



Brian A. DePeña
Mayor of Lawrence

CITY OF LAWRENCE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mayor Brian A. DePeña Commits an Additional \$1.5 Million to Help Lawrence Families with Child Care

The funds Will Continue Reducing the Long Waiting list for Childcare in Lawrence

Lawrence, MA (June 15, 2022) - Lawrence Mayor Brian A. DePeña was joined by the Lawrence State Delegation, U.S. State Representative Lori Trahan, local elected officials, The Community Group, Director Maria Moeller and parents, to announce an additional \$1.5 million to the Mayor's Childcare Scholarship Fund using ARPA monies to continue helping low-moderate families with their child care needs.

“There is no question that children who attend good quality and well-structured childcare setting during the early years’ foundations stage have an increased chance of doing well into school life because they are better equipped with the social and emotional skills necessary to be school ready,” said Mayor DePena. “In the meantime, it helps parents mitigate the economic burden since childcare is one of the largest expenses they have when joining the workforce.”

The City of Lawrence expanded the Mayor's Scholarship Fund during the pandemic by committing an additional 4,286,068 million, to an initial \$400,000 investment. The additional \$1.5 million would bring the total investment to \$6,186,068.00 million.

Thanks to these additional funds, nearly 279 children would be able to maintain stable early childhood education through the existing contract with the City of Lawrence. It would also help families in the waitlist to continue accessing services as we move families into the state subsidy program (which is happening regularly at this point).



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“Child care is essential for families, particularly low- and medium-income families, working to make ends meet. Yet, for too long, access to quality child care has been unaffordable, and in the rare case that working families can cover the costs, it’s usually unavailable,” said Congresswoman Lori Trahan. “Investments like the one announced today by Mayor DePeña are key to changing that for a lot of families, and I couldn’t be more thrilled that he’s using the federal funds I helped secure through the American Rescue Plan to do it. I look forward to continuing to work with the Mayor and partners at all levels of government to ensure high quality child care is affordable and accessible to every Massachusetts resident.”

The Mayor’s Scholarship Fund is available at a number of licensed child care providers throughout the city, so that families can choose the provider that best meets their needs. In such a short time the Mayor’s Scholarship Fund has had a direct impact on the City of Lawrence and the expansion has allowed TCG to serve 279 families with even more on a waitlist.

“The need for a program like this is clear” states Maria Gonzalez Moeller, CEO of The Community Group. “Child Care is an essential part of every community, allowing parents to work and contribute to the economic growth and development of their city. I am proud we can directly help parents by easing the logistical and financial obstacles that normally accompany this process and it would not be possible without the financial support of the City of Lawrence and partnership of numerous licensed child care centers across the city. “

Assisting families who are currently on the waitlist for the Mayor’s Scholarship Fund is a top priority and TCG is working with partner child care agencies across the city to transfer as many families as possible onto long-term state subsidies. By taking this important step we are hopeful that additional families can gain access to quality, affordable, licensed child care.

"I want to thank Mayor DePena for investing \$1.5 million in response to the increasing childcare needs of our community," said **Senator Finegold (D-Andover)**. "Expanding access to these essential programs will give parents greater flexibility to work, reduce the financial strain of childcare, and improve the quality of life for our working families."

IN 2021, the President Joe Biden signed a \$1.9 trillion emergency relief bill - the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The government allocated \$39 billion in child care relief funds to provide relief for child care providers and provide support for families that need help affording child care.

“I am thrilled to see that the City of Lawrence has committed this funding to assist some of our most vulnerable neighbors better obtain access to childcare services and ease the financial burden of raising a child,” said **State Representative Frank A. Moran (D – Lawrence)**. “I



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would like to thank Mayor DePeña for his ongoing commitment to ensure that all Lawrence families are afforded the opportunities to succeed, and I look forward to witnessing the tremendous success of this scholarship.”

“The expenses of childcare are a huge challenge for families everywhere, and Lawrence is no exception. By funding a subsidy for childcare, Lawrence will greatly ease the financial burden of parenting and open up new economic opportunity for those who would otherwise struggle with working while looking after young children, said **State Representative Marcos Devers (D-Lawrence)**. “I applaud this investment, as it will empower not only our parents and children, but the City of Lawrence as well.”

“Access to affordable, high quality child care sets families up for success by laying the groundwork for a stable future for both children and their caregivers. However, for many of our caregivers, the high cost of childcare prevents them from full time work or pursuing higher education opportunities,” said **State Representative Christina Minicucci**. “The Mayor’s Scholarship Fund helps close this gap and alleviate the financial burden families face as they seek early education and care for their children. This program is a win for our families, our children, and our regional economic health.”

The Mayor’s Childcare Scholarship fund is managed by The Community Group (TCG), and was created to increase access to high-quality, licensed child care services for all families, even those who do not qualify for state child care subsidies. As time progressed, services were expanded to include more children and families. Currently, the fund allows parents who are either working or training in an educational program, and who do not already have a state child care subsidy, to enroll their children in affordable, subsidized, licensed child care. This critical funding not only provides child care access for families who are not eligible for state subsidies, but also in many cases creates a bridge for families who are eligible for a state subsidy but are on the waiting list and need child care immediately.

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