



Memorandum

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Champ Thomaskutty, Director
RE: Housing Authority of the City of Bellingham – Samish Commons Early Learning Center
DATE: MARCH 27, 2026

Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and the Housing Authority of the City of Bellingham for your review and signature.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

On November 6, 2024, County Council approved Contract #202411026 to provide support for the creation of the Samish Commons Early Learning Center on the ground floor of the Samish Commons Affordable Housing apartments. Once complete, the facility will create 40 childcare slots, of which, no less than 25% will be reserved for children from households that have an income of 85% or lower than the current state medium income.

On August 6, 2025 Whatcom County published RFP 25-61 – HCF Child Care Capital Projects which closed on September 23, 2025. The Housing Authority of the City of Bellingham responded to this RFP, their application was reviewed and scored, and subsequently recommended for funding by the Evaluation Committee.

For avoidance of doubt, the Project is owned by the Samish Way Family Housing LLLP, a Washington Limited Liability Limited Partnership (“the Company”). The Contractor, the Housing Authority of the City of Bellingham, is the manager and controlling member of the Company and leases the Project site from the Company. Further, the Contractor intends to sublease the space, once complete, to a licensed child care provider.

This contract provides additional funds for capital expenses to support unanticipated construction-related cost escalation including professional fees necessary to make the early learning center operational.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$851,350, is provided by the Healthy Children’s Fund. These funds are included in the 2026 budget. Council authorization is required, per WCC 3.08.100, as funding for this contract exceeds \$75,000.

▪ **Differences from Previous Contracts**

This is a new contract to support the work established in Contract #202411026. A new contract, rather than an amendment, is justified by the change in budget and the inclusion of additional reporting requirements identified in RFP 25-61.

Please contact Eric Chambers, Special Projects Manager, at 360-778-6199 (ekchambe@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions.