

Kids' Corps, Inc.
Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 27, 2021
Meeting held virtually due to the Covid 19 pandemic

Members Present:	Members Absent:
Brittany Pickens, President	Jessica Teague-Beach
Rhonda Drake, V President	
Shawna Bailey	
Tasi Sablan	
Noreen White	
Kaya Avila	
Staff Present:	
Dirk Shumaker, Executive Director	

The meeting was called to order by Brittany Pickens at 6:15 p.m. To open members each shared a favorite family activity. A quorum was present.

New Hires:

Dirk reviewed the new hires list. Tasi motioned to approve the new hires and Rhonda seconded. Motion approved.

Minutes:

Minutes for August were reviewed. No discussion or amendments. Rhonda motioned to approve the minutes and Kaya seconded. Motion approved.

Wage Enhancement Procedure:

Dirk reported that KCI has FY 21 grant funds as well as special federal Covid funds to expend by October 31. He reviewed 3 power point slides that illustrated our projected expenses and revenue through the end of our federal grant year on October 31. To support staff who continue to provide services during the Covid 19 pandemic he proposed paying all staff a flat \$250 Covid duty stipend every pay period retroactive to the start of our program year on August 16 through November 5, 2021. This would cost approximately \$111,000 and could be allocated primarily to the Covid grant. It is justified by the increased risk currently posed to essential workers in Anchorage by the spike in Covid infections. The BOD could evaluate extending the wage enhancement at the meeting on November 4.

Dirk also reported that the federal vaccine mandate announced earlier this month applies to all Head Start staff nation-wide. Few details are available at this time; a January implementation date has been announced by the Office of Head Start. This mandate, added to the daily stress of providing direct services during a pandemic that goes on and on, creates a staff retention challenge.

Our hope is that this action would reduce turnover. By providing the same cash payment to all staff across the board (rather than a percentage of salary) we are providing a proportionally higher

increase to lower paid staff. For example, for many assistant teachers this action will add 12-13% to their pay.

Our second proposal is to give staff a \$500 one time retention award on their respective work anniversaries. This is something we used to do, though in the past the award was a permanent 1% pay increase and this would be a one time payment. It would cost around \$30,000 total for the fiscal year, with \$12,500 falling between July 1, 2021-October 31, 2021.

Because 2/3 of the retention awards will be distributed in FY 22, we have proposed a relatively conservative increase so we don't overstretch the FY 22 budget. \$500 would represent at least 1% of the annual gross income for over 50% of our staff. We hope that this action would support retention, especially for those staff who have a work anniversary in the next 2-3 months.

After discussion Rhonda motioned to approve the Covid 19 duty stipend and the one time retention award. Kaya seconded. Motion approved.

Background Check Procedure and the State Background Check Program

Dirk reported that the state's background check program has been down since the Department of Health and Social Services was disrupted by hackers last April. As a result fingerprints that we take for all new staff are not being forwarded by the state to the FBI (and have not been since the hack). We continue to receive a national name based criminal records check and a national sex offenders registry check as well as a state criminal records check. However, because no Head Start program in the state is able to complete national fingerprint checks, KCI and all state of Alaska Head Start programs are out of compliance with Head Start regulations that take effect on October 1.

We are advocating for the state to develop a temporary fix for this problem, but as of yet the state has provided no workaround. We will continue completing the "provisional" background checks and following our classroom supervisory procedures which are designed to always have at least two staff caring for children.

Program Updates

Dirk provided members with a program update. Our EHS expansion site construction is taking longer than usual due to supply problems caused by the pandemic. The contractor reports that construction should be completed by the end of October. We also are keeping enrollment at 12 children per classroom due to the rise in Covid 19 cases in Anchorage. In order to keep children, families and staff safe we continue to require masks and daily screening.

Closing

Kaya announced that this would be her last meeting as she is moving on to new opportunities for service at ASD.

Respectfully submitted by,
Dirk Shumaker, Executive Director