



# Memorandum

**TO:** Satpal Sidhu, County Executive  
**FROM:** Erika Lautenbach, Director  
**RE:** Imagine Institute – Imagine U Home-Based Childcare Startup Program Subrecipient Agreement  
**DATE:** MAY 8, 2024

---

Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and Imagine Institute for your review and signature.

- **Background and Purpose**

Whatcom County will contract with the Imagine Institute to prepare new home-based childcare providers through the licensing process and starting up a new business through a program called Imagine U. Through this funding, an estimated 15-17 new licensed family child care business will open in Whatcom County, resulting in approximately 180 to 204 new licensed slots. Each new childcare facility will be required to take Working Connections subsidies through the Washington State Department of Children Youth and Families. The availability of childcare throughout Whatcom County continues to be challenging for families, particularly in rural areas. Home-based childcare is one component of a mixed-delivery system and an opportunity to meet family's needs, particularly in rural areas where center-based care may not have the economy of scale needed to operate.

The program "Imagine U" has a track record of successfully launching and supporting home-based childcare providers with culturally relevant and evidence-based curriculum, on-the-job training, business coaching individual mentorship, per support, and technical assistance. Whatcom County can leverage investments made by the Department of Children Youth and Families, King County, and the City of Sea-Tac, which have funded past cohorts and supported curriculum development.

The Imagine Institute is particularly well-suited to implement the program due to its peer-approach which invests in diversifying and increasing the workforce and creating career pathways. Through peer mentorship, funds are reinvested into the community and the program creates professional development opportunities for providers and is culturally and linguistically responsive.

- **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this agreement, in an amount not to exceed \$478,910, is provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA – ALN 21.027). These funds are included in the 2024 budget. Council authorization is required per WCC 3.08.010, as funding 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.

Encl.