

To: Rep. Mohamud Noor, Sen. Eric Pratt, Members  
From: YWCA Minneapolis  
RE: Teacher Training Workforce Development Funding  
May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

Dear Chair Noor, Chair Pratt, and Members of the Jobs & Labor Conference Committee,

The early childhood field is in desperate need for new teachers. It is critically important that we attract teachers of color to the field, as studies have shown the benefits youth get from being taught by teachers who represent them. Without new teachers in the field the state will struggle to meet the needs of working families, making parents leave the workforce and affecting our ability to ensure children are ready for Kindergarten.

We are writing in request of appropriation for our teacher training workforce development program, which provides direct solutions to the aforementioned challenges. The YWCA Early Childhood teacher training workforce development program gives participants foundational employment skills and trains and supports participants in obtaining a CDA (Child Development Associate) from the Council for professional recognition. This is a foundational credential in the early childhood field that qualifies participants to enter the field as early childhood teachers.

The program can take up to 9 months to complete, with participants going through 140 hours of training and professional development, 500 hours on classroom practicum, development of a portfolio explaining their professional philosophy and teaching, an outside observation of their teaching and a timed standardized computer test. Our program offers supports to assist participants in success through:

- Computer support, WIFI & beginning computer training
- Resume building, applications and interview skills
- Support in finding and maintaining employment
- Life needs referrals/support
- Work place professionalism training
- Support preparing and learning the written skills to develop their portfolio
- Travel assistance

We have worked with over 300 participants and have graduated 116 with their CDA with 45+ on track to graduate prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Over 209 participants left the program and gained FT employment. 100% of our participants are currently identified as low income, 88% identify as people of color, 24% identify as immigrants, 70% have dependent children and close to 50% are single mothers.

Participants who leave our program prior to earning a CDA are entering the workforce with increased employment and application skills. Through our work on timeliness, work ethic, relationships, problem-solving participants are able to establish and maintain employment. Our classes work through anti-bias curriculum-expecting teachers to look at the lens they teach through and having them see how that view impacts their teaching and adult interactions. Our program has been successful across the Twin Cities and first ring suburbs and now has expanded to outstate MN with programming in the Duluth area, and has the ability to serve across the state.

YWCA Minneapolis is uniquely positioned to impact teacher development. We run 5 early childhood centers using an anti-bias curriculum framework and our work is informed by tandem racial justice and women's right work across our departments.

We appreciate the opportunity to give you more information about our programming and welcome any questions you have. We humbly and grateful ask for your consideration for appropriation in this session's omnibus.

Sincerely,

YWCA Minneapolis Early Childhood Education & Public Policy Team