

August 22, 2018 – Partners Public ELI Meeting

Meeting began at 3:05pm

Group discussion opened with an overview:

- Phase 1: Capacity Grant Awards – Increase Available Slots
- Phase 2: Scholarship Model Development Process – Make Care More Affordable
- Review Principles guiding the effort (below)
 - Program is child and family focused.
 - Policies prioritize serving infants and toddlers living in poverty
 - Program structure must consider continuity of care to maximize impact on lowest income.
 - To ensure best outcomes, participating programs must be meeting or pursuing high quality standards through state or national programs and participate in Vermont’s Specialized Care provider program.
 - Our partners who work and care for families and children will be included in development, review and revision processes.
 - Simplicity (administrative and for families) is an important consideration
 - A well-developed scholarship program can improve fiscal outcomes for early care and learning programs and is an important strategy for leveraging additional funding
 - Outcomes and evaluation will inform continuous improvement
- Timeline & Additional Community Engagement
 - Establish draft model Summer 2018 for public discussion September
 - Finalize model with public & Council input Fall 2018; choose administrator
 - Conduct outreach Fall / Winter 2018-2019
 - Open Scholarship Applications March 1, 2019 and close April 1, 2019
 - Review program results with Council and Public May 2019
 - Allocate funds June 2019 & enroll scholarship recipients September 2019
- Introduction of Conceptual Model Components for Feedback
 - Discussion of Relevant Burlington Context and Serving the Most Vulnerable
 - Review of ELI programs in other municipalities (including Chattanooga, TN, Northern Virginia, St Paul MN, Rockland County, NY, and San Francisco, CA)
 - Components (Delivery, Financial, Administrative, Eligibility, Outreach – more detail below)
- The group focused on two discussion questions:
 - Who Could be the Most Impacted?
 - How Best to Reach Those Most in Need?

The ELI scholarship would focus on low income Burlington families eligible for CCFAP but not currently enrolled in high quality childcare. The goal is to stand up a scholarship program in Burlington while also growing the capacity within Burlington – given the limited number of Burlington spots, some of the funds could flow to centers outside the City. The ELI scholarships would cover the gap in funding between existing CCFAP subsidies and the actual cost of care (at meeting, one projection of that cost based on the 2017 market survey would be an annual \$14,000 cost), and if the center is in Burlington the scholarships could also carry with them a small premium intending to benefit the high-quality childcare center that receives the child.

Questions included the following (with answers in parentheses):

- Does CCFAP works on a sliding scale? (Yes)
- Is there a problem of subsidy being underutilized? (Many eligible for larger percent of subsidy apply but sometimes those that only receive 10% do not go through the process. Programs eligible for CCFAP funding must be state regulated, and there are also requirements for CCFAP that preclude some families from accessing this resource).
- Is there a citizenship requirement for CCFAP? (No.)
- Would you want a nearly 3-year old to engage the program? (The scholarship would prioritize younger children where possible – continuity of care is an important consideration...the longer a child is in the program, the greater the impact.)
- Would the proposed program help provide training for providers? (Focused on 4 and 5 STAR centers following the Strengthening Families framework). (Public input that this is an important point – if center cant properly provide support, student may end up leaving the program.
- How much is reserved for capacity growth, how much for scholarships? (Right now, projecting half and half less the administrative expense of running the program through a 3rd party vendor that already has capacity to provide income-verification service, or about \$210,000 each for scholarships and capacity.
- Will these scholarships only go to programs that charge tuition? (No. The programs must be CCFAP eligible/state regulated, but they do not have to charge the co-pay between what the state covers and the market rate cost of their programs – right now, many programs cover this difference without charge.)
- How quickly do you hope to ramp up the scholarship program/number of children reached? (We need to be mindful of the number of spots open in Burlington to absorb new children, though because of the first round of capacity grants there should be 62 new slots by the end of 2020)
Planned to have 62 new spots by 2020
- Who is the program for? Those enrolled in subsidy? Others to work into higher quality programs? Get scholarship to cover funds the centers usually cover? Will it focus on kids already enrolled or those not enrolled? And those at poverty or above? (Focus is low-income children not currently enrolled in the system).
- How to deal if a family's situation changes – will they received less scholarship? (The goal is to keep the ELI funds steady, but the point about needing flexibility is a

good one.) Additional public suggestion to talk to Early Head Start about family changing situations.

- What about the true cost of care? \$14,000 is about 75% of market rate but programs do not charge full cost of care because it would price everyone out. Some programs fund the infant rooms with funds from other ages and others just do not have infant care because of it. (The scholarship will fill some of that gap – to the market rate but not to the full cost of care – subject for further discussion).
- If the target population is at the federal poverty level then those families will get the most amount of subsidy, which would mean that showing the scholarship impact on higher income levels is just an exercise? (No, per the above consideration that CCFAP funding could fluctuate over time and continuity of care is important. Further, scholarship might catch some children that are not eligible for CCFAP)
- Will centers hold slots or dedicate slots to scholarship kids? Parents find a spot on their own?
(Centers aren't holding spots yet – parents will have to find a spot. That will be part of the outreach effort for City/VB5 as well. Maybe the 3rd party vendor will help.)
- How will you reach the kids not enrolled in CCFAP? Why aren't they enrolled?
(Many potential reasons not enrolled – awareness, preference, limited benefit, ineligible, etc. Will have an outreach strategy and seek info from partners like Head Start or BSD. Program anticipates encouraging CCFAP enrollment as well.
- Capacity funding could help secure spots, add new spots, and help centers prepare? (Yes.)
- What about creating more incentives for low-income children? (Possible to evaluate market rate or other incentives.)
- Be clear on the target population – those under 100%, those up to 65% AMI (Will do.)
- Consider further how to account for fact that there will be a period where some children are getting scholarships but others at same centers may not be getting one. (Yes.)
- Could enroll just babies born in 2019 (wanting to serve broader population.)

Meeting concluded at 4:50pm