

**SOPHIE HAHN**

Berkeley City Council, District 5
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CONSENT CALENDAR
 January 19, 2021

To: Honorable Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Sophie Hahn (Author), Councilmember Kate Harrison (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Susan Wengraf (Co-Sponsor), Mayor Jesse Arreguin (Co-Sponsor)
 Subject: Relief for Child Care Providers

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution making child care providers, including all forms of early childhood education, eligible for grants and other assistance under the Berkeley Relief Fund.

BACKGROUND**Berkeley Relief Fund**

On March 17, 2020, the City Council allocated \$3 million to launch the Berkeley Relief Fund to assist businesses, arts organizations, and renters in Berkeley that have experienced financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ Berkeley's residents, business community, and philanthropists have made generous contributions.²

On March 30, the City announced the first phase of the Berkeley Relief Fund program: the Berkeley Business Continuity Grants, an allocation of \$1 million to help mitigate COVID-19 related financial losses suffered by small businesses. Through this program, grants of up to \$10,000 were made available to Berkeley-based small businesses and nonprofits to enable continuity through and/or beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Office of Economic Development (OED) received over 1000 applications to the Business Continuity Grant Program, testimony to the great number of needs in Berkeley. In the first phase of the grant program, the City issued 353 grants totaling \$968,499 to businesses and nonprofits.

¹ ["Berkeley COVID-19 Relief Fund and Expanding Flexible Housing Pool." Berkeley City Council, March 17, 2020 meeting, item 3](#)

² [Berkeley Relief Fund](#)

While the Fund continues to raise philanthropic donations, demonstrating the generous support of our community, and has provided vital assistance to hundreds of small businesses, it is clear that many local businesses impacted by COVID-19 have not received needed assistance.

Child Care Provider Need

Child care is critical to Berkeley's recovery from the COVID-19 health crisis and to our children's long-term development and success. However, the pandemic has placed severe strain on the child care system.

The situation child care providers are facing is dire. Without immediate relief, it is likely that many programs will be forced to close in the coming months, leaving children without access to high-quality care, and limiting the ability of low-income and frontline-worker parents to work.

To make ends meet, many childcare providers have been charging supplies to their personal credit cards, struggling to hang on through the pandemic. Most childcare providers are women, and often women of color, who under normal circumstances receive very low wages and are themselves eligible for public benefits. *Small amounts of support at this critical juncture could mean the difference between hanging on through the final months of shelter-in-place, or shutting down for good.*

As of last summer, approximately 130 child care programs were operating in Berkeley. Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, many of these providers have had to close temporarily or permanently due to increased costs, stress, and health concerns.

UC Berkeley's Center for the Study of Childcare Employment, working with the City's Economic Development Department, did a survey of childcare providers in Berkeley. When asked what it would take to reopen or maintain current services safely and sustainably throughout the duration of the pandemic, Berkeley providers consistently request funds to cover expenses such as payroll for staff, rent, utilities, and other expenses related to their operations, and survival.

Research shows that children are more successful in life if they are given a strong foundation when they are young. Infancy and toddlerhood are times of intense intellectual engagement.³ During this time, the brain undergoes its most dramatic development, as children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn, and reason. Babies and toddlers need positive early learning experiences to foster their intellectual, social,

³ Shonkoff, Jack and Phillips, Deborah. 2000. *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

and emotional development and to lay the foundation for later success.⁴ In the long run, the benefits stemming from greater investments in children lead to an increasingly productive workforce that will boost economic growth, save public dollars, and reduce involvement with the criminal justice system.⁵

Providing access to high-quality early care and education not only promotes healthy child development, but it also allows parents to participate in the labor force.⁶ Without reliable and affordable child care, parents often must choose between spending a large percentage of their budget on child care or cutting back work hours.⁷ Many parents -- often women -- are forced to leave the workforce altogether because of struggles to provide child care.⁸

This resolution makes child care providers, including those providing all forms of early childhood education, eligible for assistance under the Berkeley Relief Fund. It will help provide vital financial help to those in our community who care for our children and cannot pay for supplies and operating expenses through no fault of their own.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Allocations to be determined by the City Manager based on available funds in the Berkeley Relief Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Will support the economic sustainability and child care needs of the Berkeley community as it recovers from the COVID19 pandemic.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Vice Mayor Sophie Hahn, Council District 5, 510-682-5905 (cell)

ATTACHMENT

1. Resolution

⁴ <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/477-early-head-start-works>

⁵ <https://www.epi.org/publication/its-time-for-an-ambitious-national-investment-in-americas-children>

⁶ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2018/12/06/461643/americas-child-care-deserts-2018>

⁷ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2020/08/04/488642/costly-unavailable-america-lacks-sufficient-child-care-supply-infants-toddlers>

⁸ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2016/06/21/139731/calculating-the-hidden-cost-of-interrupting-a-career-for-child-care>

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

MAKING CHILD CARE PROVIDERS ELIGIBLE FOR
ASSISTANCE FROM THE BERKELEY RELIEF FUND

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, the City Council allocated \$3 million to launch the Berkeley Relief Fund to assist businesses, arts organizations, and renters in Berkeley that have experienced financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the generous support of Berkeley's residents, business community, and philanthropists, the community was able to raise \$1.3 million for the Berkeley Relief Fund; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Economic Development (OED) received over 1000 applications to the Business Continuity Grant Program and issued 353 grants totaling \$968,499 to businesses and nonprofits in the first phase of the grant program; and

WHEREAS, further support is needed to help those financially impacted, as COVID-19 continues to worsen and restrictions tighten this winter; and

WHEREAS, many local businesses and organizations impacted by COVID-19, including child care providers and after-school enrichment programs, have not received needed assistance; and

WHEREAS, child care is critical to Berkeley's recovery from the COVID-19 health crisis and to our children's long-term development and success; and

WHEREAS, providing access to high-quality early care and education promotes healthy child development and allows parents to participate in the labor force; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic has placed severe strain on the child care system, causing many providers to close temporarily or permanently due to increased costs, stress, and health concerns; and

WHEREAS, without immediate relief, it is likely that additional child care programs will be forced to close in the coming months, leaving children without access to high-quality care, and limiting the ability of low-income and frontline-worker parents to work;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that child care providers, including all forms of early childhood education, are hereby made eligible for grants and other assistance under the Berkeley Relief Fund.