

PCC Platform with supporting documents:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/vhbvpoubwmyy8y4/PCC%20platform%20apr2019%2B%2B%2B.pdf?dl=0>

**Amy Shollenberger, Lobbyist**

**Representing Vermont Parent Child Center Network**

**House General, Housing & Military Affairs Committee - Thursday, April 18, 2019**

**RE: S.23 - Minimum Wage Bill**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation, and thank you for considering both raising the minimum wage and the related issues that must be addressed when we do raise the wage. First, the Parent Child Center Network would like to express full support for raising the minimum wage in Vermont. Our work focuses on families with young children, and we know that higher parental and caregiver earnings have well-documented effects on children's health, educational outcomes and future earnings. Vermont's children deserve every opportunity to thrive, and we should do our best to provide every opportunity in both policy and service supports throughout the state to help all of our children and families.

More than 26,800 children in Vermont have at least one adult in their household - a parent, grandparent, caretaker or adult sibling - who will benefit from raising the minimum wage to \$15/hour by 2024. We believe that giving the people raising future Vermonters a raise can only benefit our state.

Some of the people who are not yet earning \$15/hour work in organizations like the Parent Child Centers - these are service providers that are providing critical state services on behalf of the state through agreements such as the Parent Child Center Master Grant. Specifically, we conducted a survey of the 15 PCCs this summer and learned that across the state 130 workers at the PCCs are currently earning below \$15/hour. To bring all of those positions to \$15/hour, the increased cost of wages alone would be just shy of half a million dollars. I have submitted a packet that includes a chart showing the math on this. Please note that the chart shows only wage costs - it does not include the employer side of the taxes, nor does it include any increased costs for benefits.

The PCCs currently have an appropriations request to increase their Master Grant by \$1.5million. The PCCs have not seen an increase in funding for decades, despite the fact that they are delivering services on behalf of the state. This \$1.5million increase would first go to raising the salaries of the lowest paid workers (those making below \$15/hour), and the rest would go to filling vacant positions and bringing other staff closer to market rates. This request for \$1.5million is a small step towards the additional \$8million that is actually needed to bring PCC wages in line with commensurate positions in state government and education.

If we are successful with achieving this first step base increase for the PCCs this year, the minimum wage issue would be solved for them, at least in terms of s.23. Their Master Grant

funding is General Fund, and it is essentially a contract with the state to provide eight core services for families with young children. As I mentioned, we will continue to advocate for continued increases in the Master Grant in order to "catch up" from years of level under funding. However, if we are successful this year, we would bring wages to at least the \$15/hour level for all PCC workers.

We ask that your committee support s.23 to raise the minimum wage, and we also ask that you support the PCC request to raise the Master Grant so that the PCC staff can also get closer to earning a living wage. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony and our request.

# Parent Child Centers are the Answer Legislative Platform 2019



Parent Child Centers (PCCs) are a network of 15 community-based non-profit organizations, serving all of Vermont. PCCs are essentially the hub of services for families with young children – an actual place in the local community where families are always welcome and can always get the support they need, regardless of economic status or family status.

## Budget Requests:

### 1. Increase state funding for Parent Child Centers providing essential state services

- All PCCs deliver critical & essential state services to families with young children, through their Master Grant and other grants and contracts with the Department for Children and Families. The Master Grant is an ongoing effort between the Parent Child Centers and the Department for Children and Families to build consistency in service delivery and outcomes measurement across Vermont for the essential state services the PCCs are delivering on behalf of the state. However, the Master Grant *does not adequately fund* the state services that it requires the PCCs to deliver.
- Parent Child Center staff wages and benefits are continually 30% below market rates to comparable positions in education and state government. If PCCs are expected to continue to provide high quality state services, PCC wages and benefits must sustain the highly skilled people who do the work.

**Master Grant funding must increase by \$8,000,000 to close the salary and funding gap. Total PCC Master Grant funding must be \$10,000,000. PCCs are requesting a 3-year phased approach to get to the goal of \$10million/year for the PCC Master Grant.**

- ⊕ **Our request for FY2020 is to increase the Master Grant base by \$1.5million**
- ⊕ **We also request \$1.5million in one-time funding to “catch up” on administrative (non-salary) and maintenance expenses that have been delayed as we have dealt with continued under-funding for decades.**

### 2. Do NOT end Reach Up Case Management Contracts for Parent Child Centers

- PCCs should be the home for supports and services for Vermont families.
- Co-location of Reach Up Case Management and early childhood services in PCCs ensures that parents are helped to access resources/information/guidance/community support that are critical to their children’s wellbeing during the early years in their development.
- Reach Up case management contracts at Parent/Child Centers (PCCs) are crucial to the integrated, multi- generational approach that PCCs provide to families. We provide a seemingly endless array of services and advocacy to and for young families due to the diverse funding streams and programing that we bring together under one roof.

<b>Parent Child Centers Core Services</b>
Home Visits
Early Childhood Services
Parent Education
Playgroups
Parent Support Groups
Concrete Supports
Community Development
Information & Referral

- ⊕ **The Governor’s recommend is to eliminate these contracts – PCCs request that the contracts stay with the PCCs and that they continue to be funded. (\$1.6million)**

## Parent Child Centers also support the following Legislative Agendas:

- FaMLI Coalition
- Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
- Reach Up Coalition
- Let's Grow Kids

### PCC Contact Information:

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# Parent Child Centers Network

## Base Increase Funding Request for salary increases and filling of vacant positions

### Fiscal Year 2020



**Total request over three years (FY2020, 2021 & 2022): +\$8million**

**FY2020 request: +\$1.5million base**

Parent Child Center staff wages and benefits are continually 30% *below market rates* to comparable positions in education and state government. We realize this problem cannot be fixed all at once. We are asking for a three-year commitment to bring salary and benefit levels closer to market rates to reduce staff turnover, provide consistency for our clients, and reduce the costs associated with hiring and training new staff. In this first year, we propose bringing all of our staff to a base level of \$15/hour, filling some of our vacant positions, and if possible, at some PCCs, raising salaries of professional staff and/or creating needed new positions.

The chart on the reverse of this sheet shows the staff at PCCs that are not yet at \$15/hour, and the base salary cost associated with increasing all staff to that level. The numbers below do not reflect the PCCs' share of taxes, nor do they include any benefits. The chart is meant to show the scope of the issue for the PCCs.

In addition to this chart, the PCCs conducted an internal survey this past fall, and found that:

- Over the past three years, across the 15 Parent Child Centers, we know that at least 98 people have left PCC jobs for higher paying jobs (or jobs with better benefits) with similar duties.
- Several PCCs cannot offer paid health insurance for their employees. Employees rely on spousal coverage, Medicaid, or pay out of pocket, including in at least one case, the Executive Director.
- At least 20 positions are currently vacant across all PCCs. Time to fill vacant positions ranges from 2 to 18 months.
- Based on eligibility charts for LIHEAP/SNAP/CCFAP, at least 59 employees across the state's PCCs would qualify for one or more of these benefits. This number is a low conservative estimate.
- Across the 15 PCCs, if funding were available, they would create at least 18 more jobs to fulfill their needs, in addition to the 20 vacant positions noted above. Again, this is a low conservative estimate.

The base increase requested for FY2020 will not address all of the issues listed above, but it would allow the PCCs to begin to address these issues that have arisen over many years of inadequate state funding for the essential state services that Parent Child Centers were created to provide.

Agency	# of Positions/FTEs Below \$15	Current Wage Costs Below \$15	New Wage Costs \$15 @	Total Cost of Increasing to \$15
Lamoille Family Center	(12) - 6 FTEs	\$172,487.00	\$193,656.00	\$21,169.00
Family Center Washington Cty	(11) - 10.05 FTEs	\$275,179.03	\$313,560.00	\$38,380.97
The Family Place	(1) - .1 FTE	\$2,694.00	\$3,120.00	\$426.00
Janet S. Munt Family Room	0			\$0.00
Milton Family Center	(11) - 9FTE	\$207,835.20	\$244,200.00	\$36,364.80
Addison Parent Child Center	(2) - 2 FTEs	\$57,765.00	\$64,700.00	\$8,935.00
NEKCA - North	(10) - 9.5 FTEs	\$259,875.00	\$296,400.00	\$36,535.00
LUND	(occasional subs)			\$5,000.00
Rutland Parent Child Center	(18) - 18 FTEs	\$465,920.00	\$569,920.00	\$104,000.00
NEKCA - South	(13) - 11.8 FTEs ?	\$293,110.00	\$338,338.00	\$45,228.00
Orange Cty Parent Child Center	(13) - 11.6 FTEs	\$320,566.00	\$361,920.00	\$41,354.00
Springfield Parent Child Center	( 12 ) - 10.15 FTEs	\$148,586.88	\$181,350.00	\$32,763.12
Parent Child Center of NCSS	0 FTEs less than \$15	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sunrise Parent Child Center	(7) - 5 FTEs	\$139,348.70	\$176,684.70	\$37,336.00
PCC of Early Education Services	(30) - 22 FTEs	\$576,342.00	\$643,500.00	\$67,158.00
<b>TOTAL Cost of Wage Increase to \$15</b>		<b>Total does not include federal or state taxes or benefits.</b>		<b>\$474,649.89</b>

# Parent Child Centers Network

## One-Time Funding Request for deferred administrative & maintenance expenses

### Fiscal Year 2020



**Parent Child Center Network One Time Project List** (note projects are NOT in priority order – these are a list of projects the PCC could complete right away if funds were available)

#### Total request: \$1.5million in one-time funding

These projects are only the tip of the iceberg and represent a sampling of projects that could be completed right away if one-time money were made available. Completing some or all of these projects would relieve some of the ongoing stress of continual underfunding. Also, continually deferring expenses is more expensive in the long run. We are not asking for the full amount of need this year, but we would welcome any and all funds that could be made available. The total need represented on this list is \$2,821,422. We will of course track and report on all projects completed with one-time funding in FY20.

**Contact Person:** Amy Shollenberger – 802-793-1114 / amy@action-circles.com

#### Addison County PCC (\$344,277)

1. Heating system \$15,749
2. Roof \$25,000
3. SEC windows \$9,324
4. SEC classroom (countertop, bench, finish) \$2,383
5. SEC classroom (chairs and desks) \$2,383
6. Classroom (lights) \$1,452
7. Classroom (carpet) \$2,000
8. Childcare (rugs, window covers) \$10,836
9. Building expansion to accommodate additional childcare room for 9 infants, bathroom and common area- \$150,000
10. Solar system \$60,900
11. Replacement windows \$40,000
12. Insulated blinds for meeting and office space \$10,000
13. Commercial freezer \$8,000
14. Stroller shed \$6,200

#### Rutland County PCC (\$442,000)

1. Finish current construction project for Chaplin addition. This is a Whole Family Education Center providing an additional 29 Infant/Toddler slots, in house-CIS therapy rooms, and 1/3 of the building space is allocated to a gathering space for adults, career pathways, AA/NA meetings, a full-sized dining room so parents can have early morning breakfast with kids before first shift, and a weekly community meal. This project is already in motion and has a \$300K shortfall in funding which will most likely become a loan. \$300,000
2. Replace driveway and parking areas at the Brandon facility. \$80,000
3. Kitchen equipment at the Whole Family Center where meals will be served daily to all children (breakfast, lunch, and snack), breakfast for the whole family, and a community meal once per week. \$10,000
4. Technology upgrade at the new facility. CIS computers and backup, computers for our Learning Together program, computers for parents to use in developing career pathways. System crashes often and people cannot work. \$20,000
5. Security systems for ECE center at Chaplin and Brandon. \$20,000
6. New heater for Chaplin ECE facility. (Duck tape is amazing but we're hangin' on by a thread.) \$12,000

#### NEK-South PCC (\$81,000)

1. Roof \$50,000
2. Parking Lot \$25,000
3. Electrical updates \$6,000

#### Family Center of Washington County (\$152,000)

1. Parking lots repairs including repaving \$60,000
2. Kitchen improvements and new equipment \$10,000
3. Technology improvements including continuing investment in data system development \$35,000
4. Playground replacement and improvements \$10,000
5. Safety Building Needs \$5,000
6. New roof Community Outreach building (COB) \$15,000
7. Prep and paint Childcare building \$8,000
8. Replacement Windows COB \$9,000

#### LUND PCC (\$582,500)

1. Roof Replacement- West Wing: \$65,000
2. Elevator to improve facility accessibility \$150,000
3. Parking lot repair resurfacing/repaving and signage: \$50,000
4. Computer Network Server and back up upgrades: \$39,000
5. HIPAA/Privacy compliance policy and practices consultation: \$5,000
6. New Accounting Software migration and training: \$30,000
7. On-line Training modules system: \$11,500
8. Upgraded outdoor lighting: \$5000
9. Window Treatments- for our safety/violent intruder response policy and procedure \$24,000
10. Onboarding/HR Software: \$24,000
11. Cultural competency consultant/staff training series \$27,000

#### The Family Place (\$51,545)

1. Exterior painting (will require scraping and priming some sections), three buildings: \$38,545
2. Resurface gravel/dirt parking lot (in bad shape): \$4,000
3. Add insulation in roof cavity above child care: \$1,500
4. Add insulation to roof in largest building: \$7,500

**The Janet S. Munt Family Room (\$40,000)**

1. Build onto existing playground, including fence ext. \$3,000
2. New flooring and carpeting in entryway and hallway \$5,000
3. Shade structure and storage for garden equipment \$11,000
4. Kitchen upgrades- new stove and refrigerator \$2,000
5. Partitioning of office space \$6,000
6. New carpeting in preschool and infant toddler room \$6,000
7. Build partition for Parent Room \$4,000
8. IT Support (currently none) \$3,000

**Family Center of Northwestern VT (\$15,000)**

1. Early childhood playground improvements \$5,000
2. Professional development - mindfulness/wellness/doula certification \$10,000

**Lamolle Family Center (70,500)**

1. Security System upgrades \$2,000
2. New rug installation (1200' 1st floor and 1400' 2nd floor) \$26,000
3. Paint Building \$7,000
4. Expand Parking Lot \$2,000
5. Repair and re-pave existing asphalt 3,300 sq/ft \$14,000
6. Accordion Privacy Divider for living room/kitchen \$3,500
7. Roof repair to fix leak \$10,000
8. Child Care storage space/electrical improvements/light fixtures \$6,000

**Springfield Area PCC (\$63,600)**

1. Improve IT Systems \$11,600
2. Enhance Child Care Playground \$33,500
3. Improve Building Security \$18,500

**Early Education Services Windham County (\$125,000)**

1. Keyless card entry system and security cameras for higher security at our sites \$75,000
2. New roof for one and paint our two Westminster buildings that provide programming for preschoolers, infants and toddlers \$30,000
3. Update furnishings for family meeting spaces at 130 Birge (diaper changing station, comfortable chairs, energy efficient lighting) \$20,000

**Orange County PCC updated (\$64,000)**

1. Technology upgrade to replace computers that are over 10 years old \$15,800
2. Resurface parking lot \$5,000
3. Security blinds throughout building \$8,000
4. Scrape, replace clapboards and paint exterior of building \$20,000
5. New boiler and work on heating system \$10,000
6. Kitchen Remodel/Upgrades to convert small home kitchen to commercial kitchen serving 80 kids and adults 3x/day \$5,200

**NEK-North PCC (\$226,000)**

1. Scrape and Paint exterior windows and trim \$15,000
2. Upgrade kitchen downstairs (use for classes/ community gatherings) \$10,000
3. Create welcoming child and family space (paint, renovations, furniture) \$15,000
4. Enhance food shelf program/storage (purchase commercial refrigerator/freezer units; increase storage area) \$11,000
5. Install an elevator to create handicap access to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors (Handicap access is currently only basement) \$150,000
6. Energy efficiency upgrades (i.e. window replacements/ heating and cooling system) \$25,000

**Sunrise Parent Child Center (\$209,000)**

1. Updated laptops for 15 staff @ \$600 each \$9,000
2. Data program \$10,000
3. Structural repairs to our 4 aging buildings including handicap ramp and porch repair to our High School building, one redo of ramp and second story dangerous porch repair to Victorian Building. \$90,000
4. Residing of Main Building and exterior paint of 4 buildings. \$60,000
5. 6' Chain Link Fence around play yard, \$10,000
6. Upgrade heating and electrical systems. \$30,000

**Milton Family Center (\$355,000)**

1. Repave and re-level badly cracked parking lot and walkways (the water pools in 1/3 of the parking areas that make in inaccessible for families and staff to get to the building, and in the winter the pooled water becomes a dangerous ice rink). \$40,000
2. Replacement flooring in childcare space and flooring throughout building. Childcare has small grant to purchase materials for child care but need funds to cover labor costs. Throughout building, carpet in hallways is threadbare and is a tripping hazard. Families have complained that our building is "depressing and gloomy", and despite them loving our programs, the physical space being old, faded, and badly in need of repairs/upgrades, takes away from the "warm welcome" they are looking for. \$12,500
3. Prep and paint all of exterior building. Exterior of building is wooden batten that is rotting in places and very visibly chipped everywhere. \$15,000
4. Privacy fence in front of dumpsters to avoid unauthorized "dumping" & improve first impressions of site (dumpsters are one of the first things you see when drive onto property). \$2,500
5. Board Training at a national non-profit conference such as BoardSource (board needs better training on their roles and responsibilities... good intentions, but support and guidance needed). \$5,000
6. Replace heating/cooling system. Still running with original air handler from 1976, central air does not work, so we install individual ac units that do not effectively cool space. Have had to shut down center during winter days when weather is below freezing because despite the constant repairs on current air handler, the building cannot get above 65 degrees to meet minimum licensing requirements to be in operation. Current system also highly inefficient and expensive for our monthly utility costs. \$160,000
7. Elevator to the currently non-accessible 2nd floor. Upstairs is where the classroom and large meeting space is located. Although due to the age of the building, we are not required to upgrade to meet the current accessibility codes for building use, it is a barrier to families and providers who need to attend classes in an accessible space. \$120,000



# The Case for Parent Child Center Reach Up Case Managers



*Reach Up fulfills an important role in reducing inter-generational poverty in Vermont. The program strives to work as part of a community to provide Vermont families an opportunity for a better future and to achieve the vision that all families will be empowered, connected and thriving.* <sup>1</sup>

## 1. Who is a Reach Up participant?

- **Young children: 45% of children in Reach Up were 0-5 years old in 2018.** <sup>1</sup>

*Though caseloads continue to decrease, the remaining Reach Up participants have more obstacles and challenges to overcome as they work toward sustained employment and financial sustainability.* <sup>1</sup>

- **Vulnerable families: An average of 3 barriers for participant, up from 2.2 barriers in 2012** <sup>1</sup>

Parent Child Centers have decades of experiences working with vulnerable families and young children. Maintaining connections through challenges and crises is critical. When families receive their case management through their community PCC, they are seamlessly connected to wrap-around supports.

Reach Up primarily serves families living below 50 percent of the federal poverty level, the definition of extreme poverty. After receiving Reach Up grants, many of these families remain in extreme poverty; even adding other available benefits, they are still living below, if not as far below, the poverty line. <sup>2</sup>

## 2. The total number being case managed is actually 4912—considerably greater than the 1802 Reach Up number alone.

The complete caseload for a case manager includes people who are:

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| • Actively enrolled in Reach Up (also Post-Secondary Education (PSE))            | 1802 |
| • On deferments (temporary postponement of full work requirement)                | 1121 |
| • Enrolled in Reach Ahead (transitioning from Reach Up)                          | 579  |
| • Enrolled in Reach First (families likely to need help for four months or less) | 41   |

**Total caseload when all case managed participants are included: 4914** <sup>3</sup>

It is important to recognize the full scope of work being done and what State case managers will absorb if Parent Child Center Reach Up contracts are eliminated.

### **In addition, Reach Up Caseloads are projected to increase:**

*Despite the trend in declining caseloads over the last few years, it is expected that this decrease will level off and then start to increase again in the next few years.* <sup>1</sup>

### **Potential Reach Up benefit increases would likely increase the number of participants**

More stringent work requirements, time limits on receiving benefits, and the declining value of benefits contribute both to families not applying for Reach Up and recipients being terminated from it. <sup>2</sup>

### **3. The Parent Child Centers are effective in helping people move into work**

**Parent Child Centers' statewide average Work Participation Rates (WPR) is consistently higher than the overall state average.**

The yearly average WPR for cases managed through Parent Child Centers averaged 31.03% over 2016, 2017, and 2018. That is higher than the State district office average of 25.9% for that same period.<sup>3</sup>

### **4. Parent Child Centers understand and stick by vulnerable families with young children**

The Reach Up contracts provide Parent Child Center Case Managers access to the computer system and incentives that are critical to making sure families stay on the rolls and do not lose important benefits.

Weaving Reach Up services into the full scope of wrap-around supports offered by Parent Child Centers makes services as readily available and seamless as possible. Family stress can be prevented from becoming toxic when circumstances are nurturing, stable, and engaging.

### **5. The Parent Child Centers have a continued commitment to partnering with the State of Vermont's Reach Up Program to achieve the stated goal.**

*Reach Up fulfills an important role in reducing intergenerational poverty in Vermont. The program strives to work as part of a community to provide Vermont families an opportunity for a better future, and to achieve the vision that all families will be empowered, connected and thriving.*<sup>1</sup>

***For me, if Reach Up wasn't so intertwined with the Families Learning Together program, I might not have received the specific help and support that my family needed, and I might not be where I am today.***<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Erin Oalican, Reach Up Program Director, *Evaluation of Reach Up Report*. 1.31.19

<sup>2</sup> Public Assets Institute, *For Reach Up families, basic needs are out of reach*. March 2019

<sup>3</sup> Data from Sean P. Brown, Deputy Commissioner, Economic Services

<sup>4</sup> Excerpt, Reach Up participant testimony at Appropriations Committee Public Hearing, March 2019.