



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022

Early Childhood Council

The Board/Commission mission statement (per section 2-1-123 of the City Code) is:
The Early Childhood Council shall:

1. Make recommendations to the city council for the creation, development, and implementation of programs that promote optimal development for young children;
2. Develop, for recommendation to city council, programs and activities that contribute to the continued development of a system of high-quality early care and education and after-school programs for Austin's children;
3. Explore and develop, for recommendation to city council, cooperative arrangements with area governments in the metropolitan region to support a system of quality early care and education;
4. Encourage volunteerism and philanthropic efforts in order to generate broad-based community involvement and support for quality early care and education and promote the wellbeing of families of young children; and
5. Develop, for recommendation to city council, strategies encouraging individuals and agencies to continually improve the quality of their services for young children; and
6. Support innovative approaches to quality early care and education and leadership development in fields relating to the optimal development of young children.

1. **Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

(Reference all reports, recommendations, letters or resolutions presented to the City Council on mission-specific issues. If some of the elements of the mission

statement were not acted on by the board in the past year, the report should explain why no action was taken.)

On November 10, 2021, the Early Childhood Council (ECC):

- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to explore mechanisms for tracking concerns raised by community members about access to child care subsidies, challenges navigating the child care subsidy system, and customer services provided by the Workforce Solutions Capital Area as the entity responsible for child care subsidy in Austin/Travis County by TWC. Recommended potential resolutions through City contracts with Workforce Solutions Capital Area. These could include, as an example, establishing performance measures for customer service metrics and/or staff participation in training.
 - Outcome: The City of Austin included metrics related to this request in social service contracts with Workforce Solutions Capital Area for COVID relief funded projects.
 - Outcome: Workforce Solutions Capital Area selected Start Early Consulting through a public procurement process to partner with Workforce Solutions Capital Area to identify key themes about families' and providers' experiences with the local child care system and to develop recommendations for a comprehensive stakeholder engagement system.
- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to direct state lobbying efforts to petition the state for adoption of both the federal child care funds and the related Universal Pre-K funds that are also included in this legislation. And that the City Council further direct City staff to conduct financial planning to fulfill obligations the City might have in FY2023-2027 for securing funds.
- Voted to convene 2 ECC regular meetings in 2022 at more convenient times for families, child care providers, and other stakeholders to attend, to increase access to community members and increase the opportunity to provide public comment to the ECC. One meeting was scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, April 12, 2022, and the other for the morning of Saturday, August 13, 2022.

On January 12, 2022, the ECC:

- [Requested](#) that the Austin City Council pass a resolution acknowledging that workers in the child care field in Austin are essential workers who have experienced serious burdens and stress over the past few years, and are deserving of admiration and gratitude for their service to our community
- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to identify ways to alleviate the financial burden that is leading to increasing displacement of these essential workers out of Austin, such as property-tax relief, assistance for child care and work-related expenses, transportation subsidies, housing subsidies, etc.

- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to establish a task force to address workforce issues in the child care sector.

On March 9, 2022, the ECC:

- [Recommended](#) that the City of Austin maintain all current investments in early childhood programs and infrastructure including but not limited to:
 - Social Service Contracts
 - Staffing (2 FTE) positions specifically for early childhood through Austin Public Health
 - Leases for city-funded early childhood facilities
 - Essential infrastructure such as Family Connects and WIC programs that specifically serve families with young children prenatal to age 5.

On April 12, 2022, the ECC:

- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to increase funding for child care services under the Community Development Block Grant for a) Early Head Start and b) expansion of the Teen Parent Child Care Program to provide child care for teen parents who are enrolled in districts other than Austin Independent School District (AISD).
 - Outcome: The City anticipates the Early Head Start and Teen Parent Child Care Program Community Development Block Grant agreements will be increased in FY 2022-23. However, the increase is not guaranteed and may be subject to change until the grant is received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in September 2022.
- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to consider requirements in City-funded social service contracts that:
 - Include opportunity for community and client voice and input by requiring community and client engagement and feedback in the development and implementation of programs and services; and
 - Provide a stipend to compensate for community member and client participation in planning and implementation of programs; and
 - Include Cost of Living increases for social service contracts for staff; and
 - Allow agencies to request funding to cover the cost of increased community and client engagement and that the City increase funding to accommodate community and client engagement, when possible
- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to prioritize the needs of families with low incomes for affordable housing, including increasing the availability of 3 (and 4) bedroom units.

Progress was also made this year on recommendations made by the ECC in the previous years, including

- Implementation of the [recommendation](#) to include child care facilities in City projects ([Resolution No. 20210826-108](#)) was finalized with the development of policy and criteria for implementation.
- The opening of the child care facility at the City of Austin Bergstrom Tech location that the ECC [recommended](#) the City fund the lease of.
- The City of Austin executing [contracts to implement funded recommendations from the “Recommendations for Transforming the ATX Early Childhood System”](#) that were submitted by the Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Coalition in the spending framework for COVID-19 relief and recovery and American Rescue Plan Funding.

2. Determine if the board’s actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.

(If any of the board’s actions were outside the scope of the mission statement, the report should explain the non-compliance issues.)

Yes, the board’s actions comply with the ECC mission statement.

3. List the board’s goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

(Make sure the goals and objectives fall within the mission statement of the board/commission.)

In the new calendar year, the ECC will:

1. Explore and create additional avenues for community voices including families, child care providers, and organizations, and serve as a conduit to carry their voices and perspectives to City Council to align with the Strategic Direction 2023 goal of “A Government that Works for All.”
2. Influence City investments in early childhood education and advocate on policies that support the continued development of a system of high-quality early care and education for all Austin families.
3. Articulate how actions/recommendations align with City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023 outcomes.
4. Articulate how actions/recommendations align with the Success By 6 Coalition and 2-Gen community strategic plans.
5. Increase the impact of Early Childhood Council actions by improving communications between ECC members, Joint Inclusion Committee, and City Council and Mayor’s offices.