



Carver County Health and Human Services

Human Services Building

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March 1, 2021

Minnesota House of Representatives
Earlier Childhood Finance and Policy
100 Rev.Dr.Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Committee Chair Rep. Dave Pinto, Vice Chair Rep. Laurie Pryor, and Committee Members:
Carver County Health and Human Services appreciates the opportunity to comment about the Childcare assistance funding priorities modified for eligible families, and allocation of funds adjusted, House File 1467, scheduled to be heard on Tuesday, March 2, 2021.

Investment into the childcare assistance program supports low income families to secure affordable, quality childcare. Many of these residents are essential workers directly impacted by the pandemic. The Basic Childcare Sliding Fee program (BSF) supports families who are striving to work and wanting to avoid going onto public assistance programs. The proposed changes would mean faster access to stable childcare for children, ability for parents to accept and retain a job, assurance that childcare provider's bills get paid, and direct support to businesses who are looking for qualified job seekers.

Currently, Carver County, one of Minnesota's healthiest counties (2018, 2019, 2020), has 113 families open to the Childcare Assistance Program, 70 families utilizing the Basic Sliding Fee program, 21 are public assistance recipients, and 13 are transitioning from a public assistance program to BSF program.

There are currently 53 families on our waiting list; all are waiting list priority five. The wait list priorities are identified as: Priority one: primary students finishing high school/GED; Priority two: MN Family Investment Program (MFIP) transition year or Dislocated worker program (DWP) closed-working families who have been on MFIP or DWP; Priority three: portability pool: BSF families who move between MN counties; Priority four: Veterans preference; and Priority five: Work/Training/Job Search.

With more than 500 monthly job postings in Carver County within six key sectors (manufacturing, health care, construction, information technology, finance and accounting, and human resources), employers are having difficulty securing qualified hires. Every person on the wait list is a possible great candidate for the job; a qualified job seeker who has the ability to not only secure employment to improve their own life condition, make a long-lasting impact on their child's life, but also have a direct impact on the community's economic growth and development. Reordering the BSF wait list categories will shift the focus to low income families, the largest category on the wait list, who have no other support, and still allow for MFIP families to receive childcare through the MFIP childcare program. As a result, more children would receive childcare, more families of essential workers would receive childcare assistance, and many more could get back to work.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Heather A. Goodwin

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