

STAKEHOLDER INPUT ON THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM DISCUSSION PAPER

Background

In January 2015, the Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report with Decision Materials (Sunset Report) recommended that the Texas legislature require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to develop a policy on gathering and using stakeholder input regarding the Child Care program.

In making the recommendation, the Sunset Report stated that in its policy, TWC should define the appropriate methods for obtaining needed input, e.g., through formal means, such as an advisory committee, or less formal means, such as time-limited workgroups, periodic surveys, and proactive communication with stakeholders through TWC's website. The Sunset Report also suggested that implementing such a process would help ensure a consistent approach to gathering input and provide additional opportunities for the Child Care program's many stakeholders, including advocates, child care experts, and providers, to share information useful to TWC in program and policy improvement.

Issue

The 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2015), enacted Senate Bill (SB) 208, which added §302.00435 to the Texas Labor Code, requiring that TWC's three-member Commission (Commission):

. . . develop a policy for obtaining, through appropriate methods, input from interested parties regarding its subsidized child care program and for using that input in administering that program.

Additionally, SB 208 requires that TWC adopt such a policy no later than September 1, 2016.

Recommendations

In order to implement the requirement of Texas Labor Code §302.00435, staff recommends the following:

- TWC staff continues to conduct meetings of state agencies involved in child care and early education. State agency partners currently identified in the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan include the following:
 - TWC
 - Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
 - Texas Education Agency (TEA)
 - Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO)
 - Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS)
 - TWC staff continues to participate in Child Care network meetings comprising members from each of the 28 Local Workforce Development Boards. The Child Care network meets to review child care policies, procedures, quality initiatives, and other child care-related matters to gather input on the Child Care program. Staff reports this feedback to the Commission.

- 1 • The Commission conducts public meetings each biennium to solicit input on the Child Care
2 program from child care stakeholders and the general public. Four such meetings are
3 scheduled for this biennium.

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5 During the workgroups and public meetings, TWC encourages stakeholders and the public to
6 provide input and comments on all aspects of the state's subsidized child care system, including, but
7 not limited to:

8 • delivery of subsidized child care services;
9 • alignment of early education programs;
10 • quality initiatives and standards, including Texas Rising Star; and
11 • other topics central to early childhood education.

Stakeholder and Public Input Discussion Paper

Background

House Bill (HB) 680, which was passed by the 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2019), relates to the powers and duties of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) regarding the provision of child care.

Section 4 of HB 680 amends §302.00435 of the Texas Labor Code to add subsection (b), which requires TWC's policy about stakeholder input to child care services to include methods for obtaining input from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, subsidized child care providers, relevant businesses, and the public about:

- improving coordination between the subsidized child care program and prekindergarten programs;
 - increasing the quality of and access to the subsidized child care program;
 - improving existing health and safety rules and regulations to be more efficient and/or less costly without reducing health and safety outcomes; and
 - identifying the burdens related to complying with existing regulations that should be mitigated, reduced, or eliminated while maintaining the intent, objective, and/or purpose of the underlying regulation.

Issue: Stakeholder and Public Input Policy

TWC currently gathers stakeholder and public input for the Child Care Services program, including rule changes, Texas Rising Star reviews, and the State Plan. To demonstrate compliance with HB 680, TWC may issue guidance to Boards about a state-level policy to gather stakeholder and public input.

Decision Point

Staff seeks direction on providing:

- child care and early learning stakeholders with opportunities to offer input on subsidized child care;
 - TEA, school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, relevant businesses, and the public with opportunities to offer input on coordination between subsidized child care and pre-K;
 - child care providers with an opportunity to offer input on existing health and safety regulations that could be more efficient or less costly without reducing health and safety outcomes; and
 - child care providers with an opportunity to offer input on burdens relating to complying with existing regulations that could be mitigated, reduced, or eliminated while maintaining the intent, objective, or purpose of the underlying regulation.

Additionally, staff seeks direction on gathering input from, at a minimum, the following sources:

- The Texas Early Learning Council, of which TWC, TEA, and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) are members
 - Specialized interagency and stakeholder workgroups, such as the Texas Rising Star Four-Year Review Workgroup

- 1 • Quarterly meetings with agency partners and other stakeholders
2 • Regional meetings with local stakeholders
3 • Focus groups held at the annual Texas Early Childhood Learning Summit
4 • Digital methods, including social media posts, email, and comments submitted via the TWC
5 website.
- 6 Staff also seeks direction on developing a web page on TWC's website to inform the public of
7 TWC's policy on stakeholder input and opportunities to provide input.

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Texas Workforce Commission

2 **Opportunities for Child Care Stakeholders to Provide Input**

3 TWC's three-member Commission (Commission) affords the public the opportunity to provide
4 input during any of its posted public meetings. Additionally, the Commission works with staff to
5 provide opportunities for:

- 6 • child care and early learning stakeholders to offer input on subsidized child care;
- 7 • TEA, school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, relevant businesses, and the public to
8 offer input on coordination between subsidized child care and pre-K;
- 9 • child care providers to offer input on existing health and safety regulations that could be
10 more efficient or less costly without reducing health and safety outcomes; and
- 11 • child care providers to offer input on burdens relating to complying with existing regulations
12 that could be mitigated, reduced, or eliminated while maintaining the intent, objective, or
13 purpose of the underlying regulation.

14 These input opportunities may be received from:

- 15 • the Texas Early Learning Council, of which TWC, TEA, and HHSC are members;
- 16 • specialized interagency and stakeholder workgroups, such as the Texas Rising Star Four-
17 Year Review Workgroup;
- 18 • quarterly meetings with agency partners and other stakeholders;
- 19 • regional meetings with local stakeholders;
- 20 • focus groups held at the annual Texas Early Childhood Learning Summit; and
- 21 • digital methods, including social media posts, email, and comments submitted via the TWC
22 website.