

Re: Childcare Financial Assistance

28 August, 2020

Dear Petersburg Assembly,

We are writing today to address the impact of the recent passage of Petersburg School District's Smart Start Plan on community childcare and Tlingit-Haida's decision to have virtual preschool through December. While we support the plans and appreciate all the school/tribal organization is doing to address Covid safety concerns, we are now facing a gap in childcare capacity and funding for families. In the spring, during school shutdowns, families were dividing their time between work and home, children were left home alone, or home taking care of younger siblings. As we all know, it was incredibly stressful and not the best situation. We have the opportunity to avoid much of this, with financial support, that will prevent families from having to choose between childcare and putting food on the table.

We believe that everyone recognizes the importance of childcare. For children this means being in a safe, quality facility; for families this means knowing your child has a safe place to be; for businesses this means that your employees are available to work, not dividing their attention and/or time to care for their kiddos. In "normal" times, families make economic decisions regarding childcare and work schedules based on a long held expectation of traditional school days and after school programs. These are no longer "normal" times. The shifts in school schedules and the absence of after school activities have created an emergency for working parents that simply could not have been anticipated. This emergency impacts our entire community, as a significant portion of our workforce may no longer be available due to a lack of safe spaces for young children.

We are requesting that the Borough provide \$65,000 to fund childcare financial assistance through the end of the year. Petersburg's unemployment rate was at 13% in June (compared to the average June unemployment of roughly 8%) and Covid has hit businesses hard. Petersburg prides itself on the rugged and independent workforce, with many self-employed and LLC-type businesses supporting households; economic times are tough.

While this request is for financial assistance to ensure that our children have a safe and engaging environment to be in, this is also a request to help families that are already stretched thin financially and to keep business operating at full capacity.

Thank you for your consideration. Attached are the Appendices that detail the eligibility requirements as well as the application. We all look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

SHARE Coalition  
Stedman Partners in Education  
Petersburg Mental Health Services

## **Appendix A: Financial Assistance Process**

Families submit applications monthly to Petersburg Mental Health Services.

An estimated 20 children K-5 need childcare assistance. Average monthly fee = \$600

- K-5:  $\$600 \times 20 = \$12,000/\text{month} \times 4 \text{ months (Sept - Dec)} = \$48,000$
- Preschool:  $\$700 \times 5 = \$3,500/\text{month} \times 4 \text{ months (Sept - Dec)} = \$14,000$
- Administrative cost for PMHS staff time = \$3,000

**Total request: \$65,000**

**Beneficiary:** This assistance is for families with children enrolled in licensed care facilities following state supplied guidance for Covid-19 mitigation.

**Administration Details:** Assistance will be offered to enrolled children up to a rate of \$600/child for K-5 and \$700/child for preschool. The assistance will be paid directly to the licensed facility and the facility will credit the family account in the amount of assistance received. Assistance will be provided monthly, and as long as funds are available.

**Eligibility:** Eligible childcare providers will:

- be licensed by the state
- be following state guidelines in the Reopen Alaska Responsibly plan
- not currently be reimbursing parents for any Covid-19 related closures
- credit parent accounts in the amount received
- provide a copy of their W-9 and proof of payment to PMHS for financial recordkeeping

All families can apply for assistance by completing the application form available at licensed providers. Applications must be submitted by the 1st of the month. Current CARES Act funding must be spent by December 15th.

In the event of applications requesting more than the funding that is available, the amount requested will be decreased proportionately. In this manner, all who requested assistance will receive funding.

## Appendix B: Petersburg K-5 Childcare Assistance Application Example

Requests should be submitted monthly, as we understand that there are many moving pieces between school schedules, after school activities and need for childcare. Please complete and submit to PMHS by the 1st of each month.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Custodian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Childcare Facility Enrolled In: \_\_\_\_\_

Assistance requested (select one):

- ☐ \$100.00
- ☐ \$200.00
- ☐ \$300.00
- ☐ \$400.00
- ☐ \$500.00
- ☐ \$600.00

**FUNDS DISTRIBUTED UNDER THIS PROGRAM MAY ONLY BE DISTRIBUTED FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

How has your family been harmed by the COVID-19 Pandemic? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Work hour reductions, layoffs, furloughs or other actions directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic that reduced or limited work availability at your regular job
- ☐ Medical bills, mandatory quarantines, interrupted travel, or other unexpected expenses directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- ☐ Paying childcare as a result of the adjusted school schedule.
- ☐ Other (explain)