



## 2019 POLICY AND FINANCING RECOMMENDATIONS

Minnesota needs high-quality early childhood care and education to support children, working parents and the economic vitality of our state. But we have a crisis on our hands. We do not have enough qualified early childhood educators to take care of all of the children in Minnesota.

The best way to impact both families' access to, and the quality of early care and education is to shift both attitudes and resources to support the ecosystem of early childhood care and education. This ecosystem is built on a foundation of a qualified, diverse, supported and fairly compensated early childhood educator workforce.

Toward that end, we have prioritized the following policy and financing recommendations:

- Continue and increase funding for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarships, R.E.E.T.A.I.N grants, and CDA Awards<sup>1</sup>
- Continue and increase funding for Greater Minnesota Child Care through DEED, while adding a focus on Workforce Development to the grant<sup>2</sup>
- Build on the recent Two-Year Occupational Grant Pilot Program<sup>3</sup> administered by the Office of Higher Education and provide full-tuition waivers for recent high school graduates so they can earn their associate degree in early childhood education
- Expand the "Grow Your Own" grants program to include Head Start, school and community based early education programs<sup>4</sup>
- Expand supports to increase the number of teachers of color and American Indian teachers<sup>5</sup>
- Implement tax credits supporting access and quality for families as well as early care and education professionals of all income levels

In addition, we support policy and financing recommendations to:

- Increase funding to help families access quality early care and education programs
- Implement recommendations from the Office of the Legislative Auditor Report, specifically the recommendation to broaden the authority of MDE, MDH and DHS to share individual-level data from early childhood programs to improve program coordination

As part of Minnesota's 10-year plan, additional items under investigation include looking at ways to connect compensation to quality and ensure that providers receive payments that cover the total costs of high-quality care.

The B8 Early Childhood Workforce Core Team is an independent group of early childhood stakeholders and advocates who are organized through the support of West Central Initiative and the McKnight Foundation. We are working to develop a Minnesota plan to implement some of the recommendations from the 2015 Institute of Medicine report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* and to connect that plan with the recommendations from *Minnesota's Workforce Compensation Advisory Group Report*. More information is available at [www.ecworkforcemn.org](http://www.ecworkforcemn.org) or you can contact Christa Anders at [christa@ecworkforcemn.org](mailto:christa@ecworkforcemn.org) or 612 920-0574.

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<sup>1</sup> **T.E.A.C.H** (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood MINNESOTA Scholarships is a national program licensed by the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center and administered by Child Care Aware of Minnesota. T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships cover 85% of the cost of tuition and books for up to 18 credits per year towards an early childhood degree. Recipients also receive a travel stipend and release time. Upon successful completion of nine or more credits, recipients may receive a two percent raise (center-based only) and/or a \$250-\$300 bonus. Scholarship recipients commit to remaining at their place of employment for at least one year after their scholarship end date.

**R.E.E.T.A.I.N.** (Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now) grants reward child care professionals who have demonstrated a commitment to the field by continuing their education and professional development. Grants are awarded annually and range from \$500 to \$3,500.

**CDA Awards** help early childhood educators pay for the required training, application and renewal of the nationally recognized Child Development Associate Credential (CDA). Initial training is eligible for reimbursement at \$5 per hour up to \$600; renewal training is eligible for up to \$225 of reimbursement, and the full costs of the initial and renewal CDA assessment fees can be covered (\$425 and \$125).

From July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, Minnesota spent just over \$1 million on TEACH scholarships; \$200,000 on REETAIN grants and \$43,000 on CDA awards for a total of \$1,243,000.

<sup>2</sup> **Greater Minnesota Child Care Grants** were authorized by the 2016 and 2017 legislatures and provided \$500,000 in 2017 and \$519,000 in 2018 for grants to communities to increase the supply of quality child care providers. They are administered by the Department of Employment and Economic Development in recognition that regional economic development is dependent on employees having access to child care. Grants were awarded on a competitive basis and require a local match. The communities receiving the grants will use a variety of approaches ranging from forgivable loans for child care start up to helping with licensing regulation.

<sup>3</sup> **The Two-Year Occupational Grant Pilot Program** was created by the 2015 Minnesota Legislature and implemented by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education in the 2016 -2017 and 2017- 2018 academic years. The program provided financial assistance to certain students enrolled in Minnesota State two-year colleges who were working towards a degree in a high demand occupation, including early childhood. The program provided last dollar grant funding as well as mentoring. A report on the program's first year is available at: <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/pdf/MnSCUOccGrantReport2016.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> **The Grow Your Own Grant Program** has been funded by the 2016 and 2017 Legislatures with a focus on diversifying the teacher candidate pool in Minnesota. It provides tuition scholarships/stipends to eligible employees so they can participate in a Board-approved nonconventional teacher residency pilot. It allows employees of certain school districts, particularly employees of color and American Indian employees, who already have a bachelor's degree to earn their teaching license.

<sup>5</sup> There are some innovative supports in place to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce. Additional funding is needed for the expansion of "Grow Your Own" and **Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color** programs that recruit and support racially/ethnically diverse secondary students, paraprofessionals and parents into the early childhood teaching profession.