



CITY OF OAKLAND

# AGENDA REPORT

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

**FROM:** Scott Means  
Interim Director, Human  
Services

**SUBJECT:** Head Start Program  
Amended Agreement With ChildCare  
Careers, LLC FY 22-27

**DATE:** September 26, 2023

City Administrator Approval

Date: Oct 5, 2023

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Waiving The Local/Small Local Business Enterprise Program Requirements And Authorizing The City Administrator To Amend A Professional Services Agreement With Childcare Careers, LLC To Increase The Amount By \$500,000 For A Total Amount Not To Exceed \$750,000 For As Needed Substitute Teacher Staffing Services**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of Oakland Head Start Program is a unique early care, education, school readiness, and family services program that serves the City's low-income and vulnerable families with children, birth through five years-old, and most in need. The City of Oakland is currently funded to serve 674 children and families (including pregnant women) throughout the City.

The Head Start Program<sup>1</sup> is responsible for providing comprehensive, integrated, coordinated, and specialized services that, by Federal statute, are in full compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards<sup>2</sup> and Early Learning Outcome Framework<sup>3</sup>. As a result, it's imperative that the City contracts with specialized vendors who have the expertise and knowledge to implement these standards and other Head Start requirements.

Additionally, the State of California Health and Human Services Agency, through the Department of Social Services (CDSS), mandates a teacher-to-child ratio through their

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>

<sup>3</sup> <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/article/head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework>

Community Care Licensing Division (CCL)<sup>4</sup>. For Early Head Start (0-3 years old), the teacher-to-infant ratio is 1:4 (Title 22); for Head Start (3-5 years old), the adult-to-child ratio is 1:8 (Title 5), with 1 qualified teacher. On any given day, if this ratio is not met, Head Start Program sites cannot operate and must turn away families or close for the day. Consequently, parents and caregivers have to miss work or school to watch their children, jeopardizing their employment and reducing their income to pay monthly expenses.

The Human Services Department (HSD) is requesting approval to amend the professional services agreement with Childcare Careers, LLC, to provide staffing support services for up to \$750,000. ChildCare Careers, LLC provides qualified substitute teachers when the City's full-time, substitutes, and part-time teaching staff are sick, on disability, on family medical leave, on vacation, attending professional development/ conferences, and other forms of leave since licensing requires specific teacher-student ratios at all times.

Additionally, Head Start is experiencing a critical early childhood teacher hiring shortage that is preventing vacancies from being filled at several Head Start program sites. This challenge is being felt not only regionally within Alameda County but is an industry-wide problem, made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic, where teachers have left the profession due to early retirement, career changes, and/or low pay.

Head Start has a long-standing partnership with ChildCare Careers, LLC. Over the years, ChildCare Careers, LLC has demonstrated that they are the only agency to consistently provide qualified substitutes to Head Start. Prior efforts to bid these services out did not yield other qualified vendors who demonstrated the ability, knowledge, and expertise of the Head Start Performance Standards as required, described above in the Executive Summary section. With that, staff is requesting a waiver of the L/SLBE requirements.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

The Head Start Program is a comprehensive program which serves low-income and vulnerable families with children ages birth through five-years-old, (including pregnant mothers) who need continuous services in the areas of: early care and education, health and nutrition, family support, and school readiness, and are eligible, per Federal statute, to receive additional program services.

The Head Start Program is designed with a high degree of specificity to effectively and successfully respond to the unique needs and circumstances of the population it serves. As such, Head Start Performance Standards (HSPPS) and Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) require that all Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs are implemented with an equal degree of specificity. The HSPPS and ELOF require that Head Start programs provide: 1) culturally and linguistically responsive services to families and children that are coordinated, integrated, and standards-aligned; 2) evidence-based curriculum implementation to fidelity; 3) continuous quality improvement that includes monitoring and program evaluation; and 4) data and fiscal management systems.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-licensing>

ChildCare Careers, LLC staffing support services has specialized expertise to meet the unique teaching and learning needs and circumstances of the population served by the City of Oakland Head Start program, along with the Head Start Program administration and management.

### **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

Childcare Careers, LLC will ensure our Early Head Start and Head Start programs can remain open and operating, advancing **Citywide priorities, which include holistic community safety and strengthening the economic security** of the families the City serves. As the critical shortage of early childhood educators in the Early Care and Education sector continues throughout the state of California and across the Bay Area, the City has and continues to conduct ongoing and continuous recruitment for qualified teachers, as evidenced by the Oakland Head Start Program's participation in the *Early Care and Education Virtual Job Fairs* at Peralta Community College District's Merritt College Child Development Department, advertising on CA Head Start website, the National of Head Start website as well as City hiring sites, and implementing a Workforce Development program that recruits current (and former) Head Start parents to enroll in classes to obtain the required education and certification to ultimately become Head Start teaching staff that will help fill the teaching vacancies within the program.

Contracting with ChildCare Careers, LLC will provide Head Start with qualified substitute teachers who can fill in at Centers when regular staff are absent due to excused reasons, including sick leave, disability, vacation, or training. When programs remain open, parents can be confident that their children are safe and cared for while they are at work. Further, the economic security of families can be threatened when they are forced to forgo work and care for their children when programs are closed. Through contracting with Childcare Careers, LLC, Head Start can ensure children get the consistent educational, developmental, and behavioral programming they need to be prepared for school, and families can work or go to school as needed, strengthening community safety and economic security overall.

To ensure continuity of services and quality teaching with an agency provider who is familiar with Head Start standards, City of Oakland requirements, and City of Oakland Head Start Centers, it is recommended to amend the agreement with ChildCare Careers, LLC to increase the amount to match staffing levels for the upcoming fiscal years.

Human Services has discussed with the Union the necessity for substitute teacher contracts to support existing staff and families with experienced teaching staff who have knowledge of the Head Start Program. The department continues to work closely with Human Resources on continuous recruitment for these positions. On a monthly basis, Human Resources gives qualified candidate applications to the department for interviewing. However, in the past 6 months, Head Start has only been able to hire 8 additional teaching staff.

Currently, Head Start has 37 vacancies in the following classroom-based positions: 1 FTE Early Childhood Center Director, 12 FTE Early Head Start Instructors, 5 FTE Head Start Instructors, 9 FTE Head Start/EHS Assistant Instructors, and 10 FTE Head Start/ Early Head Start Associate Instructors.

ChildCare Careers has demonstrated the ability to refer staff to help supplement existing staff vacancies and absences and will ensure the mandated teacher-to-child ratio (per CCL) will be met, thereby enabling Head Start Programs to remain open for services.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Approval of the proposed resolution will authorize the City Administrator to amend a professional service agreement with ChildCare Careers, LLC, to increase the amount by \$500,000 for a total amount not to exceed \$750,000 for licensed, qualified teachers for Head Start and Early Head Start whenever City Full-time, Part-time or substitute teachers are not available for fiscal years 2022-27. Approval of this proposed resolution will not have a negative impact on the City's General Fund.

In FY 2023-2027, staff is projecting an ongoing need for ChildCare Careers, LLC support as all centers are open and operating. Temporary substitutes will allow the program to remain open to serve families and meet required staffing ratios while teacher and staff absences are supported.

AMOUNT OF RECOMMENDATION/COST OF ChildCare Careers, LLC - PROJECT#1005580 - Head Start Basic and PROJECT #1005586 - Early Head Start Basic

- Up to an additional \$500,000 for FY 2022-27
- Total Agreement/Contract Amount: Up to \$750,000 for ChildCare Careers, LLC.

### **SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

- Department of Health and Human Services Fund (2128); HS Classroom and Seasonal Org (78231); Strengthening Children, Youth and Families (YS13); FY23-27 Project #1005580 Head Start Basic and Project #1005586 - Early Head Start Basic (Future FY Project Numbers TBD).

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

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

### **COORDINATION**

The Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau were consulted in preparation of this report.

### **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

**Economic:** The City of Oakland Head Start program creates more than 100 jobs, including people directly employed in centers, plus an unknown number of jobs through its economic multiplier effect. Most of these jobs are held by Oakland residents. In addition, Head Start and Early Head Start buy most of their goods and services from Oakland-based businesses or

individuals to support their programs. As described in the report, being able to keep classrooms open benefits not only the children served, but also the low-income families who can go to work or school to support and better the whole family's well-being.

**Environmental:** There are currently no direct environmental benefits or impacts from the Head Start and Early Head Start program to the City of Oakland. The program uses recyclable paper products.

**Race & Equity** The Oakland Head Start and Early Head Start program delivers comprehensive and high-quality services to 600-700 children and families who are approximately 93% Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), of which approximately 28% are African American, 36% are Hispanic or Latinx, and 24% are Asian participants. Sixty-two (62%) of the family's primary language is non-English. The program staff are approximately 64% BIPOC, and 59% of the staff are bilingual. Over 42% of families served are unemployed, and 17% are homeless.

Improving educational and family outcomes and eliminating racial disparities for this community is an explicit goal of the program. The range of services aims to be responsive and appropriate to each child and family's developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.

Designed to foster healthy cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development, individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development, medical, dental, and mental health services, as well as nutrition, parent involvement/engagement, and family literacy, will be provided for each child and their family.

Recent scientific research has verified what early childhood educators have known for years how children are nurtured and educated in their youngest years has a significant impact on development, growth, ongoing academic performance, and later academic and life success.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Waiving The Local/Small Local Business Enterprise Program Requirements And Authorizing The City Administrator To Amend A Professional Services Agreement With Childcare Careers, LLC To Increase The Amount By \$500,000 For A Total Amount Not To Exceed \$750,000 For As Needed Substitute Teacher Staffing Services

For questions regarding this report, please contact Diveena Cooppan, Human Services Division Manager, Early Childhood and Family Services, at (510) 238-7186.

Respectfully submitted,



SCOTT MEANS

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Head Start Program