



MEMORANDUM

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Erika Lautenbach, Director
RE: Opportunity Council – Expanded Navigation Services for Families Contract
DATE: February 14, 2022

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

▪ **Background and Purpose**

All children benefit from an organized system of community resources to help them thrive, like health care, quality early learning experiences, healthy nutrition, and parent support. When these systems are coordinated, it provides ongoing successful outcomes for children’s health and well-being. A local needs assessment identified that families seek a range of services and Whatcom County’s systems are challenging to navigate. Survey respondents advocated for increased supports for multi-language families, non-English speaking families, migrant families, and families from diverse backgrounds as well as increased access to service navigation through expanded hours and the availability of multiple communication pathways.

This contract provides funding for the initial steps needed in order to build a health, resource, and service navigation system that will provide timely connection of parents and children pre-natal to five years, to a range of protective and supportive services. The focus of this contract is to pay for hiring, training, strategy development, and expanded hours during the first six months of work that will lay the foundation for full implementation, which will begin in 2023. This is building on the existing navigation system for children with special needs, the Single Entry Access to Services (SEAS) program. Additional scope of navigation during this period will include perinatal mental health services and home visiting services. The City of Bellingham has committed to providing funds, alongside the County, to support project start-up and implementation.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$77,797, is provided by general funds. These funds are included in the 2022 budget. Council approval is required as funding exceeds \$40,000.

Please contact Judy Ziels, Public Health Nurse Supervisor at 360-778-6130 (JZiels@co.whatcom.wa.us) or Kathleen Roy, Assistant Director at 360-778-6007 (KRoy@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this request.

