



# children's defense fund minnesota

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

Children's Defense Fund Minnesota thanks the Governor and Lt. Governor for **including the Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program in their Department of Health budget bill SF 2995** and encourages the committee to follow suit by **including SF402 in the Senate Health and Human Services Omnibus budget bill**. We support Community Solutions because it is a proven strategy that addresses disparities as well as amplifies the innovative solutions that leverage community assets, are culturally relevant, and center the experiences and dignity of impacted people and communities.

Currently, twenty-three innovative community-generated solutions are being put to work tackling persistent unequal child outcomes across the state with funding from the Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program. Unfortunately, due to limited funding, the vast majority of these great ideas did not receive the full funding requested, compromising their potential. Furthermore, too many promising proposals that harness the power and knowledge within communities were left behind due to lack of resources. Finally, without legislative action the program will end in 2023, jeopardizing the important progress being made in communities across the state.

The Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development Grant Program represents more than money, it is also a process that involves and uplifts communities of color, American Indian communities, and geographically dispersed communities while highlighting their invaluable knowledge. Minnesota's population has been transforming for the last 30 years. Almost a third of the babies born in Minnesota between 2018 and 2020 were children of color and American Indian children. By 2035, one in four children in our state will be a child of color. As our state's future leaders, we have a responsibility to ensure that they are all healthy, thriving and contributing their gifts to Minnesota.

**As you weigh various proposals, we hope you will join the Governor and Lt. Governor in giving this innovative program the permanent funding needed to fully deliver on its promise (SF402).** Every step we take now to improve the lives of children improves the lives of all of us now and into the future. Minnesota will never go wrong when we put children and families at the center.

Sincerely,

Debra Fitzpatrick  
Director of Policy and Research

May Lososo  
Director of Community Engagement