

March 22, 2023

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shelley Houang and I want to thank 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 encourage the committee to follow suit by including SF402 in the Senate Health and Human Services Omnibus budget bill. I am a mother to a 3 year old boy and also caring for 3 other little ones ages 1-3. I have been participating in the opportunities provided by Hmong Early Childhood Coalition, also known as HECC, since August 2022. HECC is one of the grantees of the Community Solutions Grant Program.

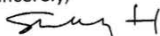
I am so grateful to be a part of HECC and for their support. My son has had a lot of allergies, severe eczema and other health issues that concerns me. For the last year, I have been searching for help for him, and also for myself as a parent. It has been hard to find a support group that understands my needs. I'm glad I got to know HECC because being able to attend their culturally relevant trainings and community conversations has helped me to understand my toddler's growth and development. I have a better understanding of how to support him and the way he deals with stress and trauma. In addition, dealing with my own stress. HECC has also provided me with:

- an opportunity to meet other parents and caregivers to have open dialogue about our struggles and how we can better support our own children and our community.
- materials and tools such as books, building blocks, emotional cards in English and Hmong to teach the children I am caring for.
- resources and opportunities to build onto my knowledge as a Hmong parent as well as strengthen our community.
- skills and tools to be a better advocate for my child and other children as well.

Community Solutions Grant Program is a model that truly centers and understands the importance of our voice and the work of small community-led organizations such as HECC. 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). Minnesota has the need and Minnesota has the resources.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Shelley Houang