

Regional Community Child Care Efforts

Efforts done on the local level to continue to support our local child care needs and economy.



CHILD CARE

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Part 3 of 3

Big Stone || Chippewa || Lac qui Parle || Swift || Yellow Medicine

The Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC) serves as a community development planning organization offering a wide variety of technical assistance and resources to our local units of government within Swift, Yellow Medicine, Lac qui Parle, Chippewa, and Big Stone Counties. The UMVRDC's annual survey results showed that **“child care accessibility and affordability”** was the region's #1 top issue identified by our local units of government. This campaign showcases how our region has faced childcare challenges and how we can continue to support our local workforce and economy.

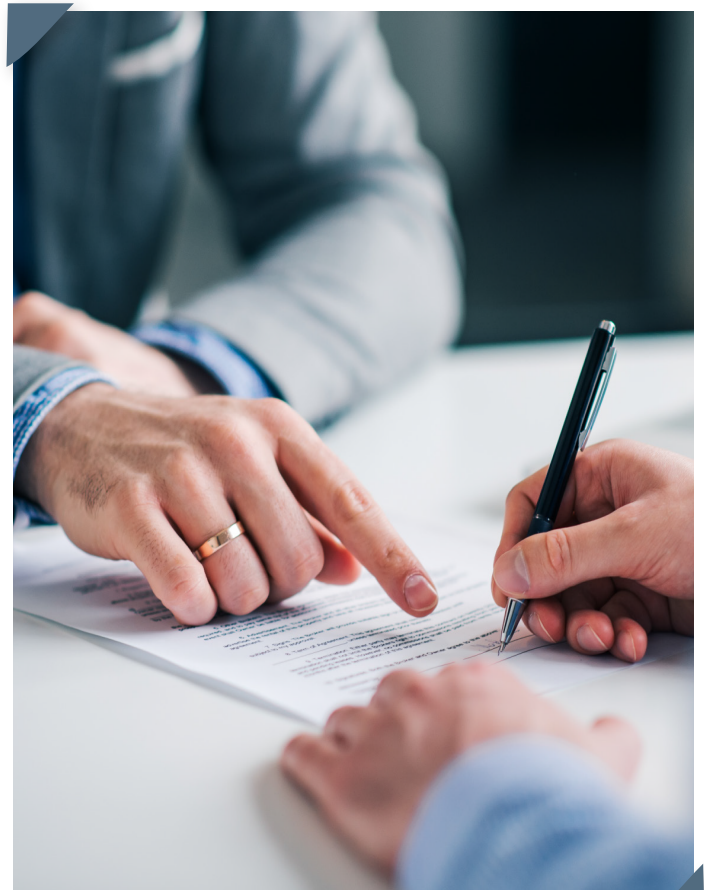
The Need

Though there is no easy solution to addressing the child care crisis, the counties and employers in our region have stepped up to provide incentives, resources, and opportunities for our child care facilities and home providers

A recent study shows family child care closures hit rural areas the hardest. The 6W region, comprised of Big Stone, Swift, Lac qui Parle, Chippewa, and Yellow Medicine counties has 6 child care centers. If those centers were nonexistent, hypothetically that impacts on average 492 children, estimated 250+ families, which could result in a loss of 250+ employers in the region.

With that, the child care need in UMRDC 6W's Region still remains high. Bigstone – 56, Swift – 11, Lac qui Parle – 59, Chippewa – 223, Yellow Medicine – 199

(FCF 2021 Child care need summary)



To address child care shortages, local communities are coming together in creative partnerships to provide more stability to child care programs. These cross-sector partnerships may include public and private employers, school districts, local government, nonprofits, and other partners. By bringing additional resources to the table—whether by donating supplies or equipment, providing free or subsidized space to child care programs, matching funds for grant applications, or other strategies—these partnerships create some flexibility

and added support for child care both on the business side and in programs' work to increase the effectiveness of their programs in providing high-quality early learning experiences for children. The State can bolster stability for child care programs in local communities by supporting the development of these kinds of cross-sector partnerships.

(MBVC, Child Care Business Supports Working Group).



The Support

Fortunately, our counties, employers and various organizations throughout the region see the value either personally, professionally and/or both of child care.

Swift County is invested in increasing and ensuring the daycare providers in the county have the resources that they need to meet licensure requirements and the resources to improve the daycare's curriculum, safety, and equipment. The county is offering a deferred loan for family providers to receive up to \$150 per child, and center-based child care facilities can apply for up to \$12,500 per year. Purchases can consist of: home/facility modifications or upgrades required to meet licensure requirements; educational curriculum and equipment; safety improvements (ie. Fence around the play area); needs to expand the number of children served (does not include operating expenses).

Big Stone County also offers a similar program - family child care providers can receive up to \$10,000 and centers can receive up to \$15,000 to use on upgrades to their current child care programs. For those interested in starting up a program, family child care providers can receive up to \$15,000 and centers can receive up to \$20,000. Other counties and

communities have done similar programs in the past. Other counties and communities within the region continue to have conversations around the crisis and how they can better support child care as a whole.

The Minnesota Business Vitality Council report's recommendations include an extension of funding for new child care business support initiatives such as the One Stop Assistance Network, new workforce development supports, a shared services pilot for family child care programs, and business training and consultation, which are largely funded with temporary federal dollars.

"This report highlights what providers, families, and others in Minnesota have long been saying to businesses and policymakers: investing in child care – both families' access and providers directly – is critical, and there are important ways for businesses and the state to engage in these needs," said Erin Bailey, Assistant Commissioner of the Children's Cabinet. "It's about our economy – and investing in early learning is also about our children, the future workforce."

The UMVRDC's website houses information and resources on regional case studies, county incentives, funding opportunities, and more – be sure to visit our website for updates!

<https://umvrdc.org/child-care-case-studies/>