



## EMPLOYERS CEO ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024

More than three dozen attendees participated in Develop Iosco's Quad County Childcare Coalition Employers CEO Roundtable on Thursday, February 29, 2024. Employers who attended the event included Kalitta Air, Star Cutter, Tawas Tool, Minth, Oscoda Area Schools, Trillium Staffing, Huron Community Bank, Iosco County, Tawas Area Chamber of Commerce, Tawas Bay Insurance, TCA Insurance and Walmart.

Some of the reasons shared by employers on why they attended the event included their interest in finding creative solutions for their clients and employees; recognizing childcare has come up several times as a scheduling concern at their business; and they wanted to be knowledgeable in what assistance might be available for businesses struggling with recruitment and retention of employees that might be impacted by child care needs.

Employers learned about the state of childcare availability in Iosco County, where there is a current capacity for 202 children at licensed childcare providers compared to a need of 759 spots for aged birth to five years old. There are 18 licensed childcare businesses in the county, including 3 licensed childcare centers, 4 licensed family child care providers, and 11 licensed group home childcare providers.

Employers at the event confirmed that one of the biggest challenges to workforce recruitment and retention is the lack of available, quality childcare including the cost and the hours of operation. They reported that employees may miss work weekly, monthly and sometimes daily due to lack of childcare resources.

The event reviewed options for employers that included quick wins, internal and community investments. There was interest in obtaining additional information about creative cost-sharing models between employers, employees and either the State of Michigan or grant-making foundations. There was also interest in implementing dependent care savings accounts, which are similar to health savings accounts where employees are able to put aside dollars from their paychecks into a tax-free savings account to be solely used for childcare expenses. Across the state, some employers may contribute a percentage of the cost or match the amount that the employee designates into the dependent care account. In addition, finding backup care and reserving slots at convenient childcare businesses for their employees were also discussed.

DI launched a survey to ask employers what their commitment to a call to action would be. Responses are still being received through March 22. Go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RBTYQRR> to participate.

As previously reported, Develop Iosco (DI) was awarded a \$203,000 regional childcare planning grant from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) in March 2023. A four-county Regional Child Care Planning Coalition, the Quad County Childcare Coalition which includes Alcona, Arenac, Iosco and Ogemaw Counties, was formed at that time. Members of the Coalition have included parent and grandparent primary caregivers, Childcare Business Owners, Units of Government, Community Action Agencies, School Districts and Workforce Development Organizations.

The QCCC is one of sixteen (16) Regional Child Care Planning Grants across the State of Michigan provided by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC)'s Child Care Innovation Fund  
Purpose: ECIC's Child Care Innovation Fund collaborates with national, state, regional and community partners to design, pilot, and scale common-sense business, workforce, and financing solutions that expand equitable access to high quality, affordable child care for working families.