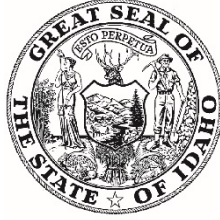


BRAD LITTLE
GOVERNOR

Wendi Secrist
Executive Director



Deni Hoehne
Chair

John Young
Vice Chair

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

514 W Jefferson St, Ste 131, Boise, Idaho 83702

Child Care Expansion Grant Review Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, April 7, 2023
Time: 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Committee Members: Sarah Griffin, Emily Allen, Anna Almerico, Renee Bade, Martin Balben, Ben Davidson, Lori McCann, Caroline Merritt

Staff: Wendi Secrist, Amanda Ames, Cassie Mansour, Rebecca Watson

Guests: Deepika Ilavarasan

Called to order at 9:00 AM

Welcome

Roll Call – Quorum Met

Review Agenda – No changes to the agenda

Review March 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Davidson to approve the March 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. Second by Mr. Balben. Motion carried.

Legislative/Budget Update

Ms. Secrist reviewed the legislative session and how the decisions made will impact the WDC and the Child Care Committee. She discussed the next steps to fund child care for public safety officers.

In May, the CCEG will consider recommending a waiver of the \$15,000 per seat maximum to the Council for up to \$3 million in grants to support public safety professions. This is based on the Governor's recommendation to have \$3 million set aside for these projects and the unique needs in staffing a facility well beyond normal business hours.

Discussion:

- An application was received in the first couple rounds from a child care provider who was planning to partner with first responders.

- They were specifically partnering with the City of Star Police and Fire Protection District but did not plan to offer expanded hours or any of the other hallmarks of a public safety specific child care provider facility.
- Another application from a provider that would operate 5am – 11pm along with providing call-out services is still pending review.

Ms. Secrist updated the committee with the new Workforce Development Training Fund budget, including funding the new Idaho Launch expansion, and semiconductor grants.

Finally, Ms. Secrist shared with the Committee that our project funding will likely be unaffected by the audit of Department of Health and Welfare grant programs. We will be waiting to sign the contract for one awardee until the applicant has repaid some funds and is back in good standing with the Department of Health and Welfare. This concern came up during the risk assessment.

Child Care Expansion Grants Discussion

***Review and Recommend Policy Changes**

Ms. Ames and Ms. Secrist shared with the Committee that we have some policy and/or process changes to discuss.

- Cost per seat is one area that we could consider updating. Do we want to have a lower cost/seat for smaller providers, or do we want to incorporate a different model?
- Do we also want to consider a cap on large grant applications? Whether that is one million, or half a million per project, would that be an effective strategy to making our money stretch farther, or would that eliminate worthy projects?

Discussion:

- The Committee would like to change the rubrics and scoring expectations from large/small providers to large/medium/small providers.
- The Committee would also like to utilize a separate rubric for after school programs.
 - The Committee suggested adding Idaho Building Blocks for Out-of-School Time Quality as a tool to assess quality work in Out-of-School time programming. This could be reflected in the rubric as it is tailored to school age quality work.
- How would you categorize the difference between large and medium centers? A clear articulation of these differences is going to be essential.
 - One recommendation would be to imitate how the Idaho Stars program delineates programs by size.
 - Mr. Balben will send that information to the committee soon.
- Will this require a different application and rubric or will we just weigh them differently on the back end?
 - That will be up to the Committee.
 - Establishing categories based on precedent would probably mean keeping the rubric the same, but that would impact the amount awarded, and the minimum threshold of points on the rubric to be considered for funding.
- The Committee discussed the sophistication differences between applicants with more resources, and those with less.
- The Committee considered the potential to cap the possible funding award.

- Capping the total should be tied to the type of project, if the Committee decides to go that route – construction of new facilities could be eligible for \$15,000 per seat, whereas remodels might be less than that.
- The Committee did an amazing job with the initial \$15 million; 2,500 child care seats were created!
- What was the reasoning to justify the \$15,000 per seat max?
 - That figure was based on the national level data on startup costs for a new Headstart program.
- Are we trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist? Is \$15,000 too low per seat? We funded a lot of applications that didn't max out their allotment of \$15,000 per child.
 - Per Ms. Mansour, the average cost-per-seat request during the first year of applications was between \$8-9 thousand.
- Altering caps or creating more limitations might hurt us down the road in the flexibility we have.
- Is there anything we wished we had in place in the policy and procedures?
- The Committee likes the idea of tweaking the application process in such a way that we are encouraging providers to ask for what they need rather than maxing their request. Even for the applications that ask for the max, the provider match ensures skin-in-the-game which is necessary to ensure each provider is as invested as we are and will be more apt to succeed.
- Will we provide training and technical assistance on the front end to applicants before they apply?
 - Staff are hoping to have brief meetings with any interested applicants to go over expectations. We are also thinking of creating a screening form for them to complete prior to the application.

Ms. Ames requested that the Committee consider updating the application for ease of evaluation, and for ease of the staff navigating the budget. In addition, “scope of work” would be an area we would like to streamline.

Discussion:

- Could we make provider size a check box on the application or in the rubric? This could help to initiate equitable funding considerations for small, medium, and large providers.
- If a provider scores particularly low in an area, would we want to give the provider the opportunity to modify their application so they could bring that score up?
- We have added a letter of intent to the application process. We want to give feedback to applicants to help them edit, simplify, or add nuance to their application.
- What are we going to do about reconsidering previous applications?
 - We could allow applicants to submit an addendum to their application, or we could give them the option to redo their application if they have substantive updates to their projects.
- A newsletter to applicants or an FAQ sheet might be a great tool to streamline this process.
 - That has been a discussion among the staff. How to be accessible without spending as much time one-on-one. Staff spent a lot of time at first with providers that didn't really have an appropriate project.
- Ms. Secrist let the Committee know that this support and feedback helps staff to focus our efforts.

Timeline for Opening Applications for Next Round

Ms. Secrist discussed the timeline for next steps in funding. She requested input on a timeline for the next round of applications.

Discussion:

- Do we want to have just one deadline this time?
 - The Committee agreed that rolling deadlines were a challenge that we don't need to navigate in this coming round.
- Would the Committee like to have a separate deadline for reapplication than for a first-time application?
 - One deadline would be better but give both first-time and repeat applicants more time to prepare.
- Rescoring is going to be an essential part of this evaluation period.
- The Committee reflected that it is possible we are going to receive a lot more applications with a potentially higher funding total request.
- The Committee discussed potential timeline options at length. Staff reflected that this process has taken longer in some areas than we could have predicted.
 - Having the application open for at least 2 months would be ideal.
- Ms. Secrist agreed with the Committee that the best-case scenario is to have all funding made by the end of the calendar year.
- The staff likes the idea of being proactive: having the training videos or resources available for applicants from the very beginning of this round.
- Is it an unnecessary complication to have 3 different deadlines for reapplicants, large/medium providers, and small providers?
- The Committee suggested on the following timeline:
 - Opening the next round of applications: June 15th-July 1st some time.
 - Applications deadline: August 15th
 - Funding meeting TBD, but some time in calendar year 2023.
- The Committee encouraged staff to brainstorm an appropriate timeline and present it at the next meeting.

***Small Provider Support**

Ms. Secrist presented the need for support for small providers. See Small Provider Support PDF. She encouraged the Committee to consider allocating a portion of the \$4 million set aside for small providers to fund a contract for dedicated technical support.

Providing technical support for providers of child care with less resources is fundamentally in line with the goals of this Child Care Expansion Grant funding.

Discussion:

- Did the WDC get an additional staff position to provide this support?
 - No, as Ms. Secrist did not feel that this was the best way forward given that we need specific expertise in child care.
 - We have two possible options that would meet this need: Contract with an organization that provides business planning/development support or contract with a child-care technology provider that supports business start-ups.
 - The first option could take 6 or more months to conduct a full RFP. The second may be done by leveraging a contract that another state has procured through NASPO – it's called a mini-bid and takes about 6 or so weeks.
- Spanish Language support is going to be crucial.

Ms. Merritt motioned to pursue the mini-bid process with a child-care technology provider. Second by Mr. Balben. Motion passed.

Timeline for Funding-Termination on Projects with no Movement

Ms. Ames requested direction from the Committee on what to do if we have applicants who have been recommended for funding but do not have any movement. We are seeing some applicants who are unresponsive, and other projects that have been awarded but are just not moving forward.

- If we terminate the project the funds would be able to be reassigned.
- Would a thirty-day warning letter be appropriate?
 - Can the Committee be notified of these projects that are in danger?
 - Yes, we can cc: the Committee with these letters and follow up at our monthly meetings.
- The Committee agrees that a thirty-day letter of notice is appropriate.

FAQ Discussion

The Committee encouraged the staff to reach out if they need more support.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 AM