

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 19, 2019

Clarence H. Carter
Director
Office of Community Services – Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Director Carter:

We write in support of the application submitted by Coastal Enterprises, Inc., (CEI) to the United States Department of Health and Human Services Community Economic Development Grant Program. If funded, CEI seeks to implement the Incubating Child Care Centers in Rural Maine project, an innovative five-year financing, social enterprise business development, and workforce initiative to provide capital and technical assistance to start-up child care businesses in Maine's economically distressed rural counties.

Most of the rural census tracts in Maine are classified as a child care desert, leaving parents with few or no options to work fulltime. Across Maine, only 36% of children under 5 years old are in paid child care and only 22% of 5- to 14-year olds are in paid after school care. In addition, the number of family-based child care businesses in Maine (the predominant offering in rural areas) has declined 28% from 2010 to 2016.

The Incubating Child Care Businesses in Rural Maine project will enable a minimum of 350 parents to work, while also producing 85 newly created jobs. At the same time, employees will receive training through a registered apprenticeship program that positions them for promotions and wage increases as they earn child care credentials.

CEI is a highly respected organization with a long track record of providing Maine communities and businesses the financial and technical support they need to grow. For more than 40 years, the organization has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to protecting and creating economic opportunities for Maine families, and we enthusiastically support its application for this grant.

Thank you for your time on behalf of CEI. We request your careful consideration of this application, subject to all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please notify [REDACTED], when a final decision has been made.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator