



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2901-2021, **Version:** 1

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Mayor Ginther's vision for Columbus, America's Opportunity City, is that all children are ready for kindergarten. Addressing early childhood learning means bringing awareness and resources to a critical learning stage in childhood development. Children who come to school ready to learn are more likely to succeed academically and in life.

Children who participate in high-quality early learning experiences significantly improve their early literacy, language, and math skills. Ample evidence shows that children who enter school unprepared fall farther and farther behind. Students who get a poor start in their earliest years are likely to struggle in high school and subsequently, fail to graduate.

Child care and early learning programs also fulfill a critical need for our community's workforce. The availability of safe, nurturing environments for children, provides parents, family members, and caregivers the opportunity to attend their jobs or pursue their education.

In Columbus however, many child care teachers and staff have left the industry due to the pandemic. According to data provided by Action For Children, over one-third of child care providers do not have enough teachers to staff their classrooms. Action For Children also projects that Franklin County has a deficit of nearly 1,000 child care teachers and staff. As such, this ordinance requests authority to expend Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds in support of this contract to address staffing deficiencies impacted by the ongoing pandemic.

In addition, numerous studies have shown that women have left the workforce in great numbers, both nationally and in Ohio - reversing years of progress. The high price of non-subsidized child care tuition for working families is one of the reasons.

Therefore, the Department of Education requests the authority, per City Code Chapter 329 relating to non-profit service contracts, to contract with Action For Children, a Not For Profit organization, to engage in an initiative to recruit child care teachers and staff, to provide one-time signing bonuses to new teachers, and to provide affordability scholarships to working families. The Department of Education does not have the staff capacity to administer either the recruiting or scholarships programs

**Fiscal Impact:** This ordinance authorizes an expenditure of up to \$3,910,003.00 from funding provided to the City of Columbus from the American Rescue Plan that was passed by Congress on March 10, 2021 and signed into law on March 11, 2021.

**Emergency Designation:** Emergency designation is requested to ensure that new teachers can be hired, and scholarships are made available to families as soon as possible.

To authorize and direct the Director of the Department of Education to enter into a non-profit service contract with Action For Children for the purpose of engaging in a plan to recruit child care teachers and staff, including providing new teacher signing bonuses and to provide affordability scholarships for working families; to authorize the expenditure of up to \$3,910,003.00 from the Recovery Fund; and to declare an emergency.

**WHEREAS,** Mayor Ginther's vision for Columbus, America's Opportunity City, is that all children are ready for kindergarten; and

**WHEREAS,** children who participate in high-quality early learning experiences significantly improve their early literacy,

language, and math skills; and

**WHEREAS**, child care and early learning programs also fulfill a critical need for our community's workforce; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in almost 1,000 child care teacher and staff vacancies; and

**WHEREAS**, the high price of non-subsidized child care is a detriment for working families; and

**WHEREAS**, the expenditure of American Rescue Plan funding for Action for Children, a not-for-profit entity, is crucial for our economic recovery, necessary due to the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, such expenditure of funds has not been previously accounted for in the 2021 Budget

**WHEREAS**, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Department of Education in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to enter into a non-profit service contract with Action For Children to recruit child care teachers and staff as soon as possible, all for the preservation of public health, peace, property, and safety; and

**NOW, THEREFORE,**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the Director of the Department of Education is hereby authorized to enter into a non-profit service contract with the Action for Children to recruit child care teachers and staff and provide affordability scholarships for working families in Franklin County.

**SECTION 2.** That the expenditure of up to \$3,910,003.00 is hereby authorized as follows (**see attachment 2901-2021**):

**Dept/Div:** 42 | **Obj Class:**03 | **Main Account:** 63920 | **Fund:** 2209 | **Sub-fund:** 220902 | **Program:** CW401 | **Amount:** \$3,910,003.00

**SECTION 3.** That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

**SECTION 4.** That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

**SECTION 5.** That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or 10 days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.