

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Applications Now Open for Innovative Child Care Pilot

Grand Rapids, MI – Applications to become a facilitator hub have opened for a new child care pilot program that will put Michigan on the map as a leader in child care innovation. Championed by a statewide coalition developed by the Grand Rapids Chamber, and legislatively led by Representative Greg VanWoerkom and Senator Curt VanderWall, \$1M has been allocated for this pilot program in Michigan’s Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

The Grand Rapids Chamber pulled together this coalition comprised of businesses, key state leaders, legislators, research and children advocacy groups with the purpose of tackling child care accessibility, affordability and quality. Since August 2019, the coalition worked to build out this pilot that is the first of its kind in the nation.

“Child care is a top priority for the Grand Rapids Chamber. It has a significant impact on early childhood outcomes and lack of child care is a big obstacle for those trying to get back to work,” says Alexa Kramer, Director of Government Affairs at the Grand Rapids Chamber. “Our coalition built out this pilot to make quality child care in Michigan more accessible. We are excited to see the pilot kick off and will work to see it a success with an aim of making this a statewide program in the future.”

The pilot seeks to split the cost of child care between state, family and business. Three locations, including Muskegon, will be selected through the application process to represent an urban, suburban and rural setting for the pilot. A facilitator hub from each region will apply, and this hub will be the fiduciary and act as a liaison between area child care providers and businesses interested in participating. The hub will also assist with administrative needs of the child care providers. Businesses that elect to be in this program will be able to offer child care as a benefit up to 250% the Federal Poverty Level.

“It is a priority of mine to find innovative ideas to make child care affordable and accessible,” said Representative Greg VanWoerkom. “I am proud to have been a part of an incredible effort to introduce this pilot program that brings business and state resources together to alleviate some of the financial burden that prevents parents from re-entering the workforce and starting on the path to prosperity. “

To learn more about the program and to apply to be a region click [here](#).

Coalition participants:

- Grand Rapids Chamber
- Small Business Association
- Traverse Connect
- Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance
- Michigan Chamber
- Detroit Regional Chamber
- Talent 2025

- Ken Sikkema- Former Senate Majority Leader
- Goeff Hansen- Main Street Legislative Consulting
- Michigan League for Public Policy
- Michigan's Children
- Michigan Department of Education

- Senator Curt VanderWall & Staff
- Representative Greg VanWoerkom & Staff
- Representative Jack O'Malley & Staff
- Representative Michele Hoytenga & Staff