BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Early Childhood Council

Recommendation Number: 20200311-3d

Direct Manana Fund revenue to Early Childhood

WHEREAS, 34,000 children under age 6 in Austin/Travis County live in households with low income and 90% of these 34,000 children are children of color;

WHEREAS, there is a gap between our community needs and service capacity. We have many more children who are at risk and eligible for early childhood services than our funding and programs can serve. Only 34% of children under age 4 from families with low income are receiving any early learning services;

WHEREAS, Only 39% of children from households with low-income and only 36% of Black children begin Kindergarten ready to learn and succeed in school;

WHEREAS, Austin/Travis County has a robust, data-driven community strategic plan designed to coordinate efforts, improve child and family outcomes as well, and build more efficient and coordinated systems for equitable access and impact (the Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Strategic Plan) which demonstrates that children born into households with low income in Austin often lack access to the same quantity or quality of resources as their higher-income neighbors;

WHEREAS, decades of research prove that the disadvantages begin the moment children come into the world because children born into poverty and children of color are disproportionately born early, at low-birth-weight, or with chronic illnesses, and are less likely than their peers to be ready for, or successful at, school;

WHEREAS, a child who begins Kindergarten ready to succeed is set on a path that predicts their third-grade reading level, high-school graduation, justice system involvement, college perseverance, and adult earning potential;

WHEREAS, community investment in early childhood programs results in not only more successful individual citizens, but also significant economic benefits for the community as a whole;

WHEREAS, in Resolution 20190620-089 it was noted Council does not currently have a reliable funding stream for child care and early childhood education services to meet current

needs; and the City Manager directed staff to provide a report back to Council with options for funding child care services and early childhood education;

WHEREAS, calculations show that the City of Austin and Travis County invested $220 in early childhood last year per child under age 6 from low-income households, and by comparison other city investments per child are more than double this: San Antonio, TX - $419, Denver, CO - $935, Portland, OR - $965, Philadelphia, PA - $1141;

WHEREAS, this request aligns with the City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023 within the Government that Works for All outcome under the indicator of "Equity of City programs and resource allocation" and with the Economic Opportunity and Affordability outcome under the indicator of "cost of living compared to income;"

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Early Childhood Council recommends that the estimated $3M in new property tax revenue from the "Manana Fund" be directed to early childhood initiatives as outlined in Resolution #20190620-089. Funding will help scale proven and effective programs aimed at improving access to and quality of early care and education, and advance coordination and navigation for families and service providers.

Date of Approval: March 11, 2020

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 9 – 0 vote

Attest: Rachel Farley