



October 28, 2024

Alison George
Division of Housing Director
Colorado Department of Local Affairs
1313 Sherman Street, Suite #518
Denver, Colorado 80203

Feedback re: Child Care Facility Development Toolkit and Technical Assistance Program and the Child Care Facility Development Planning Grant Program

Dear Director George:

We supported [HB24-1237](#) and were glad to see it become law. A lack of accessible and affordable childcare prevents small business owners and their employees from thriving and being able to participate fully in the workforce. Small Business Majority's [research](#) found that a lack of childcare for their own children created an impediment for entrepreneurs to start their business (58%) and grow their business (59%). Additionally, the survey found that due to employees' childcare issues, small businesses have had an employee quit (30%), job candidates turn down an offer (30%) and even had to eventually fire an employee who was routinely absent (16%). Therefore, we support the development and implementation of the Child Care Facility Development Toolkit and Technical Assistance Program.

However, a robust childcare ecosystem includes family childcare homes (FCCHs), and we ask that they be continuously considered and included in the development process for this program. Not only are family home childcare providers small business owners themselves, but they are also an essential part of the childcare industry. Furthermore, many family childcare homes are run by women, women of color and immigrants. Without a robust childcare industry that supports working parents, we cannot have a strong, diverse economy and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Family childcare homes provide a safe, accessible, in-home learning environment with smaller group sizes, and they offer more flexibility for hard-working Coloradans who have non-traditional work schedules. Colorado has, however, consistently experienced a shortage of licensed family childcare homes over the last decade. The aim of HB24-1237 is to support the development of childcare facilities, and this program presents an opportunity to boost FCCHs and support access to childcare in our Colorado communities, including for entrepreneurs and their employees.

Yet, due to their unique business model, FCCHs differ from a commercial childcare center. In particular, obtaining homeowners insurance is difficult for FCCHs as their residence is also a childcare business. The uniqueness of the FCCH model should be considered in the toolkit, and resources should reflect and be applicable to their businesses. We encourage you to consult with FCCHs themselves and make the programs resources available in multiple languages for non-English speaking childcare providers.

We are also supportive of the development of and implementation of the Child Care Facility Development Planning Grant Program. It's important that local governments are provided resources to accelerate the development of new family and commercial childcare facilities in their communities. However, we also ask that FCCHs are considered in the development of this program as they often face unique challenges starting and operating their childcare businesses in their local communities.

This includes inconsistent regulatory requirements—such as inconsistent zoning requirements—that often put a disproportionate burden on FCCHs, which inhibits their ability to start and run their businesses. One possibility to alleviate this would be to include requirements for seeking FCCH input and perspective as part of the grant requirements to the local governments receiving funding through this program.

We ask that DOLA include FCCHs in the development and implementation of the Child Care Facility Development Toolkit and Technical Assistance Program. Colorado small businesses and their employees rely on FCCHs to care for their children so they can contribute to our economy.

Sincerely,

Hunter Nelson
Colorado Director, Small Business Majority