

V E R M O N T  
**EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLIANCE**

## **Legislative Summary for the 2017 Session**

### **CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: *State Budget***

**Leads:** VAEYC, VCCPA, VACCRRRA and Let's Grow Kids **Result:** *Success*

The FY '18 budget invests an additional \$2.5 million in CCFAP. It allocates \$2.2 million to fund a new grant program for regulated providers, focusing on those who care for infants and toddlers and serve a high percentage of children receiving tuition assistance through CCFAP. The budget also includes \$300,000 to allow CCFAP eligibility to be based on the 2017 Federal Poverty Level.

### **AFTERSCHOOL/SUMMER LEARNING: *State Budget***

**Lead:** Vermont Afterschool, Inc. **Result:** *Progress Made*

While the FY '18 budget did not include funding for the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund, the House and Senate Education Committees supported making allocations to the Fund in their budget memos to their respective Appropriations Committees.

### **TEACH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: *State Budget***

**Lead:** VAEYC **Result:** *Progress Made*

Advocates for TEACH worked to extend current federal funding, set to expire in 2017, for an additional year. Meanwhile, requests for additional state funding were made to legislative committees. While the FY '18 budget did not include funding for TEACH, both the House Human Services Committee and Senate Health and Welfare Committee supported funding TEACH in their budget memos to their respective Appropriations Committees.

### **FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE: *H. 196***

**Leads:** Main Street Alliance of VT and **Result:** *Progress Made*  
**Voices for Vermont's Children**

In its original form, H.196 directed Vermont to develop a 12 week state-administered family and medical leave insurance benefit for all public and private sector employees. The bill changed as it moved through three different committees in the House. The program that was considered by the full House covers 80% wage replacement for up to six weeks of caregiving leave, financed by a .141% payroll deduction for an employee, with the option for the employer to contribute. The benefit would apply only to new parents welcoming a child and to those taking time to care for a sick or injured family member. H.196 passed the House in May with tri-partisan support, and is expected to be taken up by the Senate next January. The FaMLI Coalition supported this revised version of the program, though will continue to press in the Senate for a more comprehensive program.

### **FARM TO SCHOOL: *State Budget and S. 33***

**Leads:** VT FEED, VT Farm to School Network, **Result:** *Success*  
**Hunger Free VT, BBF Wellness Committee and**  
**YMCA Eat Well Play More Coalition**

The Legislature passed S.33, a bill that expands access to Farm to School to both registered and licensed child care providers. The Legislature also awarded the program an additional appropriation of \$50,000 to help pay for this growth, bringing annual funding to \$181,250.

## **HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS: *State Budget and S. 100***

**Lead: VT Affordable Housing Coalition**

**Result: *Success***

The Governor's budget request proposed, and the Legislature approved, a \$35 million housing bond for the VT Housing and Conservation Board, which will create 550-650 new or substantially renovated affordable homes for low- and moderate-income Vermonters over the next two to three years. While the Senate Finance Committee approved a \$2 occupancy fee to help pay for the bond, the proposal stalled after it drew opposition from the tourism industry and a threatened gubernatorial veto.

The budget adjusted the state's temporary housing policy to refer to "adverse weather conditions", rather than just "cold weather", when appropriate shelter space is not available. The budget invests \$600,000 in one-time funding to increase seasonal shelter capacity in Rutland and Central VT, where motel expenditures are running high, taking pressure off the motel voucher budget.

## **CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SERVICES (CIS): *State Budget***

**Leads: Parent Child Center Network /VT Family Network**

**Result: *Progress Made***

Advocates for CIS made substantial progress in increasing awareness and getting CIS into the discussion about program funding within AHS. While the FY '18 budget did not include increased funding for CIS, both the House Human Services Committee and Senate Health and Welfare Committee supported increased funding to CIS in their budget memos to their respective Appropriations Committees. Advocacy on this issue will continue in coming months.

## **DR. DYNASAUR 2.0**

**LEADS: Main Street Alliance of VT & VT-NEA**

**Result: *No Progress***

This issue was not considered during the 2017 legislative session due to the uncertainty about the future of the federal Affordable Care Act, health care reform, and Medicaid funding at the federal level.

## **FY '17/FY '18 STATE BUDGETS**

**Lead: Vermont Early Childhood Alliance**

**Result: *Partial Success***

While the state's financial situation continued to limit capacity for new investments, Alliance members pushed hard for targeted spending on critical programs and opposed cuts that were proposed. There were no substantive discussions during the session on developing state budgets based on need, rather than based on revenue limitations.

## ***Other Bills Passed by the Legislature***

### Pre-K Background Checks, Implementation Study, etc. – H. 513

Most pre-K providers will only need to complete one background check. AHS and AOE will present recommendations on improving implementation of universal pre-K to several legislative committees focusing on the equity, quality, and affordability of the current program.

### ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) – H. 508

A new legislative Adverse Childhood Experiences Working Group was tasked with developing recommendations and drafting legislation to address how the state deals with ACES.

### Benefits Cliff and CCFAP – H. 326

This bill increases the income disregard for CCFAP recipients if additional income is put into approved education savings accounts.

### Pregnancy Accommodation – H. 136

This bill will provide protections for employees who need workplace accommodations such as access to water or a chair, longer or more frequent restroom breaks, or avoiding heavy lifting.