

# Raising Travis County

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

Tuesday, November 18, 2025



# Agenda

- Historical Overview of Raising Travis County:
  - Goals, Guiding Principles & Strategic Priorities
- Short-term Investments
- Transitional Planning & Investments
- Long-term Planning & Investments
- Elements of Implementation Plan
- Timeline for Updates to the Court



# Goals of the Fund

- **Increase Access:** Make high quality child care and out-of-school time care available to critically underserved populations including infants, toddlers, and families in need of care during nontraditional hours.
- **Improve Affordability:** Make child care and out-of-school time care more affordable for families and employees so they can live and thrive in our community.
- **Invest in Quality:** Ensure all children have the opportunity to receive high-quality care to support their development and lifelong success. This goal necessitates a robust pipeline of qualified child care and out-of-school time professionals.
- **Grow the Workforce:** Facilitate more parents to participate and remain in the workforce through access to affordable, high-quality child care and out-of-school time care.
- **Strengthen the System:** Fortify and stabilize the child care and out-of-school time ecosystem through strategic systemic investments that will create lasting, sustainable change

*Source: Affordable Child Care Now Coalition*



# Guiding Principles

- **Ground Solutions in Data:** Build strategies based on quantitative and qualitative data specific to Travis County and lessons learned from prior local investments and national best practices.
- **Seek Equity:** Ensure planning, decision-making, and implementation are informed by the lived experience of families and community stakeholders.
- **Prioritize Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Programming:** Work to reduce or eliminate disparities in access based on income, race, and ZIP code.
- **Leverage Existing Assets:** Practice fiscal responsibility and build on the strengths within our community, including private businesses and philanthropy.
- **Ensure Accountability and Efficiency:** Implement an effective governance body and leverage all community assets to avoid creating redundancy and complexity.

*Source: Affordable Child Care Now Coalition*



# Strategic Priorities for Implementation

1. Expand Access to Quality Care
  - a. Early Childhood
  - b. Afterschool and Summer Care
2. Expand Access to Programs During Nontraditional Hours
3. Build Quality and Capacity
  - a. Early Childhood
  - b. Afterschool and Summer Care
4. Create a Business/Government Alliance



# Raising Travis County Short-Term Child Care Investments

Strategy & Highlights	Contractor	Annual Funding	Estimated Individuals Served/Year	Service Start Date
<b>Child Care Scholarships for Children Ages 0-3 and their Siblings:</b> Taking at least 1,000 children off the waitlist so their parents or caregivers can go to work, school, or a workforce training program	Workforce Solutions Capital Area	\$17.34M	1,000+	Winter 2026
<b>Gap Funding:</b> Closing the financial gap between the state scholarship reimbursement rate and the true cost of quality care that providers incur	Workforce Solutions Capital Area	\$4.16M	TBD	Fall 2025
<b>Project Apple Blossom:</b> Allow AISD to transform a half day of care into a full day program by providing half day Pre-K 3 and half day of childcare.	Austin ISD	\$1.85M	216	Summer 2025
<b>Pending Contracts</b>				
<b>Training for early childhood educators:</b> Provide training and education to early childhood educators on child development with a focus on learning strategies, socio-emotional health, and school readiness.	Austin Child Guidance Center	\$191K	155	Winter 2026
<b>Expand Early Head Start:</b> Create two additional infant classrooms	Child, Inc.	\$500K	16	Winter 2026

# Raising Travis County Short-Term Out-of-School Time Investments

Strategy & Highlights	Contractor	Annual Funding	Estimated Individuals Served/Year	Service Start Date
School District Interlocal Agreements	<p><b>Del Valle ISD:</b> PreK4 – Adding afterschool care to the district’s full day program</p> <p><b>Manor ISD:</b> Afterschool and summer care provided by Boys &amp; Girls Club for K-12 students</p>	\$3.1M	1,784	Summer 2025
<p><b>Expand services through existing HHS social service youth development contracts:</b> Expanding capacity and enhancing quality within afterschool and summer programs.</p>	<p><b>2 OST providers: Summer 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>African American Youth Harvest Foundation</li> <li>Creative Action</li> </ul>	\$280K	355	Summer 2025
	<p><b>4 OST providers: Afterschool and Summer Services Beginning Fall 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>African American Youth Harvest Foundation</li> <li>Creative Action</li> <li>Breakthrough Central Texas</li> <li>Girls Empowerment Network</li> </ul>	\$1.6M	950	Winter 2025
<b>Pending Contracts</b>				
<p><b>Additional ISD Interlocal Agreement in Negotiation:</b> Expanding afterschool and summer care programs</p>	Pflugerville ISD	\$1.9M	697	Winter 2026

# Transitional Planning & Investments

## Goals of Short-Term Investments:

- Address immediate needs
  - Provide relief to families in need of care
  - Stabilize the provider ecosystem
- Utilize mechanisms available to quickly deploy resources
  - Interlocal agreements
  - Existing Travis County social service contracts

## Benefits of Short-Term Investments:

- Gather data on how these investments impact individuals and organizations
- Gather data on the effect of RTC funding on the broader system
- Use data to inform decision-making moving forward

## Transitional Planning:

- Work with the community and stakeholder organizations to co-create our long-term vision
- Thoughtfully consider the services our community needs
- Develop open, competitive procurements



# Transitional Investment in Quality & Capacity: City of Austin Interlocal Agreement

**UWATX Shared  
Services & PreK  
Partnerships**

**Learn All the Time  
Quality Improvements  
for OST Providers**

**Homegrown Network  
for Family-Based  
Providers**

**Emergency Child Care  
for Families  
Experiencing  
Homelessness**

*Pending Approval  
Winter 2025*

# Transitional Planning & Investments: Data-Informed Decision Making

- **United Way for Greater Austin** has deployed a community-wide survey Early Care and Education Survey to provide a baseline of information for the early childhood sector. *Results are anticipated in Q2 2026.*
- The **Learn All the Time Network** is also conducting a landscape analysis that will provide a baseline to help inform planning for the Out of School Time investments. *Results are anticipated in Q3 of 2026.*
- These results will help inform implementation planning for each strategy and will provide baseline data for evaluation.

*Note: RFS for RTC third-party evaluator will be released in Spring 2026.*



# Long-term Investment Timeline

Category	Strategy	RFS Release Date	Contract Execution Date
OST	Summer/Afterschool Slots with Quality & Capacity Embedded	Winter 2025	Summer 2026
Child Care	Quality & Capacity Building	Spring 2026	Fall 2026
OST	Quality & Capacity Building	Fall 2026	Winter 2027
Child Care	Contracted Slots	Winter/Spring 2027	Summer/Fall 2027
Child Care	Nontraditional Hour Care	TBD	TBD
Child Care	Business Government Alliance	TBD	TBD

# Out-of-School Time Long-term Investments: Community Input

## Focus Groups:

- Four focus groups (two in-person, two virtual) held in August–September 2025
- Discussions centered on quality improvement and identifying supports for out-of-school time providers
- Findings are being analyzed and will inform long-term out-of-school time investment planning

## Stakeholder Input Sessions:

- Two sessions held in January–February 2025
- Included roundtable and group discussions
- Designed to identify needs and gaps for long-term investment planning



# Out-of-School Time Long-Term Funding:

## Phase One – Expand Access to Afterschool & Summer Programming

- The first RFS for long-term funding will be released in December 2025.
  - Expanding access to summer and afterschool programming for children ages 4-12<sup>th</sup> grade
  - Projected funding: \$9,000,000
- Expanded access to programming will be complemented by an investment in quality through our interlocal agreement with the City of Austin.
  - Facilitated by the Learn All the Time Network
  - This will include capacity building and professional development for providers as well as Youth Program Quality Assessments.



# Early Childhood: Quality & Capacity Building

**Purpose:** These investments are intended to help stabilize the child care sector and help build capacity to serve more young children from low-income households in high quality child care with a focus on birth through age 3.

## Goals

- **GAP Funding:**
  - Increase quality and capacity of childcare programs by funding the gap between the Texas Workforce Commission rates for childcare services and the cost of providing high quality childcare for children from birth through age 3, as informed by cost modeling.
- **Child Care Educator Pipeline:**
  - Increase the number of qualified staff with sufficient training and education to support quality child care staffing needs. Improve staff retention through improved preparation and on-the-job training and credentialing support.
- **Family-Based Child Care Network Supports:**
  - Increase the number of licensed and registered home-based childcare providers.
  - Increase the quality of home-based childcare providers.
- **Child Care Shared Services Alliance:**
  - Strengthen childcare provider operations through automation and business coaching.
  - Reduce costs through bulk purchases or collaboration.



# Early Childhood: Quality & Capacity Building

## Long-term Plan:

- **Research Review: Completed**
  - Review of existing quality investments in the FY26 Quality Plan (funded by TWC, City of Austin and Travis County).
  - RTC will focus on gaps outside of the existing efforts funded.
- **Community Input through:**
  - Childcare Provider Advisory Council
  - Travis County Family-Based Child Care Network
  - Raising Travis County Community Advisory Council
  - Raising Travis County Town Hall on January 26, 2026
- Draft RFS Information to Executive Staff & Child Care Subcommittee: **Winter 2026**
- Release RFS: **Spring 2026**
- Contract Execution: **Fall 2026**



# Out-of-School Time: Quality & Capacity Building

## Phase Two long-term funding RFS will invest in quality, capacity and workforce development:

- Supporting best practices and positive youth development outcomes
- Promoting career pathways for youth development professionals, including certification programs

## Raising Travis County will establish 3 service hubs:

- Professional Development
- Workforce Development
- Capacity Building

Raising Travis County will continue to seek input from the Community Advisory Council and out-of-school time providers in the Learn All the Time Network as plans are developed and refined:

- The CAC includes youth voice, which will be an important part of our planning process.
- RTC will continue to pursue solutions that remove barriers to youth accessing services, such as transportation.



# Early Childhood Contracted Slots

**Purpose:** This strategy will utilize a research-based financing and supply-building mechanism, contracted slots, to increase the supply of full-day, year-round quality child care for infants, toddlers and 3-year-olds.

1. Using contracts to reserve and pay for slots with child care providers, instead of vouchers or scholarships for families
2. Paying providers at the cost of quality



# Early Childhood Contracted Slots vs. Vouchers

Voucher / Subsidy	Family applies for waiting list.	Family is notified of eligibility for a voucher and searches for a provider with an opening for the child. It can be challenging to find an opening.	Family is assigned a co-payment based on income.
	Programs contract to accept vouchers but are not required to enroll any children. Programs are required to meet baseline level of quality, but level of quality can vary.	<p>Funding follows the child to a program selected by the family, and funding for the program is based on quality rating and age of child.</p> <p>Programs often do not have openings for infants/toddlers because it's expensive to have an empty seat with no tuition.</p>	Provider is paid for child at established rate until child withdraws or is no longer eligible.
Contracted Slots	Family applies for waiting list.	Family is notified of eligibility for a slot, and selects from a list of contracted providers <b>with an open slot</b> .	Family has no co-payment.
	Programs apply for a contract with a commitment of a number of slots in infant, toddler, and 3-year-old classrooms and meet specific quality standards.	Provider is paid for slots. This guarantees openings for families using assistance and provides stable funding for the provider.	Provider is paid based on number of slots. If a child leaves, provider has a limited time to fill it with another family.

# Early Childhood Contracted Slots

## Long-term Plan:

- **Research Review: Completed**

- Use the research review and local data develop a framework for the Contracted Slots program design including policies and procedures with key decision points to be informed by key stakeholder focus groups and community input.

- **Community Input through:**

- Childcare Provider Advisory Council
- Travis County Family-Based Child Care Network
- Parent Focus Group
- Raising Travis County Community Advisory Council
- Raising Travis County Town Hall on January 26, 2026

- Utilize data from short-term scholarship funding, gap funding pilot, and survey of child care program capacity to determine initial scale of slots.
- Update Travis County cost model to inform rates.
- Draft RFS for a single administrator.

- **Release RFS: Winter 2027**

- **Contract Execution: Summer 2027**



# Nontraditional Hour Care

**Purpose:** This investment is intended to increase access to quality child care for families who work outside of the traditional 9-5 business hours.

*\*Note: This investment is focused on regulated child care for children birth to age 13.*

## Goals:

- Increase availability and access to quality child care during early mornings, evenings, overnight and weekends.
- Improve financial stability and sustainability of child care providers in offering care during extended hours.



# Nontraditional Hour Care

## Long-term Plan:

- **Research Review: Completed**
    - [Nontraditional-Hour Child Care in Austin/Travis County](#)
  - Track impact of gap funding and new scholarship funding to assess impact on hours
  - Use the research review and local data develop a framework for the Nontraditional Hour program design including policies and procedures with key decision points to be informed by key stakeholder focus groups and community input.
- **Community input through:**
    - Childcare Provider Advisory Council
    - Travis County Family-Based Child Care Network
    - Texas Restaurant Association/Good Work Austin
    - DECA Chamber
    - ACC Parenting Students
    - Raising Travis County Community Advisory Council
    - Raising Travis County Town Hall on January 26, 2026
  - **Draft RFS**
  - **RFS Release Date: TBD**
  - **Contract Execution Date: TBD**



# Business Government Alliance

**Purpose:** Increase access to high quality affordable childcare by incentivizing &/or matching employer contributions to childcare costs as an employee benefit, specifically targeting families within a specific income range to make quality child care more affordable.

*\*Note: This investment is focused on regulated child care for children birth to age 13.*

## Goals:

- Make high-quality childcare more affordable and accessible for working families
- Help employers retain and attract employees
- Support the stabilization of childcare businesses across the County



# Business Government Alliance

## Long-term Plan:

- **Research Review: Completed**
  - Includes Dallas County Pilot
- Research legal parameters regarding use of funds related to ballot language: economic development and workforce development.
- Use the research review and local data to develop a framework for the Business Alliance program design including policies and procedures with key decision points to be informed by key stakeholder focus groups and community input.

## • Community input through:

- Employer focus groups (large and small employers)
  - Local Chambers of Commerce
  - Targeted industries for local workforce focus group
  - Raising Travis County Community Advisory Council
  - Raising Travis County Town Hall on January 26, 2026
- **Draft RFS**
  - **RFS Release Date: TBD**
  - **Contract Execution Date: TBD**



# Access to Information for Families

Travis County will work with community partners to coordinate information and leverage existing systems so families can access child care and out-of-school time services:

- **Texas Child Care Connection** – Mapping tool to search for child care and out-of-school time care for children up to age 13
- **Early Childhood Texas: Early Childhood Eligibility Screener** – Helps families see if they might be eligible for Head Start, Public School PreK, or Workforce Solutions Child Care scholarships (for children birth-age 12)
- **Travis County** is developing a map of our investments in out-of-school programs that will be available for families.



# Elements of Implementation Plan

Strategic Priorities

Goals & Objectives

Timeline & Key Milestones

Resource Allocation

Deliverables

Measurable Outcomes & KPIs

# Ongoing Updates to Commissioners Court

- January 26
- February 24
- March 24
- April 28



*Thank You!*

