

May 18, 2023 Committee on Childcare in Minot

Committee on Childcare in Minot – May 18, 2023 AT 2:00 P.M.

Members Present:

Scott Burlingame, Amy Jenkins, Rianne Kuhn, Lisa Olson, Keli Rosselli-Sullivan, Harold Stewart, John Van Dyke, Becca Oswill, Heather Cymbaluk

Members Absent:

Terry Schumalz

Also Present:

Mikayla McWilliams (City Clerk)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Scott Burlingame at 2:11pm. The committee did introductions to the presenter, Jessica Thomasson, the Executive Director of Human Services. Jessica presented updates to the committee on items dealing with the State Legislature for 2023.

HB1540 was the bill for the child care package. Discussion began with childcare as a workforce solution. North Dakota right now had more job openings than people to fill. 47% of the jobs have the average was less than \$25 per hour. Economic realities of child-rearing affect household decisions of employment. There are 45,000 ND households with kids under the age of 5.

Jessica discussed how child care as a workforce solution can make a difference for ND employers in ways such as:

- Affordability – Connecting more working families to child care assistance to keep the cost of child care within 7% of household income.
- Availability – Making it easier for working families to find child care when and where they need it.
- Quality – Helping kids realize their potential by supporting quality early childhood experiences.

HB1540 is a \$65.6 million Child Care Package. With the extra funding, there will be an investment in the child care assistance program. This program is a federal child care grant that is income qualifying for parents working or in school. There is a co-pay requirement but it is designed to make child care more affordable. Providers have to register for CCAP if they have a family that uses the funding. There is no co-pay for a family with this program if their income is under 30% of the state median.

It will also allow an extension on the ND's employer-led child care cost sharing program and opt-in to enable the State of ND to participate as an employer. The employer at minimum has to offer \$150/month and the maximum match from the state is up to \$300/month.

HB1540 will also help with increasing provider payments for infant and toddler care. This could be an increase of up to 40% but the family will still need to make the excess payment. There was also funding dedicated to improving the customer experience for applicants to CCAP, such as investing into software to make the customer experience friendly after working hours.

There would also be investment in streamlining the background checks and reducing the administrative burden. They are looking into adding two additional fingerprint station in the state. Currently ND has 11 state locations where there are live scan fingerprint machines and 9,000 child care background checks get done per year in ND. Along with adding two additional stations, they are looking into an automated system to reduce errors and reduce the time lag.

Funding was also set aside to support child care providers with grants, incentives and shared services. Discussion was also held about creating new partnerships for care provided during non-traditional hours. This process has not been developed as of yet but the application and process will be posted when available.

There will also be quality-based tiers in the CCAP payment schedule that will allow for a higher payment based on the rating. There is a 4-step rating for child care in the state of ND and it can be found on www.brightandearlynd.org. Lastly, the funding will help reward providers for the completion of above-and-beyond training.

It was asked if there could be or was an outreach program to the military. The DoD has a program but the idea of targeted outreach could be done with assistance. Jessica was asked how much a fingerprint station costs and why not have more of them. She said the hardest part of the fingerprinting stations is employing them and the equipment is around \$20,000.00. Jessica also mentioned the money will start to be dispersed after the session around July 1st.

Jessica also mentioned the committee focus should be sharing the awareness of the available programs to the families and businesses in the community. There was discussion about encouraging individuals to be trained prior to employment like in a CTE curriculum. There is child care coaching through Child Care Aware. Grants to providers will be on ND Grow, on the workforce registry dashboard and part of the electronic newsletter sent to providers.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 4:30 pm at the new City Hall (10 3rd Ave SW). He also mentioned the discussion of the meeting will be to revisit the challenges of child care on the Minot Air Force Base so if there was anyone the committee could reach out to from the MAFB it would be appreciated. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.