



# Anoka County

## HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION

Community Social Services and Behavioral Health

March 16, 2022

The Honorable Senator Jim Abeler, Chair  
Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee  
3400 Rum River Drive  
Anoka, MN 55303

### **RE: Support for SF 3379- Basic Sliding Fee Child Care**

Dear Chair Abeler and Members of the Senate Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of Anoka County, thank you for hearing S.F. 3379 and to Senator Wiklund for chief authoring this important legislation. Access to safe and affordable child care is a key component to building a foundation that supports a thriving workforce. The Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Child Care Program is a tool to support parents who are striving to access the workforce of the first time or returning to the workforce after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April of 2021, Anoka County had a BSF waiting list of 776 families. The 2021 Legislature increased funding allocations for the BSF Program and temporarily reordered the waiting list priorities. Due to this legislative support, the county was able to decrease the waiting list to 347 families by the end of 2021 and as of March 11, 2022, there are no families on the waiting list for the BSF program. Currently, Anoka County is serving 862 families in the BSF program. If the reprioritization had not happened, many of these families would still be on the waiting list, despite increased funding for the BSF program.

The BSF Child Care Program is crucial to enabling more parents to join the workforce while providing a safe and supportive learning environment of their children. The temporary prioritization prevents working families from having to quit their jobs and go onto MFIP to become eligible for assistance with child care. Making the current prioritization permanent will allow counties to continue to serve more families who would not otherwise have access to child care assistance.

Anoka County respectfully urges your support to make this prioritization permanent, so counties do not have to resume waiting lists, and to allow full utilization of the annual BSF allocation for families who have no other means of support. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jerry Pederson, Director  
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