



March 14, 2022

Chair Tina Liebling  
House Health Finance & Policy Committee  
477 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Liebling and Health Finance & Policy Committee Members:

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) writes today to urge you to support the Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program outlined in HF 4099. We believe the Community Solutions Grant Program is an important way to recognize that communities of color, American Indian communities, and geographically dispersed communities have invaluable knowledge, and must be active and valued participants within the creation of solutions for themselves.

COVID-19 has impacted every family in Minnesota. However, the pandemic exacerbated several health and wealth disparities that exist in Minnesota. Communities of color and Indigenous communities have disproportionately been impacted by the pandemic<sup>1</sup>, seeing greater exposure and positivity rates than their white peers. This is also true for hospitalizations and death rates in Minnesota.

The pilot Community Solutions for Health Child Development Grant Program is showing significant progress in working within communities to address health and wellness gaps. Strategies and programs to address perinatal health, child well-being and community connections among children and families are essential to positioning each family for stability and success. Funding these programs long-term will help Minnesota's state and community leaders work together to best meet the unique challenges that exist within communities of color and Indigenous communities.

It is essential we build solutions that are culturally appropriate and responsive. We believe community driven solutions are essential to identifying innovative strategies for addressing historical challenges and trauma in communities of color and American Indian communities.

Thank you,

Thank you,

Deb Fitzpatrick,  
Children's Defense Funds-MN,  
Coalition, Co-Chair

Nancy Jost,  
West Central Initiative,  
Co-Chair

Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn,  
MN Prenatal to Three (PN-3)  
Coalition Coordinator

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<sup>1</sup> State of Minnesota COVID Dashboard (as of March 14, 2022; <https://mn.gov/covid19/data/data-by-race-ethnicity/index.jsp>)