Coalition for Social Justice (CSJ) Education Fund

**Location:**
Fall River, Massachusetts

**Grant Period:**
2019-2020 with option to renew

**Grant Type:**
Strategic Expansion

**Focus Area:**
Statewide with a focus on Southeastern Massachusetts

**Amount:**
$115,000

**Other Funders:**
Eastern Bank
Family Values @Work

**Contact:**
Deb Fastino
Executive Director
dfastino@aol.com

**Web:**
https://coalitionforsocialjustice.org/

**Social Media:**
Twitter: @PeopleForCSJ
@CoalitionForSocialJustice

**Mission:**
To build a grassroots movement for progressive social change, rooted in communities that have been excluded from the economic benefits of the current system, with a focus on race and gender.

**Partnerships:**
CSJ participates in many statewide coalitions, and has spearheaded a new coalition focusing on affordable and accessible, high quality education and care. CSJ recently created a steering committee with Strategies for Children / Early Education for All campaign, Parenting Journey, SEIU 509, the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, Mass Commission on the Status of Women, Neighborhood Villages, Progressive Democrats of Mass, Massachusetts Association of Early Education and Care (MADCA), Greater Boston Legal Services and the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action. In addition, large organizations like Mass Communities Action Network, Massachusetts Head Start Association and the Massachusetts Association of YMCAs; plus, many smaller groups, are engaged in this campaign.

**Project Summary:**
The purpose of this grant is to lift up the voices of families, early educators, and multiple stakeholders to promote a childcare systems reform agenda that increases investment in the early educator workforce, infuses additional resources into programs that promote excellence in delivery of child care and early education, and solves the financial barriers faced by
families seeking affordable, high-quality childcare and early learning programming. This grant will be used by CSJ to further build the base of engaged parents and early educators. This year, they will focus on building a pilot in Southeastern Massachusetts to replicate in other regions.

CSJ will use a process that meaningfully involves stakeholders in creating a policy solution that meets their needs. In the early stages, regional table partners that have roots in the community will include parents in the campaign by listening to their needs, collecting their feedback and capturing their stories to connect to the statewide coalition. After the policy is developed, the tables will build critical advocacy campaign skills and lift up the civic and political leadership of early educators, families, and community leaders. This will have a lasting benefit as it provides new tools to advocates, strengthens voices, and builds power to make change. Table members and families will be invited to share their stories by participating in story collection, hosting focus groups, writing opinion-editorials, participating in delegation visits, testifying before the Legislature, contributing to phone banks, going door-to-door and providing quotes for newspapers.

**Selected Action Steps Related to RCCF Goals**

**Lift parent/caregiver, early educator and ally voices to increase their participation in crafting policy solutions in states and/or communities**

- Build regional tables in each target region of the state, to include: families, providers, faith-based leaders, community groups, local business, labor, women’s groups, and early educators.
- Develop a public input process to include town halls and delegation visits in order for parents and early educators to share their views with elected officials.
- Grow a story bank to include at least 50 new perspectives from parents, early educators, and other stakeholders.

**Build effective coordination among RCCF grantees and advocacy groups, parents, early educators and allies**

- Grow the number of organizations which endorse and engage in the coalition.
- Include diverse representatives of organizations in campaign subcommittees to review community feedback, research and/or discuss various key developments of the proposal.
- Hold monthly statewide table meetings, steering committee conferences calls as needed, regional table calls quarterly and an annual meeting to convene participants.
Selected Action Steps Related to RCCF Goals (continued)

Expand financial resources to secure increased and equitable access to quality child care, including through intentional strategies to reach and prioritize children and families most affected by injustice and inequity.

- Conduct a cost analysis on current cost for high-quality accessible care and the elements of a state system needed to reach the vision.
- Develop a progressive sliding-fee scale where families below a certain income can access child care with no cost, and with a cap on percent of income required for higher-earners to access quality care.
- Research methods of financing equitable access to high quality child care in Massachusetts.

The Raising Child Care Fund, a new project of the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative (ECFC), provides resources to organizations dedicated to building power and access to policymakers among those whose lives are most impacted by the child care crisis in the country. This brief profiles one of the first set of nine grants awarded in 2019.

For more information contact:
Rachel Schumacher, Project Manager, raisingchildcare@ecfunders.org.