

## Increase Funding for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program

CCFAP helps eligible families access child care with financial assistance paid directly to child care providers. Due to chronic underfunding, the program's reimbursement rates have not kept pace with how much providers need to charge, leaving a gap that creates economic challenges for families and providers. It is critical that Vermont address the current funding gap to establish a solid foundation for the work underway to transform our state's early care and learning system. The Alliance supports the work of Let's Grow Kids, the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC), and the Vermont Child Care Providers Association to secure \$9.2 million in CCFAP funding in the FY'19 state budget.

Vermont families eligible for CCFAP may spend up to

# 40%

of their gross income on child care, even with financial assistance from the program, due to the current funding gap.

## TEACH: Responding to an Urgent Workforce Demand

Vermont continues to face a serious shortage of licensed early educators, and qualified early childhood teachers and assistants. TEACH Vermont provides scholarships, book and travel funds, release-time funds, contract completion bonuses, and counseling to non-traditional students. Without TEACH, many would have no affordable pathway to getting their degree. The Alliance supports the work of the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC) to secure a \$320,000 appropriation for FY'19, which would sustain the current level of support that TEACH Vermont offers for one additional year while plans are developed for the project's long-term sustainability and expansion.

Typical **cost of associates degree** at CCV:

# \$17,000

(tuition alone, after loans/grants)

Typical **annual salary for child care worker** seeking a degree:

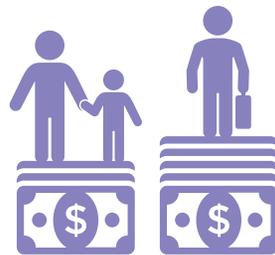
# \$24,960

(\$12/hour)



## Fully Fund Parent Child Centers' Master Grant

Parent Child Centers (PCCs) deliver critical and essential state services to families with young children through a Master Grant with the Department for Children and Families. PCC staff wages and benefits are continually 30% below market rates to comparable positions in education and state government. If PCCs are expected to continue to provide high quality state services, wages and benefits must sustain their workforce. The Alliance supports the PCC Network's request that the state increase their Master Grant funding by \$8 million, to a total of \$10 million for the statewide network of 15 centers, so that wages and benefits can sustain the highly skilled people who do the work.



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## Increase Access to Farm to School Programming

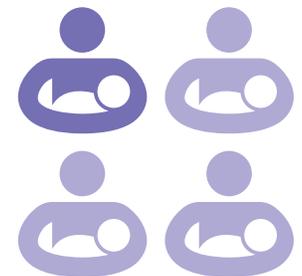
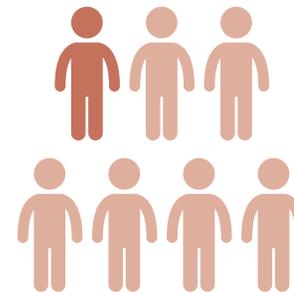
Vermont Farm to School is a nationally recognized initiative that supports Vermont's economy, our communities, and the healthy development of and learning for Vermont's children. In 2017, Act 63, the Farm to School bill, was signed into law allowing both registered and licensed child care providers to be eligible for Farm to School grants. The Alliance supports Vermont FEED and champion organizations in their efforts to increase funding by \$321,000 for the state's Farm to School program, ensuring both early care and education programs and K-3 classrooms can access program funding.

## Create a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program

Nearly every working Vermonter at some point will need to take time away from their job to care for or bond with a new child or to deal with a serious personal or family illness. A statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program will support the health, well-being, and economic security of Vermont's children and families and ensure that future generations thrive. H.196, a bill creating a state-administered insurance program, passed the House in 2017. The Alliance supports the VT Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FaMLI) Coalition in advocating for passage of a strong bill in 2018.

# 1 in 7

Vermont children live in food insecure homes.



# 1 in 4

new mothers go back to work 10 days after childbirth.

# VERMONT EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY ALLIANCE

The Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance is a statewide coalition of early childhood professionals, parents, organizations, businesses, and strategic partners who are committed to improving public policies that impact young children between birth and age eight in the areas of health, safety, nutrition, economic security, and early care and education.

vecaa.org  
802-229-4281

a program of the  
Vermont Community Loan Fund

## Reinvest Reach Up Caseload Savings

According to state statute, Vermont's Reach Up program is meant "to improve the well-being of children by providing for their immediate basic needs." However, current state spending levels mean that the program falls far short of its purpose, providing only 35%–50% of the income needed for struggling families. As the economy recovers, there are fewer families receiving Reach Up benefits, creating caseload savings. The Alliance supports the work of Voices for Vermont's Children to secure the reinvestment of those savings back into the program, to increase base grants and mitigate the negative impacts of poverty on children's development.



The maximum RU grant for a mother with two children is \$640/month, just

**49.6%**  
of the 2004 basic needs budget.

## Protect Integrity and Transparency in 3SquaresVT

3SquaresVT, which helps nearly 78,000 Vermonters put food on their table, is facing the threat of significant federal budget cuts that would force the Agency of Human Services (AHS) to make difficult decisions about who should get benefits. Additionally, if AHS wanted to make any changes to 3SquaresVT that would affect eligibility, benefit amounts, and program access, they can do so without informing clients, the public, program experts, or legislators. The Alliance supports the work of Hunger Free Vermont to pass H.271, which would protect the integrity of 3SquaresVT and maintain the strong tradition of government transparency currently experienced in administration of the program by establishing a public comment period for proposed changes and other transparency measures.

**1 in 8**

Vermonters rely on 3SquaresVT to buy food each month.



## Help End Child Homelessness by Investing In Housing and Services

Vermont is making headway on reducing child and family homelessness, but to make sustained progress we need to keep increasing state investments. The Alliance supports the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition in securing full, statutory funding for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), about \$21 million for FY'19. VHCB received a huge boost through last year's \$35 million housing bond but we need to make sure its base funding remains steady — and we need to increase investments in rental assistance and supportive services not addressed through the bond. Because of the state's chronic inability to adequately fund its housing and homelessness needs, we must find new revenue sources dedicated to funding them, like the proposed \$2 occupancy fee on motel/hotel stays.



**44.5 days**

is the average length of stay in Vermont's homeless shelters, the longest in 15 years.

## Pay Equity for Children's Integrated Services (CIS) Professionals

CIS, a signature early childhood initiative in Vermont, maximizes children's health, development, and learning by providing individualized support to families and specialized child care programs. CIS was designed to lessen, if not eliminate, the need for future services that are costlier and less efficient. However since CIS began in 2009, it has been both underfunded and funding has remained flat. CIS providers can no longer pay their staff enough to avoid high turn-over rates and long vacancies. The Alliance supports the efforts of the Parent Child Center Network and the Vermont Family Network to secure an increased investment in CIS, which would ensure continued progress on family safety and stability; optimal, healthy child development; and families' access to quality early care and education.

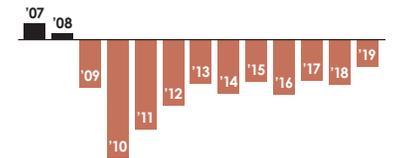
A recent statewide survey found that

**63%**

of CIS professionals said that **they might choose to leave CIS due to low wages.**

## FY'18/FY'19 State Budgets: Countering Years of Under-Funding

State budgets in previous years have made significant cuts to essential early childhood programs and services, negatively impacting low-income families and children. Funding for programs and staffing levels at many state agencies are so low as to create crisis situations in state government and for providers. The Alliance will work to oppose cuts to essential programs and direct services, and will actively investigate potential revenue sources in support of a state budget based on needs, not revenue limitations.



FY'19 is the

**11th**  
year in a row

that projected state spending obligations will exceed projected state revenue.