



## 2018 Legislative Priority Issue

### Background

The Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO) is a collaboration between the nine Regional Development Commissions and the West Central Initiative Foundation. Together we work on common issues and topics across Greater Minnesota. Our group each performs duties for the MN Department of Transportation and are each designated as Economic Development Districts by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and work on local and regional initiatives based on the needs of our regions.

In 2015 MADO created a common framework for collaboration called DevelopMN. <http://www.mnado.org/developmn/>. We are using this plan to guide collaborative work.

*“Minnesota has significant economic opportunities all across the state. Regions throughout Greater Minnesota share many qualities and challenges, but lack the intentional alignment needed to take advantage of shared priorities and maximize the use of resources. The lack of alignment has led to a limited voice in crafting effective development policy based on regional priorities. DevelopMN will help identify needed alignment and document a broadly supported strategy for creating shared prosperity.”*

Child care is identified as a critical infrastructure that supports the labor force across Minnesota and is supported under the Human Capital Cornerstone in our DevelopMN plan. The lack of child care, especially in the rural areas of Minnesota, has resulted in negative economic development impacts. We believe a cohesive, comprehensive, strategy for addressing the issues needs to be implemented and that the 2016 Legislative Task Force on Access to Affordable Child Care created a document with an excellent set of recommendations to start addressing the issue.

**Child care has been identified by MADO as a top priority under DevelopMN. MADO supports funding from the Legislature to develop and implement the specific recommendations of the Legislative Task Force on Access to Affordable Child Care.**

### **Innovative Solutions for Regional Issues**

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**MADO Supported Recommendations**

*Excerpted from the Executive Summary, Legislative Task Force on Access to Affordable Child Care, January 15, 2017*

The Legislative Task Force on Access to Affordable Child Care was created by the 2016 Legislature to review the loss of child care providers in the state, assess affordability issues for parents and providers, and identify areas that need to be addressed by the Minnesota Legislature. Over the course of four months, task force members worked with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and several stakeholders to gather information about Minnesota's child care landscape—one with a rocky terrain of high costs for families; an ever-increasing shortage of providers that causes desperation in parents who seek to find care; and communities that are feeling the economic ripple effects caused by the shortage and high costs. The task force received input from over 50 child care providers, child care organizations, parents, guardians, state and county officials, and concerned Minnesotans. The material gathered during public testimony, in conjunction with facts and figures about child care delivered during presentations, helped to inform and guide the final report recommendations.

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**Regulatory**

- Develop consistency and uniformity in regulatory enforcement; improve relationships and communication between the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), county licensors, and child care providers; and improve fairness in compliance measures.
- Ensure training is accessible, relevant, and affordable; and broaden and deepen the trainer pool.

**Affordability**

- Reform and invest in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).
- Determine ways to address costs for middle income families, whether through targeted funding, tax policy, or community/business investments in child care.

**Long-term Discussions**

- Consider the creation of an independent board for child care providers.
- Encourage more people to enter and stay in the child care provider workforce.
- Consider ways to address emergency child care assistance for families fleeing abuse.