

Resolution No.: 17-934
Introduced: November 5, 2013
Adopted: November 12, 2013

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: Councilmember Ervin, Council President Navarro, Councilmembers Leventhal and Floreen,
Council Vice President Rice, and Councilmembers Elrich, Riemer, and Berliner

SUBJECT: Resolution requesting the establishment of a Working Parents Assistance Work Group

Background

1. The State Child Care Subsidy Program (SCCSP) and County Working Parents Assistance (WPA) programs are the two child care subsidy programs that serve Montgomery County residents. The WPA program was established in 1986 to assist with the high cost of child care as families move toward self-sufficiency and to assist low-income working families who are over income limits for the SCCSP, formerly, the POC program.
2. These child care subsidy programs help working parents access quality child care which increases education and social opportunities critical to school readiness; improves the socio-economic status of families through stable employment and increased earnings; and expands the tax-base, thus benefitting the whole community.
3. Limited funding and income eligibility limits have impeded access to the State and County child care subsidy programs. The State instituted a wait list for the SCCSP in January 2003, which lasted into 2005, and again on February 28, 2011. Implementation of the SCCSP wait list resulted in greater demand for the County's WPA program and the institution of a WPA wait list in October 2003 into 2005, and then again from July 2011-May 2012. Increased funding approved by the Council in FY13 and FY14 resulted in the WPA wait list being lifted from May 2012-April 2013. The State was able to partially lift the wait list for SCCSP in November 2012. The WPA program will begin placement from the WPA wait list in November 2013 and will continue to place from the wait list based upon funding availability.
4. Limited funding and income eligibility limits have impacted family access to the State and County child care subsidy programs. Fiscal constraints during difficult budget times have resulted in waiting lists for services at different points in time.

5. The Department of Health and Human Services implements the County's Working Parents Assistance program pursuant to its general authority to "plan, deliver, and administer programs" under Chapter 2 Section 2-42A of the Montgomery County Code. Requirements governing implementation of the WPA program can be found in the Code of Montgomery County Regulations at COMCOR 02.42A.06.
6. Families participating in child care subsidy programs may be required to pay substantial costs for licensed child care. Increasing child care costs and the differences between the cost of care and available subsidy amounts significantly impact what families must contribute. These considerations can deter participation in child care subsidy programs like WPA and the use of licensed child care services.
7. The eligibility and subsidy calculation process for the WPA program entails a complicated assessment of multiple factors. The tables governing the program currently take up two large volume books and require substantial time and resources to update. Simplifying the eligibility and subsidy calculation process consistent with other subsidy programs may allow a more efficient use of resources and will further assist with the high cost of child care as parents move toward self-sufficiency.

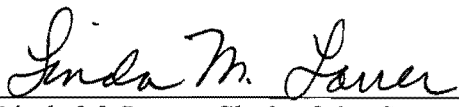
Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Council requests that the County Executive convene a workgroup for the purposes of reviewing the Working Parents Assistance program including, but not limited to, (1) the criteria for determining eligibility; (2) provider participation requirements; (3) the process for determining subsidy awards including the possibility of a minimum subsidy floor for participants; and (4) the possibility of updating the regulations governing WPA implementation in COMCOR. The workgroup should include representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Commission on Child Care, the local child care provider community, and other key stakeholders.

The Council requests that a final report describing any recommended changes to the program and its governing regulations be transmitted to the Council by February 28, 2014.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council