

Testimony on impact of moving CCFAP Eligibility Determination and Referral from Child Care Resource

Jane Van Buren, Executive Director

802-863-3367; jvanburen@childcareresource.org

Child Care Resource is one of the 12 Community Child Care Support Agencies around the state that handle eligibility determination for families applying for Child Care Financial Assistance and referrals for all Chittenden County families looking for care. Our agency is based in Williston, has a total of 11 employees, and serves approximately 3500 unique families every year, as well as all of the Chittenden County registered child care programs.

How Many People We Serve and Our Staff Structure

Child Care Resource reviewed 1,786 CCFAP eligibility applications in FY20, all within 30 days of receipt. The 2 full time case managers carry an on-going case load of over 500 CCFAP clients each, and are supported by a part time assistant.

This work has increased in FY21 due to the pandemic and changing school situations because parents are now needing subsidy for their school aged as well as younger children, and there has been considerable confusion about what services are eligible.

Similarly, in our Referral Department, the work has increased. In FY20 we handled 952 requests for referrals to child care providers in our community, or about 18 per week. Last week we processed 26 requests, an increase in demand which we expect to continue for the coming months.

The contract CCR has with CDD to perform this work totals \$300,536 which pays for 5 staff (3.76 FTE) as well as other direct and indirect expenses.

Community-Based Services Help Families

Being in the community is critical to the families we serve in Chittenden County. For example, we work closely with the Immigrant and Refugee population and their advocates, and process applications for parents for whom English is not their primary language.

Every weekday before COVID we welcomed numerous clients into the office to pick up or drop off an application, and/or to seek assistance in completing the CCFAP paperwork. They were greeted by staff and given the attention they required, including referral to additional services offered by CCR. For example, they may contact CCR for a referral to child care and get put in touch with our CCFAP case manager for subsidy assistance. Since March of 2020 we have assisted families on the phone and through email, or in the driveway of our building.

Seeking and renewing subsidy assistance is personal and stressful, the application is detailed, and parents are nervous about the affordability of care and whether they will be able to meet their co-pay. Coming to CCR for assistance is a safe, non scary experience; the model we have developed at the community level is successful.

The Director of the Referral department has intimate knowledge of the child care facilities across Chittenden County. We know where open slots are, and who stayed open and who closed during the

pandemic. We assisted essential workers in the spring and continue to assist families and child care providers navigate the opening of school and the impact that is having on working parents. The way that parents interact with child care has shifted for child care centers and in-home programs and the knowledge we have is essential. We provide personal attention to families and understand the special needs of their children. Our services are personal and seamless.

Thank you