AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: CFGV Award to HHS & ECC

Action Requested: Other County Manager Approval

Parties to the Agreement: Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley

Term Begins: 8/10/2020 **Term Ends:** 12/31/2021 **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

The Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley is awarding HHS $11,000 of COVID 19 Funding for early childhood programs to help pay for teacher sick leave that is not covered.

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Margaret Wacker **Submitter's Email Address:** mwacker@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: (●) Required ( ) Not Required

Comments:
No concerns, ln

Reviewed by: GUNCOUNTY1\lNienhueser Discharge Date: 9/19/2020

County Attorney Review: (●) Required ( ) Not Required

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mhoyt Discharge Date: 10/2/2020 Certificate of Insurance Required Yes ( ) No (●)

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 10/2/2020

(●) Consent Agenda ( ) Regular Agenda ( ) Worksession Time Allotted: 0

Agenda Date: 10/6/2020

Revised April 2015

If this application is from a group, please list the organizations participating, along with the contact person's name, phone number, email and mailing address for EACH entity.

Gunnison-Hinsdale Early Childhood Council	Lana Athey	970.642.4667	lathey@gunnisoncounty.org	220 N. Pine Street, Gunnison, CO 81230
Tenderfoot Child and Family Development Center	Lynna Frymoyer	970.642.1949	tfootdirector@gmail.com	700 N. Colorado Street Gunnison, CO 81230
Seasons Schoolhouse	Rachel Alter	970.641.4511	Seasons81230@gmail.com	617 W Virginia Avenue Gunnison, CO 81230
Paradise Place Preschool	Ben Poswalk	970.349.2149	paradiseplaceschool@gmail.com	404 Maroon Avenue Crested Butte, CO 81224
Little Red Schoolhouse	Jessica Rutherford	970.349.0996	lilredschoolhouse1@gmail.com	49 Gillaspey Ave Crested Butte, CO 81224
Stepping Stones Children's Center	Jen Burks	970.349.5288	steppingstonescb@gmail.com	705 7th St Crested Butte, CO 81224

Tell us about the vulnerable population(s) you are serving (give us specific numbers if you can), what the specific need is, and how you are working to meet the need. Also, what is your time frame? *

Our licensed child care providers serve many vulnerable populations that have been hit hard by the COVID19 pandemic. The 38 children and 27 families currently being served through the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) are all in care at the licensed child care facilities in Gunnison County. Our community's licensed child care centers provide care for children with open child welfare cases as well as families receiving assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The early childhood educators in these facilities and homes provide children with a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment that

supports optimal growth and development. In addition, our focus is on social and emotional support that cannot be replicated in other environments, and has shown to be of particular importance to families that fall into these demographics.

The early childhood workforce is also a unique and vulnerable population. Licensed child care centers' regulations require rigorous training, costly background clearances, and year-round professional development for all employees. Nationwide, the early childhood workforce has received notoriety for being underpaid, overworked, and unappreciated. The COVID-19 public health emergency has added a new level of stress on our early childhood teachers. Employees of child care centers returned to classrooms as frontline workers after stay at home orders were lifted caring for the children of frontline healthcare workers and others in our community leading the charge against COVID19. Now, three months after reopening child care programs in our community, we recognize that working in child care during a pandemic has made an already stressful and low-paid job even more difficult. Low-paid child care workers are typically not in the financial position to be able to take extended time off. We are requesting funding for licensed child care employees' sick leave to support these amazing individuals who have selflessly chosen the important role of caring for others' children.

Currently centers are open and able to provide care for all members of the community. Should the County's Coronameter move into the orange phase child care slots would once again be restricted to support child care for essential workers only. If the Coronameter enters the Red Phase all licensed child care centers would be required to remain closed until the County was back into the Orange phase of the Coronameter. It is expected that this funding would help support centers through at least December 31st and potentially longer depending on how many early childhood educators fall ill in that time period.

Tell us how the need is connected to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority of the early childhood providers in our community operate on very thin margins and rely heavily on the tuition paid by families as their primary and often sole source of revenue to cover payroll and additional operating expenses. Early childhood centers are in a unique space of providing quality care at an affordable price to families and attempting to appropriately compensate a workforce with the tuition received. The nature of childcare as a business is that tuition typically feels like a stretch for families, centers struggle to pay their teachers living wages, and the ends just barely meet for the center, the families it serves, and the people it employs. The result for years has been an early childhood workforce that is underpaid and receives little to no benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this scenario. Stringent sick policies have been adopted to keep children, families, and employees healthy as we continue to resist the spread of the virus. However, it is child care staff that are taking the brunt of these policies as they are not able to work for at least 10 days when they display two or more symptoms of the novel coronavirus. This may cause up to two or more weeks of lost wages.

If this application is from a group, tell us about your planning. Please give a bit of history on how you came together, the strategies you use to stay coordinated, and what your collective "plan" looks like. A plan can be as informal or detailed as is appropriate, but should describe how you work together now, and, if possible, how you would like to work together in the near future. (Single entities, please enter N/A) *

This application is a collaboration between the Gunnison-Hinsdale Early Childhood Council (GHECC) and the licensed child care centers in our community. The GHECC was brought to our community in July of 2007 by Gunnison County's Department of Health and Human Services Department (DHHS) in order to improve local early childhood services and educational opportunities for children in these counties. The GHECC works in conjunction with Early Childhood Councils across Colorado to address the goals of HB 07-1062 which expresses a statewide need for increasing and sustaining the quality, accessibility, capacity, and affordability of services for children and their parents to help parents raise their children to be successful at school, at work, and in the community.

The GHECC and the licensed child care centers in our communities have been successful in working collectively as a group for years to help strengthen and support our County's early childhood system. Since March the GHECC, licensed child care centers, licensed family child care home providers, Gunnison County Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Licensing, and the Gunnison Watershed School District have worked together in investigating funding streams, developing policies around safely reopening child care facilities in the midst of a pandemic, and working to provide care for essential workers upon reopening. We plan to continue these partnerships throughout the pandemic to ensure that child care is available to all in the community, prioritizing care for our essential workers and vulnerable populations.

The Early Childhood Sector was the first to develop a cohesive plan and proposal to reopen and has served as a model for other business sectors moving through the pandemic. This is one of many examples of our ability to think cooperatively as a collective to address challenging situations.

How will you expend the grant? Be as specific as possible. (If this application is from a group, please identify how much of the requested total will go to each partner and how that partner will expend it.) *

The GHECC is requesting $21,000 to be used to help cover the cost of licensed child care employees' sick leave if they present symptoms of the novel coronavirus and are thus required to exclude themselves from work. The funds would be held by the GHECC and center directors would request reimbursement from the GHECC for sick leave paid to employees. If an employee already has a paid sick leave allowance the request for paid sick leave from this fund will only be for the additional days that are not covered by the sick leave allowance. For instance, if a center covers paid sick leave for up to 3 days and an employee is out sick for 10 days the request for reimbursement could only be for 7 days.

Requests would be prioritized based on the following prioritization levels:

HIGH PRIORITY – Employees with no sick leave allowance

NORMAL PRIORITY-Employees with partial sick leave allowances (less than 5 days of sick leave)

LOW PRIORITY – Employees with full sick leave allowances

Requests would be capped at $1,000 per individual and centers can request reimbursement only once for each individual employee.

$1,000 of the funds awarded would be used to cover admin expenses

What other sources of funding have you pursued? Were you successful or not? (If this application is from a group, describe funding to the group, and please only include information on funding to individual entities if appropriate.) *

5 out of the 6 licensed child care centers received funding from the Paycheck Protection Program all of which has now been expended. One center also obtained an SBA loan.

The GHECC was able to shift some grant funding around from the Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation. The funds were used to support centers by providing a mini-grant to each center that applied to help cover the cost of additional supplies and expenses associated with reopening centers.

Two centers that already have Temple Hoyne Buell funding in place received a small grant from the Foundation to assist them during the first part of the pandemic.

Two centers applied for the Colorado COVID relief fund, only one was awarded funds. Centers have also applied for funding from the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley's COVID recovery fund during prior application periods, funding was not awarded.

Do you have cash reserves? If yes, how has the balance changed since March? (If this application is from a group, only include information on cash reserves for individual participating entities if relevant, otherwise, enter N/A) *

All of the centers were able to maintain a cash reserve throughout the last few months by accessing other funding sources. The funding sources such as PPP loans, SBA loans, Colorado COVID Recovery funding, and small amounts from other Foundations have allowed them to not deplete their cash reserves completely. Should the pandemic ramp up once again it could prove difficult for some of the centers to maintain operations and stay open depending on how long a potential closure or reduction in group size might last.

It is important to note that cash reserves for child care centers take decades to secure. COVID-19 depleted these reserves in three months and that is with external financial support. Early-childhood organizations do not make enough profit to accrue cash reserves as quickly as other businesses. The depletion of centers' cash reserves will be impactful for years to come.

Is there anything else you would like to share with the reviewers that will give them a better understanding to make a grant award decision?

Many different business sectors could also benefit from a fund to provide paid sick leave to their employees. However it is critical for the early childhood workforce to have this additional support. As mentioned previously, the stringent sick policies which are essential to ensure the health of the children, families, and employees will leave many in the early childhood workforce without pay for at least two weeks. The results of these sick policies are two-fold. The already low-paid employee now faces a financial hardship and the center must find substitute staff. Long-term the impact of this scenario could be tragic to our licensed child care programs. This funding is to help provide paid sick leave to employees that otherwise wouldn't have received it. This can help the employees to feel comfortable taking off of work when they are sick ensuring the health and safety of the children and families they interact with and their financial well-being.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many hardships for a variety of business sectors in the community. Our licensed child care centers play a critical role in keeping our community going by providing an essential service to our community's workforce. As this public health and economic crisis has shown us, a safe place for children to learn, play, and thrive while their parents work is an *integral* piece of local economies. We seek to bolster the financial foundation of childcare so that it may play a stronger, more resilient, and more dependable role in the lives of working families and our community at large.