

# Memorandum

**REPORT TO:** City Commission

**FROM:** Jesse DiTommaso, Economic Development Coordinator  
Brit Fontenot, Economic Development Director

**SUBJECT:** Authorize the City Manager to Sign a Grant Match Agreement with Greater Gallatin United Way for a Waitlist Prioritization Program

**MEETING DATE:** April 1, 2025

**AGENDA ITEM TYPE:** Grant

**RECOMMENDATION:** Authorize the City Manager to sign a grant match agreement with Greater Gallatin United Way for a waitlist prioritization program.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:** 2.3 Workforce Development: Support education and workforce development initiatives to improve the skills of our citizens.

**BACKGROUND:** The City of Bozeman's adopted [Economic Vitality Strategy](#) highlights the importance of child care as critical infrastructure for a healthy local economy. A shortage of accessible child care can negatively impact the economy by creating workforce instability, as parents are forced to reduce hours or leave jobs due to lack of care options. In Gallatin County, [44% of parents report missing work](#) due to child care challenges. Since 2021, we have seen an 11% decrease in women with a child under the age of 6 entering the workforce in Bozeman, see attached CHILD Task Force Strategy. Businesses are directly impacted by instability in the child care sector. The US Chamber of Commerce estimates [businesses lose \\$57 billion annually nationwide](#) due to child care related absenteeism. Accessible child care can reduce stress on families, businesses, and the local economy.

To address some of the economic impacts of inaccessible child care, the City of Bozeman supported the CHILD task force strategic plan. Goal 2 of the CHILD Task Force Strategic Plan is to support, complement, and expand upon what currently exists. A key strategy to accomplishing Goal 2, is establishing and implementing a Gallatin County Waitlist Program for use by care providers, families, and businesses.

A county-wide waitlist program will provide families with real-time slot availability while also helping child care providers maximize their enrollment capacity. The program manager, housed at [Greater Gallatin United Way](#), will assist child care providers, businesses, and parents with a child care business management software that will allow providers to upload details about their facility as well as availability. Parents can then use the software to find a

child care that best fits their needs. When a family finds a child care, they will be automatically removed from the list. This streamlines the process of finding child care, removes inefficiencies, increase transparency, and ensures that available lots do not go unused.

Building off the [Missoula Child Care Advantage](#) model, the program will allow business to join the platform to provide a benefit for their employees. The tiered business membership model allows businesses to do everything from holding future slots for employees to subsidizing the cost of care for their employees as a retention and recruitment tool. Additionally, the program will subsidize costs for low-income families to access child care listings on the platform.

The CHILD Task Force is in the process of applying for multiple grants to start the program. The \$25,000 contemplated in the grant match agreement would provide a 50% match to a recently awarded sub-grant by Zero to Five. After startup, the program is designed to be financially sustainable using a tiered business membership model and foundation partnerships to maintain the system. The Economic Development Department's budget request for FY2025 included start-up costs for a child care portal and has the \$25,000 match available.

- UNRESOLVED ISSUES:** None.
- ALTERNATIVES:** As recommended by the Commission.
- FISCAL EFFECTS:** \$25,000, available in the Economic Development fund.

Attachments:

[25 - Grant Agreement - Great Gallatin United Way - Child Care Waitlist and Prioritization Program FULL.pdf](#)  
[Child Task Force Strategic Plan 2024.pdf](#)

Report compiled on: March 19, 2025