



January 11, 2023

**ADDENDUM 1**

RFP #22-52

Funding for Childcare/Early Learning Facilities – Capital Program

**ATTENTION:**

This Addendum 1 consists of 4 pages, including this page.

All documented holders are hereby notified that the RFP documents for the subject RFP have been amended as hereinafter set forth. The following changes, additions, and/or deletions are hereby made a part of the RFP documents.

- The following pages contain clarification of information and responses to questions discussed at the informational webinar, held at 11:00 AM, Thursday, January 5, 2023.
- The next informational webinar is scheduled for 2:00 PM, Friday, February 24, 2023. See Section 2.2. of the RFP documents for further details.
- The deadline for responses remains 2:30 PM, Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

**NOTE:** This is an informational addendum only. Acknowledgment of the receipt of this addendum is not required in order for the response to be considered complete.

**ATTENDEES:**

1. Ann Beck – Community Services Manager, Whatcom County Health Department
2. Chelsea Johnson – Program Specialist, Whatcom County Health Department
3. Amy Martin – Grant Compliance Specialist, Whatcom County Finance
4. Jessie Thomson – Contract Coordinator, Whatcom County Health Department
5. David Foreman – CFO, Opportunity Council
6. Philippa Nye – Ally Community Development
7. Heather Powell – CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Whatcom County and Kids World
8. Gabriel Miles – Owner, Gabriel's Art Kids
9. Marilyn Chu – Board Member, Bellingham Childcare & Learning Center
10. Sara Maloney – Chief Development Officer, Boys & Girls Club of Whatcom County
11. Erin – Owner, Barefeet Farm School
12. Jenny Weinstein – Independent Consultant
13. Kenda Sipma – Manager, Center for Retention & Expansion of Childcare (C-RECC)
14. Jake - Scocon

**Whatcom County RFP #22-52**

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**Addendum 1 – Clarification of Information and Responses to Questions Discussed at the Informational Webinar**

**Questions:**

The County encourages brief answers to the questions, as indicated in the RFP. Questions and Answers during the conference follow. Please note corrections/clarifications to answers provided during the webinar.

**1. Q:** Does ARPA funding require any type of environmental review?

**A:** Standard federal grant environmental review requirements for constructions projects apply. **CORRECTION:** All projects must comply with applicable federal, state and local law. However, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) does not apply to Treasury’s administration of the SLFRF program, although projects supported with ARPA SLFRF funds may still be subject to NEPA review if they are also funded by other federal financial assistance programs or have certain federal licensing or registration requirements (ARPA SLFRF FAQ).

**2. Q:** Are Choice Limiting Conditions applicable to ARPA funds?

**A:** Choice limiting actions do not apply to ARPA SLFRF funds, however, projects may still be subject to regulations regarding choice limiting actions if they are also funded by other federal financial assistance programs (namely, HUD).

**3. Q:** Can Whatcom County lend the funds rather than grant them?

**A:** No, only grants will be provided as ARPA funds must be expended by December 31, 2026.

**4. Q:** Can these funds be used for acquisitions if a lease with an option to buy is already signed?

**A:** Yes. Refer to Section 1.7 of the RFP.

**5. Q:** Under what circumstances will contracts be extended through December 31, 2026?

**A:** Funds need to be obligated by December 31, 2024 but if a timeline for construction is extended, assurance would need to be provided to the County that a project would be completed and expended by December 31, 2026. Once funds are obligated at the end of 2024, funds may not be reallocated to another project if a project falls through after the December 2024 deadline.

**6. Q:** Is it an eligible expense for these funds for an existing child care program to renovate their existing center to expand the number of children being served rather than obtaining an additional facility?

**A:** Yes, if the expanded capacity is guaranteed to serve low income children.

**7. Q:** Do the grant funds only support subsidized slots for child care?

**A:** If the funds are used for a newly constructed or acquired building, a portion could fund subsidized slots. If the funds are used for expanding current license capacity, those newly expanded slots would need to serve low income children. Refer to Section 1.3 of the RFP.

**8. Q:** Does labor have to be paid as prevailing wage and does it trigger the Davis-Bacon Act?

**A:** Prevailing wage is required however, Davis-Bacon wages will not be required for capital projects funded under ARPA. **CLARIFICATION:** The rules for other funding sources contributing to the project may still apply.

All contracts made by a recipient or subrecipient in excess of \$100,000 with respect to a capital expenditure that involves employment of mechanics or laborers must include a provision for compliance with certain provisions of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, 40 U.S.C. 3702 and 3704, as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 5). Referenced here: 2 CFR Appendix II to Part 200(E).

**9. Q:** Should proposals include estimates or confirmation that demonstrate that a Contractor is willing to do the work at prevailing wages?

**A:** Yes. Refer to Section 1.7 of the RFP.

**10. Q:** Is this a one-time funding source?

**A:** This is the only allocation of funding for the Childcare Early Learning/Capital Program.

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- 11. Q:** If a provider applies in 2023 and there are unallocated funds remaining in 2024, can they apply again?  
**A:** **CORRECTION:** No, all applications for this funding must be submitted by March 7, 2023.
- 12. Q:** If a business has multiple child care sites, should one application for all of the sites be submitted or should one application be submitted for each site?  
**A:** One application for each site is recommended.
- 13. Q:** Can the funding be used for child care centers inside of Bellingham city limits?  
**A:** The goal is to serve more children outside of the City of Bellingham but applicants will not be disqualified if they are applying for locations within the City of Bellingham.
- 14. Q:** Do the federal procurement requirements indicated in the RFP include competitive bidding?  
**A:** Yes. Projects exceeding \$250,000 include sealed bid requirements. Bids would need to be solicited from multiple organizations or contractors and document justification of why they were selected.
- 15. Q:** Can a general contractor be selected through a competitive process that is qualitative and then bid subcontracts on a competitive basis?  
**A:** Qualitative and price aspects can be considered. **CLARIFICATION:** Federal procurement rules apply. The federal regulations regarding procurement are in CFRs 200.318-200.327 (2 CFR 200.217). Procedures are outlined in 2 CFR 200.320(b).
- 16. Q:** Is there a percentage of proposals for centers within the City of Bellingham that will be awarded funding?  
**A:** No. The more explanation about how a program/center is serving underserved communities and communities most disproportionately impacted by COVID, will receive more points during the evaluation process.
- 17. Q:** Can you provide an overview of the potential for how these funds will support the community?  
**A:** The child care landscape has been struggling for many years and was compounded by COVID-19. There are a lot of bigger picture goals for early learning in Whatcom County. For this specific RFP, the goal is to, 1) increase the number of slots and the number of children that can be served in Whatcom County and 2) increase opportunities for early learning in underserved areas such as the north and east county areas in order to ensure that people in all areas of the County can access early learning opportunities.
- 18. Q:** Many child care centers have decreased their licensed capacity since COVID because group sizes got smaller and/or programs were reconfigured. If a program wanted to renovate their facility back up to their licensed capacity to regain what they lost during COVID, is that possible or does it need to be an expansion beyond licensed capacity?  
**A:** It needs to be an expansion beyond licensed capacity.
- 19. Q:** Is priority given to programs serving infants and toddlers?  
**A:** Refer to Section 1.3 of the RFP.
- 20. Q:** Is it recommended to work with a consultant to assist with writing the proposal?  
**A:** It is recommended if a respondent is not familiar with the RFP process.
- 21. Q:** What type of reporting will be required?  
**A:** County contracts typically include progress reports or descriptions of activities submitted with reimbursement requests. Monitoring requirements and what monitoring occurs during the project period and following the project period depends on the project type. There may be site visits or other indications that the project is meeting the goals that are outlined in the contract. Depending on what the proposed outcomes are, monitoring and progress reporting will be different but primarily monthly invoices and most often, quarterly progress reporting on how well the goals, outcomes and timelines are being met, in order to ensure that spending and projects are on track.

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**22. Q:** Is this a deliverable and reimbursement contract?

**A:** This is dependent on the proposed project type but typically yes, reimbursement is based on deliverables and receipts.

**23. Q:** Can these proposals include a request for funding of acquisitions and improvements?

**A:** Yes. Refer to Section 1.6 of the RFP.

**End of Addendum 1 to Whatcom County RFP #22-52**