

A photograph of a family walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk in a park. The father, wearing a grey sweater and blue jeans, is on the right. The mother, wearing a light-colored sweater and blue jeans, is in the middle. A young child in a brown jacket and blue jeans is walking between them. Another child in a pink hat and light-colored pants is further ahead. The path is surrounded by trees and greenery.

# **Child And Family Well-Being Task Force**

## **Healthy Children's Fund Report Card 2025**

## Land Acknowledgement

We would like to begin this report by acknowledging that we work on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and the Semiahmoo.

May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future—future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county.

This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices and leadership of the first people of this land.

## Task Force Membership

**Vesla Tonnessen**, Task Force Co-Chair

**Colton Kaltenfeldt**, Task Force Co-Chair

**Sallye Quinn**, Task Force Co-Chair

**Tilda Doughty**, Task Force Co-Chair

**Jason Oldham**, Generations Forward

**Christina Jackson**, Generations Forward

**Karla Anderson**, Whatcom Early Learning Alliance

**Beverly Porter**, Whatcom Taking Action

**Kristi Dominguez**, Ferndale School District Superintendent

**Allison Williams**, Whatcom County Health Department

**Jon Scanlon**, Whatcom County Council

**Kayla Schott-Bresler**, Whatcom County Executive Representative

**Samya Lutz**, City of Bellingham

**Gregory Hansen**, Small Cities Partnership

**Sativa Robertson**, Nooksack Tribe

**Sterling Chick**, Public Health Advisory Board

**Ray Deck III**, Community Member

**Jamie Desmul**, Community Member

**Jennifer Wright**, Community Member

**Anne Granberg**, Community Member

**Allison Bishop**, Community Member

**Monika Mahal**, Community Member

**Katherine Orlowski**, Community Member

**Pamela Jons**, Community Member

**Samantha Cruz-Mendoza**, Community Member

**Megan Juenemann**, Community Member

**Lyn Salazar**, Community Member

**Susan Marks**, Community Member

**Lynn Schreiber**, Community Member

**Jessica Goette**, Community Member

## Introduction

Section 5.2 of Proposition 5 The Healthy Children's Fund<sup>1</sup> (HCF) calls upon the Child & Family Well-Being Task Force (task force) with the support of the fund administrator to: "write and deliver an annual report to the public and the County Council. This shall include progress made towards agreed upon goals, outcomes, and metrics."

## Considerable Progress

Our first HCF Report Card<sup>2</sup>, produced in May 2024, included four specific recommendations for the County Council. They were:

- 1.) Call on Whatcom County Health & Community Services (WCHCS) to present to the Council and task force jointly regarding WCHCS infrastructure/capacity needed to deploy HCF.
- 2.) Call on the Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney Office's Civil Division to present to the Council and the task force jointly regarding the Gift of Public Funds Doctrine and its relevance to the HCF.
- 3.) Call on the Whatcom County Executive's Office to develop a 'Schoolhouse Rock style' explanation of how an HCF strategy becomes an RFP/contract.
- 4.) As a last resort, if the WCHCS and the rest of the county administration proves unable to effectively deploy the HCF with reasonable efficiency, consider exercising Section 4.1 of Proposition 5 which allows you "to create a new department or entity that is a more appropriate fund administrator."

These interventions were recommended in light of what was, in the view of the task force, a sluggish early start to the HCF with the administration missing the deadlines it set for itself on all but one of ten "mutually agreed upon goals" in the initial implementation plan.

Since that time, considerable progress has been made in transparency regarding the contract development process, and in development and release of meaningful funding opportunities. New challenges have emerged and some roadblocks remain, but the rate of HCF deployment has notably improved in the nine months since our last report. The task force is hopeful that if this rate of change continues, the taxpayers of Whatcom County will soon enjoy the benefits of a dedicated local fund as outlined in Proposition 5 and described to them during the campaign for its passage. In this report, the task force will describe the ways in which HCF implementation has improved, point out where roadblocks remain intractable, and describe the emergence of new challenges. Finally, we have a new set of recommendations for both the Council and County Administration.

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<sup>1</sup> [Ordinance 2022-045](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Child & Family Well-Being Task Force May 2024 Report Card on the Healthy Children's Fund](#)

## Contract Development

The original implementation plan included 19 strategies, 10 of which were identified for implementation in the first two years. Of those, six were noted as having a higher degree of readiness and thus described as "initial strategies."

When the task force prepared our first Report Card in May 2024 — 14 months after County Council adopted the implementation plan — just four funding opportunities had been published and only two of those aligned with the initial strategies—#8: *Prevention of family homelessness*, and #9: *Early parenting supports*. In the nine months since, four additional funding opportunities have been published resulting in 14 fully executed service provider contracts with six additional contracts presently in the development queue. That kind of acceleration was precisely what the task force was hoping to witness. We are grateful to the WCHCS staff — particularly Sarah Simpson, Allyson Halverson, and Allison Williams — for their work to make it happen.

We are pleased to report a significant improvement in transparency regarding the process of transforming strategies into funding opportunities and, ultimately, service contracts. For the benefit of the Council and the public at large, we have detailed the four stages of this process.

**RFP Development:** In this first stage, a strategy identified in the implementation plan — often originating from previous community initiatives such as Healthy Whatcom, Generations Forward, the Childcare Coalition, or recommendations from the task force (e.g., Childcare Subsidies) — is translated into a Request for Proposals (RFP). Most of this work is carried out by WCHCS, with input from the Civil Division and the Finance Department as needed.

The timeline for this stage of the process is the most variable, as the amount of work required to develop an RFP depends on factors such as contract size and strategy complexity. For example, the Doula Services RFP (strategy #9) was completed in less than a month due to extensive preparatory work conducted before HCF was adopted. In contrast, Childcare Subsidies (strategy #3) has taken nearly a year to finalize despite widespread support. This is also the part of the process that the task force has the least visibility into.

**Proposal Review:** After an RFP is posted, responses are accepted for a predetermined period of time. The received proposals are then evaluated by an ad hoc committee of reviewers against a rubric which is typically published as part of the RFP. Once fund recipients are chosen, award letters are issued to the apparently successful bidders. Average duration for proposal review across 14 HCF contracts for which data is available to date has been 45 days. Successful bidders have shared several points of friction regarding this process with the task force such as:

- Difficulty locating HCF funding opportunities due to opportunities being listed on the County's website in a miscellaneous category titled "Services and/or Consultants other than Architectural/Engineering";

- Response materials must be printed on paper, sealed in a manila envelope, and delivered to the county in-person;
- To access the RFP information, prospective bidders must identify the nature of their interest in the project. But of the list of options—Prime, Electrician, HVAC, Plumbing, or Rebar Installation—none are relevant to most HCF bidders. This creates confusion and often leads first-time bidders to believe they are filling out the wrong form.

*Figure 1 - Whatcom County RFP Portal*

This form is used to populate the Whatcom County Purchasing office's Plan Holders List. Please complete all required information accurately.

Email Address\*

Company Name\*

Primary Contact Name\*

Phone Number\*

Please use the following format for US and Canadian phone numbers: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Mailing Address\*

Plan Center, Prime, Subcontractor, Supplier? (Optional)  
 Please indicate if you are a plan center, prime- or sub-contractor, or supplier. This will be noted on the Plan Holders List. If you indicate "Other Sub-contractor" or "Supplier", please also note the field of work that you offer, as that information will be listed on the published Plan Holders List.

If you are not a bidder or supplier, please indicate such by marking "Info only; Non-bidder, non-supplier".

Note that more than one option may be indicated.

☐ Plan Center  
☐ Prime  
☐ Electrical  
☐ HVAC  
☐ Plumbing  
☐ Rebar Installation  
☐ Structural Steel Installation  
☐ \*Other Subcontractor (Please note field in Comments section below.)  
☐ \*Supplier (Please note field in Comments)  
☐ Info only; Non-bidder, non-supplier

Comments

Bidder Responsibility for Addenda\*

By clicking "I agree" box, bidder agrees and acknowledges that the bidder is responsible for checking for addenda, and completing and attaching each addenda acknowledgement, if applicable, to the bid response submitted.

☐ I agree

**Contract Negotiations:** After an award letter is sent to successful bidders, the County and the bidder negotiate the specifics of the contract. Since both the Civil Division and the Finance Department were consulted during the initial development of the RFP, a first draft of the contract should be ready on or before the date of award letter issuance; however due to capacity challenges in administrative services this has not always been the case.

A few successful bidders who went on to become contracted service providers have shared their experience during this stage with the task force. Some noted that contract requirements revealed during this stage were a surprise. More than one described instances where the



County edited or inserted new contract language after all parties had agreed to a previous version of the contract.

Average duration for contract negotiations across 14 HCF contracts for which data is available to date has been 29 days with the fastest reaching agreement in just two days and the longest requiring 58 days. This duration is calculated using the date on award letters.

**Final Approvals:** Once successful bidders and the WCHCS have agreed to contract terms, the final contract language is reviewed by WCHCS leadership, the Executive's Office, the Civil Division, and the Finance Department. Since all of these groups have had opportunities to shape strategy selection, RFP development, and the original contract draft, this step should be *pro forma* and happen quickly. However, on average, HCF contracts require 35 days to receive these final approvals. For contracts exceeding \$40,000, the final step—after obtaining all necessary administrative approvals—is securing approval from County Council before execution. However, the Council's meeting schedule and docket constraints can represent additional delays, even for contracts that are otherwise ready to proceed.

After hearing from a number of successful bidders about the difficulties they faced in navigating this process, the task force requested that WCHCS better inform bidders about the true length and complexity of this process. In response, WCHCS developed an explanatory handout that definitely rocks the schoolhouse and has begun sharing it with bidders<sup>3</sup>. The final page of this document includes a template providing contractors with target dates for each process milestone specific to the contract in question. This is precisely the kind of process transparency the task force requested in its May 2024 HCF Report Card and we are thrilled to see it implemented.

In summary, seven contracts have moved from award letter to executed contract within 90 days—the success benchmark established in the Council's resolution about contract timeliness—while six have exceeded that timeliness target with three contracts scheduled for the council docket on 2.25.25 and five scheduled for the council docket on 3.11.25.

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<sup>3</sup> See Attachment A ([Whatcom County Contracting Process](#))

**Figure 2 - HCF Contracts With Approval Times**

- Red indicates contracts that exceeded 90 days from award letter to contract execution.
- Green indicates contracts that met the 90 day goal.

| Organization                            | RFP ID                        | # days spent in contract negotiations (every day between dates, includes weekends, holidays and vacations) | # days spent in internal approval process (this should be completed in 28 days) | # days from Award Letter to Contract Approval |
|---|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Generations Early Learning              | 23-87 Small Capitol Projects  | 1  | 10  |   |
| Doula Contracts (all)                   | Targeted Solicitation         | 8  | 10-49   |   |
| Mercy Housing                           | 24-07 HCF Prevention          |  |   |   |
| Lydia Place                             | 24-07 HCF Prevention          | 58   | 72  | 168   |
| Ferndale Community Services             | 24-07 HCF Prevention          | 58   | 72  | 168   |
| Mobile Mama                             | MRSC - Mental Health          | 20   | 28  | 70  |
| Bellingham Food Bank                    | 24-44 Basic Needs             | 8  | 8   | 35  |
| Opportunity Council                     | 24-44 Basic Needs             | 34   | 10  | 70  |
| Lydia Place                             | 24-44 Basic Needs             | 46   | 78  | 135   |
| WCEL                                    | 24-60 Mental Health Expansion | 31   | 18  | 76  |
| Catalyst Therapies                      | 24-60 Mental Health Expansion | 2  | 8   | 48  |
| Lydia Place                             | 24-60 Mental Health Expansion | 18   | 31  | 90  |
| Ferndale School District                | 24-60 Mental Health Expansion | 68   | 17  | 104   |
| Brigid Collins                          | 24-60 Mental Health Expansion | 57   | 21  | 104   |
| Peace Centers                           | 24-26 Drop-In Care            | 53   | 25  | 71  |
| Cozy Bears                              | 24-66 Innovation              | 23   | 50  | 90  |
| Aha! Childcare and ELC                  | 24-66 Innovation              | 21   | 50  | 90  |
| Ferndale School District                | 24-66 Innovation              | 31   | 28  | 90  |
| More Smiles                             | 24-66 Innovation              | 14   | 51  | 84  |
| YMCA #2 (Curriculum)                    | 24-66 Innovation              | 21   | 34  | 83  |
| Opportunity Council (SEAS)              | 24-66 Innovation              | 24   | 42+   |   |
| Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association | 24-66 Innovation              | 35   | 42  |   |
| Lummi Indian Business Council           | 24-66 Innovation              | 31   | 42  |   |
| YMCA #1 (OT/SLP)                        | 24-66 Innovation              | 24   | 42  |   |
| Sendan Center                           | 24-66 Innovation              | 17   | 42  |   |
| Whatcom Center for Early Learning       | 24-66 Innovation              | 15   | 42  |   |
| Tiny Steps, Big Leaps                   | 24-66 Innovation              |  |   |   |

## Remaining Roadblocks

In addition to the acceleration in fund deployment, and challenges now visible thanks to improved transparency, some roadblocks noted in the 2024 HCF Report Card still remain a challenge.

**Gift of Public Funds:** A prohibition on the gifting of public funds is present in the law of all 50 states, and Proposition 5 was drafted and revised/approved by the Civil Division with full awareness of this doctrine and its inclusion in the state constitution. Yet, several of the implementation plan's cornerstone strategies continue to face internal resistance stemming from a conservative interpretation regarding the gift of public funds doctrine. This has most directly impeded progress on HCF strategy #4: *Ensure access to early learning and care by promoting the expansion and retention of the early learning & care workforce*. The task force has unique concern about this because our first ever task force recommendations<sup>4</sup>, made in October 2021, regarded the need to invest in the child care workforce. Other jurisdictions have built and are running exactly the sort of programming that would operationalize this strategy. Here are two examples:

- In October 2024, the Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families issued an RFP to launch a pilot program involving at least ten childcare facilities in the greater Spokane region. The program aimed to conduct workplace culture assessments to identify ways to expand the childcare workforce.

A task force member asked the Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney whether a similar RFP could be implemented in Whatcom using HCF funds. The attorney responded that it could not and declined an invitation to discuss the matter further with the task force, citing professional responsibility concerns<sup>5</sup>.

- Best Starts for Kids has implemented a wage boost pilot for childcare workers across King County<sup>6</sup>. The project is led and designed by a third party administrator called The Imagine Institute—who also happens to be an HCF contractor on a smaller scale. This pilot program will distribute more than \$25 million in additional compensation to approximately 1,400 child care workers before 2027. For scale comparison, there are roughly 200 employees at licensed childcare facilities in Whatcom County, so replicating the program in our community would cost approximately \$3.5 million.

To help align our interpretation of this issue countywide, the Whatcom Community Foundation and Chuckanut Health Foundation hosted an informational session on March 5, 2025 regarding

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<sup>4</sup> [Permanent Solutions for Child Care Affordability in Whatcom County Drafted by The Child & Family Well-Being Task Force](#)

<sup>5</sup> i.e. the task force is not his client.

<sup>6</sup> [BSK Wage Boost](#)



the Gift of Public Funds Doctrine led by Noah Purcell, Solicitor General from the Washington State Attorney General's Office. It was encouraging to see several members of council & the administration present in the crowd. We hope that the discourse in Whatcom County regarding this issue will improve as a result of this event.

**Communications:** Our 2024 HCF Report Card mentioned communication with the task force as an area of necessary improvement. We are happy to report that thanks to the implementation of a regular reporting format and the improved transparency surrounding the contracting process, this has improved substantially. This progress should be extended to communication with the public about the Healthy Children's Fund. Quite simply there is more great work underway<sup>7</sup> than the average voter knows about. In the absence of complete and correct information, misinformation is bound to spread. The task force hopes HCF administrative funds can be used to expand public awareness regarding the scope and nature of the HCF investments in improving childcare availability and affordability, and supporting vulnerable children and families.

**External Evaluation:** Despite two previous memos outlining the task force's understanding of<sup>8</sup> and hopes for<sup>9</sup> the biannual, comprehensive, external evaluation described in section 5 of Proposition 5, discrepancy remains between the way it is described in the ordinance and how it is being implemented.

*Primary, not supplemental:* In conjunction with this Report Card, the biannual, comprehensive, external evaluation of the HCF is intended to be the primary evaluation of the fund's effectiveness—not a supplement to the fund administrator's self-assessment. The two components have complementary design with the Report Card taking an informal layman's view on the HCF while the external evaluation provides a more technically rigorous analysis. Having one report without the other — as things currently stand — gives the public and policy makers a limited and inadequate view into the fund's performance.

*Comprehensive, not fragmented:* As outlined in Section 5 of Proposition 5 and reiterated in previous task force memos, the biannual, comprehensive, external evaluation is designed to assess all aspects of HCF performance. This includes administrative processes, fund deployment, and the overall impact of investments at the population level. Such an evaluation is not feasible if the scope of work is fragmented across multiple projects led by different contracted evaluators.

The task force appreciates the Council's recent resolution reiterating the original design of the external evaluation and trust that you will continue to insist that this essential aspect of the HCF is implemented consistent with the ordinance rather than the fund administrator's preferences.

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<sup>7</sup> [Healthy Children's Fund rollout a complicated task, vexing some contractors | Cascadia Daily News](#)

<sup>8</sup> [12.30.24 | Task Force Memo Regarding HCF Evaluation](#)

<sup>9</sup> [12.11.23 | Task Force Memo Regarding HCF Evaluation](#)

## Recommendations

In summary, the task force is encouraged by the accelerated rate of fund deployment, grateful for the improved contracting process transparency, and hopeful about what the next year may hold for the HCF. For your consideration, we offer the following recommendations.

### General Recommendations

- **Review the Gift of Public Funds informational session.** An informational session was hosted on March 5 regarding the Gift of Public Funds Doctrine led by Noah Purcell, Solicitor General from the Washington State Attorney General's Office. We encourage interested individuals to reach out to Whatcom Community Foundation for a recording of the event.
- **Hold the line on the design of the external evaluation.** As described above, the external evaluation is an essential part of the HCF design, and the Council's recent resolution rightly called for it to be initiated this year. We hope that in this and all things, you do not grow weary in doing good.
- **Invest in childcare capacity expansion.** With ARPA funds now fully deployed and doing good across the community, we hope expansion of childcare capacity is elevated among the HCF implementation plan strategies.
- **Remain strong in your support for childcare subsidies.** The task force appreciates County Council's resolution in support of making childcare subsidies available to households up to 85% of area median income (AMI). Like you, we are watching with great interest as the state legislature works to balance its budget, and are concerned that the *Fair Starts for Kids Act*, an important and overdue adjustment to the state's investment in childcare subsidies, will be affected. Regardless of what happens at the state level, the cost of raising a family in Whatcom County is unlikely to be lower in 2026 and beyond, so we encourage you to sustain your support for a childcare subsidy program funded with locally-controlled dollars.

These final two recommendations, regarding childcare expansion and subsidies, are both items included in the original implementation plan and the task force anticipates they will be included in the refreshed implementation plan when it is published on schedule following robust community input later this year. This common sense rhythm—plan, implement, report, repeat—is part of the HCF design.

## Recommendations for Improving Contract Development Timeliness

One major advantage of increased process transparency is that it enables the task force to recommend ways to enhance the speed and efficiency of contract development—an objective we know the Council also values. Below are four recommendations for your consideration:

- **Expand capacity in the Finance Department** — Adding Finance Department capacity—whether through directly hiring or by contracting for temporary support—funded by HCF administrative dollars in part or in full, stands to improve the speed of the RFP development, contract negotiation, and final approvals portions of this process. This was previously recommended by the task force in the May 2024 Report Card and again when we visited the Health & Public Works Committee in July 2024. The task force continues to believe this would be a high-leverage usage of HCF administrative funds.
- **Publish a draft contract with the RFP** — Surprise requirements and eleventh-hour edits/insertions have been common for HCF contract negotiations. These do not help the County establish and maintain a reputation as a reliable funding partner. A practice common to other government contracting is the inclusion of a draft contract with the RFP materials and doing so here could further improve transparency and efficiency.
- **Issue Council approval for draft contracts within fixed limits** — Late process delays caused by the Council's own docket deadlines could be avoided if Council were willing to pre-approve the draft contract language. Since Council has already approved the funded strategies as a part of the implementation plan, and is made aware of RFPs as they are published, such a pre-approval could be limited to final agreements that do not deviate substantially from the published draft in the view of the Civil Division.
- **Raise the \$40,000 threshold for contracts requiring council approval** — The task force is aware that Council has discussed this already and we would like to formally express our support for an adjustment to this threshold.

## **Attachment A**

### **Whatcom County Contracting Process**

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONTRACT VS. GRANT

An Overview for Contract Partners

A "**contract**" is a **legally binding agreement** where the organization commits to providing a specific service or deliverable in exchange for payment.

A "**grant**" is a **financial award** given to an agency/organization with less stringent requirements, allowing them more flexibility to use the funds towards a broader goal or project, usually with minimal direct oversight from the funding source.

**A contract is "buying" a service while a grant is providing support for a cause**

## Key Differences

### Contract

#### Control over Work

The payer has significant control over the details of the work performed, specifying deliverables and timelines.

#### Purpose

Used to acquire a specific good or service for the benefit of the payer.

#### Reporting Requirements

Involve more detailed reporting on project progress and deliverables.

### Grant

#### Control over Work

The organization or agency has more autonomy in how they use the funds to achieve their goals.

#### Purpose

Intended to support a broader mission or program of the agency/organization.

#### Reporting Requirements

Might only require periodic updates on overall activity.

# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACT PROCESS

## COUNTY STAFF ROLES

An Overview for Contract Partners

### CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR

County program staff who are subject matter experts on the content of the contract and will facilitate conversation with the contractor and monitor contract performance. This person will be your primary point of contact at the County throughout the span of the contract from contract development to contract execution and monitoring.

### CONTRACT COORDINATOR

County staff who are internally facing subject matter expert on the contract development and approval process. They serve as a liaison between the Contract Administrator, Health, and other County departments before and during contract execution.

### CHILD AND FAMILY PROGRAM SUPERVISOR

County program supervisor who oversees the Healthy Children's Fund. They are knowledgeable about all projects and services that are funded by HCF, manage the HCF budget, and are required to review and approve all contracts that are funded by HCF.

### HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES MANAGER

County division manager who oversees the Children and Family Programs Supervisor and is required to review and approve all contracts from the Health and Human Services Dept. They may also serve as a liaison between Health and other County departments as needed before and during contract execution.

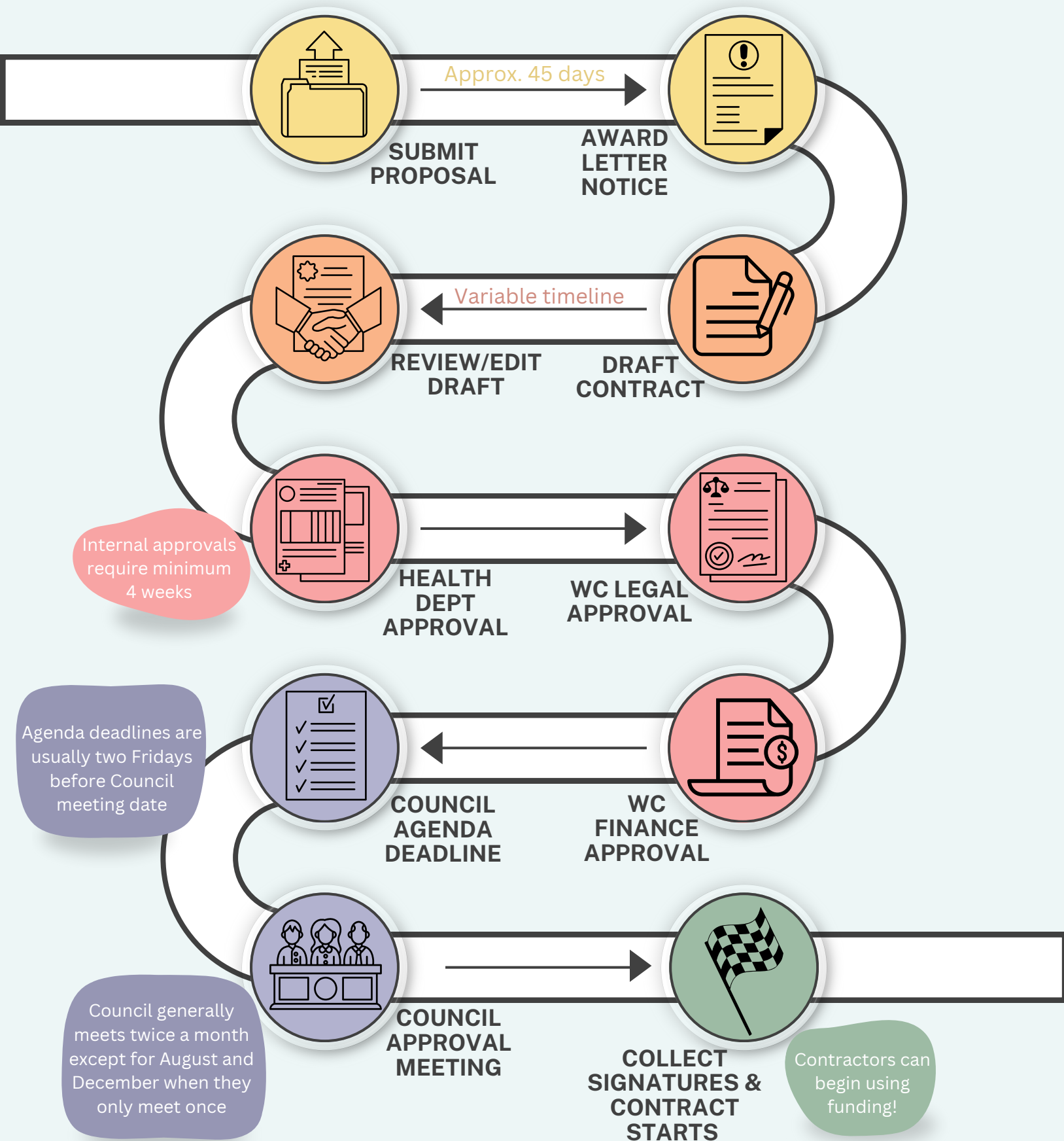
### PROGRAM EVALUATOR

County program staff who are subject matter experts on the Healthy Children's Fund evaluation plan. They work with the Contract Administrator to determine contract reporting requirements during contract development and may provide assistance with contract monitoring and reporting during contract execution.



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts over \$40k+



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts over \$40k+



## AWARD LETTER NOTICE

### WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR SELECTING PROPOSALS?

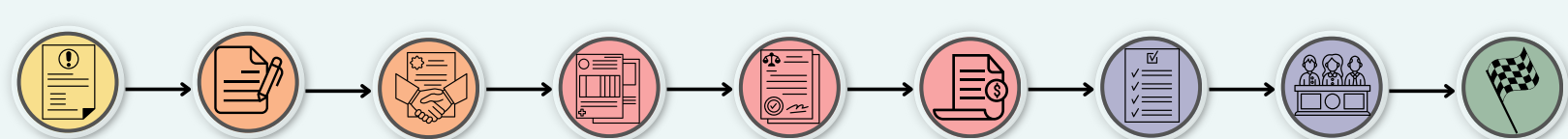
- County reviews submitted proposals to ensure that applications are complete.
- Evaluation Committee evaluates completed proposals as individuals.
- Evaluation Committee meets and discusses as a group which proposals to recommend for funding and at what amount.
- Contract Administrator will draft the Award Letter and notify applicants of their proposal's award status via email.

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO RECEIVE MY AWARD LETTER NOTICE?

- Given the variable timeline of the selection process detailed above, it could be up to 60 days before award letters are received, however the County strives to send award letters 45 days after the deadline.

### WHAT IS MY ROLE DURING THIS PART OF THE PROCESS?

- Wait patiently!
- Respond to any questions or requests from the Evaluation Committee as needed.
- **IMPORTANT:** Do NOT start any work until the contract has been signed. The County can not reimburse contractors for work done prior to contract signatures.



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts over \$40k+



## NEGOTIATIONS

### WHEN WILL MY CONTRACT BE DRAFTED?

- The County strives to draft contracts 1-2 weeks after award letters are sent.
- A draft of the contract may be sent with any outstanding questions, or may not be sent until after the Contract Administrator receives the additional information that was requested from Contractors.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING NEGOTIATIONS? HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

- Contractor reviews the contract draft and responds to additional questions that may have emerged.
- Contract Administrator may be consulting with County legal, finance, and leadership staff to resolve questions during negotiations.
- Negotiations can take a few days or several weeks to complete depending on the scope and complexity of services to be executed in the contract.

### I ALREADY SUBMITTED A LOT OF INFORMATION IN MY PROPOSAL, WHY ARE YOU ASKING FOR MORE?

- A contract is a legally binding agreement, and may need to include more detailed information about programming or services than what was provided in the original proposal.

### WHAT IS MY ROLE DURING THIS PART OF THE PROCESS?

- Review the contract draft and respond to any questions.
- Consult with your own internal teams as needed.
- Engage in contract development communications with the Contract Administrator.



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts over \$40k+



## INTERNAL APPROVALS

### WHO NEEDS TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT INTERNALLY?

**1st**



#### Health Department

- Children and Family Supervisor
- Health and Community Services Manager
- Health dept budget review

**2nd**



#### Whatcom County Legal

Health and Community Services  
has an assigned attorney for  
Health Dept contracts

**3rd**



#### Whatcom County Finance

Health and Community Services  
has an assigned reviewer for  
Health Dept contracts

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A CONTRACT TO GO THROUGH INTERNAL APPROVALS?

- Minimum timeline is 4 weeks, however the internal approval process may exceed 4 weeks.

### WHY MIGHT IT TAKE LONGER FOR MY CONTRACT TO GET APPROVED INTERNALLY?

- Factors including County Holiday's or staff time off and department review staff overall workload capacity may impact this timeline.
- County wide processes or projects such as County Budget submission, implementation of new software/systems and other large scale, multi department projects may impact this timeline.
- If County staff are awaiting Contractor response to resolve legal or financial questions this may impact the timeline.

### WHAT IS MY ROLE DURING THIS PART OF THE PROCESS?

- Wait patiently!
- Respond to any questions from the Contract Administrator as needed.



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts over \$40k+



## WC COUNCIL APPROVAL

### WHAT IS THE COUNCIL AGENDA DEADLINE?

- Deadline for contracts to be added to the next Council meeting agenda for approval.
- Agenda meeting deadlines are usually two Friday's before the scheduled Council meeting date.

### WHEN AND HOW DOES MY CONTRACT GET ADDED TO A COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA?

- The Contract Coordinator will add your contract to the Council meeting agenda after it has been internally approved.
- Your Contract Administrator will notify you which meeting your contract will be reviewed.

### HOW OFTEN DOES COUNCIL MEET TO APPROVE CONTRACTS?

- Council meets twice a month to approve contracts except for August and December when they only meet once.

### WHAT HAPPENS AT THE COUNCIL MEETING(S)?

- Contract is reviewed by Council during the Finance Committee meeting. The Contract Administrator attends/is available to answer any questions.
- If the contract is approved during the Finance Committee meeting, it will be moved forward for approval during the 6pm Council meeting for a full vote of Council.
- If the contract is held back, the Contract Administrator will work to resolve Council's concerns with the contract, so it can be reviewed by Council again and voted on at a later Council meeting.

### WHY DOES MY CONTRACT NEED TO BE APPROVED BY WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL?

- Whatcom County Code 3.08.100 requires the County Council to approve all contracts over \$40k or if an amendment exceeds 10%.

### WHAT IS MY ROLE DURING THIS PART OF THE PROCESS?

- Wait patiently! You will be notified the following day if your contract was approved by County Council.



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts over \$40k+



## CONTRACT START

### WHEN CAN I BEGIN SPENDING THE AWARDED FUNDING?

- **The contract start date will be communicated by the contract administrator** and is typically the day after the Council has approved the contract. All parties must sign off on the contract before it is complete. This may be a few days delayed if the parties are not able to sign immediately.

### CAN I GET REIMBURSED FOR FUNDING THAT WAS SPENT BEFORE MY CONTRACT START DATE?

- No. Do not spend any dollars until your contract has been signed by all parties.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF A CONTRACT NEEDS TO BE EDITED AFTER IT HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED?

- If changes are needed to the contract, it may be amended. Depending on what needs to be changed within the contract, it will have to go through various levels of approval again. The updated changes to the contract will not go into effect until the contract amendment has been reviewed and approved by necessary parties. Not every contract amendment will require Council approval, but some of them may.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT MOVING FORWARD?

- County staff may be in contact with you to provide reminders or requests for documentation.
- Always reach out to your Contract Administrator with any questions you may have during the contracting period.





# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts Over \$10k- \$40k



## AWARD NOTIFICATION

### WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR SELECTING PROPOSALS?

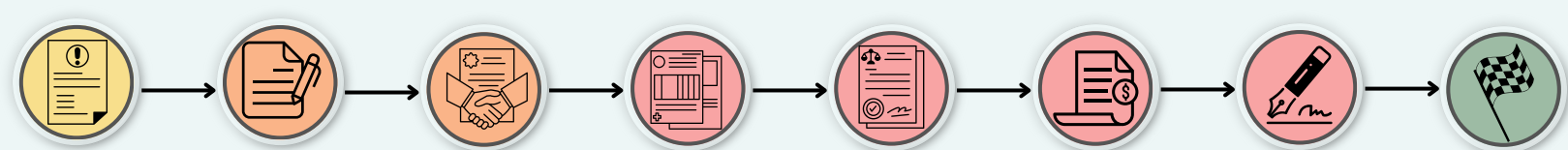
- County reviews submitted proposals to ensure that applications are complete.
- Contract Administrator evaluates completed proposals to determine which proposals to recommend for funding and at what amount.
- Contract Administrator will draft an award notification email to applicants of their proposal's award status.

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO RECEIVE MY AWARD LETTER NOTICE?

- Given the variable timeline of the selection process detailed above, it could be up to 60 days before award letters are received, however the County strives to send award letters 30 days after the deadline.

### WHAT IS MY ROLE DURING THIS PART OF THE PROCESS?

- Wait patiently!
- Respond to any questions or requests from the Evaluation Committee as needed.



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts \$10k-\$40k



## NEGOTIATIONS

### WHEN WILL MY CONTRACT BE DRAFTED?

- The County strives to draft contracts 1-2 weeks after award letters are sent.
- A draft of the contract may be sent with any outstanding questions, or may not be sent until after the Contract Administrator receives the additional information that was requested from Contractors.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING NEGOTIATIONS? HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

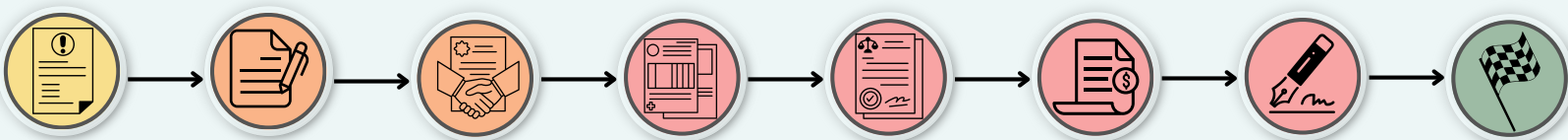
- Contractor reviews the contract draft and responds to additional questions that may have emerged.
- Contract Administrator may be consulting with County legal, finance, and leadership staff to resolve questions during negotiations.
- Negotiations can take a few days or several weeks to complete depending on the scope and complexity of services to be executed in the contract.

### I ALREADY SUBMITTED A LOT OF INFORMATION IN MY PROPOSAL, WHY ARE YOU ASKING FOR MORE?

- A contract is a legally binding agreement, and may need to include more detailed information about programming or services than what was provided in the original proposal.

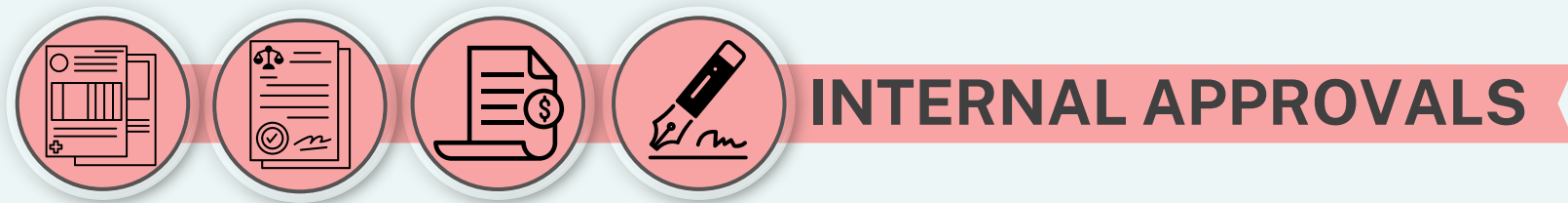
### WHAT IS MY ROLE DURING THIS PART OF THE PROCESS?

- Review the contract draft and respond to any questions.
- Consult with your own internal teams as needed.
- Engage in contract development communications with the Contract Administrator.



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts \$10k-\$40k



### WHO NEEDS TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT INTERNALLY?

**1st**



#### Health Department

- Children and Family Supervisor
- Health and Community Services Manager
- Health dept budget review

**2nd**



#### Whatcom County Legal

Health and Community Services has an assigned attorney for Health Dept contracts

**3rd**



#### Whatcom County Finance

Health and Community Services has an assigned Finance reviewer for Health Dept contracts



#### Whatcom County Executive Review & Signature

The Executive Office reviews the contract after it have been approved by all internal departments and the Whatcom County Executive signs the contract.

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A CONTRACT TO GO THROUGH INTERNAL APPROVALS?

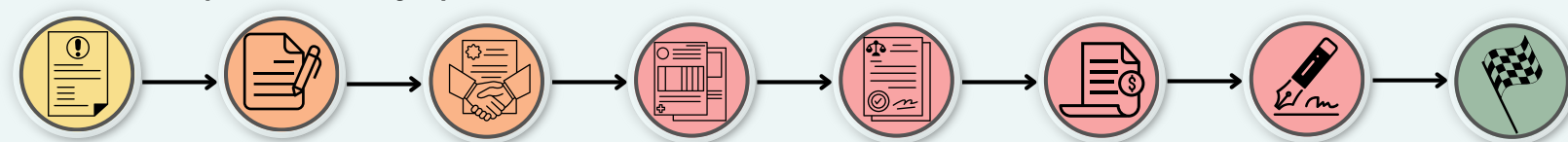
- Minimum timeline is 4 weeks.

### WHY MIGHT IT TAKE LONGER FOR MY CONTRACT TO GET APPROVED INTERNALLY?

- Factors including County Holiday's or staff time off and department review staff overall workload capacity may impact this timeline.
- County wide processes or projects such as County Budget submission, implementation of new software/systems and other large scale, or multi-department projects may impact this timeline.
- If County staff are awaiting Contractor response to resolve legal or financial questions this may impact the timeline.

### WHAT IS MY ROLE DURING THIS PART OF THE PROCESS?

- Wait patiently!
- Respond to any questions from the Contract Administrator as needed.



# WHATCOM COUNTY CONTRACTING PROCESS

Overview for Contracts \$10k-\$40k



## CONTRACT START

### WHEN CAN I BEGIN SPENDING THE AWARDED FUNDING?

- The contract administrator will notify contractors of the contract start date.
- Approved contractors can be reimbursed for awarded funds at this time.

### CAN I GET REIMBURSED FOR FUNDING BEFORE MY CONTRACT IS APPROVED?

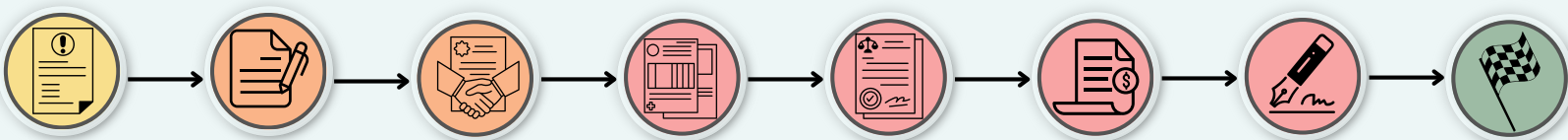
- No. Do not spend any dollars until the start date indicated on your contract.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF A CONTRACT NEEDS TO BE EDITED AFTER IT HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED?

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