



## RECOMMENDATION

### Commission for Women

#### Recommendation Number 20240605-005: Affordable Child Care

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WHEREAS, the Commission for Women (“Commission”) of the City of Austin (“City”) serves as an advisory body that advocates for and inspires the City Council (“Council”) and City Manager to prioritize women’s quality of life, so that Austin becomes the most equitable city in the nation for women and girls; and

WHEREAS, for decades, families in Austin and Travis County have struggled to find affordable, quality child care and afterschool and summer programming for children birth to high school graduation (henceforth referred to as “child care”); and

WHEREAS, child care is the highest expense for families after housing in Travis County, and one year of child care costs more than one year of tuition at the University of Texas at Austin; and

WHEREAS, the current waiting list for families with low income who need child care subsidies has more than 4,600 children on it, enrollment is closed, and there is now a 2-year waiting list period; and

WHEREAS, child care costs are out of reach for many families in Austin and Travis County. While families cannot afford the current prices, child care tuition rarely covers the true cost of providing a high-quality program. Costs for quality child care programs (including paying staff a living wage) have increased but families cannot afford to pay more; and

WHEREAS, the child care and out-of-school time workforce, predominantly women of color, earns less than a living wage resulting in high turnover (over 30% annually) and under-staffed programs serving fewer children and cutting hours. Turnover hurts children and creates stress for families; and

WHEREAS, families rely on affordable quality child care to participate in and complete education, training programs, or the workforce; and

WHEREAS, child care and out of school time challenges particularly impact individuals and communities of color that have been historically excluded from economic prosperity:

- 81% of children under age 6 receiving child care subsidies in Travis County are Black, Hispanic, or non-white/multi-racial
- The share of Travis County children under age 6 in working families who have parents working nontraditional hours is 47.1% Black and 42.1% Hispanic

- The child care workforce in Texas is overwhelmingly female and 62% are either Black or Hispanic; and

WHEREAS, a local investment in affordable quality child care and out of school time programs will result in better outcomes for children, greater workforce participation, family economic stability and a stronger economy; and

WHEREAS, quality afterschool and summer programs increase youth's academic skills and skill development for future careers, improve school day attendance, support positive mental and physical health, and support working families by providing a safe environment for youth when school is out; and

WHEREAS, with the high cost of living for families and rapid population growth in Austin and Travis County, increased access to affordable quality child care is imperative to nurture children's development, support working families, and foster community well-being. These programs provide a safe environment for children to learn and play, contributing to improved academic outcomes and reduced crime rates. Moreover, by enabling parents to participate in the workforce, these investments boost productivity and strengthen the local economy. Ultimately, prioritizing these initiatives ensures a brighter, more equitable future for all residents of Austin and Travis County.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Commission for Women supports a ballot initiative in Travis County that would generate sustainable funding each year to support quality, affordable child care, including early childhood care and afterschool programming and summer programs. This would add more funding to expand access to quality programs for children and youth, support working families, and help to provide better pay to staff and resources for children and youth in Austin and across Travis County.

Date of Approval: 06/05/2024

Record of the vote

For: Chair Tau, Vice Chair Bullard, Commissioners Austen, Harris, Scheihing, Serrata and Veloz Salas

Against: None

Absent : Commissioners Bissereth, Glasser, Melendez and Rattan

Attest: Christi Vitela

Commission for Women Staff Liaison