

Access & Affordability Workgroup

Merced County Local Child Care and Development Planning Council

Workgroup Charge

Name: Access & Affordability Workgroup

Parent Body: Merced County Local Child Care and Development Planning Council (LPC)

Purpose

The Access & Affordability Workgroup works to expand the availability of early learning and care (ELC) programs and ensure families across Merced County can access affordable, high-quality services. The group will focus on equitable expansion of facilities, supporting vulnerable populations, diversifying funding streams, and advocating for policies that increase subsidy access.

Scope of Work

- Identify and address gaps in access for homeless families, children with special needs, dual-language learners, and other underserved groups.
- Promote development of ELC facilities in neighborhoods with unmet demand.
- Encourage private investment and employer-supported ELC options.
- Advocate for unified funding streams and removal of regulatory barriers.
- Develop strategies to broaden subsidy eligibility and expand family access to financial supports.

Membership

Open to LPC members, sub-committee appointees, and partners such as First 5, MCOE, LEAs, HSA, Rescue Mission, FCCPs, city and county leaders, chambers of commerce, local businesses, UC Merced, Merced College, and planning departments.

Responsibilities

- Attend monthly meetings and contribute expertise.
- Share data, local insights, and community perspectives.
- Advance strategies for facility growth, affordability, and subsidy access.
- Build partnerships across public, private, and nonprofit sectors to achieve equitable outcomes.

Proposed Monthly Meeting Series (Sept – May)

September – Kickoff & Charge Adoption

October – Access for Vulnerable Populations

November – Facility Expansion & Location Prioritization

January – Employer Investment & Private Sector Engagement

February – Unified Funding Streams & Financing Plan

March – Regulatory Barriers & Permitting Solutions

April – Subsidy Eligibility & Affordability Advocacy

May – Progress Review & Next Steps

Draft Agendas

September: Kickoff & Charge Adoption

- Welcome & Introductions
- Review LPC Goals and Workgroup Charge
- Approve Workgroup Charge and Membership Roster
- Map desired outcomes (1A–2A) to year-long meeting topics
- Next Steps: Assign sub-tasks for October

October: Access for Vulnerable Populations

- Review Desired Outcome 1A
- Presentation: Existing supports for homeless families, DLLs, and children with special needs
- Identify service gaps and barriers
- Brainstorm strategies for improved access and supports
- Assign follow-up research tasks

November: Facility Expansion & Location Prioritization

- Review Desired Outcome 1B
- Presentation: Current ELC facility map and neighborhood gaps
- Discuss zoning, land use, and location prioritization

- Identify partners for facility development support
- Assign outreach roles

January: Employer Investment & Private Sector Engagement

- Review Desired Outcome 1B-3
- Presentation: Examples of employer-funded ELC models
- Brainstorm incentives for local businesses to invest in ELC
- Develop engagement plan with chambers and business leaders
- Assign business outreach roles

February: Unified Funding Streams & Financing Plan

- Review Desired Outcome 1C and 2A
- Explore potential local, state, and federal funding mechanisms (ballot measures, parcel taxes, developer fees, local foundations)
- Draft outline for ELC Financing Plan
- Assign team to develop proposal for LPC review

March: Regulatory Barriers & Permitting Solutions

- Review Desired Outcome 1C-2
- Presentation: Current permitting and regulatory challenges in facility development
- Brainstorm recommendations for reducing barriers
- Draft advocacy points for city/county leaders
- Assign drafting of recommendations

April: Subsidy Eligibility & Affordability Advocacy

- Review Desired Outcome 2A-2
- Presentation: Current subsidy eligibility and enrollment challenges
- Brainstorm proposals to broaden income and need eligibility
- Draft advocacy letters or recommendations for LPC approval
- Assign outreach to policy leaders

May: Progress Review & Next Steps

- Review accomplishments against Desired Outcomes 1A-2A

- Identify unfinished business and recommendations for next year
- Document successes for annual LPC reporting
- Celebrate contributions of members
- Transition planning for summer/fall 2026

One-Page Calendar Overview (Sept – May)

Month	Focus Topic
September	Kickoff & Charge Adoption
October	Access for Vulnerable Populations
November	Facility Expansion & Location Prioritization
January	Employer Investment & Private Sector Engagement
February	Unified Funding Streams & Financing Plan
March	Regulatory Barriers & Permitting Solutions
April	Subsidy Eligibility & Affordability Advocacy
May	Progress Review & Next Steps