

6/8/06
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06-08-06 Childcare Facility Improvement Project

Council approval of the Facility Improvement Project will improve environments for young children by making grants for physical improvements to childcare facilities. The City will provide up to \$250,000 as one-time, seed funding for a Child Care Facility Improvement Grant Project managed by the Success By 6 (SB6) initiative at United Way Capital Area. The Project will make at least 25 grants over three years to improve the physical environments in child care facilities by improving child care providers' ability to meet health and safety requirements and by enhancing children's learning environments indoors and/or outdoors including adaptations for children with special needs.

Child care providers that serve 25% or more low-income families and that have an agency budget of less than \$1.5 million in zip codes 78702, -21, -22, -23, -41, -44, -52, -53, and -58 will be targeted. Both for-profit and non-profit childcare providers will be eligible for the grants. Grants will range between \$1,000 and \$25,000. Often, childcare providers do not have the resources to make needed repairs or improvements to their facilities. Providers have a difficult time getting loans for capital improvements since they are considered high risks by lenders, even micro-lenders.

SB6 will use the City funding as leverage to bring additional resources to the Project through corporate or individual underwriting and donations; donations of supplies and materials; volunteers to assist with projects such as work days or donated labor; increased public awareness of the importance of good child care quality and quality standards; and increased public recognition of providers that meet quality standards. SB6 will work to replenish the grant fund from donations to build sustainability into the Project beyond the end of the City contract. The intention of this contract is to develop an ongoing public, private, philanthropic community partnership that supports the improvement of childcare facilities in Austin. Over the contract period, \$200,000 will be used for direct facility grants and \$50,000 will partially fund the volunteer coordinator position to develop additional resources and recruit volunteers for facility projects. SB6 will coordinate outreach to providers with existing child care mentors at various agencies that have City social service contracts, as well as using mentors from SB6's federal Early Learning Opportunities Act grant program. The mentors will assist SB6 in identifying the facility needs of the child care providers, and also can assist providers in applying for the grants.

Performance Measures

Related Goal: Prevention/Provision: Social Services – Promote and foster increased self-sufficiency, healthy behaviors and lifestyle among targeted populations.

<u>Outcome</u>	<u>3-Year Goal</u>
Percentage of participating child care programs that either start meeting quality standards or improve their quality rating.	90%
<u>Outputs</u>	<u>3-Year Goals</u>
Number of child care centers that receive a facility grant	25
Number of volunteer hours contributed toward facility improvement projects	2,500
Value (estimated) of materials donated to facility improvement projects	\$113,083
Amount of cash donations to facility improvement projects	\$200,000

A Notice of Funding Availability was published on 3/13/2006 and 3/20/2006 in the Austin American Statesman. United Way Capital Area was the only qualified response received. Staff recommends United Way Capital Area because of its experience in community fund raising and in volunteer recruitment and management along with its Success By 6 early childhood initiative.

Requested Council Action

Council is requested to authorize execution of a 36-month contract with UNITED WAY CAPITAL AREA, Austin, TX, for childcare facility improvement grants, for a total amount not to exceed \$250,000.