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The Nonprofit Workforce Shortage Crisis and Child Care

Survey data show that a major reason job applicants turn down work at charitable nonprofits is a lack of available and affordable child care. See the [nonprofit workforce shortages report](#). The [nonprofit community letter](#) to Congress explains that “as employers, and, in many cases, as child care providers, charitable nonprofits are deeply concerned that the lack of child care and equitable wages are impediments to all, noting that one expert told the Federal Reserve, “There is no recovery of the economy without child care.” Federal policy solutions identified in the letter include increased funding to expand access to high-quality child care. But with Congress mostly stuck in gridlock, nonprofit advocates are turning to the states for appropriate relief. North Carolina provides an example of such advocacy in action.

In advance of the legislative session this month, the advocacy group NC Child published [Three ways state legislators can get child care on track in North Carolina](#) based on a [shared set of policy priorities](#) of the early childhood education community. A key recommendation to state lawmakers is to make child care accessible by raising subsidy rates and establishing a statewide floor to “create greater equity between rural and urban areas.” Focusing on the early education workforce, the advocates call for expanding the state’s WAGE\$ program to improve

teacher recruitment and retention by supporting those pursuing degrees in early education. Noting the available federal relief funds (North Carolina will receive a second tranche of ARPA Funds this year), NC Child recommended targeting investments in child care that aim for long-term sustainability.

Lawmakers are responding with numerous child care bills introduced in the first days of the North Carolina legislative session this month. These bills include measures to expand the NC Pre-K program and increase child care subsidy rates ([H.B. 1074/S.887](#)); increase funding for subsidized child care ([H.B. 1117](#)); reduce the cost of co-payments for subsidized child care ([S.850](#)); extend funding for child care stabilization grants ([H.B. 1150](#)); and re-enact the state child care tax credit ([S.857](#), [H.B. 1074](#), and [S.887](#)). According to a review of the **North Carolina Center for Nonprofits**, many of the new child care bills introduced last week appear to be consistent with three priorities articulated by NC Child.

There's no guarantee that the North Carolina Legislature will approve all or any of these provisions, so it's essential that nonprofit advocates are making known their challenges and policy solutions.