

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

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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.