



# Memorandum

**TO:** Satpal Sidhu, County Executive  
**FROM:** Erika Lautenbach, Director  
**RE:** Opportunity Council – Healthy Children's Fund Basic Needs Contract  
**DATE:** **AUGUST 28, 2024**

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Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and Opportunity Council for your review and signature.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

This contract provides funding for the purchase and distribution of basic needs items to families with children ages 0-5, who qualify as low-income, including those in underserved, marginalized and rural communities within Whatcom County. As the designated Community Action Agency for Whatcom County, Opportunity Council provides basic need services through their Community Resource Centers located in Bellingham and East Whatcom County, where they have approximately 2,300 interactions per quarter with community members in need. OC anticipates distributing basic needs items during 350 engagements with families with children 0-5 per quarter through interactions with staff at their Community Resource Centers or through their housing program case managers.

Reducing the financial stress associated with purchasing basic needs items allows families to allocate their limited resources towards other necessary expenses, such as rent and utilities, contributing to the entire family's overall wellbeing and financial stability and reducing the risk of crises, such as homelessness. Families visiting the OC's Resource Centers in Bellingham or East Whatcom County or who are enrolled in one of the OC's housing programs, may request basic needs items from a pre-approved list of items and will include:

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Gas cards and public bus passes

This contract supports Strategies 9 and 10 of the Healthy Children's Fund Implementation Plan, to expand and enhance early parenting supports and implement coordinated systems to access resources. This contract is awarded as a result of RFP 24-44.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$93,811, is provided by the Healthy Children's Fund. These funds are included in the 2024 budget. Council authorization is required per WCC 3.08.100, as funding for this contract exceeds \$40,000.

Please contact Ann Beck, Community Health & Human Services Manager at 360-778-6055 ([ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:ABeck@co.whatcom.wa.us)) if you have any questions.

