



# AGENDA REPORT


**TO:** Jestin D. Johnson  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Sofia Navarro  
Interim Assistant City  
Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Early Childhood Apprenticeship  
Program

**DATE:** July 10, 2025

City Administrator Approval

  
Jestin Johnson (Jul 11, 2025 09:18 PDT)

Date: Jul 11, 2025

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That the City Council Adopt A Resolution:**

- 1. Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Execute A Two-Year Memorandum Of Understanding With Peralta Community College District To Expand Merritt College Early Educator Apprentice Program In Early Childhood Development For The City Of Oakland Early Childhood And Family Services;**
- 2. Accepting And Appropriating Up To Two Hundred Twenty-Six Thousand Two Hundred Twelve Dollars (\$226,212) In Reimbursement From Peralta Community College District For The Apprenticeship Program;**
- 3. Authorizing The City Administrator To Negotiate And Execute A Two-Year Agreement With The Tides Center, Fiscal Sponsor For The Early Childhood Education Pathways To Success Workforce Model, And Accepting And Appropriating Up Two Hundred And Twenty-Two Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety-Eight Dollars (\$222,898) In Reimbursement; And**
- 4. Authorizing The City Administrator To Accept And Appropriate Additional Peralta Community College District And The Tides Center Funds If They Become Available Within FY 2025 – 2026 And Amend The Agreements Within The Funding Limits.**

City Council  
July 15, 2025

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The objective of the Peralta Community College District, specifically, the Merritt College Early Educator Apprenticeship Program (MCEAP) is to address the early childhood education workforce deficit by providing a formalized workforce development program, on-ramp, and career pathway for Head Start families and parents, which will lead to them becoming fully permitted classroom teachers in the early childhood education industry and job sector.

The City of Oakland Early Childhood and Family Services Program will continue to partner with Merritt Community College, and the Early Childhood Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS) program, for whom The Tides Center is the fiscal sponsor.

The Merritt College Early Educator Apprenticeship Program creates a career pathway for academic growth, development, and eventual employment by providing on-the-job training, coaching/mentoring supports, college coursework (15 units in Early Childhood Education (ECE)); professional learning communities, and eligibility for hire and potential employment within a 24-month period.

### ***Implementation Approaches in the Apprenticeship Program***

The apprenticeship program advances intentional, community-centered strategies designed to support both individual success and broader family well-being. Key implementation approaches include:

#### ***Cohort Learning Community***

Participants engage in a supportive peer network that emphasizes personal growth, shared learning, and mutual encouragement to foster a strong sense of belonging.

#### ***1. Enhanced Support Services***

A comprehensive suite of supports to help remove barriers to success, including:

- Childcare and transportation assistance
- Resume and interview preparation
- Financial stipends
- Embedded tutoring within the program structure

#### ***2. Commitment to Reflect the Community***

The Oakland community is reflected across all levels—participants, staff, and instructors.

#### ***3. Tailored Community-Based Approach***

- Classes are delivered in accessible, community-based locations
- Job placements are prioritized near participants' homes whenever possible
- Mentors are intentionally paired for optimal support
- A Success Coordinator assists with navigating college systems and accessing services

#### ***4. Two-Generation Strategy***

The program supports whole-family success by providing benefits that extend to both participating caregivers and their children, reinforcing long-term stability and opportunity.

5. The funding from Peralta Community College District (Merritt College) and the ECEPTS partners allows for the operation of the early educator apprenticeship program at the City of Oakland.

## **REASON FOR URGENCY**

Human Services Department and Early Childhood and Family Services Division had staff leadership transitions that impacted the submission of this report. Authorization is urgently needed to receive funding prior to the launch of our third cohort with 12 new apprentices in August 2025, without this the planned apprentices would not be able to fully receive the required support. This will also affect our 24 active stakeholders (12 employees and 12 who are awaiting offer letters) who would be deprived of the promised support clarified in our ECEPTS and Merritt College contracts. However, our contractual obligations are overshadowed by our larger mission: the immediate need to address Oakland's shortage of teachers in the early childhood education profession. Timely processing will ensure we can continue training, hiring, and retaining locally rooted educators committed to teaching the next generation of students from our families and our communities.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

Alameda County, and Oakland specifically, faces a growing crisis in early childhood education (ECE) due to a persistent shortage of qualified early educators. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated longstanding challenges—low wages, high turnover, and limited access to professional development—leading to widespread staffing shortages in preschools, family childcare homes, and infant-toddler care settings. These shortages directly impact a families' ability to return to work and limits access to high-quality early learning experiences that are critical for child development.

Several key factors drive the need for an apprenticeship program specifically in Oakland:

1. ***Workforce Shortage Across the ECE Sector***  
Many ECE programs in the county, state, and country are operating below capacity or closing classrooms due to the inability to recruit and retain qualified staff. This shortage affects Head Start programs, community-based providers, and private centers.
2. ***High Cost of Living Paired with Low Wages***  
Alameda County's cost of living is among the highest in the nation. Yet early educators are among the lowest-paid workers. This economic imbalance makes it difficult to attract and retain educators in the field without new pathways to sustainable careers.
3. ***Gaps in Access to Education and Career Mobility***  
Many potential early educators face systemic barriers to entering and advancing in the profession, such as a lack of access to higher education, limited English proficiency, and competing responsibilities such as caregiving. Traditional college pathways are often not accessible or flexible enough to meet their needs.

4. ***Need for a Skilled Community Responsive Workforce***

There is an urgent need to grow a workforce that reflects and understands the communities it serves. Apprenticeship programs provide a way to "grow our own" educators from within the community.

5. ***Economic Development and Family Stability***

Strengthening the ECE workforce has a positive ripple effect across the economy, supporting working parents, enabling job growth, and preparing the next generation of learners. Apprenticeships provide a practical "earn while you learn" approach that supports economic mobility for educators and stability for families.

The Merritt College Early Educator Apprenticeship Program (MCEAP) was established to address these issues and promote equitable educational and economic opportunities for the early childhood education (ECE) workforce in Northern Alameda County. Recognizing the critical role of ECE in post-pandemic economic recovery and overall economic stability, MCEAP addresses the ongoing workforce shortages that impact a range of sectors reliant on quality early care and education—including preschools, family childcare, and infant-toddler care. In partnership with the City of Oakland Head Start, YMCA of the East Bay, and Merritt College, the program offers a supportive and innovative model that responds to the specific needs of the ECE workforce—a workforce predominantly composed of working women, immigrants, and people of color.

MCEAP directly supports the California Community College Vision for Success by facilitating access to employment, Associate Teacher certification, and the Child Development Permit at the Associate Teacher level. Through its structured "earn and learn" model, the program enhances student success by offering a clear on-ramp to degree completion. It supports progression toward an associate degree and lays the foundation for further educational advancement, including the Master Teacher Child Development Permit and ultimately a bachelor's degree. By providing transparency and support around long-term educational pathways, the program encourages continued attainment while actively strengthening and stabilizing the local ECE workforce.

Importantly, MCEAP works to close gaps through comprehensive academic, financial, and social supports tailored to meet participants where they are.

This innovative work plan is distinguished by its:

1. Intentional design centered on equity and workforce advancement
2. Integrated academic and social support structures
3. Dual site learning taking place both on education campuses and at worksites
4. Multiple pathways for entry and advancement, ensuring flexibility and accessibility

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

The policy recommendation outlined in this report directly supports the **City of Oakland's citywide priority of Housing, Economic, and Cultural Security**, by investing in the early childhood education (ECE) workforce—a critical sector for community stability and economic growth.

### ***Workforce Snapshot and Challenges***

Based on data from the **Alameda County Workforce Registry (2020)**:

- **40%** are age **50 or older**
- **87%** are classified as **very low income** under Alameda County standards

These data points reflect an aging, underpaid, and essential workforce in need of a formalized support and development structure.

#### ***Impact of COVID-19***

The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified workforce stress, highlighting the essential role of early educators who continued to serve on the front lines. Recruitment, retention, and well-being remain ongoing concerns post-pandemic.

### ***Broader Economic Implications***

A stable and qualified ECE workforce is foundational for:

- Supporting **working families**
- Advancing **child development and school readiness**
- Enabling **economic recovery and growth** at the local, state, and national levels

California's three million children under age 5 require access to high-quality early learning—made possible only by a **well-trained, respected, and a fairly compensated workforce**.

### ***Proposed Policy Solution***

The proposed funding would support the development of a formal **Early Childhood Education Workforce Development Pipeline**, including a **Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)** in partnership with Merritt College and the City of Oakland Head Start.

### ***Program Features***

- A **career pathway and roadmap** for parents, CalWORKs participants, and community members
- On-the-job training with embedded **mentorship and coaching**
- **Academic advancement** through course credits and permit attainment
- **Stabilization strategies**: wage enhancements, compensation supports, and wellness initiatives
- A **two-generation model**, supporting both children and their adult caregivers

### ***Anticipated Impact and Outcomes***

The apprenticeship model is designed to:

- **Recruit, expand, and retain** a highly qualified early learning workforce
- Promote **educational attainment** from Associate Teacher Permits to college degrees
- Offer a **career ladder** and economic mobility for low-income and entry-level workers
- Provide opportunities for **permanent job placement** and clear advancement opportunities

- Build **professional development systems** that strengthen program quality and outcomes

**Key Performance Measures:**

- Enrollment of parents, caregivers, community members, and CalWORKs participants
- Opportunities for increases in participant wages, skills, and credentials
- High rates of **job retention and workforce stability**
- Growth in degrees and permit attainment over time

**FISCAL IMPACT**

***Peralta College MCEAP Funding***

The total budget for the Merritt College Early Educator Apprenticeship Program (MCEAP) for the City of Oakland cohort of 36 apprentices is \$226,212 over a 24-month period (Program Years 2024–2026). This funding supports the attainment of the Child Development Associate Teacher Permit through a structured “earn and learn” model that includes classroom instruction, on-the-job training, and wraparound supports.

**Budget Allocation:**

**1. Training Costs – \$10,000**

- Covers laptops, software, peripherals, and school supplies

**2. On-the-Job Training – \$75,600**

- Mentorship, CPR, professional development for soft skills, technology, permit fees, and background checks.

**3. Program Administration – \$140,612**

**Table 1: Peralta Community College District Funding Budget Allocation**

<b>Category</b>	<b>General</b>
Textbooks	
Training Costs, Laptops, software, peripherals, school supplies	\$10,000.00
Mentoring	\$64,800.00
Non-credit bearing training (CPR, soft skills, technology) + livescan, permit fees)	\$10,800.00
Travel, Meetings, Conferences	\$4,500.00
Success Coordinator	\$76,112.00
The City of Oakland will receive \$60,000 to support the site coordination program at their site. The coordination consists of work with ECEPTS, the MEAP Coordinator, the success coordination of training and purchasing supplies and services for apprentices	\$60,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$226,212.00</b>

There is no negative fiscal impact to the City of Oakland's General Fund. All program expenses are funded through external sources, including partnerships with Peralta Community College and workforce development grants. This collaborative funding structure reduces the financial burden on the City while expanding access to education and employment for Oakland residents.

Both Peralta College MCEAP and TIDES funds are to be appropriated in the Private Grants Fund (2190) and in Organizations, Projects, and Programs to be determined.

### ***The Tides Center Funding***

The proposed The Tides Center, fiscal sponsor to ECEPTS Sponsored Registered Apprentice Program, contract totals \$228,898. **Table 2 outlines the allowable costs for the funding.**

**Table 2: The Tides Center Funding Budget Allocation**

Category	General	ELL (English Language Learner)	Total
On the Job (O) Support Staff			
Mentor Coordinator	\$54,000	\$10,000	\$64,000
Success Coordinator	\$54,000	–	\$54,000
OJT Supports and Services (e.g., Permit Fees, Fingerprinting, TB tests, Technology, Career Services, Mental Health Consultants, First Aid/CPR, etc.)	\$26,530		\$26,530
Professional Development	\$48,368		\$48,368
RSI & ELL Support Services			
In-person student translator service	–	\$10,000	\$10,000
Translation Technology and Services (ELL)	–	\$20,000	\$20,000
Total	\$182,898	\$40,000	\$222,898

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

The submission of this report was shared with the Head Start Parent Policy Council and the Head Start Advisory Board, which are public Meetings.

### **COORDINATION**

The City of Attorney's Office in preparation of this report and resolution.

## **PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION, AND FOLLOW-UP**

The goal of the City of Oakland Head Start Apprenticeship Program is to address the ECE teacher shortage by recruiting and developing apprentices who meet the requirements to be employed as Assistant and Associate Teachers for Oakland Head Start.

For Year 1, September 2023 - July 2024, eighteen apprentices were enrolled in the Tier 1 level of the apprenticeship program. Out of the twenty-eight apprentices, ten completed Tier 1 by earning fifteen ECE college credits and were subsequently employed by the City of Oakland Head Start. Of those ten hires, six apprentices secured positions as Associate Instructors, one as an Assistant Instructor, and three as Early Childhood Learning Aides. Seven of the apprentices took advantage of the program model from Year 1 by continuing with child development courses and training, which will contribute to their career ladder trajectory and progress towards an associate degree. Of the remaining eight apprentices, five dropped out of the program, and three apprentices accepted employment outside of the City of Oakland Head Start.

Moving into Year 2, eighteen apprentices are currently enrolled. Fifteen apprentices completed the fall semester, and eighteen have completed the spring semester. Currently fifteen apprentices are in the process of completing on the job training at City of Oakland Head Start sites, the remaining three will begin during the new program year August 2025.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

***Economic:*** The proposed funding supports the recruitment, instruction, support services, on-the-job training, and administrative costs for 54 Apprentices participating in the Merritt Community College Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship Program over three years in partnership with the City of Oakland and YMCA of the East Bay. This includes support for intermediary apprenticeship sponsorship. The program provides a sustainable workforce pipeline by offering an "earn and learn" model that leads to Associate (Assistant) Teacher Permits, long-term employment, and career advancement in the early childhood education sector.

***Environmental:*** There are currently no direct environmental impacts—positive or negative—associated with the implementation of the apprenticeship program. However, the program indirectly supports environmental sustainability by reducing commuting barriers through community-based education and job placements close to home.

***Race & Equity:*** The apprenticeship program directly advances the City of Oakland's Race and Equity goals by providing equitable access to early education careers for historically underserved and underrepresented populations. The City of Oakland Head Start defines equity in early childhood education as ensuring both equal and equitable access to training, mentorship, and career advancement across race, culture, language, ethnicity, ability, income, gender identity, and lived experience.

This program is especially impactful in a city like Oakland, where, despite recent economic growth, many people of color and low-income communities continue to face systemic disparities



in employment, housing, healthcare, and education. By targeting Head Start parents and other community members, the program promotes economic mobility and helps to build a culturally responsive, community-rooted ECE workforce.

### **ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff recommends that the city council adopt a resolution:

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For questions regarding this report, please contact DIVEENA COOPPAN, Early Childhood and Family Services Manager, at 510-238-3165.

Respectfully submitted,

***Sofia Navarro***

[Sofia Navarro \(Jul 10, 2025 17:02 PDT\)](#)

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