Public Policy Action Group

Meeting Summary

April 11, 2018

The Public Policy Action Group met at the Community College of Aurora on Wednesday, April 11, 2018 and discussed the following topics.

1. Background on [SWFI](https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20160614).

Jessica Cassarino described the Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) operating at the [Community College of Aurora](https://www.ccaurora.edu/strengthening-working-families) and [Community College of Denver](https://www.ccd.edu/blog/cityhawk-talk/campus-resources-strengthening-working-families-initiative) including the number and type of students involved, the help provided by child care navigators and the focus on training for jobs in Health Care, Information Technology and Advanced Manufacturing. She reported on the data collected to date and the type of child care challenges faced by the students.

1. Background on the [SWFI Learning Community](http://www.civicnetwork.io/network/strengthening-working-families-initiative-swfi-child-care-learning-community).

Rich Jones and Lisa Jansen Thompson described the role and activities of the SWFI Learning Community and background on the goals and work of the Public Policy Action Group. They also described the goals and work of other action groups created as part of the Learning Community.

1. Discussion of [HB18-1335](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb18-1335)

The group discussed the provisions of HB18-1335 currently pending in the legislature and how it will restructure the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP). Various members of the action group discussed several components of CCCAP including:

* How the current formula and process for allocating CCCAP funds among the counties works and the process for developing the formula.
* The current minimum income level for eligibility for CCCAP, the maximum income limits in the various counties for families receiving CCCAP and how HB18-1335 will raise the minimum to 185 percent of the federal poverty level and direct the maximum to be set at 85 percent of state median income. Although the maximum will be set through rules developed by the State Human Services Board, the Joint Budget Committee staff, the Colorado Department of Human Services, the counties and advocates all agree that this is what the board will do and will work to support this decision.
1. Other issues relating to expanding access to child care

The group discussed several factors that constrain access to high quality child care services and how policy might address them including:

* [Proposed CCCAP rules](http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oec/OEC_Resources?p=Resources&s=Public-Notice-Information&lang=en) that are open for public comment through May 7, 2018.
* The number of students currently eligible for CCCAP and how counties serve student parents under CCCAP. There are current policies aimed at ensuring that student parents have access to CCCAP but there may be a need to ensure that the current policies are being carried out. The group wants to better understand where students are not getting access to CCCAP and identify policy levers to ensure that more families have access to CCCAP.
* A need to address the fact that higher quality child care often costs more and that many families are using informal care givers for child care. Could public policy provide incentives for raising the quality of child care provided by the informal care is a question the group will consider.
* How can public policy address child care desserts? There is a need to provide incentives for people to start child care businesses in the areas that currently lack facilities. Among the issues discussed were: (1) the lack of financial incentives and current regulatory barriers to start child care businesses; (2) the high cost of housing and limited ability to operate a child care business in rental properties; (3) the need for employers to help provide child care slots and whether liability issues limit their willingness to do so; and, (4) the need to incent child care providers to move to where the children live and for more providers to accept CCCAP.
1. Next Steps
* The group will meet again on May 22, 2018 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at the Community College of Aurora.
* Members agreed to [read the proposed CCCAP rules](http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oec/OEC_Resources?p=Resources&s=Public-Notice-Information&lang=en) currently open for public comment and comment as they feel appropriate.
* To the extent we have data on the number of students currently served by CCCAP statewide and by county it will be posted on the Civic Network and members will come prepared to discuss this issue at the next meeting.
* The outcome of the legislature’s deliberations on HB18-1335 and the next steps in implementing the changes embodied in it will be discussed.
* Other topics as suggested by action group members will be added to the agenda