

# Early Learning Facilities Program (ELF)

Eligible Organizations Grant  
Funding Round Debriefing Webinar

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FEBRUARY 28, 2024



Washington State  
Department of  
**Commerce**



# We strengthen communities



HOUSING AND  
HOMELESSNESS



INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
BROADBAND



SMALL BUSINESS  
ASSISTANCE



ENERGY



PLANNING AND TECH  
ASSISTANCE



COMMUNITY SERVICES



CRIME VICTIMS AND  
PUBLIC SAFETY



ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

# Eligible Organizations Program Eligibility

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- Increased capacity for ECEAP and/or WCCC
  - Must be within licensing limits for the current or proposed facility space
- Early Achievers participation
- Project costs must be eligible per the Program Guidelines
- Programmatic goal to provide a minimum of 25% non-state funds in matching funds
- Project to be completed in the current biennium





# Summary of Application Process

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- The Eligible Organizations Funding Round was very competitive
- Funding available: \$31,686,000.00
- 212 applications received, requesting \$196,030,032.87
- Only 16% of requested funds were awarded
- 44 out of 212 applications were selected



# Review Team and Review Process

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- **Commerce ELF Team**

- Conducted initial review
- 6 staff reviewed all 212 pre-applications for program eligibility, project readiness, accuracy and completion
- Determined if each application was eligible to move forward to our external review team

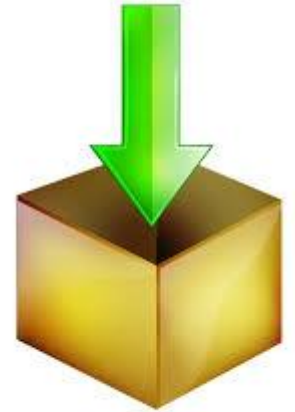
- **External Review Team**

- Made up of 10 subject matter experts in the early learning, community support, and finance fields
- Reviewed 154 applications
- Each reviewer scored 20 questions with assigned point values
- Each reviewer voted for the projects that should be funded based on the application

# Review Team and Review Process

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- All scoring data was exported into Excel
- Projects were divided into five categories:
  - Pre-Design
  - Pre-Development
  - Minor Renovations
  - Major Renovations / Acquisition (\$200,000 - \$999,999)
  - Major Renovations / Acquisition (\$1,000,000 - \$2,500,000)



# Review Team and Review Process

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- Each category was sorted by highest to lowest score and highest to lowest votes for recommendation of funding
- Only the highest scoring projects with a majority of votes recommended for funding were awarded
- The exported scoring data and votes were anonymous to ensure objectivity in the decision making process

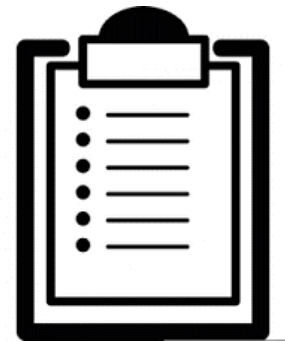


# A Few Reasons Projects Were Not Selected

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- **Low Scores / Votes**

- Site control not established (Deed, Lease, or site identified)
- Project budget was not fully funded or no evidence of other funding to provide matching funds
- Not enough detail in the Scope of Work
- Project would not be complete by June 30, 2025
- Increased number of subsidized spaces would not be licensable by DCYF
- Missing bids or bids did not support the requested funding amount
- Required readiness tasks incomplete or marked NA when required
- Project timeline not feasible
- Incorrect funding category selected for the proposed project





# Award Decisions

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- All award decisions are final
- 168 applications were declined
- Commerce is unable to offer individual debrief meetings



**Helpful information for your  
next grant application**



# Recommendations for Future Funding Rounds

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- Read the Program Guidelines and Notice of Funding Opportunity carefully
- Contact licensor for a coach, Imagine Institute for language assistance, local chamber of commerce for application completion assistance



# What phase is your project in?

## Idea Phase

In the **Idea Phase**, it's best to start with a Pre-Design grant.

- You have an idea and are ready to work with professionals to complete feasibility studies. ([DCYF can assist with this](#))

## Planning Phase

In the **Planning Phase**, you've already completed the Pre-Design activities and are ready to move to a Pre-Development grant.

- You are ready to develop your architectural plans, get contractors' bids to build the project, and may be ready to start getting building permits and making utility connections.

## Construction Phase

- In the **Construction Phase**, you are ready to start building your project with a Major Construction, Renovation, or Acquisition grant.
- You've completed both Pre-Design and Pre-Development activities and you're ready to start construction on your project.

# Eligible Organizations Funding Categories

## Pre-Design

**\$10,000  
to  
\$21,605**

### Example:

To conduct the feasibility study for creating a new child care center.  
(Start point for large projects)

## Pre-Development

**\$20,000  
to  
\$216,052**

### Example:

Early learning facility site preparation and architecture & engineering work.  
(Next step for large projects)

## Minor Renovations

**\$20,000  
to  
\$216,052**

### Example:

Upgrading an existing building to expand child care capacity.  
(Family home smaller expansion projects)

## Major Construction, Major Renovation, and Facility Purchase

**\$200,000  
to  
\$2,500,000**

### Example:

Purchasing and renovating a facility to open a new child care center.  
(Family home large projects)

Idea Phase

Planning Phase

Construction Phase



# Other Funding Opportunities

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- If additional funding is provided by the legislature, then the next projects down on the sorted score sheet may be selected for funding
  - Potential awardees will receive an award letter in August if selected for funding
- Other funding opportunities
  - Enterprise Community Partners: Renovation and Expansion Grant Opportunity-- Expected Spring, 2024
    - For more information please [use this link to sign up for updates from Enterprise.](#)
  - [Washington Early Learning Loan \(WELL\) Fund](#)
  - [USDA Loans for Rural Non-Profits](#)
  - [Small Business Administration Loans](#)
- Grant opportunities through [DCYF](#)

# Other Funding Opportunities with Commerce

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- Please check our website:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/capital-facilities/early-learning-program/>

- The Health and Safety Minor Renovations Round opened 2/1/2024 (General Applications due 4/16/2024)
- The Public School Districts round opens 4/30/2024
- Sign up for email updates on the bottom right of the webpage to be informed when funding rounds open



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Washington State  
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**Thank you for  
attending!**