



September 15, 2022

Mayor Bibb, Council President Griffin, and Members of Cleveland City Council:

The Funders Collaborative on COVID Recovery (FCCR) applauds you for recognizing the key issue of stabilizing and rebuilding Cleveland’s struggling childcare workforce. Dedicated to COVID recovery, the organizations of the FCCR believe ample access to safe, ***affordable childcare is crucial to a thriving community and is an infrastructural necessity to support a prosperous, local economy***; moreover, we believe addressing this issue will bolster our city’s success today and be an investment in our sustainable future.

During the pandemic, employees across the country left the workforce in droves; ***more than half of workers and nearly 60% of parents cited childcare as their reason for leaving***. In the last two years, 16,000 childcare centers were forced to close and many more are functioning at limited capacity.¹ Despite job recovery in many sectors, adequate staffing in childcare is lagging—still down 8.4% from February 2020 as of June 2022.² In Cleveland, there was an 18% decrease in overall childcare capacity during the pandemic; there are currently 3,000 fewer childcare slots available than there were pre-pandemic.³ *With more safe, affordable childcare options, many Cleveland workers could reenter the labor force providing local businesses with desperately needed staffing, bolstering the region’s economy, and making Cleveland a more attractive location for business growth.*

The FCCR organizations are all working towards a sustainable and, also, more equitable Cleveland. We believe stabilizing and rebuilding childcare is an opportunity for Cleveland to improve gender and racial equity. Lack of safe, affordable childcare disproportionately impacts women, who are often primary caregivers. More than two years after the height of pandemic job loss, men have returned to work at a higher rates than women, and “women’s labor force participation is still a full percentage point lower than it was pre-pandemic, meaning an estimated one million women are missing from the labor force.”⁴ The reason women most commonly gave for not returning to the workforce was childcare. Childcare providers are an essential, but often overlooked, segment of our workforce; 94% of childcare jobs in the U.S. are held by women, especially women of color who earn \$0.78 less per hour than their white counterparts on average.⁵ *Training programs, wage initiatives, and childcare workforce development demonstrate the city’s commitment to addressing blatant disparities and will also attract new and returning members of this workforce—all critical steps in rebuilding our childcare infrastructure.*

¹ [Data Deep Dive: A Decline of Women in the Workforce](#)

² [The Child Care Sector Will Continue To Struggle Hiring Staff Unless It Creates Good Jobs](#)

³ Data provided by Starting Point

⁴ [Data Deep Dive: A Decline of Women in the Workforce](#)

⁵ [Equity in Childcare is Everyone’s Business; The Early Childhood Educator Workforce](#)

The Funders Collaborative on COVID Recovery recognizes the complexities of building and sustaining an effective workforce, but we believe stabilizing and rebuilding Cleveland's struggling childcare workforce is fundamental to securing the city's current economic success and creating a prosperous future for all community members.

Sincerely,

