
Sponsor: Financial Assistance Services

Meeting Date: 12/21/2021

Title: Single Source Agreement with Think Small for Administration of the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Program

File Number: 2021-694

Background and Rationale:

Ramsey County currently has an agreement with Think Small to administer the state funded Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Child Care Assistance Program. This program seeks to assist low-income families by subsidizing their child-care costs on a sliding fee scale basis and arranging for safe, quality child-care. Program staff assure that applications are complete, families meet eligibility guidelines, authorize and track child-care payments to providers, and maintain waiting lists for services. Think Small provided BSF child care services to 3,024 children under the age of 14 in 2020.

Think Small uses the state-established sliding fee scale to determine the amount families must contribute to paying for their child care and the amount that will be subsidized by the state. Think Small also helps parents locate child-care that meets their family's needs. The county's Child Care Service Team and Think Small staff meet on a monthly basis to discuss and monitor issues with program administration.

Following county single source policy and procedures, Think Small was determined to be a single source provider of this service. There are few organizations within the state that have the technical capacity and knowledge necessary to administer the BSF program, as well as the in-depth knowledge of programs that interact with BSF, especially the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and other state systems. After exploring other resources, county staff determined that continued contracting with Think Small was the most cost-effective option.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the single source agreement with Think Small, 10 Yorkton Court, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55117 for administration of the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Assistance Program for the period of January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2023 in the not-to-exceed amount of \$1,595,486.
2. Authorize the Chair and the Chief Clerk to execute the agreement.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Frethem, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board