



Child Care Development Project

CITY OF LA CROSSE ARPA FUNDING

| Year 1 | July 15, 2022- July 14, 2023



Achievement of Performance Goals

1. CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR POSITION

The Child Care Development Coordinator position was filled as of August 29, 2022 with existing Parenting Place staff member, Michelle Sampson, whose position with another program was being eliminated. This position has led the coordination and facilitation of efforts within the City of La Crosse to assess and reduce the child care shortage. Activities are as follows.

CHILD CARE SURVEY

The Child Care Development Coordinator created and facilitated a child care survey to determine the current state of child care within the City of La Crosse with specific attention to child enrollment and staffing challenges. The resulting data report has been shared in the community and was used to determine grant and stipend amounts along with informing future work.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS

The Child Care Development Coordinator has joined various community collaboration meetings such as the W2 Steering Committee, state-wide Partner Up! meetings, and the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership La Crosse program. The Child Care Development Coordinator has also attended advocacy events and shared advocacy opportunities with local businesses and will co-present at an upcoming statewide conference for Human Resources professionals about the impact of child care on employee recruitment and retention.

NAVIGATION SERVICES FOR NEW CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

- Provided coaching and financial support to 1 group child care center to add 63 slots in the City of La Crosse (see "Start-Up Success Story" on page 4).
- Provided coaching and financial support to 1 family child care provider, adding 3 slots (which includes 3 children under the age of 2) in the City of La Crosse.

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LOCAL CHILD CARE CONVERSATIONS

The Child Care Development Coordinator has created and facilitated ongoing "Child Care Conversations" meetings with local businesses and community members to discuss innovative ways to support employees' needs while investing in child care. During these meetings, held in February and April so far, The Parenting Place has researched and shared different child care models that businesses in surrounding communities

have implemented. These meetings have consisted of individuals from a total of 10 business and community organizations.

INDIVIDUAL ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS

The Child Care Development Coordinator has engaged individually with local businesses and community members to discuss child care options and collaborate on child care needs in our community. During this time, The Child Care Development Coordinator has connected interested area businesses with others who are implementing various child care models and brainstormed innovative ways they could provide support. These meetings have consisted of individuals from 10 businesses and community organizations.

EMPLOYER CHILD CARE MODEL RESOURCE

The Child Care Development Coordinator is in the beginning stages of creating a resource for employers that lays out potential models that they can use to support their employees' child care needs. The Child Care Development Coordinator has used time during the "Child Care Conversations" meeting to learn the needs of local businesses and what information and supports they are looking for. The goal of this resource is for businesses to have the ability to look at a variety of models to determine the best option for their business.

2. RETENTION STRATEGIES

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STIPENDS

The Child Care Development Coordinator designed and dispersed 27 recruitment and retention stipends in March 2023 to regulated child care providers within the City of La Crosse for a total of \$167,000.00. This included 8 group child care centers, 12 family child care providers, and 7 school age programs.

- o Maintain current staff wages: \$35,062.00 (30%)
- o Staff benefits: \$2,700 (2%)
- o Staff retention bonuses: \$72,398 (64%)
- o Professional development costs for both new and existing staff: \$2,282 (2%)
- o Recruitment bonuses and wage increase for new hires: \$857 (1%)

*The above data is based on responses reported by May 31, 2023 (representing 68% of funding). Data will be updated when additional responses are received.

Recruitment and Retention Impact Quotes:

Family Child Care Provider: *“It seems like every dime I earn goes back into maintaining the property or improvements to the child care to keep my business competitive to other homes. When there is a few extra dollars I want to squirrel every extra dollar away for future emergencies. This stipend I chose to put into retirement investments. I have not been able to invest much into retirement being a child care provider. The cost of maintaining my home far exceeds social security benefits.”*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

The Child Care Development Coordinator helped to facilitate multiple professional development opportunities at The Parenting Place to support both potential child care providers and existing child care providers within The City of La Crosse. This includes the following trainings:

- 2 different required entry level trainings which included Introduction to the Child Care Profession and Skills and Strategies. Both were offered free of cost utilizing a Department of Children and Families funding source.
- Business practices for family child care providers (this training was created based off of the survey data collected) – coming June 2023
- Strengthening Families – which includes the mandated reporter training
- Pyramid Model (Supporting social and emotional competence in young children)

There were an additional 33 required health and safety trainings offered by The Parenting Place such as Abusive Head Trauma and CPR, along with trainings on curriculum, developmentally appropriate practice, health and nutrition, and many other topics.

CHILD CARE RECOGNITION STRATEGIES

The Child Care Development Coordinator, along with fellow staff at The Parenting Place, planned and hosted a free child care appreciation event. Over 130 child care providers attended and were recognized for their achievements during a night of fun at Maple Grove Venues. This event included speakers from both the local and state level that shared their appreciation for the important work child care providers do and engaged financial support from businesses in La Crosse and surrounding communities.

CHILD CARE PROVIDER UPDATES

The Child Care Development Coordinator provided quarterly updates to all existing child care providers within the City of La Crosse to share updates and request feedback. This included a scheduled evening event along with a newsletter that was sent to all regulated child care providers. The Child Care Development Coordinator

has also scheduled in-person meetings or phone calls with providers in The City of La Crosse to stay up-to-date on their needs.

3. START-UP AND EXPANSION STRATEGIES

The Child Care Development Coordinator designed and distributed 2 rounds of child care start-up and expansion grants. This included a \$28,000 award to support the opening of a child care center in the City of La Crosse (see “Start-up Success Story” below) and \$920.27 to support a new in-home family child care provider.

Retention Success Stories:

RED BALLOON CHILD CARE RE-OPENS CLOSED CLASSROOM

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in the spring of 2020 Red Balloon was forced to close 2 of their classrooms and reduce the capacity of 4 other classrooms by 50% due to staffing challenges and increased costs due to the pandemic. For nearly three years, the center was not able to re-open those classrooms due to staffing shortages. Then the center utilized City of La Crosse ARPA funding to support staff recruitment efforts. Due to this funding, the center was recently able to hire 3 assistant teacher qualified applicants and quickly move them into a teacher qualified position because they offered both a wage increase and a bonus for the completion of the required courses to obtain teacher qualifications. In May 2023, the center was finally able to re-open one of the classrooms and begin to fill another one of the classrooms that was operating at reduced capacity resulting in an increase of at least 10 slots in the City of La Crosse.

Start-Up Success Story:

PRESCHOOL CHILD CARE

In October of 2022 The Parenting Place was notified that a local child care center (not located within the City of La Crosse) was going to be closing their doors by the end of 2022 due to a lease ending. The Child Care Development Coordinator (Michelle Sampson) instantly reached out to the center and was able to begin providing supports immediately. The Director (Lisa Goodwin) explained that she was actively looking for a new location, but that was easier said than done. After touring many locations Lisa found a location with potential that was located within The City of La



Crosse. Michelle suggested that The Parenting Place's Pre-licensing Consultant also tour the building to give feedback on the construction that would need to be done to meet licensing requirements. During the tour, the current tenants (VARC Inc.) were at the tour and asked a few questions about child care. After the visit VARC reached out to Lisa to begin the conversation about a partnership. During this time, Michelle was invited (by a current parent at the child care center) to attend a parent meeting about finding child care. At this meeting, parents shared their fears and potential solutions for interim child care. Michelle provided insight into some of the legalities of caring for children both in-home and group child care settings. Michelle was also able to share resources on finding regulated child care and how The City of La Crosse ARPA funding could support the child care center moving forward in a new location.

After some conversations between The Director (Lisa Goodwin) and VARC, a partnership was formed! VARC acquired the child care center which allowed for an extensive remodel of the building to keep all 63 child care slots with the potential for additional slots in the future. This change also brought new opportunities such as benefits for employees along with the plan of creating an inclusive child care setting by caring for children with disabilities. The center received a start-up grant from The City of La Crosse ARPA funding for \$28,000.00 to help with the remodel. Michelle and the Pre-Licensing Consultant worked hand-in-hand with the center from beginning construction through the achievement of their license to provide input on space, materials, and connect them with other resources in the community. On Monday, May 8th, 2023 the child care center earned their child care license in their new space and they opened their doors on Monday, May 15th, 2023, adding 63 new slots in the City of La Crosse.

Attachment A: Contract Year-to-date Budget Comparison

Attachment B: Letter from Megan Tully of VARC, Inc.

Attachment C: Letter from Katie Green, Preschool Child Care Parent

Attachment D: Letter from Lisa Goodwin, Preschool Child Care

Attachment A: Expenses through April 30, 2023

Expense	Budgeted	Actual through 4/30/2023	Notes
Staff Benefits & Compensation	\$ 72,954.00	\$53,739.32	Staff to implement program – year 1 of 4 years (includes wages and benefits for 1 FTE Coordinator position, limited data work and supervision/support)
Occupancy	\$ 2,047.00	\$5,784.43	Workspace and communication costs for staff (actual adjusted to include cleaning cost and depreciation)
Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 1,313.00	\$336.37	Mileage reimbursement for travel to providers, businesses, meetings
Professional Development	\$ 985.00	\$1014.51	Training to increase skills and knowledge of staff
Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$1007.65	Office supplies needed
Laptop	\$ 1,200.00	\$0	One time start-up cost for new staff
Total Project Staff Cost	\$ 78,999.00	\$61,882.28	Total Project Staff Costs
General Program Operations		\$5423.69	Added to capture copying/printing, postage, program supplies, dues/fees, risk insurance, audit
15% Administrative Costs	\$ 11,850.00	\$10,092.34	Administrative and back office support
Total Implementation	\$ 90,849.00	\$77,398.31	
Financial Support to child care businesses	\$ 183,000.00	\$167,000.00	Incentive to retain existing regulated child care providers thru bi-annual regulation maintenance awards
	\$ 37,500.00	\$0	Support expansion of existing regulated child care centers
	\$ 38,651.00	\$28,000.00	Start up support for new family child care and new child care center
Total Year 1 Project Cost	\$ 350,000.00	\$272,398.31	

Attachment B

May 1, 2023

Dear Michelle,

I am writing to provide you with an update on our recent progress and exciting news regarding opening our daycare center.

We are pleased to share that we are scheduled for our State license review on May 8th. The Parenting Place has been instrumental in supporting our readiness for this appointment by providing us with pre-licensing services, consultation, access to resources, collaboration opportunities and additional funding options through the ARPA grant. This partnership has been and will continue to be invaluable in helping us build a strong foundation for success and create meaningful impact in our community.

As you know, it is common for funding to be a crucial factor in opening a daycare. The ARPA grant has been a much needed financial support in start-up costs associated with the remodel of our center to meet daycare licensing requirements.

We are grateful for the support of The Parenting Place and look forward to our continued collaboration with them to achieve our shared vision. We believe that our partnership will help us to be a top-choice daycare provider for the La Crosse community.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to The Parenting Place for their support and for sharing our commitment to quality daycare providers. We are excited about the opportunities this partnership will bring and look forward to keeping you updated on our progress.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best regards,

Megan Tully

Director of Strategy, VARC



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Attachment C- Letter from Katie Green, Parent Preschool Childcare Center

The Parenting Place is a critical resource in the La Crosse community. In October of this year, I got the news that our daycare center would be shutting down at the end of 2022 because they would no longer have a location. We have a 4, 2, and 1 year old who attend the Preschool Childcare Center, and this news was some of the most devastating news our family could receive. I was terrified, and my husband and I immediately started considering which one of us would have to quit our job and how we would afford our life if it came to that. My 4 year old has been thriving in the Pre-K program at Summit Environmental School, and we did not know how we would continue to provide transportation for him from daycare to 4K. 63 spots and 55 families were affected by this closure, and I was now tasked with finding daycare for three small children when there are waiting lists at most providers in the area.

Our daycare center provider and team desperately wanted to find a way to reopen and continue providing care for the children of the La Crosse area. The Parenting Place was instrumental in that process. The Parenting Place worked closely with our provider to help her find a new location and to support her and her staff with potential grant money to keep this center open and available for the families in La Crosse. We had a meeting with the staff, parents, the county, and the Parenting Place. The Parenting Place helped staff and families understand their options and support us through this tough time. They were also instrumental in helping our center to re-open in 2023. We are likely looking at less than a week of gap time between locations and service. They are an essential support for families, parents, providers, and employers in the La Crosse area.

Katie Green

Parent and Teacher at Central High School

Attachment D – Letter from Lisa Goodwin, Director of Preschool Child Care

I started as the Director of the Preschool Childcare Center in 2012, and the Parenting Place has played a large role in helping me get to where I am today. When PCC joined Youngstar I didn't realize what an impact the Parenting Place would have on the way that I ran the Center. Not only with the consulting and trainings, but also just knowing that they were always there to help support me with anything that I would need.

After being located at the French Island location for 11 years and finding out that we would not be able to renew our lease, it became a very stressful time for me. I needed to find a place that our families and staff could relocate to. The Parenting place immediately jumped in and even started helping me look for a new location. They were there even if it meant just listening and giving support. The families of the Center played a large part as well. They started a parent group and held a meeting at the Center to brainstorm on how to keep us all together, and Michelle Sampson from the Parenting Place was there to help in any way she could. The Parents ended up working with some of our teachers to do a Nanny share, so they had care for their children and the teachers had an income while waiting for the transition.

Eventually a parent of the Center sent me a link for the VARC building, so my husband and I went to look at the building. After meeting with Liz Filter (the CEO of VARC) and Megan Tully (Director of Strategies of VARC) we went home and discussed things and decided that we wanted to put an offer in on the building, so we set up a time to meet with them again. Things took a surprising turn as I was approached with the idea of teaming up with VARC. After hearing the positive things that VARC had to offer our Staff and families, we went home to discuss things. Eventually we decided that teaming up with VARC would benefit everyone. VARC purchased PCC and I stayed on as the Director and we were able to keep the current staff.

The Parenting Place was there for me every step of the way, Michelle Sampson and Jan Burns came through the building and helped with ideas before construction and were there to help me through the licensing process as well. We are now licensed and have many of our families and staff back together and ready for a bright future!