



# Memorandum

**TO:** Satpal Sidhu, County Executive  
**FROM:** Erika Lautenbach, Director  
**RE:** Whatcom Family YMCA – Childcare Preservation Contract  
**DATE:** **SEPTEMBER 28, 2023**

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Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and Whatcom Family YMCA for your review and signature.

## ■ Background and Purpose

According to the latest census<sup>1</sup>, there are approximately 10,500 children under the age of five living in Whatcom County. The total current child care capacity in the County is, however, only 3,686 children enrolled in 106 programs<sup>2</sup> leaving a substantial service gap. Access to safe and affordable access to childcare is more salient among families at or below the federal poverty line: in a low income needs assessment<sup>3</sup> conducted by the Opportunity Council, childcare access was ranked as one of the most important needs for families with children under five who also ranked it as lowest in availability across multiple needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic further limited access to safe and affordable childcare in Whatcom County. Across the state, Washington lost approximately 25% of their childcare workers<sup>4</sup> due to the pandemic and has still not fully recovered. One of the goals of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) established under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is to expand and enhancing childcare and early learning services.

Through a competitive bidding process (RFP 22-52) Whatcom Family YMCA (hereinafter, 'Subrecipient') was selected and recommended for funding to be used to purchase their currently leased property located at 2410 Rimland Dr. Bellingham, WA, 98226. Upon purchase, the facility will have preserved 84 slots and created an additional 20 slots. At capacity, the facility will provide 104 child care slots for infants through 5 years and include 20% that meet low income thresholds as described below.

## ■ Funding Amount and Source

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$1,500,000, is provided by the American Rescue Plan Act [ARPA (CFDA 21.027)]. Funding is included in the 2023 budget and Council authorization is required for contracts exceeding \$40,000.

Please contact Eric Chambers, Special Projects Manager at 360-778-6199 ([EKChambe@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:EKChambe@co.whatcom.wa.us)) or Kathleen Roy, Financial & Administrative Manager at 360-778-6007 ([KRoy@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:KRoy@co.whatcom.wa.us)), if you have any questions.

Encl.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/whatcomcountywashington>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oppco.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ELAFS-Community-Needs-Assessment-2023.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.oppco.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Community-Needs-Assessment\\_09.15.21editspdf.pdf](https://www.oppco.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Community-Needs-Assessment_09.15.21editspdf.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/71981d3ec3a1d02537d86d827806834b/Child-Care-Trends-COVID.pdf>