE Utility Oversight | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> Open Space, Environment & Sustainability | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health & Human Services | | |

Recommend a Fiscal Analysis be completed?

Recommend a Legal Analysis be completed?

Notes:

Mayor Signature & Date:



**Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department
Early Childhood Council**



October 14, 2015

Chairperson

Kyle Holder

Vice-Chairperson

Monica Sanchez

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Cathy Doggett
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Jacquie Porter
Brook Son
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Early Childhood
Council
City of Austin HHSD
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To: City of Austin Health and Human Services Committee

“Continuity of Care” is a pilot program currently funded by Travis County that provides childcare to children of low income parents in two particular circumstances: during gaps in subsidy eligibility resulting from job loss or other circumstances and also “up front” while parents hunt for a job. The Early Childhood Council strongly recommends that the City of Austin invest \$500,000 of the unallocated Health and Human Service dollars in the Continuity of Care program based to support families of young children in Austin become self-sufficient.

The results of the first year of the pilot show this is an excellent investment because:

- It promotes family self-sufficiency by enabling parents to find and maintain employment.
- It maximizes the return on investment in job training by enabling parents to find employment after completing job training.
- It promotes child development by providing quality child care, one of the major goals of the Austin School Readiness Action Plan
- It promotes child well-being by reducing turbulence resulting from instability of child care.
- It enables teen parents to stay in school.

Of 75 families who have used “up front” child care subsidies, 63 (84%) found jobs; once they were working, the federally-funded child care subsidy program was available to them. The 12 parents who did not find jobs within 90 days were referred to workforce services, which increased their prospects for employment. Travis County has committed to provide \$235,758 per year for the next five years to continue the pilot program. The average daily cost per parent is \$23.84. The program can serve approximately 36 families at any one time. The demand is much greater.

We recommend that the City of Austin allocate \$500,000 per year allowing the program to triple the number of families currently served. Additional details are included below. We encourage you to contact members of the Council if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

The Austin Early Childhood Council

Additional Information:

Logistics of program

- Parents must meet eligibility requirements for federally-funded subsidies, with the exception that teen parents are not required to meet the income eligibility requirement.
- Child care must be high quality; that is, it must meet the quality standards of the Texas Rising Star System.
- The average family uses the program for 70 days.
- 75% of the children served are under age 5; 25% are between 5 and 13.
- The program includes a full-time “navigator” who monitors use, refers clients to sources of employment and training, and refers clients to quality child care settings.

Background

Parents with little or no income are often faced with a Catch 22. In order to work, they need child care, BUT in order to get child care subsidies, they must have a job. If they lose a job or encounter administrative glitches, their federally-supported child care subsidies end after 28 days, creating more disruption in the family and in the child’s life. The Continuity of Care program helps families to help themselves by bridging the gaps created by job instability and enabling parents to find and maintain employment and by assuring that children get the continuous experience in high quality early education that promotes school readiness.

Sincerely,



Kyle Holder, Chair

Cc: Austin City Council
Shannon Jones, HHSD Director