

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIO FILE:

NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

*LESSONS LEARNED: SUPPORTING FAMILY, FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR
CARE & FAMILY CHILD CARE IN WASHINGTON STATE*

JUNE 18, 2009

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT:

OPERATOR: I would now like to turn the conference over to Miss Helen Blank, Director of Leadership and Public Policy, National Women's Law Center. Please go ahead.

HELEN BLANK: Thank you so much. Thank all of you for joining us on our Conference Call Series. As many of you know we have been writing about FFN care as well as unionization, and we have found that as unions, especially SEIU and ASME, as well as AFT and Communication Workers of America and UAW, have begun to organize Family, Friend and Neighbor Care and Family Child Care. They have many important lessons in terms of strategies for working effectively and supporting these providers.

Today in Washington State we have two experts joining us. We have Nancy Ashley, who is not with SEIU but someone who has worked for very many years on FFN care. She is the Founder and Principal of Heliotrope, a consulting firm. She has worked for over 20 years in planning and policy work on strengthening children, youth, families and communities. She has worked with dozens of non-profits and government agencies, foundations and others, to develop solutions to a broad range of human services challenges in child care, early learning, out-of-school time care, and other important areas that affect children and families. She also brought her experience practicing law for nine years to her work.

Karen Hart is the Early Learning Division Director of SEIU Local 925 in Washington State, and she has spent most of her adult life as a community and labor organizer, except for a break where she taught middle and high school for 12 years in the Seattle Public Schools. And then she left the classroom and began working for SEIU as their Organizing Director and led the campaign to organize family child care providers. She has a lot of other wonderful interests outside her organizing work.

We're going to ask Karen and Nancy five questions that we think will help you understand their experiences and learn from their wonderful work. Karen, can you start off and talk about how SEIU has helped to make supporting FFN providers a bigger priority for this state, apart from the issues in your contract, as well as the subsidy issues that you worked on affecting both FFN and family child care providers?

KAREN HART: Sure. So when we first started organizing here in this state what we called the license exempt providers, I'll referred to that often so that's what I mean by FFN or they fit in that FFN category, those providers had not seen a subsidy increase – you're asking about the contract first?

HELEN BLANK: Yes, just talk some about the contract and also your issues apart from the contract.

KAREN HART: Okay. So in the first contract the license exempt providers had not seen any kind of a subsidy increase in this state for seven years and they were paid \$2.06 an hour and \$1.03 for a second, for a sibling, \$2.06 for a first child and \$1.03 for a sibling.

And they had no training, they had no – that was it, right (chuckling), that's what they had, and the state was really very clear with us that this group of providers, there are 6,000 in the state of Washington, they really did not want to encourage this kind of care. And what we said to the state was "well whether you want to encourage it or not, this is care that a lot of people want for their children and so we have to support it". And so in the first contract we won a 7 percent increase in the subsidy rate for that group and we were able to win an equalization of the rates, which lead us into the world of training.

And so in our first contract, we were able to win significant training money and in the second contract we've sustained that training money for this group of providers so that they can actually even get a bonus for becoming licensed, a \$250.00 bonus for becoming licensed, they can take up to \$200.00 worth of trainings and get that fully reimbursed by the state, and they can actually get a bonus for taking a certain number of hours of trainings to encourage them to do that. And those were the biggest provisions in the contract for that group of providers. You know we've really worked together with the advocate community to support this group outside the contract, so I can talk about that a little bit later if you like, but I would say that those were the big pieces of the contract.

HELEN BLANK: Okay. Nancy, can you briefly explain the Washington State business plan for FFN providers, the goals and objectives and their role for existing organizations in supporting FFN care that you wrote?

NANCY ASHLEY: Yes, and I wrote it with the help of a lot of people, some of whom are probably on the phone. The business plan is a result of four or five years of work initiated by a group of public and private funders in Washington based on a study showing how many children were in Family, Friend and Neighbor Care here. And certainly the awareness that SEIU has brought to this issue, and we have worked with them on a number of things, has been a positive thing in terms of people starting to understand where children are.

So we had small, little, strategic plans sort of year to year, and then through one of our funders here we had an opportunity to submit a proposal to the Kresge Foundation, just as it was starting to not only just do capital funding but looking at system change, and they asked us for a business plan and we all gulped and said, "Okay, you want it, we will do it." So what we did is follow the format for a more traditional business-type business plan.

The document itself is about 120 pages with appendices. And so we talked about the need, how many children are in this care, why parents need and want this care. The opportunities to tap into these caregivers are an incredible resource for advancing quality early learning. We did a situational analysis of the field, what's out there, what isn't out there, what parts of field building are being done and need to be done. We talked about our philosophy for approaching Family, Friend and Neighbor Care in Washington State, which is basically very, very focused on family support principles and cultural appropriateness and inclusiveness. We had a 3-year plan in there based on all the expert guidance and research we could find saying, "based on these state of knowledge and where we are this is our 3-year plan".

We had a financing plan in there about what our strategy was to take the work that had started in the Seattle, King County area statewide and how we would take it to scale and sustain it, and then a chapter on research, evaluation and dissemination. We talked about our outcomes achieved to-date, who was going to drive this work, and we had detailed goals, objectives and outcomes for three years.

We asked Kresge for \$1.8 million over three years, we received \$900,000 over three years. But without that funding right now, and I know we would not have gotten it without the business plan, we would really have terrible difficulties, probably like others, because of our state budget, but we do still have the Kresge funding.

And the business plan has been a wonderful tool to work with policy makers because, again, as many of you know, this is an area that seems very fuzzy to a lot of people, they don't take it seriously, even if they understand it they don't know what to do. So it's been a

great tool for other funders, for policy makers, and we're able to continue to use it as a guide, although our pace might be slowed down (chuckling) temporarily until the economy recovers a little bit.

HELEN BLANK: Can people get that plan from you?

NANCY ASHLEY: I knew you were going to ask that. I am not sure which website it is on. It may be on United Way of America, it may be on the National Alliance. I will get that to you Helen so you can send it out to people.

HELEN BLANK: Okay, thank you. Karen?

HELEN BLANK: Can you talk about the interesting provisions in your contract concerning training, there are two funds, and what's happened to implement them and what you've learned about training issues and the kinds of incentives for training from your experience to-date?

KAREN HART: We have two pools of money for training. One was a pool of money that we negotiated at the bargaining table that included money for tuition reimbursement and for if you got licensed you would get a bonus. And there is also paid subsidy training, so license exempt providers are paid four hours of whatever they would've been paid to attend a subsidy training to learn more about how to maneuver through the subsidy system in this state.

In the first contract there was \$300,000.00 in the fund; in the second contract it's gone down a bit because of the usage, and the first shifted money to another place in the second contract.

The second part – and I would say the lesson that we've learned from that pool of money was that it's really hard for this group of providers to upfront money for tuition or for costs of training. And so because it's a reimbursement they have to have the money and pay for their classes upfront, it's not that user friendly for them and so that's why that part of the contract's been under spent. As of May we had I think something like 130 or so providers actually became licensed, you know in this group they chose to do that, which was we didn't know if anyone would want to do that, but anyway that was just so you know, and then not that many have actually taken up the tuition reimbursement.

But the second training fund that we created as part of the first contract came from a vote of the membership. When we were able to equalize the sibling rate so that all children were paid at the same rate per hour for the FFN care, we asked the providers, "If you could reduce that sibling rate a little bit", and by little I mean three cents an hour so it's about a three cent difference between what you get paid for the first child and what you get paid for the second, "if we could reduce that by three cents or so and create a training pool out of that money, would you be for that, would you like that? You know that would give you bonuses for taking training."

And the state agreed to it, they thought it was good, it was a good experiment to see if this would get this group into training, and the members liked it and they voted overwhelmingly to do that. And so we created this \$600.00 bonus program, where if a provider took ten hours of child care related classes that are Department of Early Learning approved, that they could then be eligible to receive a \$600.00 bonus per contract year.

And we've so far, I think by the end of this first contract year, which will end at the end of June, I think we'll probably have close to 800 license exempt providers who have about 800 bonuses that have been paid out, which we think is pretty good given that this is a group of people who hadn't really ever had anything like this before, you know we can grow it, we know we can, and so that bonus program has been a really huge thing.

It was late to get started but it's really taken off.

And I guess what we've learned from all of this, and I should also mention that the union took the position that we would coordinate with our licensed providers and teach them to be the trainers so that it connected our licensed community with the Family, Friend and Neighbor community, and so that was the approach that the union took to it. And what's been most amazing and the lesson we've really learned from this that we just didn't know we would learn, is that the licensed providers have hugely loved doing this kind of child care related training for this group of people. They feel great about it, and it's actually probably improving their own child care. When you teach something you often become better at it, and it's also really working to de-isolate the Family, Friend and Neighbor providers so that now they have people they can call if they have questions in their own communities. So it's been an amazing experience.

Outreach to this group is not easy, as everybody on the call that works with this group knows. But we've door knocked, we've mailed flyers, we've done calls, we've had all of our trainers, before they have a training session. They make calls to anybody who's registered to remind them of a training coming up. There's a lot of intense work that we're doing that's member to member to really build this program.

HELEN BLANK: It's impressive. Another program that involves outreach that has many benefits both for FFN and family child care providers, is the Child and Adult Care Food Program that is scheduled to be reauthorized this year. I'm going to ask you both to talk about that. Nancy, can you talk about the report you recently did on Hunger in Washington State and its connection to CACFP? And then, Karen, can you follow-up with the challenges that you faced in getting FFN providers involved in CACFP?

NANCY ASHLEY: Yes. One of the wonderful benefits of being a consultant in different fields is I can carry over ideas and knowledge from one to the other. So our consulting firm was asked by United Way of King County to help them quickly put together a comprehensive plan to reduce hunger, both directed at short-term, intense needs because of the recession, as well as a longer term plan. Our Children's Alliance here had done a plan to reduce hunger for children a few years ago and so one of our instructions was to build on existing plans.

So in the hunger plan we were looking for what are other sources, other than more pounds of food delivered to food banks, to get food to children, youth and families. So I was very aware of the Child and Adult Care Food Program and it was included, finding more providers, including FFN providers, was included as one of 12 strategies. And in doing the work and finding out about it I talked to the City of Seattle, who is a sponsor for licensed providers, and found out they are supporting a few FFN providers, like maybe a dozen of them, in learning how to deal with the paperwork and the requirements. But they do not do any outreach, but they've been able to work with informal providers, and once they get used to it they are finding it helpful and important. So this plan has gone to a lot of different funders.

Another strategy related to summer meals for children received a grant from a group of funders, who then have contracted with schools at Washington. They're going to do an outreach project for summer meals but they're also going to include after school programs in that. So I think we have another angle here to come at these food programs that help providers and clearly help children get more food.

And one of the sad parts of the recessions is people are a lot more alert about how to take advantage of resources that are out there. So I am hoping perhaps someone will pick up this strategy, a private funder or United Way or somebody, the City of Seattle, and see if they can't do some work, and obviously SEIU is listed as somebody that would have to be a part of reaching FFN providers. So I think another door, another lens for people to look at what it takes to serve and feed kids and how we can support the caregivers that are doing it.

HELEN BLANK: That's great. And I know that, Karen, can you address some of the challenges? We worked with many states to get FFN providers enrolled in CACFP as long as they were getting chapter block grant funds, and I know it's been challenging, can you talk about that a little bit?

KAREN HART: Like everything you know we need to figure out the systems that will really support this. If I've learned anything in the last two years it's that we really need more kind of systems that are effecting to get this kind of stuff out. But you know Nancy is really right when she says "there's a lot of struggle out there to figure out how to do this." Some of our challenges, and I should just say kind of what we've tried to do, so we got this written into the contract, the union contract, that exempt providers would have access to the food program. And then the state did some, the people who administer the food program to the agencies in this state out of our Superintendent of Public Instruction Office, they found which agencies would be interested in participating and that would be interested in doing the outreach to this FFN group.

And so we have a brochure and they had brochures. We also get a list every month from the state of those providers who care for children in the provider's home that receive subsidies. Because we would have no way of knowing that otherwise and those are the only providers that are eligible in the FFN group that can receive CACFP. And so we get that list, it's usually around 2,000 people, and then we forward that to the food agencies that have said that they are interested in doing this outreach.

The problem is that they don't have adequate staffing to really go out there then and take those lists and do something with them. They get them and what happens is then when someone comes to them they check the list to know you're on it, okay, great, and then they go out and do the visit. But in terms of their outreach, it's very difficult for them because of their staffing levels and resources that they have to take on this whole outreach to this whole new group. And so we're starting to realize that we have to be much more involved in this if providers are really going to see the benefits for their kids in the food program.

And so like, for example, right now we have a door-to-door outreach program going on and we have the food program flyers with us. And anybody that is eligible, you know that we ask them "do you care for kids in your home?" and they say "yes" or "no" and then, of course, that the kids don't live there, then we say "do you know you're eligible to apply for this if you're interested?" And so we're starting to do that on a one-to-one, you know door knocking basis, at least just for the next six weeks out there to see can we generate maybe some more interest, in that most people don't even know.

When I've attended orientations on when this group is getting oriented on the subsidy system and I said, "Did you know you're eligible for this?" Most people had no idea, and so nor really should they. I mean it's not like you can know everything really.

But anyway, so it's been very slow going. And I think that the paperwork required, I don't know how onerous that is for this group, it's not something they're used to doing and so that may be a bit of a barrier. In addition, I just think the USDA, the food guidelines sometimes are a bit restrictive for multicultural, different cultures that have different meal patterns, frankly, and we sort of have questions about how it fits in certain communities, and so these are all the challenges that I can think of right now.

HELEN BLANK: See that's helpful. And as we wrap up, Karen, why don't you start. Quickly, what do you see as the issues in Washington about what is next for both SEIU and the FFN and family child care community?

KAREN HART: Well I think we will continue to work on the rates so that people can really provide quality care in their homes. And health insurance is something that we're working very hard on at the national level, as well as in this state, to try to see for people who take care of children, can they also take care of themselves with health care.

But in overall I'd say we're constantly reminded that these providers, and our licensed providers as well, but particularly these providers are incredibly isolated and we're really committed to working to connect them to the resources that are out there for them. We want to break that isolation and really help to grow the resources and link them to it and to each other, so.

HELEN BLANK: That's good. Nancy what do you see as issues from your vantage point in terms of FFN care?

NANCY ASHLEY: Well I would say the biggest umbrella one is there's still a lot of energy around early learning in our state. We have a new director, we have a new really very successful Early Learning Action Alliance Advocacy Group, there's going to be a statewide early learning plan developed. Thrive by Five, our public/private partnership, is working on its focus. There's a group of communication people that work in early learning that are going to launch some type of shared message campaign. [0:28:09.5]

And the problem is we have lost capacity among the people who were the rabble rousers that showed up at all of these meetings to say "what about FFN care providers?" and to represent those interests. So it's a little scary to me that some momentum we had built up, if we can't keep people at the table and keep the issue on the table, the early learning train is just going to keep moving. We have new allies, people are way, way more aware than they were, but we just don't have the individuals that can participate at the level we could before.

In King County, Child Care Resources is moving toward trying to take the Play and Learn Groups to a deeper level of evaluation. They're going to be testing the possibility of can or should we measure child outcomes, which has been a big discussion for a long time. And then clearly state funding, we have lost almost all of the funding, maybe all of it, for Family, Friend and Neighbor support that we had for two years. So it's just going to be a struggle to stay on the map I think.

HELEN BLANK: Well, Karen, your work is cut out for you.

KAREN HART: Yeah. We actually wrote in the Play and Learn experiences in our contract for this bonus program. So we're hoping that we can better link with the R&R's where there are Play and Learn activities so that we can get that to be more part of the system, that providers can actually get reimbursed and stuff, so we'll see.

MISS HELEN BLANK: Great. Christy, I think we're ready to take questions.

OPERATOR: The first question comes from the line of Rebecca Whitaker with SEIU Local.

REBECCA WHITAKER: Hi, this is Rebecca Whitaker from SEIU Local 503, and I work with the license exempt child care providers that we represent here in Oregon. And I just wanted to say that all of the questions and answers have been really helpful.

We are, right now, as even today, bargaining with the state over our contract, and one of the questions I had was around the training. We also bargained a training fund for license exempt providers. However, we are facing a challenge of being told that the remaining money in the training fund can't be rolled over past June 30 into the next contract. And I was wondering if 925 faced any of that difficulty or if you guys were able to roll over money or if you bargained a completely separate training fund?

KAREN HART: Yeah, our, my understanding is that it cannot be rolled over here either.

REBECCA WHITAKER: Okay. Thank you and that's all.

OPERATOR: Your next question comes from the line of Nikita Barrow with United Way.

NIKITA BARROW: Hi, this is Nikita Barrow of United Way of Parnell County. I'm the Success by Six coordinator and we're currently working on a proposal for FFN providers. And I'd like to know if I can get a copy of the contract, and I didn't get your name, that includes that Play and Learn experience and some other details that we would like to look into and maybe implement in our county.

KAREN HART: If you want to look at the SEIU 925 Contract, you can look at it on our website. I think you can even download it if you go to www.seiu925.org. I think that's what it is, and go to the Early

Learning page. And then if you go to the Early Learning page you'll see a section for contracts where you can look at it and/or download it. The new contract is not up yet, because it goes into effect July 1, but this would have that in it.

NIKITA BARROW: Thank you. And also one more question. Have any of you found a curriculum that you like to use to implement into the FFN provider centers, any particular curriculum that you would suggest?

NANCY ASHLEY: Nikita this is Nancy. Also, if you want more information about Play and Learn Groups that my answer is going to be the same to both of your questions.

NIKITA BARROW: Oh, great, okay.

NANCY ASHLEY: Child Care Resources, which is the child care resource and referral agency in Seattle, has been really the lead agency on all of this. So they have about 60 or 70 Play and Learn Groups up and running and supported in King County. They were not able to find curriculum that they thought was appropriate and helpful. California had done a curriculum for FFN providers but it was not working for the very, very diverse Play and Learn Groups that are in our community, so the staff at Child Care Resources are developing their own curriculum and they're developing, How to Start and Support a Play and Learn Group. And unfortunately, I am not at my desk so I do not have their website, but I will also send that information to Helen for her to send out, and they can connect you and talk with you and let you know what they might have that would help you.

NIKITA BARROW: Well thank you very much.

OPERATOR: Your next question comes from the line of Abby Cohen with NCCIC.

ABBY COHEN: Hi, this is Abby Cohen and I had a question which is, it's my understanding from listening to you that the work you're doing around the food program is limited to those folks who are on subsidies since those are the people you know how to reach, I'm curious to know if there is any effort by any group to reach the exempt providers who might be out there who have not yet been connected to the subsidy system who might, in fact, be caring for kids who would be eligible, both for the subsidy as well as for the food program?

HELEN BLANK: Don't they have to be in CCDBG if they're exempt to participate in the food program?

ABBY COHEN: Right, but what I'm saying is there are many people who are relatives caring for their grandchildren who, in fact, are eligible for CCDBG but their parents might not be accessing it.

ABBY COHEN: So it's sort of like outreach to those who haven't yet, you know they're not only not in the food program because they're not on CCDBG but could be on CCDBG, and I'm just sort of wondering, you know SEIU has connections obviously with those people who are the FFN caregivers receiving subsidies but are they working at all with anyone to publicize what's now really available in a much more significant way to those who might not even yet be connected to CCDF?

KARA HART: I got it. Well I'm probably going to have to turn this over to Nancy. But I would just say from the SEIU perspective on this, we currently don't have any way of – we don't have any kind of lists or any kind of knowledge of how we would do that.

ABBY COHEN: I'm thinking more like a public awareness campaign that is broader, you know just in the same way you reach parents; it's public information as opposed to lists.

NANCY ASHLEY: Yeah, and Abby this is Nancy. The only access that the folks that I've worked with here would have to do that, and I don't think it's been at the top of the list to do but it could be at some point, is through the Play and Learn Groups. So there are several hundred FFN caregivers now coming regularly to Play and Learn Groups.

ABBY COHEN: Okay.

NANCY ASHLEY: And we think the only way you could get that kind of information out is person-to-person through someone they know and trust and who could then potentially lead them through the steps to get there. The fact that Child Care Resources is the coordinator of all of this certainly helps because they know how to refer people to the subsidy program, but we have Play and Learn Groups happening in like 14 or 15 languages and so the more public awareness that might reach a middle swath of parents is probably not going to go very far for reaching this population.

KAREN HART: Yeah, I agree with Nancy and I do think that the Play and Learn Groups are a great way to start, and I know they're already doing it. I mean I know they're already really connecting people to resources.

ABBY COHEN: Yeah. The one other comment that I have is that my experience with all these Family, Friends and Neighbor caregivers is I always say exempt care is not exempt care, it's not exempt care. You need to know your own population and how to reach them, and whether it's differences in ethnic communities or whether it's differences in ages or whatever it might be, you really need to know that group of people you're trying

to reach and it does vary from locale to locale, from state to state, who that group is and that affects how you do outreach and it affects what curriculum you might choose, all of those things are very local.

KAREN HART: That's right.

OPERATOR: Your next question comes from the line of Bonnie Caldwell with Child Care Providers.

BONNIE CALDWELL: Hello everyone. I have a question. I'm calling from Pennsylvania and we are currently negotiating our contracts here with the state, but I have a question. Looking to expand the food program to relative neighbor providers, we currently don't offer that to them in Pennsylvania, but what we've been told by the state is that they would like to do it but there is a hiring freeze and so, therefore, they can't hire anyone, even though it will not cost the state any money. Has anyone else heard this or did you hear this when you began the program?

NANCY ASHLEY: Our state was very hesitant to expand it as well. They thought that it was – I mean we had to go to the Food Action Network and try to get some help with it. Once we could show them you can expand the program, then the question was you know it's the agencies that actually administer it in Washington, and so it didn't mean that there had to be any new staff hired because the staff that were already administering it for the licensed group, right, and for whoever else is eligible, but for the licensed child care group they just added that to it. So in Washington it didn't generate more staff at the state level because the agencies that contract with the state, they are the ones that do the work, you know I mean that you know what I mean that do this.

BONNIE CALDWELL: Yeah. It's basically the same here except for the state is telling us that they're already short six staff at their office and they can't hire anyone else, therefore, taking more on would be – you know they're just, that's what they're telling us. I just wondered if anyone else had heard that in any other state, because we are pushing for that here, especially since it wouldn't cost the state anymore money. But, thank you, that was the question I had. Thank you very much.

HELEN BLANK: This is an important issue because it actually provides monitoring and support to FFN caregivers, and it helps the state because it gives them visits they ordinarily wouldn't get. You don't get tons of providers at first so maybe it's worth saying it won't overload them to get it going.

NANCY ASHLEY: From the organizing perspective in my soul, I mean we had to organize to win this. The state was not ready for this and we had to be in mediation before we could get them to agree to this. So this was something we just kept at because it's a great, it's something the state should be doing and we just weren't going to let it go, so.

OPERATOR: Your next question comes from the line of Sherry Gruber with New York City Children Service.

SHERRY GRUBER: Good afternoon. In New York City we have some wonderful Family, Friends and Neighbor providers. And I was wondering if in Washington State if there has been, if you conduct any background checks or given consideration to doing so? Because one of our challenges in New York City has been to ensure that this doesn't become an employment program for those who aren't eligible for positions due to their criminal history and to ensure the quality and safety of the child care.

KAREN HART: They are required in Washington State to undergo a background check. If they're in the subsidy system it's a requirement.

SHERRY GRUBER: And what type of background, like do you fingerprint them?

KAREN HEART: ... I'm – I don't know. I don't know if they're fingerprinted. I don't know.

SHERRY GRUBER: That's okay.

KAREN HART: But I do know the Department of Early Learning conducts a background check and they must clear it you know, so.

HELEN BLANK: Do you know Nancy?

NANCY ASHLEY: I don't know. I'm suspecting they don't fingerprint because I'm under the impression that the provider can fill out the paperwork. You know I've never heard of people having to make an in-person visit or I don't have transportation to the police station to get fingerprinted or whatever, but no one should take that as anything more than a guess on my part.

KAREN HART: M-hmm, I think that's right.

SHERRY GRUBER: Okay, thank you.

HELEN BLANK: I guess I have a question on the subsidy system for Karen. Because I think one of the things you all do is help providers get through the subsidy system.

HELEN BLANK: Can you talk about what you've done to work on that side to make the subsidy system more accessible for providers?

KAREN HART: So we have various kind of standing committees, or not so standing committees, that we've established with the state. We have a Payment Committee that meets quarterly to discuss if there are providers who are having payment problems, slow payments or inaccurate payments or underpayments or whatever. We have a Labor Management Committee that if we can't resolve issues at those other levels then we can take it to that group to discuss payment problems. When there are WAC revisions, that's what we call our regulations out here the Washington Administrative Codes, then we weigh in on the subsidy WACs and how they're being proposed to be changed.

We actually this year, for this contract, due to the budget cuts and the deficits here, we forfeited our subsidy increases that we won in bargaining last year, we forfeited those in the new contract is so the stimulus money could go toward keeping the parent co-payments stable, so that the co-payments would not rise for the parents because that's a big issue for all of our providers is how those parent co-payments, you know either keep people out of the subsidy system or you know the providers don't actually get them.

The subsidy trainings have really helped, in particular with regard to special needs. This group of providers does a lot of special needs care. And so making sure that they know that there are additional subsidies that they can ask for and receive if they provide care to special needs kids and they have things that they have to do with them. So we really are trying to help them navigate and make sure that they're able to get what they need to do the care that they want, you know that they need to do. Those are just some of the ways that we weigh in on subsidy issues.

HELEN BLANK: I have one last question and I think you've talked about it some. Your number of 800 bonuses is sort of extraordinary for the hours of training. Was there any, you know what was the special formula you all used?

KAREN HART: We just do an incredible amount of phoning and mailing. And what we realized was we had to start in the most dense areas. We looked at our biggest areas of density, as we rolled this program out. Then we put together workshops in those areas, and then sent out information, targeted to providers who lived close to where those trainings and workshops were going to be, and then we built it from there. So I think thinking about it as, well let's start where we have the most density and grow it out, is where we had our best success, rather than just trying to do it all over the state because we couldn't have managed that. We picked five

areas with the most density, and then we started to build it. We also got a group of licensed providers together who wanted to spearhead building this.

HELEN BLANK: Great. Well it was terrific having two such experienced advocates working with FFN providers on this call today. Washington State has been doing impressive FFN initiatives for a very long time and I think the training that SEIU has offered and the response indicates how, when you build it they'll come. We will have a transcript and an audio of this conference call on our website, www.nwlc.org, and we will let people on the conference call know how they can get Nancy's report, the business plan and we'll e-mail that out to you.

OPERATOR: You have an audio question, would you like to take it?

HELEN BLANK: We'll take one, all right, a quick question.

OPERATOR: Tara Cole with Child Care Resource.

TARA COLE: Hi, thank you. I'm sorry for the delay, but when you were speaking on subsidy it did bring another question. I think it's wonderful hearing about the support on the subsidy that you do for the FFN. The vague question, vague misunderstanding that I have is, do you have FFN providers that are strictly caring for non-subsidized children? And if so, are there supports available for those providers as well? Thank you very much for your response. For Nancy,

NANCY ASHLEY: This is Nancy. There are tons and tons and tons.

NANCY ASHLEY: Right now the Play and Learns have been the groups, it's been the primary way of reaching those caregivers. There are other methods starting in other places, Thrive by Five has some work going on over in Yakima in eastern Washington and White Center south of Seattle, where they're trying to reach all households. So as they can be found and reached and there are resources, you know things like Play and Learn Groups or attending other types of training or whatever, where any FFN provider has been encouraged to participate. There isn't a bonus as a carrot to keep them there or encourage them to come but they are certainly welcomed.

HELEN BLANK: Okay. Thank you everybody. Have a good summer and stay in touch, check the website.

HELEN BLANK: Thank you so much Karen and Nancy for your great work and sharing. Thank you.

NANCY ASHLEY: Yes, thank you.

KAREN HART: Thank you very much.

END TRANSCRIPT