



Dear Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

We write to you today with strong support for the many provisions in the SF4410 DE/HHS Omnibus bill that improve the lives of our state's children, especially those facing the largest opportunity gaps. We lift up just a few specific provisions, among many:

**Stabilizing Working Minnesotans changes that reduce cliff effects and inconsistencies that make it challenging for families to achieve economic stability and help families build a solid economic base from which they and their children can launch.** These include the following MFIP changes:

- **6-month reporting, prospective budgeting & simplification** to provide predictability in budgeting and improve economic stability for the 56,000 children on the program
- **Aligning RSDI and SSI income disregards.**

**Permanent investments in Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program** and its proven strategy for addressing disparities by amplifying innovative solutions that leverage community assets, are culturally relevant, and center the experiences and dignity of impacted people and communities.

- Due to limited funding, the vast majority of the current 23 **great ideas included in the program did not receive full funding**, compromising their potential. Furthermore, **too many promising proposals that harness the power and knowledge within communities were left behind.**
- Without legislative action the **program will end in 2023, jeopardizing the important progress being made** in communities across the state and as well as the innovative process that involves and uplifts communities of color, American Indian communities, and geographically dispersed communities while highlighting their invaluable knowledge.

**New state investments that set up more of our youngest Minnesotans for success**, among them: **Child care assistance** provider rates, expanded family definition and waitlist changes; grants to **family, friend and neighbor caregivers**; and expanded **home visiting**.

**A multi-pronged approach to the mental health crisis among children and the adults in their lives.** With a quarter of 9<sup>th</sup> graders reported a long-term mental health, behavioral or emotional problem even before the pandemic, the time is now for significant resources and a full court press.

The Omnibus bill also include many other critical provisions, such as: **Continuous 12-month MA coverage for children**; an **increase in the SNAP gross income limit**; investments in **community resource hubs** and the **Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Families act**.

**We know these provisions and others included SF4410/HHS Omnibus are critical to the future of our children and our state. Thank you for prioritizing them.**

Debra Fitzpatrick, Policy and Research Director