

Raising Travis County

Update to Travis County Commissioners Court:
Long-Term Implementation Plan

Tuesday, May 5, 2026



Agenda

- Review Strategic Priorities
- Updates by Strategy
 - Progress to date
 - Recommendations
 - Next steps
- Upcoming Timeline



Strategies

Strategy 1: Expand slots for infants & toddlers (ages 0-3) and for afterschool and summer programming (PreK-12th grade)

Strategy 2: Expand non-traditional hours care

Strategy 3: Build quality and capacity

Strategy 4: Build a Business/Government Alliance to leverage business contributions and matching public funds to reduce employee child care costs

Strategy One: Expand Access to Quality Care

Progress to Date

Early Childhood Investments

- 1,000 child care scholarships for children 0-3 and their siblings
 - 1,341 families outreached
 - 271 children enrolled (231 ages 0-3)
- Early Head Start expansion
 - 2 new infant and toddler classrooms opened April 7th
- PreK3 full-day care at Austin ISD
 - 163 children enrolled
- Emergency care for children experiencing homelessness
 - Salvation Army contract approved
 - \$500K investment serving 93 young children



Strategy One: Expand Access to Quality Care

Progress to Date

Out of School Time (OST) Investments

- Afterschool and summer programs: Del Valle ISD, Manor ISD and four nonprofit providers
 - 2,322 youth enrolled
- K-5 afterschool and summer expansion in Pflugerville ISD
- Launched Request for Services in December 2025
 - Slate of new contracts presented to Court today



Strategy One: Expand Access to Quality Care

Planning for Contracted Slots – Updates

- Contracted slots are guaranteed funding agreements that pay providers to reserve seats for low-income families
- Draft recommendations have been presented to child care providers for feedback
 - Additional feedback was solicited at the Texas Rising Star Directors meeting and the Raising Travis County Community Advisory Council meeting
- Decision point for Child Care Subcommittee:
 - Proportion of contracted slots to traditional scholarships



Strategy One: Expand Access to Quality Care Planning for Contracted Slots – Updates

- Program Design Recommendations:
 - Quality requirements for participating child care programs
 - Texas Rising Star 3 & 4 star rated
 - Small teacher to child ratios
 - Credentialed teachers (Child Development Associate or enrolled in CDA program)
 - Minimum wage requirements for teachers in participating programs
 - \$20/hour
- Target timeline has been determined:
 - Request for Services for Program Administrator posted November 2026
 - Contract awarded April 2027



Strategy Two: Nontraditional Hours Care – Updates

- Program Design Recommendations:
 - Funding parameters
 - Financially incentivizing providers to expand their hours of operations by at least 5-10 hours per week – early mornings, evenings, or weekends
 - Include funding for facilities, operations, and increased labor costs
 - Types of care to support
 - Existing licensed and registered providers
 - Serving children up to age 12
- Next steps:
 - Continue economic modeling to understand true cost to expand care
 - Develop scoring rubric to determine priority programs for funding
 - Continue to gather data through parent/caregiver survey
 - Invest in the workforce pipeline



Strategy Three: Quality and Capacity – Updates

- Early Childhood Investments
 - Gap funding
 - Over \$2.6M distributed to 150 child care providers
 - Early childhood educator professional development
 - 10 educators received 1:1 training and coaching
- Early Childhood and OST Investments
 - Business coaching for program directors and owners
 - PreK partnerships between child care providers and ISDs
 - Professional development & quality supports for teachers
 - Small business grants



The Impact of Gap Funding

"Based on our estimates, we adjusted our expected tuition income upward by about \$100,000 due to the Travis County gap funding. That increase meant that we were able to give all of our teaching staff an additional wage increase and absorb the majority of our health insurance cost increase for this budget year."

Cynthia McCollum, Executive Director
Open Door Preschool



Strategy Three: Quality and Capacity – Updates

- Understand the child care and OST ecosystem needs, including service availability and workforce gaps, based on local landscape surveys
 - United Way early childhood study findings were released, underscoring the urgent need to address the workforce shortage:
 - 26% of providers reported being understaffed
 - Almost 50% teacher turnover last year
 - 64% of applicants lacked basic requirements
 - Learn All the Time OST landscape survey will be released next month; however, a shortage of youth development professionals has already been identified as an industry challenge
- Prioritize investing in a well-trained workforce



Strategy Three: Quality and Capacity – Updates

- Next step, models to further explore:
 - Workforce development for Opportunity Youth (ages 19-24)
 - Youth development certificate program options
 - Earn and learn
 - Short-term fast track
 - Long-term apprenticeship
- Timeline for two Request for Services: Child Care & OST
 - Posted February 2027
 - Contracts awarded June 2027



Strategy Four: Business/Government Alliance – Updates

- Employer focus group planned with the Austin Chamber and United Way for Summer 2026 to determine the viability of each potential model
 - Cost sharing
 - Grant program
- Next Steps:
 - Coordinate a learning session with a best practice peer community and Travis County employers
 - Engage with the DECA Chamber, Texas Restaurant Association and Austin Regional Manufacturers Association
 - Identify employer champions with an interest in child care as an employee benefit



Summary of Progress to Date

Task	Complete	Ongoing	In Process
Short-Term Investments	Selection	Monitoring & Evaluation	
Best Practice Research	✓		
Stakeholder Feedback	✓	✓	
Procurement Timeline*			✓
Drafting Plan			✓

* For long-term investments and evaluator



Upcoming Timeline

- Update to Commissioners Court – June
 - Including procurement timeline through 2033
- Review of Draft Plan:
 - RTC Community Advisory Council – June
 - Child Care and Out of School Time Subcommittees – June
 - Commissioners Court – August



Thank You!

