



Boston City Council Committee on Ways and Means

Dockets #0524-0531 FY22 Budget

Office of Women's Advancement

Working Session: Friday, May 7, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

Hearing: Thursday, May 20, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

The following is a collection of questions that were asked by the Committee regarding the FY22 budget for the Office of Women's Advancement at the Working Sessions on Friday, May 7, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Recording here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GavZAZTbqCk>

The Administration is requested to respond to all questions in one of three ways:

- 1) Verbally at the hearing on Thursday, May 20th, at 10AM
- 2) For factual questions, through written responses supplied prior to May 20th, including budget book page numbers or other references where appropriate.
- 3) By deferring to a specific scheduled departmental budget hearing

Please annotate and return this information request before May 20th, indicating how each question will be answered.

Office of Women's Advancement Budget Questions

Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair, asked:

- Please explain the \$250,000 increase in contracted services for the Childcare Entrepreneur Fund; what will the criteria be for selection and what form/degree of financial support will it provide?

\$230,000 of the increase will be used for Childcare Entrepreneur Fund grants. \$20,000 of the increase will be used for outreach and communication materials.

The increase in funds for the Childcare Entrepreneur Fund will increase the number of grants and business workshops that MOWA provides to people who operate Family Childcare businesses in the City of Boston.

- In FY22, using operating budget and external funds, the Childcare Entrepreneur Fund will provide grants to 100 Family (in-home) Childcare operators:
 - \$3500 per grantee for 93 existing Family Childcare operators, and
 - \$7000 per grantee for 7 start up/co-operative model Family Childcare operators.

- Grantees will take part in 6 business workshops specifically tailored to the needs of Family Childcare providers, delivered by United Way staff.
- These 100 operators represent approximately 20% of the Family Childcare businesses in the City of Boston.
- FY21 Childcare Entrepreneur Fund selection criteria:
 - In order to be eligible for consideration, applicants must:
 - Provide proof of EEC license or pending license
 - Childcare business located in Boston
 - Serve 10 or fewer children
 - For existing businesses, serving at least 3 children
 - For existing businesses, applicant has business insurance
 - Not be a past CEF recipient
 - FY21 Scoring rubric awarded points for:
 - Having a business plan
 - Operating in BHA housing
 - Serving voucher families
 - Serving unsubsidized families
 - Being low-income (having income within HUD limits)
 - Having a plan for how they will utilize grant funds
 - Planning to expand their business
 - Businesses who know the impact of COVID on their finances, with particular focus on businesses most impacted by COVID
 - Other evaluation criteria include the applicant’s plan for utilizing grant funds, whether they have applied in the past, and the applicant’s interest in learning from the business workshops

Our research, feedback from community partners, and changing funding flows (e.g., federal dollars flowing through the Massachusetts EEC) informs iterative design of the scoring rubric with each cohort.

- How does the design of the Childcare Entrepreneur Fund connect to what the office has found to be the main barriers to increasing access to affordable and quality childcare in Boston?

According to the 2019 Childcare Census Survey conducted by MOWA and the Economic Mobility Lab, Boston families experience many childcare challenges, but primarily:

- 86% of respondents within our sample listed “Not Affordable” as a childcare challenge.
- 45% of respondents within our sample said childcare was either too far or too difficult to find.

Family Childcares (FCCs) tend to have more flexible hours, be more affordable, and serve families in the neighborhoods the providers live in, which helps address these challenges. However, despite these benefits, FCCs in Boston were closing even as the

population of children in the city has grown, with nearly 400 closures between 2010 and 2019. In 2018-2019, MOWA and the Economic Mobility Lab conducted interviews with providers and experts in the field in order to better understand these trends. We learned that FCC providers were struggling to make ends meet financially due to both low wages in the field and a need for business skills. While excellent caregivers, many FCC providers did not feel confident as small business owners. The Childcare Entrepreneur Fund was designed to support FCC providers over both the short and long term - with a short term financial infusion to help them achieve a goal, and over the long term to help them be successful business owners.

- How does the Office of Women's Advancement and the Boston Women's Workforce Council (BWWC) work to create an inclusive and welcoming space for trans women?

The Boston Women's Workforce Council works with over 250 employers to close the gender/racial wage gap. We do so by measuring, analyzing, and reporting on the gap. In addition, we organize events for our members, 100% Talent Compact Signers, on best practices to reach pay equity. Researchers, advocates, and Compact Signers lead these sessions, providing opportunities for discussion and shared learning.

Many of the BWWC's employers have put in place policies to make sure their workplaces are inclusive to both trans women and men and we enthusiastically support their efforts. The BWWC is working to change the wage gap measurement data submission categories, currently based on the EEOC filing, to move beyond the binary reporting standards and to include a category for trans women and men. While our employers are not required to include this employee data in their EEOC filing, we believe that "if you can't see it, you can't change it", and this will be an important step in raising visibility for pay inequities that trans women and men may face in the workforce.

- Is the measure of 82 businesses receiving financial support specific to those supported by the Childcare Entrepreneur Fund, or include anything else?
 - Yes, that is only businesses served by the CEF.
- How is the City thinking about the way in which the pandemic has negatively impacted women including job loss or having to leave the labor force, and what can we do to help?

The Office of Women's Advancement continues to hold conversations with employers through the BWWC and other avenues. The childcare survey was designed with questions pertaining to COVID and its effect on families. The survey also helps us look into these disparities, where we obtain data from parents regarding childcare/work. MOWA continues to focus on economic equity, expanding the salary negotiation workshops will help our focus on reopening. We must continue to create programming to help break these barriers as well as continue funding for programs that will help support reopening with an equity lens.

Collaboration is essential and assuring MOWA has a seat at the table when these conversations arise is important. We look forward to partnering with the City council in finding solutions to tackle this problem together.

Councilor Julia Mejia asked:

- How are we using the Childcare Entrepreneur Fund to empower local entrepreneurs of color who are working in this industry?
 - The CEF was specifically developed in 2019 to aid family childcare providers - who run small childcare businesses from their homes - because these entrepreneurs are more than 90% women, 60% women of color, and 40% immigrants.
 - The CEF empowers entrepreneurs with 6 workshops centered on the fundamentals of running a successful childcare business as well as a \$3500 grant. The grant can be used for a business project of the applicant's choosing, such as fencing in a backyard to make it a safe play space.
 - The CEF selection process is designed to center equity. We have offered digital and paper promotional materials in 5+ languages and applications in 10 languages. We use a scoring rubric to ensure fairness in the selection process.
 - Beyond the initial selection criteria, we work to ensure that the proportion of selected applicants is as diverse or more diverse than the field as a whole. For example, for the 50 participants selected for the first two cohorts of FY21 who chose to specify their racial identity on the application:
 - 20 identified as African American/Black
 - 12 identified as Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish
 - 4 identified as White
 - 3 identified as bi-racial or multi-racial
 - 2 identified as Dominican
 - 1 identified as of Haitian Descent

- In FY21, the Childcare Entrepreneur Fund is supporting its first entirely non-English-speaking cohort of childcare providers, with workshop facilitation and materials in Spanish. What is the plan to support a cohort of providers who speak languages beyond English and Spanish?
 - Outreach and promotional materials about the CEF are offered in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Chinese.
 - The CEF application is available in 10 languages and the selection process is neutral as to an applicant's need for workshop interpretation - that is, we do not turn away any applicants because of interpretation needs. We offer simultaneous translation to any selected applicant who needs it, and we

pivoted to offer simultaneous translation over Zoom when the pandemic hit.

- During the first cohort, we offered simultaneous translation in Cantonese and Spanish. Since then, we have offered simultaneous translation and a separate cohort in Spanish because that is what the applicants have identified as their preferred language. If we were to have a large enough group of selected applicants who speak a language besides Spanish or English (10+), we could run a separate cohort for them if our partner United Way was able to provide an instructor who spoke their language.
- Going forward, we will be working closely with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement to continue outreach into immigrant communities in order to ensure all Family Childcare operators are aware of this program.