

City of Fort Worth
Stop Six Early Learning Center
Recovery Plan

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
2025 Report

City of Fort Worth, Texas
Stop Six Early Learning
Center

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

The City of Fort Worth's Neighborhood Services Department has strategically deployed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) SLFRF funds to mitigate the pandemic's most severe economic impacts on vulnerable communities. From a competitive pool of proposals totaling \$31.4 million, the City selected seven high-priority housing and human-services projects.

One of these key investments is the Stop Six Early Learning Center, which received \$5 million in ARPA funding. This project will expand and modernize early-learning facilities in the historically underserved Stop Six neighborhood, increasing capacity for infants, toddlers, and three-year-old children from 82 to 106 unduplicated participants per year. By providing no-cost, high-quality childcare to low-income families, the renovation directly addresses affordability barriers, supports school readiness, and strengthens economic stability for working parents.

Key benefits include:

- **Expanded Capacity:** Addition of new classrooms and support spaces to serve 24 more young children annually.
- **Enhanced Facility Standards:** Upgraded safety, accessibility, and energy-efficiency features aligned with NAEYC and Texas Rising Star quality benchmarks.
- **Equity Focus:** Targeted outreach and enrollment for households at or below 80% of Area Median Income, ensuring that the deepest needs in this Choice Neighborhood are met.
- **Timeline:** Final design and permitting are underway, with construction set to begin in Q4 2025 and conclude in Q4 2026, paving the way for program launch in early 2027.

The Stop Six Early Learning Center exemplifies Fort Worth's commitment to using ARPA resources for sustainable, equity-driven recovery—providing critical support to families and laying the groundwork for long-term community resilience.

Uses of Funds

Expenditure Category: 2.11-Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care

The City's \$5 million ARPA allocation for the Stop Six Early Learning Center was authorized via M&C Communication 21-0814, recognizing the project's vital role in expanding access to quality childcare in a high-need community. Funding will reimburse Child Care Associates for hard and soft costs associated with:

- **Site Selection & Relocation:** Relocate the Center from the Stop Six Hub to a more accessible neighborhood site, per M&C 24-0476.
- **Design & Permitting:** Architectural services, environmental assessments, and permitting approvals.
- **Facility Construction & Expansion:** New eight-classroom building shell and utilities, sized for infants, toddlers, and three-year-olds.
- **Interior & Safety Upgrades:** ADA-compliant restrooms, secure entry systems, child-safe finishes, and energy-efficient HVAC, lighting, and fire-safety systems.

- Outdoor Learning Environment: Fenced playground, shade structures, and learning gardens.

All contract provisions include ARPA-mandated reporting, documentation, and compliance controls to ensure that expenditures directly support the project's public-purpose objectives and meet SLFRF guidelines.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes

The Stop Six Early Learning Center renovation is strategically designed to advance equity by expanding critical childcare services for families disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. By providing no-cost, high-quality early education to infants, toddlers, and three-year-olds, the project directly addresses barriers to safe, affordable care and fosters positive developmental outcomes in a historically underserved neighborhood.

Key Equity Impacts:

- Targeted Service for Low-Income Families: All 106 childcare slots are reserved for households at or below 80% of Area Median Income, ensuring priority access for those most in need.
- Enhanced Capacity: The addition of three new classrooms increases enrollment from 82 to 106 unduplicated children, reducing waitlists and childcare cost burdens.
- Inclusive Environment: Facility upgrades—such as ADA-compliant restrooms, child-safe finishes, and energy-efficient climate control—create a welcoming, accessible space for all children.
- Community Linkages: Collaboration with local social service agencies and Case Management ensures families can access wrap-around supports, including nutrition, health screenings, and parent education.

Neighborhood Demographics:

- Population: ~19,000 residents (4,000 families)
- Poverty: ~5,800 individuals and 1,074 families below the federal poverty line
- Housing: Median home values are well below the Fort Worth average
- Education: Over 30% of adults lack a high school diploma
- Race/Ethnicity: 63% Black; 33% Hispanic or Latino

By aligning service capacity with these demographic realities, the project not only improves everyday access to childcare but also contributes to broader community resilience—promoting school readiness, enabling workforce participation, and strengthening Stop Six's long-term vitality.

Community Engagement

The Stop Six Early Learning Center project integrates sustained, equity-focused outreach to ensure neighborhood voices guide every phase—from funding allocation through facility commissioning. Key strategies include:

- **Public Notice & Formal Comment:**
 - M&C Communication: Project approval announced via Mayor & Council bulletin, triggering a 30-day public comment period.
 - Notices: Published in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, the City Secretary’s website, and district mailers, detailing ARPA fund allocations and inviting feedback.
- **Written & Digital Feedback:**
 - ARPA Portal Survey: An online questionnaire solicited input on childcare needs, operating hours, and facility features.
 - Paper Comment Cards: Available at local hubs (Riverside Library, community centers) for those without internet access, ensuring broad participation.
- **Community Meetings & Workshops:**
 - Pre-Construction Workshop (Dec 2022): Hosted at the Stop Six Hub to review design options, classroom layouts, and play-area configurations.
 - Stakeholder Interviews: Conducted one-on-one discussions with neighborhood leaders, Early Head Start coordinators, and social service providers to refine program priorities.
- **Equity & Accessibility Measures:**
 - Bilingual Outreach: All materials and sessions offered in English and Spanish.
 - Accessible Scheduling: Meetings held during evenings and weekends to accommodate working families.
 - Support Services: On-site childcare stipends and interpretation services provided at in-person events to eliminate participation barriers.

By embedding these engagement activities into the project lifecycle, the City fosters transparency, builds community ownership, and ensures the renovated Early Learning Center meets the real-world needs of Stop Six families.

Labor Practices

Expenditure Category: 2.11-Healthy Childhood Environments: Child Care

To ensure the Stop Six Early Learning Center renovation delivers high-quality construction and supports local economic recovery, the following labor standards are incorporated, in alignment with ARPA SLFRF Section C(5):

- **Prevailing Wage Compliance:**
All contractors must pay wages at or above rates set by the Texas Prevailing Wage Act (Texas Government Code Chapter 2258) and the federal Davis–Bacon Act where applicable. Certified payroll records will be submitted and audited by the City to verify compliance.
- **Local Hiring Initiatives:**
Job openings for trades and support roles will be posted on Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County’s job board and the City of Fort Worth Careers Portal, prioritizing applicants who live in Tarrant County to foster regional economic benefits.
- **SMWBE Contracting Goals:**
At least 25% of ARPA-funded subcontracting dollars are targeted for certified Small, Minority-, and Women-Owned Business Enterprises. The City’s Supplier Diversity Office will track and publicly report participation against this goal each quarter.
- **Apprenticeships & Workforce Development:**
In partnership with Tarrant County College’s Construction Training Program, the project

will establish paid apprenticeship slots in carpentry, electrical, and HVAC trades to build local skill pipelines.

- **Ongoing Monitoring & Compliance:**

The City's Contract Compliance Unit will conduct monthly site inspections, payroll audits, and vendor performance reviews. Any discrepancies will trigger corrective action plans to ensure continued adherence to all wage and hiring requirements.

These measures guarantee that the Stop Six Early Learning Center renovation not only meets ARPA's stringent labor requirements but also generates meaningful employment and development opportunities for Fort Worth residents.

Use of Evidence

Evidence of improved childcare will be shown by tracking the increase in the number of children who have access to child care services that are both affordable and safe.

Evidence of affordable housing will be demonstrated by showing that housing assistance has enabled people to purchase homes where their housing costs are 30% or less of their household income.

Evidence of infrastructure development will be shown through the completion of planned housing phases and other infrastructure projects.

The evidence described will reflect the impact of projects funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). It is important to recognize the following:

- **Funding Status:** The ARPA funds have been allocated but not fully expended. This means that while funding has been set aside for the project, the actual spending and implementation are still in progress.
- **Partial Impact:** The projects funded through ARPA are just one part of a broader set of initiatives aimed at improving childcare, housing, and infrastructure. Therefore, the evidence collected will represent a portion of the overall impact rather than the complete picture.

Performance Report

The project is currently underway.

Project inventory

The project is currently underway.