



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOVERY INITIATIVE-FAMILY CHILDCARE SCHOLARSHIP

#### Ordinance 906-2022

Date: 8/9/22

Name of Requesting Entity: Starting Point

Address of Requesting Entity: 4600 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH. 44103

Geographic Scope of Project: City Wide

Primary Contact Name: Nancy Mendez

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**AMOUNT REQUESTED \$ 1,888,750.00**

## DESCRIPTION

High quality early childhood for a city committed to growing vibrant neighborhoods. COVID exacerbated the long-standing weaknesses in the early childhood system and placed most harm on teachers, students, and families. To stabilize, rebuild, and improve Cleveland's quality early childhood system, we have to stabilize the accessibility to families. Providers across the city are unable to maintain healthy enrollment (80%) due to hiring and retention challenges, and the ability for families to pay. In fact, the annual cost of childcare is over \$11,000 per year in a center. Making it an unaffordable expense for Cleveland families who have a median household income of approximately \$29,000 per year. **The Early Childhood Recovery Initiative-Family Childcare Scholarship program** will increase access to child care for families by subsidizing childcare while newly employed parents await enrollment in publicly funded childcare. This scholarship program coupled with the workforce bonuses program offer a comprehensive approach for stabilizing the childcare system by directly investing in those most vulnerable; teachers, students, and families. The scholarship program will support a minimum of 250 families returning to work and navigating publicly funded childcare or avoiding a benefits cliff. Scholarship amounts will range based on a sliding scale, and support the most vulnerable families.

## TIMELINE

**Oct-Dec 2022:** Recruit and hire staff, finalize the eligibility criteria and process,

**Jan-July 2023:** Launch and administer the scholarship application,

**August-Dec 2023:** process applications,

**Jan-July 2024:** mid-year outreach, and process applications,

**August –Dec 2024:** administer final scholarships and develop final impact report.

This program is intended to be time bound. However, the administrative tools and data collected on affordability based support and public funding navigation practices will be added to the Starting Point infrastructure, and shared with the early childhood sector.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Starting Point will implement this work and increase their capacity through the hire of additional accounting and programming staff.



## **PARTNERS**

Starting Point is Northeast Ohio's regional resource and referral agency (serving Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Geauga, and Lake), and partnered Pre4CLE, Step Forward, and Invest in Children in the development of this strategy.

## **GOALS**

The goals are to build towards a healthy enrollment rate of 80%, and reach a minimum steady growth in enrollment of 12% by 2024, and to support the most vulnerable families in returning back to work.

## **EQUITY**

Nationally, 46% of children enrolled in childcare are children of color. While Cleveland does not capture the same race data for children enrolled in childcare, the universal pre-school program funded by the county shows 67% of the children attending are African-American and 13% are Hispanic/Latino. Additionally, a poll from Groundwork Ohio showed that 60% of Ohio mothers not working or working part-time reported they would go back to work if they had access to quality childcare at a reasonable cost. Lastly, the long-lasting positive impact of early childhood programs going as far back as the 1960's and is still being reported in follow-up studies with outcomes in college attendance, positive cognitive skills, behavior, and health. Many publicly funded with students of color.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT**

This investment will directly impact 250 families, and up to 529 early childhood programs.

## **DIFFERENTIATION**

Right now Cleveland is set apart by not investing in our future and stabilizing early childhood. This allows Cleveland to catch up with the rest of the nation where ARPA funds have been used just like this to stabilize the early childhood system. Including Franklin County, OH, which invested 2.5M in affordability scholarships for families. There is an opportunity to learn from those early adopters and improve the implementation.

## **FINANCIAL LEVERAGE**

Starting Point has secured up to 1.6 M from ODJFS. This reimbursement based funding must be spent by 2024. The funding cannot be used for direct incentives to educators but is being used to support providers with improving their quality rating, and communications, outreach strategies, and web based tools.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

While outreach to marginalized communities call for targeted communications, a number of these engagements will be web based and reduce paper use and the sustainability footprint of the organization.

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

While innovating in the early childhood sector is both possible and necessary, the bonuses and scholarships presented in this first docket through education and inclusive economic recovery workforce are the stabilization needed right now. A comprehensive plan for Cleveland also includes increasing the safety and quality of facilities through the improvement of aging spaces for learning, a set of education and outreach tactics that attract nontraditional workforce participants into the field, and strategies for deeper long-term coordination and investment in the system as a whole.



**BUDGET**

	<b>Project Budget</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Scholarships	\$1,770,000	Sliding fee for up to 250 families
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>		
Program Assistant	\$56,250	50% Salary and benefits for \$112,500 for 2 years 100% FTE
Accountant	\$62,500	Salary and benefits for \$125,000 for 2 years 100% FTE
	<b>\$1,888,750</b>	