



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Dr. Jason H. Lester
Human Services Dept.
Director

SUBJECT: Early Care and Education Emergency
Grant – Measure C

DATE: January 8, 2026

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Jan 8, 2026 22:01:54 PST)

Date: 01/08/2026

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator:

1. **To Apply For And Accept The First 5 Alameda County Early Care And Education Emergency Grant In An Amount Not To Exceed Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) To Provide Stipends To Eligible Early Childhood And Family Services Division Staff And Other Allowable Early Childhood Expenditures Effective July 1, 2025, Through June 30, 2026; And**
2. **To Accept Additional Early Care And Education Emergency Grant Funding That Becomes Available For The Same Purposes During The Same Contract Term; And**
3. **To Enter Into An Agreement With California School Age Consortium (CalsAC) To Serve As The Fiscal Sponsor For The City Of Oakland Award From First 5 Alameda County's Early Care And Education Emergency Grant, To Manage And Disburse Stipends To Eligible Early Childhood And Family Services Staff And Other Grant Related Expenditures.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Early Childhood and Family Services Program seeks authorization to apply for and accept the First 5 Alameda County's Early Care and Education Emergency Grant – Measure C to give a one-time minimum of \$1,000 stipends (the final stipend amount is dependent on the award size) to the Program's eligible educators and direct services staff as a short-term support addressing wage gaps in the early childhood field. Additionally, the Program will use funds for educational supplies that will support, enhance, and enrich the delivery of comprehensive early care and education to Oakland families with young children. To deliver the disbursement of stipends, the Program also seeks approval to contract with fiscal sponsor California School Age Consortium (CalsAC).

REASON FOR URGENCY

The proposed resolution is urgently needed to authorize an application for the First 5 Alameda County Early Care and Education Emergency Grant – Measure C to secure up to \$500,000 in emergency funds from First 5 Alameda County to support early childhood educators and program operations. The First 5 Commission requires receipt of our approved application by January 23, 2026, to place it on their February meeting agenda. Missing this deadline would defer approval until April, delaying the execution of the agreement with our fiscal sponsor, stipend distribution, and jeopardizing compliance with the June 30th expenditure deadline.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Alameda County Measure C: Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative

Measure C is a newly implemented 30-year funding stream that will generate approximately \$150 million annually for early childhood education in Alameda County via a 0.5% sales tax. First 5 Alameda County administers Measure C’s Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education Fund, which has five goals for its [2025-2030 5-Year Plan and Budget](#):

1. Increasing Access to Child Care Services
2. Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Early Educators
3. Enhancing Child-Serving Spaces
4. Accountability and Measuring impact
5. Effective Administration and Systems Improvement

The Early Care and Education Emergency Grant is part of *Goal 2: Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Early Childhood Educators*, and it is the first investment in Early Childhood systems that took place alongside Measure C’s initial implementation in 2025. The total investment in one-time Emergency Grants is \$82 million countywide ([5-Year Plan](#), 47). With a focus exclusively on Family Child Care providers and Child Care Centers, the amount of the grant award ranges from \$40,000 to \$100,000, depending on the provider type and licensed capacity. Agencies that operate multiple centers are capped at \$500,000 ([5-Year Plan](#), 48). City of Oakland Early Childhood and Family Services (ECFS) Centers fall into the \$500,000 maximum category, and all of the Program’s sites are located in a Census tract with a 5% or higher poverty status level, which is one of the equity-based eligibility criteria for this funding. The key requirement for grantees in disbursing these funds is that all teaching staff must receive a minimum of \$1,000 each ([5-Year Plan](#), 47).

ECFS proposes that the following direct service positions receive stipends of up to \$5,000, depending on the final award from the Emergency Stabilization Grant:

- Head Start Instructor
- Early Head Start Instructor
- Associate Instructor

- Assistant Instructor
- Home Base Visitor
- Family Advocate
- Family Services Specialist
- Early Childhood Center Director

The Emergency Stabilization Grant terms state that programs have the discretion to choose how funds are spent, after the minimum \$1,000 stipend requirement per teacher is met. By making all family and child-facing direct service positions eligible for the grant, the Program ensures that all positions that work directly with our children and families have access to stabilization funds of a minimum of \$1,000 up to \$5,000 per eligible staff member, depending on the final award to the City of Oakland. Any additional funding from the Emergency Stabilization Grant will be used for educational supplies, such as easy reader books for preschoolers and older toddlers, as well as materials to support infant/toddler home-school connection for family education support activities

Note: Family Child Care providers who are part of the ECFS Tiny Steps program are independent Family Child Care businesses and had the opportunity to apply for \$40,000-\$50,000 grants for their individual sites separately. This ECFS grant is based on the capacity of the City of Oakland's center-based program option.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Measure C's five-year goals for Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Early Educators is anchored by the premise of "To keep good teachers, we need clear career pathways and better wages" ([5-Year Plan](#), 46). Priorities for Workforce Development and Wages and Compensation include professional development, career ladders, and direct financial support in response to the high cost of living in the Bay Area. These priorities resonate with the findings of the "City of Oakland – Human Services: Final Total Compensation Study Report" (August 2024), completed by Usher Forward Human Resources Consulting, included as ***Attachment A***.

Commissioned by the City of Oakland's Human Services Department, this report evaluates the competitiveness of total compensation for eight benchmark Head Start classifications by comparing them to seven peer agencies in the labor market.

On average, City of Oakland Early Childhood and Family Services Salaries are 13.54% below the labor market mean. These roles have significant gaps:

Table 1: Base Salary Gaps

Role	% gap with the labor market mean
Head Start Instructor	-19.66%
Early Head Start Instructor	-20.69%

Head Start/ Early Head Start Assistant Instructor	-12.05%
Head Start/Early Head Start Associate Instructor	-14.53%
Early Childhood Center Director	-7.22%
Family Advocate	-5.66%

This report is central to the City's broader compensation strategy for Early Childhood and Family Services staff. The Home Base Visitor, a direct service role, was not included in the study as this is a new position which was in job specification development at the time. In 2024, the Office of Head Start issued [a Final Rule mandating parity between Head Start salaries and public preschool teachers by 2031](#). This report shows that the wage gap between ECFS and OUSD ranges between 18% to over 70%, depending on role.

The findings in this report are consistent with the Measure C goal of *Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Early Childhood Educators*, specifically increased wages, career ladders, and ongoing professional development to support career advancement. These are all long-term challenges in the field, which require systemic solutions. Measure C is a 30-year initiative, so there may be an opportunity to transform wages and sustain the early childhood workforce. Currently, this emergency stabilization grant is a one-time opportunity to give staff stipends to provide immediate, short-term financial relief.

Table 2: Job Classifications Eligible to Receive Stipends

Job Classification	Total Estimated Number of Stipends Based on Current Staffing as of December 2025
HS Instructor	10
EHS Instructor	19
Associate Instructor	11
Assistant Instructor	5
Home Base Visitor	8
Family Advocate	2
Family Services Specialist	7
Early Childhood Center Director	13
Total	75

At present, there are no policy alternatives to this grant. The Measure C Emergency Grant is a one-time opportunity available during the initiative's first year of implementation. There are no anticipated future plans for comparable one-time funding on the local level that would reach direct service staff at ECFS centers, who receive below market wages. To not apply for the funding means that these staff members will miss the opportunity to receive this financial relief that is widely available to local early childhood educators. If the City did not apply for the Emergency Grant, that may negatively impact recruitment and retention efforts of ECFS teachers and direct services staff.

The policy recommendation in this report advances the Citywide priority, based on the 2025-2028 City of Oakland Strategic Plan, of "Strengthening Governance and Coordination for

Economic and Workforce Development, which is part of the *Fostering Cross-Department Collaboration* priority. The City would be coordinating with another public entity, First 5 Alameda, to leverage countywide early childhood funds to strengthen the Early Childhood and Family Services workforce. This is a prudent use of non-City public funds to support the City's workforce. Additionally, approximately 20% of the children and families served by ECFS have experienced homelessness. The direct services staff who would receive this stipend serve unhoused families with young children. This funding would help stabilize part of the City workforce that provides essential support for unhoused families.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total budget for the First 5 Early Care and Education Emergency Grant is up to \$500,000 for the award term of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, with an eligible expense period from January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The final award amount will be based on the number of sites actively serving children. Funds will be used to provide one-time stipends of \$1,000 up to \$5,000 (amount dependent on the final award received) to educators and other eligible center staff; to purchase education materials and supplies; to cover fiscal sponsor administrative fees, and family education home support activities.

There is no negative impact to the City of Oakland's General Fund. All program expenses are funded through external sources. This is a pass-through grant managed by CalSAC, which will be the fiscal sponsor. Funds will be awarded directly to CalSAC upon submission and approval of all required reports and documentation. **Table 3** presents the proposed budget if the maximum award of \$500,000 is received. This budget will be modified depending on the final award amount.

Table 3: Proposed Budget Plan for \$500,000 Award

Item Description	Estimated Amount
Staff Stipends	\$375,000
Administrative Costs – Fiscal Sponsor	\$75,000
Education Supplies and Materials (Easy Reader Sets)	\$40,000
Family Engagement and Support (Infant/Toddler Home Materials)	\$10,000
Total	\$500,000

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No outreach was deemed necessary for the proposed policy action beyond the standard City Council agenda noticing procedures because the Head Start Advisory Board and the Head Start Parent Policy Council reviewed and approved this policy action as well.

COORDINATION

The Head Start Advisory Board, Head Start Parent Policy Council, the Office of the City Attorney, and the Department of Finance were consulted in preparation of this report.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION, AND FOLLOW-UP

Before funds are received and disbursed, the contract will be reviewed and approved by First 5 Alameda County's Executive Committee and Commission in early February 2026. The Program meets all grant requirements (Child Care License "Good Standing," meeting minimum wage requirements, general liability insurance, etc.). Once the application moves forward, the Program will need to complete a funding sources data form, have education staff attend a Measure C orientation session, and participate in grant reporting.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The proposed stipends provide financial support, which may help retain qualified ECFS teachers and direct services staff, reducing turnover and maintaining program quality. Stabilizing employment in childcare centers supports the City of Oakland's working families and prevents disruptions in care.

Environmental: There are no foreseeable direct environmental benefits or impacts from this grant to the City of Oakland.

Race & Equity: Early Childhood and Family Services recognizes racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic disparities across Oakland that impact children and families. The Program also recognizes that wage disparities in direct services and early childhood educator jobs are a product of race and gender inequities that devalue the labor of roles disproportionately held by women of color. The Measure C stipends address these systemic inequities. By strengthening ECFS staff, these stipends support their retention, so that the program can continue to improve educational and family outcomes. For staff, families, and children alike, the Program has an explicit goal of eliminating racial disparities.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt :

Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator:

- 1. To Apply For And Accept The First 5 Alameda County Early Care And Education Emergency Grant In An Amount Not To Exceed Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) To Provide Stipends To Eligible Early Childhood and Family Services Division Staff And Other Allowable Early Childhood Expenditures Effective July 1, 2025, Through June 30, 2026; And**
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For questions regarding this report, please contact DIVEENA COOPPAN, MANAGER, EARLY CHILDHOOD & FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION/DIRECTOR, OAKLAND HEAD START PROGRAM, at (510) 238-3165.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jason H. Lester

Dr. Jason H. Lester,
Human Services Dept. Director

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Attachments (1)
A: City of Oakland – Human Services: Final Total Compensation Study Report (August 2024)