



Memorandum

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Champ Thomaskutty, Director
RE: Opportunity Council – Cedar Commons Early Learning Center
DATE: APRIL 17, 2026

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

- **Background and Purpose**

On November 18, 2025, the Council approved Contract #202511027 to provide support for the creation of the Cedar Commons Early Learning Center on the ground floor of the Opportunity Council's Bellis Fair Family Housing apartments with an anticipated opening of August 2026. Once complete, the facility will create 70 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 Opportunity Council 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 Bellis Fair Early Learning LLC, a Washington Limited Liability Company ("the Company"). The Contractor is the manager and controlling member of the Company. All instances which refer to the Contractor, shall, as applicable, refer to the Contractor casing the Company to achieve the same.

This contract provides additional funding for capital expenses to support unanticipated construction-related cost escalation, and funds for staff time, program development, and furniture and equipment to make the early learning center operational.

- **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$291,676, is provided by the Health 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 #202511027. A new contract, rather than an amendment, is justified by the change in budget and the inclusion of additional reporting requirements and eligibility identified in RFP 25-61.

Please contact Sarah Simpson, Children and Family Programs Supervisor, at 360-410-2400 or SSimpson@co.whatcom.wa.us if you have any questions.

