

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023 Plan, under the priority of Economic Opportunity and Affordability, identifies the burden of child care costs; and

WHEREAS, the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan identifies the need to “improve access to quality child care services near homes and workplaces”, and

WHEREAS, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than half of the child care programs in Austin that accept child care subsidies have closed and are not operating; and

WHEREAS, child care programs that remain open and operating child are facing impending closure due to increased operating costs associated with implementing health and safety protocols (such as additional staff to create smaller class sizes), reduced revenue due to reduced enrollment and attendance, and intermittent closures as a result of COVID-19 exposure; and

WHEREAS, child care programs that remain open and operating may have capacity to serve additional families, however the Austin/Travis County Workforce Board that manages the subsidy program currently has a waiting list of more than 2,000 children seeking child care subsidy; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the demand for child care subsidies and number of families
21 eligible for subsidies is growing and expected to continue growing given the
22 economic strain of the pandemic on our community; and

23 **WHEREAS**, the Essential Worker Child Care Subsidy is expected to be
24 terminated imminently, which would result in additional loss of funding for child
25 care and more families placed on the growing waiting list; and

26 **WHEREAS**, \$1 Million in funding already allocated by the City Council for
27 the Austin Childcare Provider Relief Grant provides relief for economic loss from
28 March to June, however the ongoing requirements for providing child care under
29 current health and safety protocols will result in ongoing potential loss of revenue
30 and increased expenses for all child care programs in Austin for the next 9-12
31 months; and

32 **WHEREAS**, the shortage of subsidy funds for child care disproportionately
33 impacts children of color, whose parents and guardians disproportionately work in
34 sectors that do not allow for remote work or work from home options, also
35 increasing risk of COVID-19 exposure; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

36 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

37 The City Manager is directed collaborate with APH's Child Care working
38 group to report on the state of child care in our community and include actionable
39 recommendations by August 13, 2020 to address the current and imminent child

care challenges brought about by COVID-19. Recommendations should include measures for stabilizing the local child care system as an essential component of the City's economic infrastructure, actions that may be taken by our community and local governments, as well as matters on which the City could press for action at the state and federal levels.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

Recommendations should include an assessment of the viability of establishing a Child Care Stabilization Fund that may award immediate and ongoing stabilization grants, and support other solutions to strengthen financial viability of the child care sector, and increase equitable access to quality child care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council further directs the City Manager to immediately implement recommendations from the report that may be enacted without Council approval.

ADOPTED: _____, 2020

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk