



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: November 30, 2023

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Workforce Development Office

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Ramsey

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

An Ordinance approving an Interlocal Agreement between the City of San Antonio and Texas A&M University – San Antonio in an amount not to exceed \$96,712, for a comprehensive analysis of access, quality, and affordability of the early learning landscape in San Antonio and Bexar County.

SUMMARY:

An Ordinance approving an Interlocal Agreement between the City of San Antonio and Texas A&M University – San Antonio for a comprehensive analysis of access, quality, and affordability of the early learning landscape in San Antonio and Bexar County. Funding is available in the amount of \$72,534 is available from the General Fund FY 2024 Adopted Budget and funding in the amount of \$24,178 is available in the Pre-K 4 SA FY 2024 Adopted Budget for a total amount of \$96,712.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Before the pandemic, 99% of low-income children in Bexar County lived in a quality childcare desert. A quality childcare desert is any zip code with more than 30 low-income children under the age of 5 and more than three times as many children as available seats in providers with a high-quality rating (i.e., Texas Rising Star 4 or national accreditation). From March 2020 to September

2021, childcare deserts grew by 50% across the state. Bexar County alone lost 236 childcare providers in this time (Children at Risk, 2021). The extent of the problem is likely worse than childcare desert data suggest because childcare desert estimates are based on a childcare provider's maximum licensed capacity, not the number of actual openings available at any given time. Health and safety protocols and staffing shortages have forced many childcare facilities to operate on a much smaller scale and serve fewer children than their license permits. Additionally, childcare desert data do not take into account hours of operations, meaning the availability of services for families who need childcare during non-traditional hours or on a flexible basis are not fully represented in these models.

To fully understand access, quality, and affordability, it is critical that new research examines the current enrollment capacity available to the San Antonio and Bexar County communities, as well as, the scope of the services, service times, and enrollment patterns. For families in Texas and Bexar County, where childcare deserts have grown in the past years, lack of availability makes finding childcare extremely difficult. Once they find care, cost and quality challenges remain. This project provides essential information on access, quality, and affordability as conduit to change.

On August 22, 2023, the Economic Workforce Development Committee recommended that this item be brought to the full Council for consideration.

ISSUE:

In February 2023, a call for proposals was issued to obtain the services of a local research university to conduct a comprehensive study of access, quality, and affordability of childcare in San Antonio and Bexar County. Texas A&M University-San Antonio (TAMUSA) was the only entity to respond to the call. TAMUSA proposed to conduct a landscape analysis of licensed childcare centers, registered and licensed childcare homes, Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees, Pre-K 4 SA, and district-based early childhood services using a sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design featuring omnibus and stratified random sampling approaches. Drs. Melissa Jozwiak and Hatice Zeynep Inan will serve as lead the researchers. Dr. Jozwiak has expertise in early childhood education and specializes in examining continuity and discontinuity within the early childhood system and how those elements, such as educator qualifications or the role of Quality Rating Improvement Systems when improving quality, interact to impact the larger system and community. Dr. Hatice Inan is an ethnographer who specializes in the evaluation of high-quality, hands-on, interest and inquiry-based early childhood education programs that prioritize both child development and learning.

Staff seeks to enter into a one-year, Interlocal Agreement with TAMUSA. Deliverables includes a full project report, an executive summary of the report, and a presentation of the process, findings, and implications.

ALTERNATIVES:

City staff could attempt to conduct this analysis in-house. However, limited staff bandwidth and expertise may result in significant delays.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding for the Professional Services Agreement in the amount of \$ 72,534 is available from the General Fund FY 2024 Adopted Budget and funding in the amount of \$24,178 is available in the Pre-K 4 SA FY 2024 Adopted Budget for a total amount of \$96,712.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a Interlocal Agreement between the City of San Antonio and Texas A&M University – San Antonio in an amount not to exceed \$96,712, for a comprehensive analysis of access, quality, and affordability of the early learning landscape in San Antonio and Bexar County.