



## **2025-2026 Draft Implementation Plan Years 3 & 4**

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	3
<b>Executive Summary</b>	4
<b>Introduction</b>	6
<b>Mission and Vision</b>	7
<b>Accountability and Guiding Principles</b>	7
<b>Priorities and Focus Areas</b>	8
<b>Priority: Early Learning &amp; Care</b>	8
<b>Priority: Supporting Vulnerable Children</b>	8
<b>Key Milestones 2023-2024</b>	9
<b>Lessons Learned from the Implementation Plan 2023-2024</b>	10
<b>Investments to Date</b>	12
<b>Draft Approach for 2025-2026. Healthy Children’s Fund Path to Success</b>	13
<b>The Spending Plan</b>	15
<b>Gathering Community Feedback on the 2025-2026 Draft Implementation Plan</b>	19
<b>Evaluation and Metrics</b>	19
<b>Audit Process &amp; Fund Administration Evaluation</b>	20
<b>Next Steps</b>	21
<b>Appendices</b>	22

# Acknowledgments

Deepest gratitude is extended to the residents of Whatcom County who generously support the Healthy Children's Fund through their property taxes and financial contributions. Your commitment to the well-being of children and families in our community makes a lasting impact, ensuring that every child has access to the resources they need to grow, learn, and thrive.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Whatcom County Council for their leadership and commitment to the Healthy Children's Fund. You play a vital role in ensuring that children and families in our community have access to the essential services and resources they need to thrive. By prioritizing investments in early childhood development, health, and well-being, you are helping to build a stronger, healthier future for Whatcom County.

To each member of the Implementation Team, thank you for your unwavering dedication, time, and expertise throughout this process. Your commitment to ensuring that the draft implementation plan reflects the needs of our community has been invaluable.

The positive community outcomes could not be accomplished without the agencies and organizations implementing the Healthy Children's Fund strategies. Your tireless efforts, innovative programs, and continued support create opportunities that shape brighter futures for our youngest community members.

Together, we are building a healthier, stronger, and more equitable future for all children in Whatcom County. Thank you for your generosity, compassion, and commitment to making a difference.



# Executive Summary

The **Healthy Children's Fund (HCF)** continues its commitment to improving the well-being of children and families in Whatcom County by building upon the foundation established in the [2023-2024 Implementation Plan](#). The **2025-2026 Draft Implementation Plan** focuses on actions and direction that expedite investments to well thought out strategies and experiences from the past two years.

## Key Priorities for 2025-2026

Based on the Implementation Team's recommendations, the County Executive's Office and Health and Community Services expertise the following priorities have been identified:

- 1. Increasing Affordable, High - Quality, Professional, and Accessible Early Learning and Child Care Opportunities:**
  - Maintain and extend funding of successful early learning and child care programs while strengthening them with additional resources for expansion
  - Expand family child care subsidies and rate augmentation to early learning and child care providers
  - Enhance and expand child care facilities
  - Improve access to supports within early learning centers
  - Invest in education, professional development and credentialing of early learning workforce to increase the child care workforce and quality of care
- 2. Helping vulnerable children of all backgrounds, including homeless and at -risk children:**
  - Maintain and extend funding for mental and behavioral health services, housing and parent support programs
  - Improve the reach and efficiency of mental health and parenting supports
  - Maintain funding for Infant basic needs with agency and food bank partners
- 3. Strengthen Administration**
  - The County Executive's office is contemplating a full-time dedicated staffing structure for the HCF to bolster leadership, contract capacity, data collection, and communications
  - Publish an annual work calendar
  - Conduct an outreach campaign to leverage existing funding in the State Working Connections program
  - Align investments with the Washington State Fair Start for Kids Act Funding
  - Reduce barriers to access funding and bolster technical assistance

4. **Evaluation for the 2027-2028 Plan** – Use data and evaluation to refine strategies and set the stage for the next phase of HCF
5. **Maximizing Impact through Partnerships** – Strengthen collaboration with state, federal, and philanthropic partners to stretch local dollars further and sustain long-term funding and programming across the systems that support children and their families in Whatcom County.

The **2025-2026 Draft Implementation Plan** is not about creating something new when a good solution already exists—it is about **stabilizing, strengthening, and scaling** the work that has already begun. By maintaining focus on **continuity, impact measurement, and strategic expansion**, this plan ensures that HCF remains a powerful force for positive change in Whatcom County.



# Introduction

The **Healthy Children's Fund (HCF)** was established by a vote of Whatcom County Residents and Ordinance AB2022-303. This ordinance increased property tax to fund programs for the funding of childcare and early childhood programs to improve kindergarten readiness and funding vulnerable children. The HCF is expected to yield \$100 million in property tax dollars for investment in programs and initiatives over 10 years.

An Implementation Plan framework was outlined in the ordinance.

The HCF is administered by the Whatcom County government structure with the County Executive overseeing the Department of Health Community Services Department as fund administrator, the County Council with budget authority each year, the Child and Family Wellbeing Taskforce writing and delivering an annual report in addition to collaborating on implementation and a performance audit, and plenty of transparency giving the public opportunity to comment.

The Implementation Plan was/is required to:

- Outline details of fund allocations across eligible expenditures and strategies, including as a percentage of the fund revenue;
- Deliver working criteria for fund allocation to guide the granting and/ or contracting process for non - administrative expenses;
- Provide an overview of the granting/ contracting process that includes opportunities for community members to provide input in to fund allocation decisions;
- Include opportunities for leveraging the fund and bringing in external resources to the county.

To provide accountability to the taxpayer, the Ordinance included provisions for independent audits. "Every other year, a qualified independent auditor shall conduct a performance audit of the Healthy Children' s Fund." The audit includes collection and review of data and evaluate the County progress towards achieving the goals and strategies adopted in the Ordinance, Section 3. Feedback from stakeholders including users and providers of services will be included, and recommendations for improvements or adjustments to the HCF will be made to the County Executive and County Council. The first independent audit of the Healthy Children's Fund is on track and will be completed as scheduled in December 2025.

More Information may be found at: <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4069/Healthy-Childrens-Fund> or by calling the Health and Community Services Department at 360-778-6000.

# Mission and Vision

Over the past two years, the Fund has focused on expanding early learning opportunities, strengthening family resilience, and addressing the needs of vulnerable children, particularly those at risk of abuse or neglect. The **2025-2026 Draft Implementation Plan** serves as a strategic guide for directing investments and shaping administrative practices, ensuring resources are effectively managed to enhance the well-being of children and their families in Whatcom County.

**After ten years and an investment of nearly \$100 million, we envision a broad range of impacts, including but not limited to:**

- An increase in the percentage of kids entering kindergarten ready to learn.
- A reduction in the number of children experiencing abuse and neglect.

# Accountability and Guiding Principles

Adapted from the [2023-24 Implementation Plan](#)

## Transparency

- Communicating regularly on the Healthy Children's Fund webpage
- Cooperating with an external independent performance auditor

## Impact

- Using data-based decision-making to identify investments that will make the greatest impact on Whatcom County residents, both in the short- and long-term.
- Ensuring that funds are equitably distributed throughout the county and among diverse communities, and have an impact on those disproportionately affected by the systemic issues these investments are meant to address.
- Reporting on programmatic and population-level data.

## Learning

- Soliciting proposals for programs that employ community-based innovations.
- Evaluating programs, processes, and impacts regularly, at minimum on a two-year cycle.
- Acting on the results of those evaluations promptly to ensure initiatives are producing the desired results, ending or modifying investments when needed, and adjusting fund administration accordingly.

## Equity

- Will apply equity values, practices, and commitments to all aspects of the Healthy Children's Fund, including data collection, identification of service priorities, contracting, program and service implementation, engagement, communication, and evaluation.

# Priorities and Focus Areas

Investment is prescribed by the [Healthy Children's Fund Ordinance](#) to fall under the following priorities and focus areas (Whatcom County, 2022). These focus areas are the mechanisms through which the Healthy Children's Fund will reach its outcomes, discussed in more detail in this plan's [Evaluation and Metrics](#) section.



## Priority: Early Learning & Care

Focus areas:

- **Accessible:** Expand early learning & care services that meet the varied needs of families and children. Geographic locations, ages of children, special needs, and a broad range of early learning & care scheduling (including emergency opportunities, evenings and weekends) will all be considered.
- **Affordable:** Decrease the cost of early learning & care experiences for both families and providers.
- **High-Quality:** Increase the quality of early learning & care experiences.
- **Professional:** Attract, train, and retain quality early childhood educators.

## Priority: Supporting Vulnerable Children

Focus areas:

- **Expand Mental and Behavioral Health:** Expand mental & behavioral health services for vulnerable children and their families.
- **Prevent & Reduce the Trauma of Homelessness:** Reduce the instances of vulnerable children experiencing homelessness, through diversion and other preventative services and reduce the trauma associated with homelessness by supporting interim housing services and trauma-focused system reform directed at vulnerable children and their families.
- **Support Vulnerable Children's Parents/Caregivers:** Expand support and services for families who have or are expecting children.

## Key Milestones 2023-2024

Since its inception, the Healthy Children’s Fund has been championed by Whatcom County Health and Community Services (WCHCS), County staff, elected officials, community members, and local experts—all working together to support the well-being of the county’s youngest residents and their families. The following table includes some significant milestones to date. Learn more on the HCF [website](#).

Date		Details
2023	March	<b>Council Approval (7-0) of the 2023-2024 Implementation Plan</b>
	June	<b>Children and Family Supervisor hired</b>
2024	February	<b>First Request for Proposals (RFP) – Supporting Vulnerable Children</b>
	May	<b>First Request for Proposals (RFP) – Early Learning &amp; Care</b>
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staff hired to support vulnerable children initiatives</b></li> <li>• <b>Funded the Single Entry Access to Services (SEAS) program</b></li> </ul>
	July	<b>Early Learning &amp; Care subsidies for emergency child care funded.</b>
	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contracts: Expanding Early Parenting Support, including Basic Needs</b></li> <li>• <b>RAPID Survey Launch</b> (Stanford Grant Awarded to WCHCS)</li> <li>• <b>RFP: Early Learning and Care Innovative Services RFP released</b></li> </ul>
2024	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Start Early Systems Mapping Grant</b> to develop a comprehensive early childhood system map to identify gaps, funding streams, and opportunities to strengthen services.</li> <li>• <b>An Implementation Team</b> comprising WCHCS staff and community partners is formed to develop the 2025-26 Implementation Plan.</li> </ul>
2024	October	• <b>Capital project contract awarded</b> to expand child care capacity.
	November	• <b>Contract signed to expand mental and behavioral health services</b> for children 0-5 and their families.
2024	December	<b>The Whatcom County Council <a href="#">unanimously approved</a> (7-0) a policy/approach to Local Subsidy &amp; Rate Augmentation Program</b>

# Lessons Learned from the Implementation Plan 2023-2024

## Strengths: (Internal, positive attributes)

The original Implementation Plan adopted ten strategies to guide investments. Over the past two years, administration has focused on investing in these ten strategies as allowed with the codified eligible fund expenditures. These efforts have required close collaboration among parents, advocates, and local agencies to examine and enhance the systems that support children and families in Whatcom County.

### Early Learning & Care

<p><b>Strategy 1:</b> Use small capital projects to expand, renovate or repurpose buildings to increase early learning and care slots in a mixed-delivery system.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 4:</b> Ensure access to early learning and care by promoting the expansion and retention of the early learning and care workforce.</p>
<p><b>Strategy 2:</b> Coordinate current and develop additional pathways to ensure a stable early learning and care workforce that can deliver high-quality programs for children.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 5:</b> Create regional early learning and care hubs that include shared administrative services, co-located early learning and other services for children and families, and support for smaller providers in the county.</p>
<p><b>Strategy 3:</b> Improve access to early learning and care through subsidies that reduce the cost of programs for children from families that are cost-burdened.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 6:</b> Support innovative approaches to meet various Healthy Children’s Fund goals for early learning and care.</p>

### Support for Vulnerable Children

<p><b>Strategy 7:</b> Recruit mental and behavioral health workforce to Whatcom County.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 9:</b> Expand and enhance early parenting support.</p>
<p><b>Strategy 8:</b> Develop and/or expand resources and programs for families who disproportionately experience housing instability.</p>	<p><b>Strategy 10:</b> Integrate and co-locate services via coordinated access to resource navigation.</p>

### **Weaknesses: (Internal, negative attributes)**

The first two years of the fund have had challenges. Fund administrators have faced the reality of unprecedented funding with HCF dollars and scaling up in order to administer the funding.

**Leadership & Administrative Structure:** Despite these challenges, Whatcom County government has recognized that building a strong HCF organizational structure foundation and is gaining momentum towards increased funding to meet the strategies originally outlined.

**Public Contracting:** Unlike the private sector, contracting for public taxpayer dollars is governed by procurement law with requirements that cannot be waived. It is the responsibility of the Whatcom County government to ensure that these laws are followed. Whatcom County has recognized the need to approach contracting in a more streamlined way and as fund administrators and stewards of public funds, Whatcom County is committed to being a supportive funding partner. This means aiming to reduce barriers to accessing funds while maintaining high accountability standards.

**Legal Analysis:** Whatcom County recognizes that some strategies outlined by the original Implementation Plan had not been through rigorous legal analysis prior to being included as stated strategies, programs, or action steps.

### **Opportunities: (External, positive factors)**

Great work has been accomplished in the first two years of the HCF.

**Community Partnerships & Engagement:** Whatcom County is committed to building strong partnerships and working collaboratively across sectors. Through the work to date relationships have been strengthened with the contractors, such as in-home childcare providers across the county, larger center providers such as the Whatcom YMCA, Opportunity Council and Brigid Collins, school districts, and inter-governmental departments.

**Evaluation:** Newly developed evaluation criteria are ready to be initiated through the collaborative work of the Whatcom County staff, The Implementation Team, the Child and Family Wellbeing Taskforce, and an Evaluation Advisory Group. This evaluation criteria and subsequent data collection efforts will be used for an external evaluator to audit the county efforts and provide feedback for improvement.

### **Threats: (External, negative factors)**

As with any important work, there is always external factors that can become barriers to success. These external factors that have affected the HCF implementation include workforce shortages, politics, a challenging economy.

# Investments to Date

## 23/24 Budget by Contract Status



# Draft Approach for 2025-2026. Healthy Children's Fund Path to Success

The 2025-2026 Draft Plan builds upon this progress by focusing on continuation, enhancement, and impact measurement. Rather than creating an entirely new framework, this plan serves as a continuation of the 2023-2024 plan. **This approach honors the vision and potential in the ten strategies, provides ample time for implementation, and evaluates them for effectiveness.**

Additional strategies were considered as part of the 2025-2026 draft planning process. This process included emphasizing a data driven, community-informed approach. However, after a thorough evaluation, the Implementation Team concluded that the original set was still the highest priority, especially considering that best practices in funding recommend a minimum of two-year grants.

A key component of this next phase is a comprehensive evaluation process to be completed by December 2025, which will assess the effectiveness of current investments, address evolving community needs, and shape future funding decisions for 2027-2028. Stakeholder engagement remains central to this process, with direct input from families through initiatives like the RAPID Survey Project, which captures real-time insights into the challenges and needs of parents and caregivers and Washington States Child Wellness survey. These findings will be incorporated into the evaluation framework, ensuring that community voices drive funding priorities.

In mapping out the next steps toward success, the Implementation Team identified four key elements that will integrate lessons learned and ensure a successful next phase of Implementation:

- 1. Partner Effectively.** The Healthy Children's Fund relies on strong partnerships across government agencies, nonprofits, health care providers, and community groups to maximize impact, improve service coordination, and ensure equitable support for children and families in Whatcom County. Key oversight bodies are the County Executive and the County Council. Collaborators include the Child and Family Well Being Task Force, the Implementation Team and independent evaluators, who work together to highlight accountability, suggest strategic fund allocation, and continuous improvement, while learning cohorts help grantees enhance service delivery and effectiveness.
- 2. Set Priorities.** The 2025-2026 Draft Implementation Plan focuses on three key priorities: expanding access to early learning and care, streamlining implementation by leveraging existing strategies, and building data-driven tools for the 2027-2028 plan. These priorities ensure funding remains targeted and effective while addressing capacity constraints, improving efficiency, and laying the groundwork for sustainable, outcome-based decision-making.

3. **Spending Plan.** The Healthy Children’s Fund's spending plan prioritizes sustaining and improving existing services while strategically enhancing select programs to maximize impact without overburdening administrative capacity. By focusing on supporting vulnerable children, expanding access to child care, leveraging state and federal funds, and strengthening administrative infrastructure, the plan ensures long-term sustainability, increased access to early learning, and improved child and family well-being in Whatcom County. These will not be automatic renewals. Instead, fund administrators will work with contractors to review progress reports to determine renewal parameters. Contract renewal and/or extension decisions will be made in partnership with contractors at least three months before the contract expires. Based on contract and program parameters, contracts will add one service year or renew through December 2026.
4. **Fund Administration.** The fund administration team has faced challenges such as staffing shortages and navigating administering an entirely new fund and service line within the county government structure, but is gaining momentum in addressing the root causes of poverty. By strengthening community partnerships, reducing barriers to funding access, and providing technical assistance, Whatcom County Health & Community Services (WCHCS) aims to ensure inclusive and effective fund distribution while maintaining accountability and enhancing communication to engage stakeholders and beneficiaries.

## **The 2025-2026 Draft Healthy Children’s Fund Investment Strategies – a continuation from 2023-2024**

### **Early Learning & Care**

1. **Capital projects:** Provide funds to expand, renovate, or repurpose buildings to increase early learning and care slots.
2. **Work Force Development:** Coordinate current and develop additional pathways to ensure a stable early learning workforce.
3. **Family and Provider Subsidies:** Reduce child care costs for families that are cost burdened and provide subsidies to providers who accept WA State Working Connections Child Care Subsidy.
4. **Work Force Retention:** Retain current early learning and care educators and staff in the field and position the field to attract new employees for expansion by offering wage subsidies.
5. **Create Regional Early Learning and Care Hubs:** Develop regional shared administrative services for child care providers, co-locate early learning and care services, and auxiliary services such as PT, OT, and Behavioral and Mental Health services for children.
6. **Innovative approaches:** Programs that support various HCF goals related to Early Learning and Care.

## Support for Vulnerable Children

1. **Recruit Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce:** Recruitment of workforce and development and expansion of programs.
2. **Housing:** Programs for families with children 0-5 disproportionately experiencing housing instability.
3. **Parenting Supports:** Supports for families including infant basic needs, Doula supports and Obstetrics-based Social Worker.
4. **Co-Location and Coordination of Services:** Programs such as Single-Entry Access to Services (SEAS) and system coordination.

## The Spending Plan

**The 2025-2026 Draft Plan builds on the progress of the 2023-2024 plan by continuing and enhancing existing strategies while measuring their impact.** Reinforcing successful projects maximizes resources to expand services efficiently, ensuring long-term positive outcomes for children and families.

**The Implementation Team has focused on maximizing the potential of existing projects rather than introducing new initiatives.** In embracing this strategic approach and recognizing the ongoing efforts currently in progress and development, the Implementation Team recommends the following investment strategies for allocating 2025-2026 funds to support the Healthy Children's Fund's objectives effectively.

### Fund Allocation

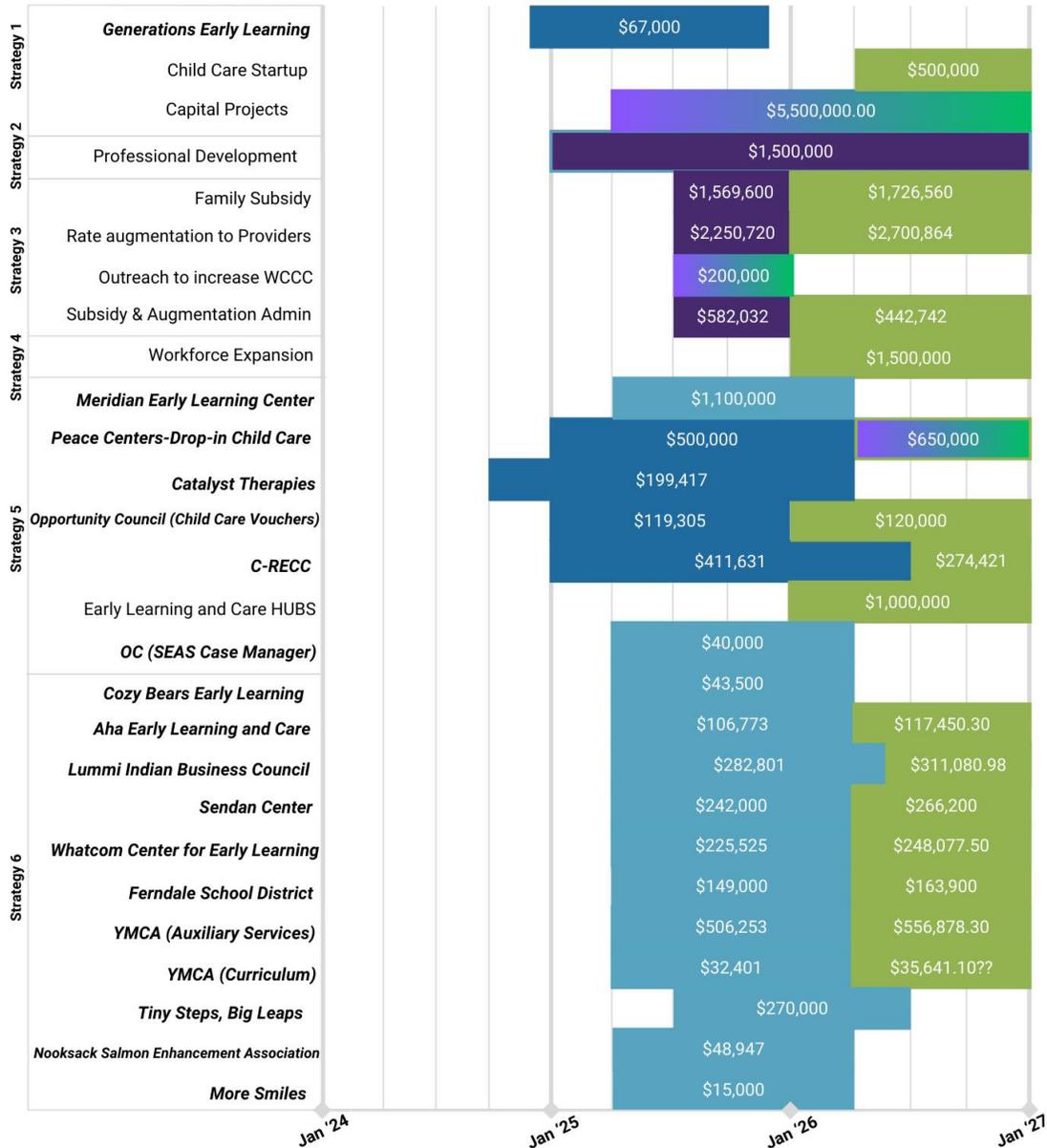
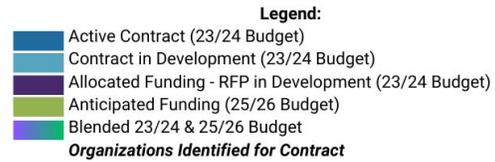
Revenues in Year 4, 2025, for the Healthy Children's Fund are estimated in the amount of \$10,000,000. While revenue may change in Year 4 due to several factors, estimates in this document are based on the same revenue in 2026 as in 2025. As indicated in the ordinance, 55-68% of revenues must be allocated to Early Learning & Care in the first two years of the fund, and 20-36% must be allocated to Supporting Vulnerable Children. These percentages were maintained by the County Council for 2025-2026. This spending plan allocates 68%, \$13,613,815 of the estimated revenues to Early Learning & Care, and 23% to Supporting Vulnerable Children, \$4,426,632.

**Table X. Expected Revenue Allocations for Years 1-4: 2023-2026**

	Ordinance Allocation Requirements	Years 2023-2024		Years 2025-2026	
		\$	%	\$	%
<b>Fund Administration</b>	9%	\$1,800,000	9%	\$1,800,000	9%
<b>Early Learning and Care</b>	55-68%	\$12,361,905	62%	\$13,613,815	68%
<b>Supporting Vulnerable Children</b>	20-36%	\$5,717,453	29%	\$4,423,632	23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,079,358</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$19,743,635</b>	<b>100%</b>

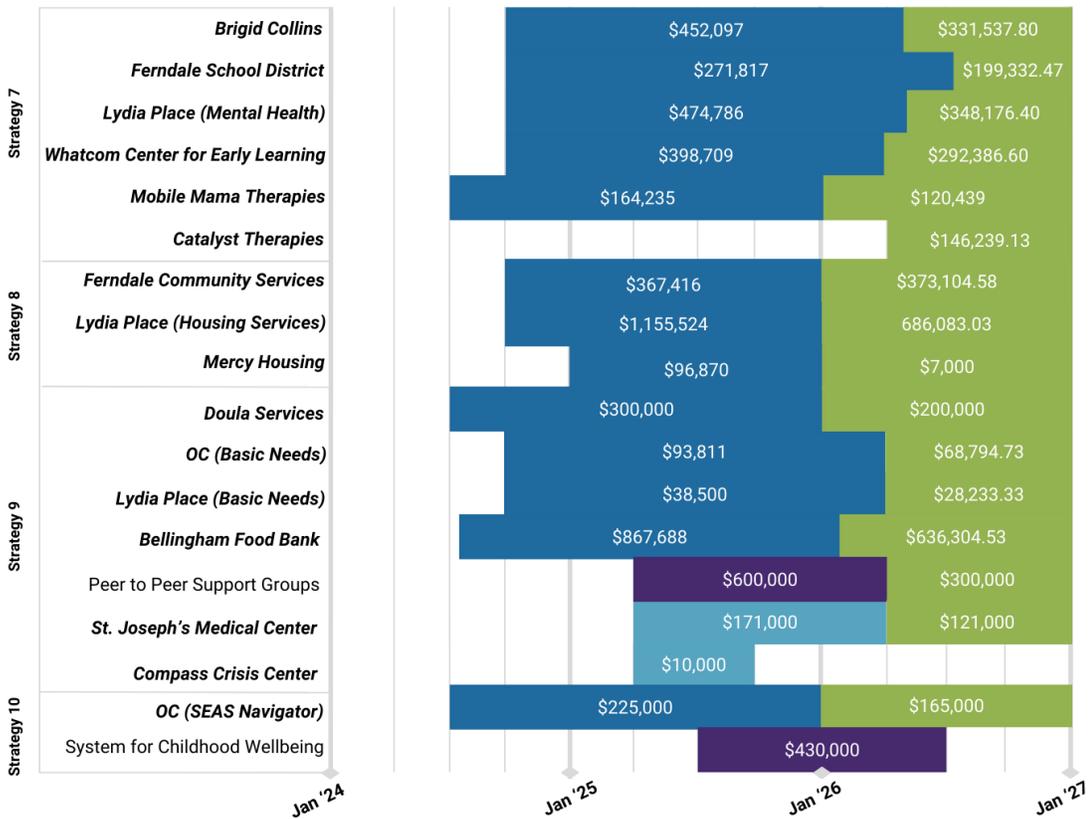
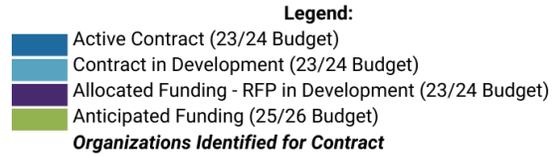
The following tables show detailed information about current and anticipated funding plans.

# Early Learning and Care



**Strategy 1** Fund small capitol projects to expand, renovate, or repurpose buildings to increase early learning & care slots.  
**Strategy 2** Coordinate and develop pathways to ensure a stable early learning & care workforce to deliver high-quality programs for children.  
**Strategy 3** Improve access to early learning & care through subsidies that reduce the cost of programs for cost burdened families.  
**Strategy 4** Ensure access to early learning & care by promoting the expansion and retention of early learning and care workforce.  
**Strategy 5** Create regional early learning & care hubs with shared administrative services, co-located early learning and other services for children and families and support for smaller providers in the County.  
**Strategy 6** Support innovative approaches to meet various Healthy Children's Fund goals related to early learning & care.

# Supporting Vulnerable Children



**Strategy 7** Recruit Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce to Whatcom County.

**Strategy 8** Develop/expand resources and programs for families experiencing housing instability.

**Strategy 9** Expand and enhance early parenting supports.

**Strategy 10** Integrate and co-locate services via coordinated access to resources.

# Gathering Community Feedback on the 2025-2026 Draft Implementation Plan

An Online survey was made available to all members of the Healthy Childrens Fund Implementation Team and the Child and Family Well Being Task Force to provide feedback on the Draft Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Teams recommendation is to launch a survey for all community members to provide feedback on the Implementation Plan after council has provided input and policy direction. Additionally, Implementation Team members recommend seeking targeted feedback from the groups they represent and were interested in receiving feedback from, suggestions include:

- Whatcom Child Care Coalition
- Whatcom Public Health Advisory Board
- Racial Equity Commission
- Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence
- Business & Commerce Committee
- Healthy Whatcom
- Whatcom Small City Mayors
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Current Healthy Children’s Fund Contractors

This feedback will help ensure the draft plan aligns with community priorities and supports the vision of the Healthy Children’s Fund.

## Evaluation and Metrics

Rigorous evaluation practices are essential for maintaining both short- and long-term accountability. In 2024, WCHCS collaborated with Village Reach to create a comprehensive evaluation and performance measurement plan. The plan was shaped by the Child & Family Well-being Task Force and other key stakeholders and finalized in July 2024. This plan is a living document that will be updated regularly and will undergo a substantial revision for the third implementation period from March 2027 to February 2029. Evaluations will occur every two years to assess performance and guide future planning.

The cycle of evaluation results, implementation planning, and updates to the evaluation plan will occur every two years, starting in 2025. Evaluation results will be published every two years, in the last December of the implementation period. They will then be used to inform the planning phase for the subsequent implementation period. After the revision of the two-year implementation plan, the evaluation plan will also be updated based on any modifications to evaluation questions or indicators that arise from new strategies or activities. This update will incorporate feedback from the Child and Family Well-being Task Force, and other stakeholders. This process may involve adding new elements if there are still unresolved questions or removing elements that did not yield meaningful outcomes.

The HCF evaluation follows the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework, focusing on performance accountability to ensure effective resource use and swift adaptation. Key evaluation questions include:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

Additionally, population-level accountability tracks broader outcomes, such as:

- Increased kindergarten readiness
- Reduced disparities in school readiness
- Decreased child maltreatment rates

## **Audit Process & Fund Administration Evaluation**

To ensure the Whatcom County Government identifies and removes barriers by improving internal systems, the Whatcom County Executive's Office, with consultation from the Child & Family Well-being Task Force, will retain an external government audit organization. A key component of the external audit will be analyzing the effectiveness of fund administration in ensuring the success of the Healthy Children's Fund and identifying areas for improvement and development.

Resolution AB2024-767, approved by the Whatcom County Council in January 2025, ensures the timely completion of an independent audit. The Whatcom County Executive's Office initiated selection of an external auditor in June and will issue a completed evaluation report by December 2025.

As fund administrator, WCHCS continues to refine internal processes, support diverse early learning providers, and reduce administrative barriers. Efforts include:

- Facilitating cross-departmental meetings to streamline contracting.
- Developing educational resources for providers new to government funding.
- Tracking contract development timelines to identify bottlenecks and improve efficiency.

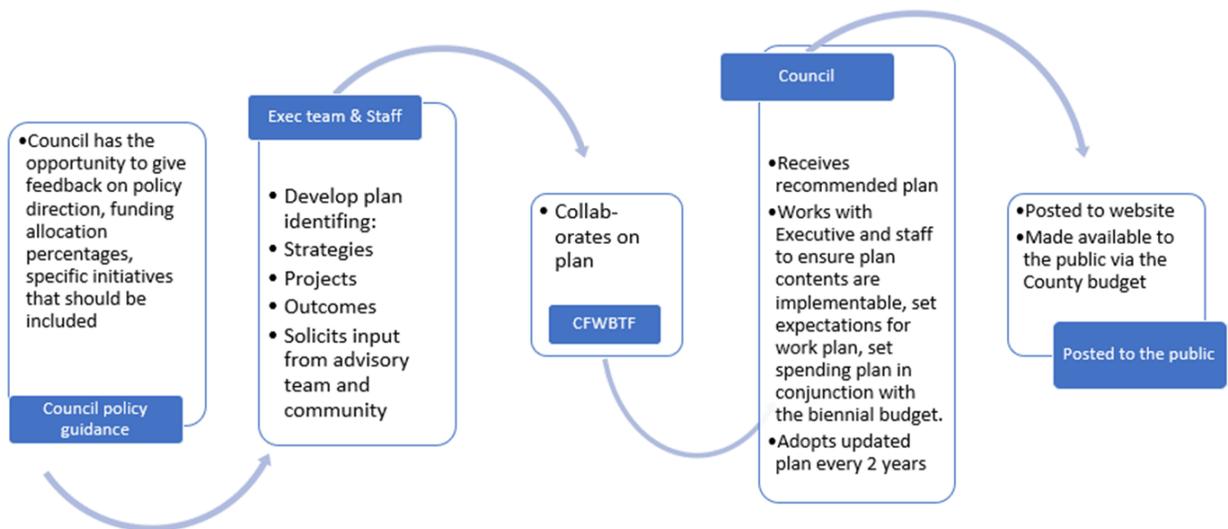
# Next Steps

The 2025–2026 Draft Implementation Plan represents a pivotal step in the continued evolution of the Healthy Children’s Fund. Grounded in the experiences and lessons of the past two years, this plan emphasizes stability, strategic enhancement, and measurable impact. It builds on strong community partnerships, proven strategies, and a robust framework of accountability to ensure that young children and families in Whatcom County receive the support they need to thrive.

With a focus on sustaining and scaling successful initiatives, strengthening administrative infrastructure, and enhancing data-driven decision-making, this plan affirms Whatcom County’s commitment to early learning, child and family well-being, and equitable access to opportunity. By aligning local investments with state and federal initiatives, expanding capacity through innovation and collaboration, and maintaining rigorous evaluation processes, the County positions itself to maximize the Healthy Children’s Fund’s long-term impact.

Together—with community voices, trusted partners, and public stewardship at the core—Whatcom County will continue to shape a future where every child enters school ready to learn, families are supported and resilient, and the systems that serve them are coordinated, inclusive, and effective.

After the draft plan receives community feedback, Whatcom County Health and Community Services staff will compile key themes and any proposed recommendations, and present them to the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force and the HCF Implementation Team for discussion and dialogue to refine the final draft before it is introduced to the County Executive and the County Council in November 2025. We anticipate several robust discussions with the Council in an open public meeting prior to the formal adoption of a final Implementation Plan.



## Appendices

### Implementation Team Position Description:



## Whatcom Healthy Children's Fund

### Implementation Team Member Position Description

*Whatcom County Health and Community Services is seeking individuals who are deeply committed to improving the lives of children and families in Whatcom County and believe in collaboration and collective action!*

In November 2022, Whatcom County voters approved Proposition 5, establishing the Healthy Children's Fund (HCF). This dedicated property tax will fund early learning & care programs and support vulnerable children for 10 years. As a member of the Implementation Team, you will be critical in shaping the fund's direction and ensuring its effectiveness in achieving its goals. This team consists of staff and community members who serve as the Fund's central body, holding the "bigger picture" of funding decisions, goals, and priorities and ensuring these funds are allocated effectively to increase:

- **Kindergarten readiness:** Helping children develop the skills and knowledge needed for success in school.
- **Affordable, high-quality child care:** Increasing access to quality and affordable child care for all families.
- **Mental health services:** Providing accessible and culturally responsive mental health support for young children and their families.
- **Support for vulnerable children and families:** Addressing the unique needs of children facing challenges such as poverty, homelessness, or abuse.

#### Responsibilities:

- **Guide the fund:** Utilize the wisdom of our local community and experience from model communities to provide strategic guidance on the Healthy Children's Fund's funding decisions, goals, and priorities, as outlined by the Implementation Plan.
- **Ensure effective implementation:** Work collaboratively with other team members and community partners to guide the successful implementation of the Healthy Children's Fund, as outlined in the Implementation Plan.
- **Make informed funding decisions:** Participate in rigorous discussions and evaluations to allocate funds strategically, maximizing impact for young children and families.
- **Ensure accountability:** Hold the fund accountable to the community by collaborating with the Child and Family Well-Being Task Force to monitor progress, evaluate outcomes, and make adjustments as needed.
- **Maintain high ethical standards:** Uphold the highest ethical standards of objectivity, fairness, confidentiality, and accountability.
- **Bridge the gap:** Foster collaboration between community agencies, government agencies, and other partners to leverage resources and expertise.
- **Champion equity and inclusion:** Advocate for equitable access to resources and programs, dismantling systemic barriers and promoting social justice.
- **Build diverse partnerships:** Forge strong relationships with diverse community partners, especially those serving underserved areas and populations in Whatcom County.

#### Core Values:

- Deep commitment to improving the lives of children and families in Whatcom County through providing access to early learning and care, mental/behavioral supports, and reducing the likelihood of becoming homeless.
- Belief in collaboration and collective action.
- Champion for equity and inclusion, advocating for dismantling systemic barriers and promoting social justice.

#### Experience and Expertise:

- **Community members:** Lived experience with the issues the HCF addresses, bringing diverse perspectives and insights.
- **Subject matter experts:** Expertise in early childhood development, education, social services, data analysis, fiscal management, mental/behavioral health, or community engagement, representing relevant government agencies, non-profit organizations, or other entities.

#### Skills and Abilities:

- Strategic thinking and decision-making
- Ability to participate in rigorous discussions and evaluations
- Strong communication and collaboration skills
- Ability to bridge the gap between community members impacted by decisions, government agencies, and other partners
- Commitment to ethical standards of objectivity, fairness, confidentiality, and accountability
- Ability to build diverse partnerships, especially with underserved communities

#### Additional desirable qualities:

- Understanding the Healthy Children's Fund goals and priorities, as the Implementation Plan outlines
- Passion for making a positive impact on young children and families
- Familiarity with Whatcom County and its early childhood landscape
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment

#### Time Commitment:

- Members are expected to attend regular team meetings, actively participate in discussions (at least 4 hours per month, with opportunities for more), and serve on application evaluation committees as needed to review and analyze funding proposals and other relevant materials (~10 hours per committee). Committees are voluntary, but we anticipate that each Implementation Team member will participate in at least one committee per year.
- There is no term limit, but Implementation Team members will undergo a yearly evaluation of participation to ensure this role is a good fit.

**Compensation:** We seek individuals with lived experience who have been impacted by the issues the Healthy Children's Fund addresses, bringing diverse perspectives and insights to the table. Compensation may be available if you have lived experience and are not otherwise compensated to participate in the Healthy Children's Fund Application Evaluation Committee and Implementation Team. Let us know in the [Implementation Team application](#) if you want to know more.

**Interested in joining the Implementation Team? Apply via [application here](#).**

**Implementation Team Roster:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization Affiliation</b>
Aida Rodriguez	Imagine Institute & Former In-Home Care Business Owner
Allison Williams	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Allyson Halverson	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Amy Rydel	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Ann Beck	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Ann Granberg	Child and Family Well Being Task Force and YMCA Child Care Program Director
Heather Flaherty	Chuckanut Health Foundation
Hunter Pluckebaum	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Jamie Desmul	Child and Family Well Being Task Force and YMCA Child Care Program Director
Janie Oliphant	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Jessie Thomson	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Jill Boudreau	Whatcom County Executive's Office
Kathryn DeFilippo	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Laurie Sailing	Opportunity Council
Marilyn Chu	WWU Professor Emeritus
Melissa Pickel	Brigid Collings
Meredith Hayes	Child Care Coalition & Chuckanut Health Foundation
Pamela Jons	Child and Family Well Being Task Force & Whatcom Community Foundation
Patty Boyce	United Way of Whatcom County
Ray Deck III	Child and Family Well Being Task Force & Skookum Kids
Sallye Quinn	Child and Family Well Being Task Force
Samya Lutz	City of Bellingham
Sarah Simpson	Whatcom County Health and Community Services
Susan Marks	Commission on Sexual and Domestic Violence
Tilda Doughty	Child and Family Well Being Task Force & Opportunity Council

**To view the full list of contracts administered through the Healthy Children's Fund, visit our website:**

[www.healthychildrensfund.org](http://www.healthychildrensfund.org)

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/4485/Where-Has-the-Money-Gone-So-Far>