



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: 11/12/13

Prepared By/Phone Number: Juanita Jackson/854-4467

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Sherri E. Fleming,
County Executive for Health and Human Services and Veterans Service

Commissioners Court Sponsor: Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

APPROVE PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR INVESTMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES.

RECEIVE UPDATE AND GIVE STAFF DIRECTION ON THE FOLLOWING RELATED TO INVESTMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES:

- a) PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR EXISTING AND EXPANDED INVESTMENTS FOR FY15
- b) ONE TIME INVESTMENT IN DIRECT CHILD CARE SUBSIDY FOR FY14 AND 15

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

See attached memo

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed strategies for investment in early childhood services.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

See attached memo

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

See attached memo

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Mary Etta Gerhardt, Assistant County Attorney
 Nicki Riley, Travis County Auditor
 Leslie Browder, County Executive for Planning and Budgeting
 Cyd Grimes, CPM, Travis County Purchasing Agent
 Aerin Toussaint, Analyst, Planning and Budgeting Office
 Shannon Pleasant, Purchasing Agent, Purchasing Office
 Sherri Fleming, County Executive HHS/VS

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials must be submitted as a pdf to the County Judge's office, agenda@co.travis.tx.us by **Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.** for the next week's meeting.



**TRAVIS COUNTY HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES
and VETERANS SERVICE**
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P. O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767

Sherri E. Fleming
County Executive for HHS/VS
(512) 854-4100
Fax (512) 279-2197

DATE: November 6, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT

FROM:

Sherri E. Fleming
Sherri E. Fleming, County Executive
Health and Human Services and Veterans Service

SUBJECT: Receive update and give staff direction on the following related to investments in early childhood services:
a) Procurement process for existing and expanded investments for FY15
b) One time investment in direct child care subsidy for FY14 and 15

Proposed Motion:

Approve proposed strategies for investments in early childhood services.

Summary and Staff Recommendations:

For FY14, Commissioners Court allocated \$500,000 in new funding to HHS&VS to support expanded investments in early childhood services. Staff proposes the two following steps to allocate those new funds and update our existing investments:

FY15 Social Service Competition

Goal: All Travis County early childhood investments align with or strategically compliment the TCCC-endorsed *Austin/Travis County School Readiness Action Plan*.

Outcomes and services fall in to the following categories:

- Supports to families with young children
- Early care and education
- Wraparound services to highly vulnerable families with young children
- Issue area planning, research, program design and evaluation

Travis County investment strategies:

- Direct service programming (e.g., Healthy Families, Parenting In Recovery)

- Directly-negotiated contracts for service (e.g., ATCIC, Workforce Solutions Child Care Local Match)
- Competitively-procured contracts for service (i.e., social service contracts)

Proposed timeline for FY15 social service competition:

- December 2013 – Complete required documentation (scope of work, review criteria, etc.)
- February 2014 – Release RFP
- March 2014 – Proposals due
- March–July 2014 – Review and score proposals, negotiate and approve new contracts
- October 1, 2014 – New contracts begin

The HHS/VS Department requests permission to offer a competitive bidding process with existing and expanded early childhood investments for FY15.

FY14 Interim Investment Strategy

The FY14 interim investment strategy recommendation is a **one-time** \$500,000 investment towards child care subsidies using one of the following approaches:

Recommendation A: Invest \$500K in **one-time** funding toward childcare subsidy in FY14.

Recommendation B: Spread **one-time** investment over two contract years - \$250K in FY14 and \$250K in FY15.

Rationale:

This recommendation addresses the top community priority in this issue area – increase local investments in child care subsidies.

Many Travis County families need assistance with subsidized child care to obtain or maintain employment:

- Almost one-half (46%) of all children in Travis County are below 200% of the poverty threshold.
- Child care is an essential work support. In Travis County, 53,653 children under six years old live in families where their sole parent or both parents work.
- Central Texas has the most expensive child care in the state of Texas.

In addition to increasing service capacity, a significant **one-time** increase in resources for child care subsidies can offer greater stability to vulnerable Travis County families, as well as the overall child care system:

- Prevent and offset care disruption for vulnerable, working Travis County families.
- Stabilize the local child care system for Travis County infants.

Note: this is not a recommendation for an ongoing expanded investment in childcare subsidy. After this one-time investment, these dollars should be included within the County's overall Early Childhood investment strategy for FY15 (see page 1).

Budgetary and Fiscal Impact:

Plan will add \$500,000 to County investments in early childhood services.

Issues and Opportunities:

Starting in FY12, the budget rules approved by the Court directed departments to notify outside agencies of the process for “non-County requests”. In response, the number of requests HHS&VS has received has grown at an almost exponential rate: from 9, to 18, to 33. The 33 requests we received for FY14 totaled roughly \$4 million. The number and value of these outside requests have become unmanageable. This proposal is the first step to address some emerging needs in the community in a more structured, formal manner.

This early childhood investment process will serve as a pilot of an updated approach to address all of our investments in purchased social services. As our community continues to grow and change at a rapid pace, Travis County needs to shift to a more flexible and more responsive approach to making and managing investments in social services. In the long-run, HHS&VS hopes create a process through which all of our investments will be reviewed and updated on a predictable schedule that will allow both more transparency in how investments are made and more responsiveness to community change.

Background:

Travis County’s investments in purchased social services have remained largely static for many years. TCHHS&VS recommends that we move towards the following long-term plan as a way to create a more open, transparent, responsive and accountable approach to investing in our community:

- a. Implement a cycle of issue-based processes that will ensure an open and transparent process to review, update, and where appropriate, re-compete all of our investments over a 5 year period
- b. Will include both existing investments and new funding where possible
- c. All will build upon existing community plans, community assessments that are the result of inclusive collaborative processes
- d. Early Childhood process planned for FY14 will serve as a pilot

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Mary Etta Gerhardt, Assistant County Attorney
Nicki Riley, Travis County Auditor
Leslie Browder, County Executive for Planning and Budgeting
Cyd Grimes, CPM, Travis County Purchasing Agent
Aerin Toussaint, Analyst, Planning and Budgeting Office
Shannon Pleasant, Purchasing Agent, Purchasing Office
Sherri Fleming, County Executive HHS/VS

Travis County Early Childhood Issue Area Investments

Recommended investment strategies
for FY14 and FY15

Two Part Discussion

- Part 1 – FY15 Social Service Competition:
Targeting all Travis County early childhood investments to align with or strategically compliment the *Austin/Travis County School Readiness Action Plan*
- Part 2 – FY14 Interim Strategy:
One-time investment to Child Care Subsidies

Targeting all Travis County early childhood investments to align with or strategically compliment the *Austin/Travis County School Readiness Action Plan*

PART 1: FY15 SOCIAL SERVICE COMPETITION

TCCC-endorsed Austin/Travis County School Readiness Action Plan

Outcomes and services fall in to the following categories:

- Supports to families with young children.
- Early Care and Education.
- Wraparound services to highly vulnerable families with young children.
- Issue area planning, research, program design and evaluation

Travis County Investments strategies:

- **Direct service programming** (i.e., Healthy Families, Parenting In Recovery)
- **Directly negotiated contracts for service** (i.e., ATCIC Children First, Workforce Solutions Childcare Local Match)
- **Competitively procured contracts for service** (Social Service Contracts)

FY15 Early Childhood Social Service Competition

The HHS/VS Department **requests permission to offer a competitive bidding process with existing and expanded early childhood investments for FY15.**

- **December 2013** – Complete required documentation (scope of work, review criteria, etc.)
- **February 2014** - Release RFP
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One-time investment to Child Care
Subsidies

PART 2: FY14 INTERIM STRATEGY

FY14 Interim Strategy

Recommendation: ONE-TIME \$500,000 investment over FY14 and FY15 to early childhood subsidies

This recommendation addresses the top community priority in this issue are - increase local investments in childcare subsidies.

Many Travis County families need assistance with subsidized child care to obtain or maintain employment:

- Almost one-half (46%) of all children in Travis County are below 200% of the poverty threshold.
- Child care is an essential work support - In Travis County, 53,653 children under six years old live in families where their sole parent or both parents work.
- Central Texas has the most expensive child care in the state of Texas.

Benefit of a ONE-TIME Childcare Subsidy Increase

In addition to increasing service capacity, a significant ONE TIME increase in resources for child care subsidies can offer greater stability to vulnerable Travis County families, as well as the overall child care system:

- Prevent and offset care disruption for vulnerable, working Travis County families.
- Stabilize the local child care system for Travis County infants.