

Expansion of Texas Rising Star Early Childhood Conference Discussion Paper

1 Background

2 The Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) three-member Commission (Commission) has been
3 supporting a professional development conference for Texas Rising Star providers since 2016 (except
4 for 2020 and 2021, due to COVID). This annual statewide conference, the "Texas Rising Star Early
5 Childhood Educators' Conference," is tailored to the professional development needs of Texas Rising Star
6 early childhood caregivers, equipping them with information, tools and resources to improve the quality
7 of early care experiences. The event is available at a nominal fee, with TWC funds supporting most of
8 the hotel and registration costs to allow participation by childcare workers who otherwise could not
9 afford to attend such an event.

10 Issue

11 The 87th Texas Legislature enacted House Bill ([HB](#)) 2607, making participation in the Texas Rising
12 Star program a requirement for all child care programs participating in TWC's Child Care Services
13 (CCS) program. As outlined in TWC's [proposed amendments to Chapter 809, Child Care Services rules](#),
14 CCS child care programs would have two years to attain at least a Two-Star certification. These rules are
15 scheduled for adoption in August, with an implementation date of October 1, 2022.

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17 Currently, approximately 30 percent of all CCS providers are Texas Rising Star certified. With the
18 enacted of TWC's Child Care Rule amendments, we will see an increase in the number of CCS
19 providers in Texas Rising Star. As these numbers grow, the number of program eligible to participate in
20 the Texas Rising Star Early Childhood Summit will increase. To support more Texas Rising Star
21 provider's participation in the Summit, the Commission should consider increasing funding for this
22 statewide initiative.

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24 The currently annual budget of \$750,000 supports one event, and up to 800 attendees. To support Texas
25 Rising Star program growth, staff recommends that beginning in Fiscal Year 2024, the Commission
26 annually dedicate \$3 million to support four Texas Rising Star Early Childhood Educators' Conferences.

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28 Additionally, staff notes that the \$20 registration fee charged to attendees is no longer adequate. The
29 registration fee was implemented to both increase the show rate of attendees and to assist in covering
30 certain costs that are now allowable uses of TWC's child care funds (such as snacks during breaks) or
31 other out-of-pocket expenses such as parking. Authorizing staff to change the fee would provide greater
32 flexibility to ensure that the venues selected continue to honor early childhood educators as
33 professionals while also offsetting some of the out-of-pocket expenses of attending a conference.

34 Decision Point

35 Staff recommends that the Commission:

- 36 • increase the annual budget for the Texas Rising Star Early Childhood Conference (Track 76019)
37 from \$750,000 to \$3 million, for four conferences annually, beginning in Fiscal Year 2024;
- 38 • and authorize staff to assess an appropriate registration fee for future conferences that is
39 affordable and supports both attendance goals and a high-quality experience for attendees.