



General Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND GENERAL

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING AGENDA

Thursday, June 5, 2025

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 11:00AM

I. Call to Order

1. Confirm quorum present
2. Approval of draft minutes from 5.1.2025 (see agenda packet)
3. Suggested additions to today's agenda
4. Brief announcements

II. Public Forum

III. Time-Sensitive New Business

1. Review and finalize announcement of the Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program for recommendation to Council (see agenda packet)
2. Identify local providers to notify about the grant program application process and likely deadlines

IV. Continuation of Business from May Meeting

1. Business engagement work plan - finalize questionnaire and plan (see agenda packet)
 - A. Businesses to be approached
 - B. Questions to be asked
 - C. Discuss timeline for this project
2. Update chart to reflect progress on the committee's short and longer term goals (see agenda packet)

V. Adjournment to July 3 Meeting

1. Review and decide on grant program recipients and award amounts for recommendation to Council
2. Finalize plan for interviewing local businesses regarding childcare needs
3. Continue discussion on cultivating future funding
4. Suggestions of other topics from committee members
5. Adjournment

If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Kerrick Gooden at citymanageroffice@ashlandoregon.gov or 541.488.6002 (TTY phone number 1.800.735.2900). Notification at least three business days before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**ASHLAND GENERAL
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING
MINUTES
May 1, 2025**

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 11:00AM

These are draft minutes until approved by the committee.

I. Call to Order

Therkelsen called the meeting to order at 11:03am

Members present: Nancy Seward, Paula Hyatt, Jessica Therkelsen, Joanie Keller-Hand, and Lisa Verner

Staff present: Staff Liaison Kerrick Gooden, Deputy City Manager Jordan Rooklyn

Guests present: Kurt Hildebrand, Allan Sandler, Breanna Gutierrez, Brooke Hornecker, Sam Fung, Madison Fung

1. Confirm quorum present

Confirmed

2. Approval of draft minutes from 4.3.2025 (see agenda packet)

Seward motioned to approve minutes from the meeting of 4.3.2025.

The motion was seconded by Hyatt.

Vote: Seward, Hyatt, Therkelsen, Keller-Hand, and Verner- Yes. Motion passed.

3. Suggested additions to today's agenda

None

4. Brief announcements

Hyatt spoke of receiving positive feedback regarding the committee's work from Soroptomists. Verner spoke of an upcoming development code update that will provide outright permitted use for childcare in certain zones.

II. Public Forum

Committee members and guests exchanged introductions. Madison and Sam Fung are involved with commercial real estate and invited the three guests in attendance. Gutierrez and Hornecker, owner and director (respectively) of Little Sprouts Enrichment Academy, spoke of looking to support childcare needs in Ashland. Sandler spoke of his interest and previous efforts to develop a childcare center with a theater production component. Rooklyn spoke of having an economic development focus as Deputy City Manager. Gutierrez spoke of having experienced zoning challenges when attempting to open childcare centers in the past, and of the difficulty in securing quality staffing, especially for special-needs children. Verner spoke that the earliest possible activation of the childcare zoning changes in Ashland would be July 3 after successful first and second readings at City Council.

III. Continuation of Business from April Meeting

1. Business engagement work plan (see agenda packet)

Therkelsen and Verner provided background on this item. Verner spoke about a questionnaire for consideration as part of the business engagement work plan.

Discussion turned to refining the business list and what business questions would be asked. Committee discussed working on this individually and bringing it back to the committee for review. Business list ideas can be sent to Verner for compilation through Gooden, and Rooklyn offered to assist with putting out the questionnaire when ready

for City review.

Gutierrez spoke about having worked with Asante on a cooperative model/business proposal for an employer-sponsored childcare benefit as part of their benefit package. Discussion regarding benefit plans with Flexible Spending Account (FSA) and/or Health Spending Account (HSA) plans and discussed how payments don't keep up with childcare costs. Discussion included the value of regional partnerships from Ashland to Medford, and the anticipation that funding for Head Start will be adversely impacted.

2. Updating chart about progress on the committee's goals. (see document in agenda packet for the September 2024 version with suggestions for inclusion in red)

Verner encouraged members to review.

3. Cultivating future funding beyond June 2026 - discussion with Kurt Hildebrand and Shasta Zieke of the Oregon Community Foundation. Kurt is the Philanthropic Advisor and Regional Director of the Southern Oregon regional office. Shasta is Senior Donor Relations Advisor for Southern Oregon.

Hildebrand spoke about the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) as the largest foundation in Oregon for over 50 years, with a regional office in Medford. Hildebrand spoke about options for endowment potential, including endowment partnerships and donor-advised funds. Endowment partnerships can issue funds each year with a 4-5% distribution - an endowment of \$2.5 million would be needed to execute the annual level of grant funds the committee was able to issue before. Donor-advised funds are fully expendable to give all out, but can only go to non-profits or government entities. Strategies for raising this size of an endowment were discussed, including the consideration of setting up a separate nonprofit to collect funds over time. Hildebrand spoke that OCF's leadership Council has identified childcare as a top priority and has a Special Gifts Officer that may be able to help with this.

IV. Adjournment to June 5 Meeting

1. Continuation of cultivating future funding: Meeting with an investment banker at Rogue Credit Union and Bret Anderson with SOU's Institute for Applied Sustainability

None

2. Suggestions for topics from committee members

None

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07pm



Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program

The City of Ashland is accepting grant applications for the Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program for the 2024/2025 fiscal year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).

Purpose

Ashland is an early learning and childcare desert, and the City Council has developed this program with the express purpose of increasing affordability and access to quality early learning and childcare programs for the benefit of working families.

The Grant Program's Goals Are to:

- Address Ashland's need for expanded early childhood care services
- Respond to households seeking affordability & financial stability
- Attract and retain a local workforce through enhanced quality of life and affordability
- Reinforce & propel kindergarten readiness in collaboration with partners
- Support economic development in Ashland

Program Funding:

Up to \$135,000 will be available for distribution under the Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program.

Additionally, the Ashland City Council has authorized funding only through the 2023/25 Biennium.

Funding in future years is not guaranteed.

Program Structure:

1. Program providers apply for the Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program funding in any of the following categories:
 - a. Sliding Scale Scholarships
 - b. Infrastructure Investment
 - c. Staffing Support, Special Needs Integrated Programming, and/or Behavioral Support.
2. Applications are received and reviewed by the Affordable Childcare and Early Learning Ad Hoc Committee and the City of Ashland Finance Department.
3. Upon completion of its review, the committee makes award recommendations.
4. Recommendations are presented to the City Manager for final approval of grant awards.
5. Each provider/grant recipient reports quarterly on the progress toward grant award goals as outlined under "Reporting" below.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for Early Childhood Affordability Grant Funding, childcare providers must meet the following criteria:

1. Active childcare license IN GOOD STANDING with the Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD) of the State of Oregon's Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC).
2. Be a legal entity currently registered to do business in the State of Oregon.
3. Be located within Ashland City limits and provide programming within the City of Ashland.
4. Carry liability insurance as follows:
 - a. Commercial General Liability, Amount \$2M / Per Occurrence 2M / Aggregate \$3M, and
 - b. For those transporting children: Commercial Auto Liability, Amount \$2M/ Per Occurrence \$2M.
 - c. Sexual Abuse/Molestation Liability Insurance. Amount \$2M/ Per Occurrence \$2M / Aggregate \$3M.

Instructions for Completing All Grant Applications

A Complete Application Includes:

1. The "City of Ashland Early Childhood Affordability Grant Application", which includes a description of the program's purpose, rationale for the funding request, complete explanation of procedures to be followed in carrying out the proposed project, and line-item budget with explanation for all major budget items.
2. Documentation of an active childcare license with the State of Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD).
3. Proof of insurance commensurate with the coverage levels above.
4. Documentation of the organization's financial viability (990 tax form, recent income tax filings, liability insurance coverage, etc.).
5. Pricing and rate information.
 - a. Note – if awarded grant funding, a provider may not increase their agreed rates to the households participating in the scholarship program for the duration of the award period.
6. Documentation of non-profit status, if applicable.

Additional Instructions the Grant Application

A. Grant Funds for Sliding Scale Scholarships

1. Fully describe your project, including the need you are addressing and how this investment will solve the need.
2. If the grant is to be used for sliding scale scholarships, grantees work with families in their programs, and applying to their programs, to assess need and award scholarships to qualified households.
 - a. The city will not assess individual households. This is the responsibility of the program provider.
 - b. Households receive affordability scholarships through June 2025.
 - i. The Early Childhood Affordability Program serves households at or below 200% of the Southern Oregon Median Income.

Household Size	200% of Southern Oregon Median Income
2	\$129,500
3	\$145,630
4	\$161,750
5	\$174,750
6	\$187,750
7	\$200,630
8	\$213,630

3. Scholarships must be awarded according to the following criteria:
 - a. Scholarship recipient is an Ashland resident, or an employee of an Ashland based business.
 - b. Scholarship recipients are between the ages of zero and four years, eleven months.
 - c. Scholarship recipients demonstrate a financial need.
 - i. Financial need is defined as a household earning at or below 200% of the Southern Oregon Median Income.
 - d. Financial needs must be established by the household's most recent W-2, or pay stub, and verified by the early learning service provider.
4. Reporting requirements:
 - a. All Early Childhood Affordability Grant recipients must provide quarterly reporting to the City of Ashland. Reporting requirements are necessary to ensure appropriate use of funds, evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program, and assess results for future planning.
 - b. Provide a summary narrative of scholarship work completed, including:
 - i. Total number of scholarships awarded, and number of families served.

- ii. Attendance of scholarship recipients (number attending 90% of the time, 75% of the time, less than 50% of program time).
- iii. Average scholarship award value, and scholarship award value range (smallest vs. largest scholarship).
- iv. Total enrollment without the Early Childhood Affordability Grant dollars versus total enrollment with the grant dollars.
- v. Current waitlist count, if any.
- c. Provide a revenue and expenditure statement, or profit and loss statement, demonstrating the cashflow of grant dollars.
- d. If applicable, indicate if the Early Childhood Affordability Grant dollars supporting scholarships enabled your program to use other monies for investment in quality of service, curriculum, educators, and/or infrastructure.

B. Grant Funds for Infrastructure Projects:

- 1. Fully describe your project, including the need you are addressing and how this investment will solve the need.
- 2. For projects between \$0 and \$24,999 Include two quotes. If the project is between \$25,000 and \$150,000, then provide three quotes. If three quotes are not reasonably available, fewer will suffice, but the applicant shall make a written record of the effort made to obtain those quotes or proposals.
- 3. Provide proof of site control – for example deed, property tax statement, lease agreement or a long-term rental agreement.
- 4. If renting or leasing, provide documentation of approval of the property owner.
- 5. Give your complete schedule for installation and performance to schedule milestones.
- 6. Reporting requirements:
 - a. All Early Childhood Affordability Grant recipients must provide quarterly reporting to the City of Ashland. Reporting requirements are necessary to ensure appropriate use of funds, evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program, and assess results for future planning.
 - b. Provide a summary narrative of infrastructure work completed, including:
 - i. Copies of permits required for installation, if required (example, fencing for a play area)
 - ii. Provide a revenue and expenditure statement, or profit and loss statement, demonstrating the cashflow of grant dollars.
 - c. Upon completion, provide an inspection report if appropriate, or photo of the completed installation.

C. Grant Funds for Staffing, Special Needs Inclusive Programming, and/or Behavioral Support Programming:

1. Fully describe your project, including the need you are addressing and how this investment will solve the need. Include the following:
 - a. Number of staff to be hired.
 - b. Indicate the number expected to be part-time and full-time, part-year and full-year.
 - c. Indicate the number of children to be supported by the grant funds.
2. Reporting requirements:
 - a. All Early Childhood Affordability Grant recipients must provide quarterly reporting to the City of Ashland. Reporting requirements are necessary to ensure appropriate use of funds, evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program, and assess results for future planning.
 - b. Provide a summary narrative of what work was completed, including information about your program capacity and/or service impact of additional staff on programming offered.
 - c. Provide a revenue and expenditure statement, or profit and loss statement, demonstrating the cashflow of grant dollars.

Final Note: Underused funding shall be subject to recapture by the City of Ashland and may be re-awarded to other programs or held in the General Fund for investment, as recommended by the Affordable Childcare and Early Learning Ad Hoc Committee.

Providers may be required to comply with Ashland's living wage requirement. According to Ashland Municipal Code, if the amount of the grant is \$24,050.68 or more, Consultant is required to comply with Chapter 3.12 of the Ashland Municipal Code by paying a living wage, as defined in that chapter, to all employees performing Work under the grant agreement and to any Subcontractor who performs 50% or more of the Work under the grant agreement.



City of Ashland Early Childhood Affordability Grant Application

ORGANIZATION LEGAL NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

OTHER NAMES ORGANIZATION KNOWN BY (DBA)

ADDRESS

Street City State Zip

FEDERAL EMPLOYER ID NUMBER (FEIN): _____

AMOUNT REQUESTED \$ _____

GRANT CONTACT:

Name _____

Title: _____

Telephone _____ **E-mail** _____

Certification

The information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Print Name

1. **Description of Organization** (limit responses to no more than half page)
 - a. Outline of organizational priorities/mission and values, equity commitment, childcare philosophy, history, board membership, etc.
 - b. List of staff including any formal and continuing education and licensing.
 - c. Description of type of childcare services offered including:
 - Total number of available seats
 - Seats currently filled
 - Seats currently open
 - Number of classrooms
 - License capacity per room
 - Staffing ratio
 - Are you licensed to serve infants or toddlers?
 - Program year – Calendar Year or Academic Year
 - Website, if any

2. **Select Grant Application Type**

Sliding Scale Scholarships (Complete section 3.A.)

Infrastructure Investment (Complete section 3.B.)

Staffing Support, Inclusive Special Needs Programming and/or
Behavioral Support (Complete section 3.C.)

3. **Please complete the below questions that pertain to the grant type you are applying for:**

A. Sliding Scale Scholarships

- i Proposed draft sliding scale used to identify/verify the level of need and priority in awarding affordability scholarships.

- ii Outline of required information from the household used to evaluate their potential scholarship.

B. Infrastructure Investment

For projects between \$0 and \$24,999 include two quotes. For projects between \$25,000 and more provide three quotes. If three quotes are not received, make a note of which agencies did not respond to the request for quote.

- i Project description, including the need you are addressing and how this investment will solve the need.

Include a copy of the following as applicable to your application.

- ii Proof of site control – for example deed, property tax statement, lease agreement or long-term rental agreement
- iii If renting or leasing, approval of the property owner

C. Staffing Support, Special Needs Inclusive Programming and/or Behavior Support

- i Please describe the type of staffing resources supported by this grant request.
- ii How many full-time equivalents (FTE's) will the grant request support, and for what duration (ex. 6-months, 1 year)?
- iii What qualifications are required to meet the staffing resource objectives?
- iv How does the addition of the staff member enable greater program capacity, expand program offerings, or add program support?

4. **List any other funding sources that have been considered or received. (Such as Preschool Promise, Head Start, SNAP, foundations/donors, local employers, etc.)**

5. **Attach the following:**
 - i. Documentation of state certification/licensure of applicant/childcare facilities
 - ii. Proof of Insurance
 - iii. Documentation of organization's financial viability (990 tax form, recent income tax filings, liability insurance coverage, etc.)
 - iv. Provider rate/pricing structure
 - v. Documentation of non-profit status, if applicable

Submit application and required documentation to
citymanageroffice@ashlandoregon.gov

Note: If awarded funds you will need to sign a contract with the City of Ashland and provide a W-9.

Please direct any questions to citymanageroffice@ashlandoregon.gov

Ad Hoc Committee on **Affordable Childcare and** Early Learning and Childcare
BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT WORK PLAN

(Suggestions in red by John Love)

MORE DETAIL (fits into BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT WORK PLAN outline Version 2-
March 21,2025):

2. Businesses to contact:

- a. Paddington family of stores (owners: Pam & Kelly Jean Hammond and Joe Collins)
- b. SOU: VP for Finance & Administration Dr Carson Howell? Human Resources AVP for DEI? ?
- c. City of Ashland: Human Resources Director Molly Taylor
- d. TC Chevy: (owner: Alan DeBoer)
- e. **Butler Ford:**
- f. **Maple Ridge Senior Living:**
- g. Asante Community Hospital: Human Resources?
- h. Oregon Shakespeare Festival: Human Resources?
- i. Market of Choice: owner & CEO Rick Wright
- j. Ashland Food Coop:
- k. **Albertsons/Safeway:**
- l. **Shop N Kart:**
- m. RiteAid:
- n. Bi-Mart:
- o. YMCA: Heidi Hill, CEO
- p. Rogue Credit Union:

4. Questions to ask businesses:

- a. Number of employees? With children below age 18? With children ages 0 to 5? **Do we need to know about families with children under 18?**
- b. Do **any of** your employees have/**use** childcare?
- c. Do any employees need childcare **but can't find it or afford it?**

- d. ~~Are you~~ Has your the business been impacted by the lack of childcare in this area?
- e. ~~Does childcare impact your ability to retain employees? Does it impact absenteeism?~~
- e. If so, does it ☐ affect your ability to retain employees?
☐ affect employees absenteeism?
☐ have other impacts on your business (please explain

- f. Do you offer “tuition” or to help with tuition for childcare for your employees?
- g. Do you have room onsite for a childcare facility?
- h. If yes, would you be open to having one constructed if funding were availalbe?
- i. Would you join a group of employers to provide or to subsidize childcare for your employees?
- j. If an endowment were created to support/subsidize childcare slots in Ashland, would you contribute to it? Annually?
- k. What else would you like to tell us about how your businesses (your business) are is impacted by the challenges employees have in accessing childcare?
- l. Have you heard how other businesses are affected?

Ad Hoc Committee on Affordable Childcare and Early Learning

Progress on Short- and Longer-Term Goals

September 5, 2024

Suggested updates (in red) for discussion at June 5, 2025 committee meeting

Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
1. Advocate at the state level for Preschool Promise slots to be made available to programs currently licensed and operating in Ashland. A traditional Preschool Promise class supports 18 children. Having 18 Preschool promise slots would be a significant asset to our community and help greatly in supporting Ashland working families. Preschool Promise supports families earning at or below 200% of the FPL with free early learning opportunities.	The committee has not done specific lobbying yet, but the Ashland Family YMCA has received state funding for ____ Preschool Promise slots.	Reach out to Children’s World and the other Ashland childcare providers to inform them about the process for applying for Promise Preschool funding.
2. Engage local businesses to assess their employees’ needs, and investigate potential partnerships	Committee members published “The Economics of Musical Chairs” in the local online Ashland.news, April 2024. Final version of article for Southern Oregon Business Journal approved at 4-3-25 meeting; City Council approved for distribution at May 6 Council meeting.	Prepare article for Southern Oregon Business Journal that would expand on the Ashland.news article. John spoke with founder/editor Jim Teece, and he’s eager to accept our submission. Aim for about 2,000 words (at least twice as long as the April article). John will bring a draft outline to the committee’s September 4 meeting.

Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
	Article submitted to Southern Oregon Business Journal on 5/13/25.	Distribute article more widely. Interview local employers to assess the nature and extent of the impact of their employees having difficulties finding childcare they can afford.
3. Improve public awareness of early learning programs currently available in Ashland.	The team worked with a variety of partners, including SOESD, EQQUS Work Force Solutions, Business Oregon, SBDC, ODHS, DELC, and multiple local providers (see #4).	Continue reaching out to these partners as the committee expands its work. Also see #5. Are there specific things we can do?
4. Work with providers to ensure they are aware of grant opportunities and business development opportunities that support their long-term viability.	Committee chair Paula Hyatt reached out to all local, licensed providers (including YMCA, Children's World), Business Oregon, Asante, and local movers and shakers (including Peter Buckley, SOU President Richard Bailey, Cynthia Anderson) to ensure awareness of the city's Affordability Grant program announcement and the state's DELC/Business Oregon Childcare Infrastructure Grant opportunity in August/September 2024. In late March 2025, forwarded Business Oregon's 3-26-25 announcement of second round of Child Care Infrastructure Fund grants to YMCA, Children's World, SOU, Food Coop, Sunstone, and others.	Continue reaching out to all these providers and organizations as the committee learns about new grant- and business-development opportunities. Contact Ashland providers when the City announces the Affordability Grants application availability

Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
5. Engage Ashland's Community Development department regarding land use for early learning programs and how we can best support providers looking to locate programs in our city.	Chair Hyatt and committee member Verner met with Sunstone, and Hyatt also facilitated a meeting between the Sunstone's ED and Sunny Spicer and her team at Oregon Center for Creative Learning.	Work with Community Development to get a "place at the table" in connection with the group involved in planning the Croman Mills housing development. Explore with them possibilities for including a childcare center in that development. Advocate for one that could (a) serve <u>all</u> the children, 0-5 years of age, who might reasonably be expected in the number of families who would reside in the new development and (b) be located convenient to RVTD's expected bus line. Also determine the agency/organization/business that could apply for a grant in the next round of Child Care Infrastructure Program funding, and support them in submitting an application.
6. Explore strategies for colocating childcare and affordable housing.	NA	Include colocation plans in the application coming out of #5 and meet with SOU President Bailey or his designee regarding the project they have in the works replacing an old dorm with senior housing to explore childcare colocation.
7. Are there other short-term goals we want to tackle?		

Goal	Activities to Date	Possible Future Activities
Longer-Term Goals		
1. Investigate, and support, development opportunities in infant and toddler care in Ashland.	Recommended that Children's World receive full funding requested for the city's Affordability Grant because of CW's offering of toddler care slots.	See short term goal #5.
2. Investigate, and support, development opportunities in care for children with special needs in Ashland.	Recommended that the Family YMCA receive full funding requested for the city's Affordability Grant because of its request for funding a part-time behavioral support specialist. (September 2023)	Advocate for the city to continue its Affordability Grant Program into the next biennium, and if possible, increase funding to reach more families enrolling children with special needs. With future grant funding available from the city, investigate additional funding opportunities.
3. Cultivate future funding.	Therkelsen and Love met with Kurt Hildebrand and Shasta Zieke of the Oregon Community Foundation to discuss options for endowment partnerships and donor-advised funds. Hildebrand attended the committee's May 1 meeting to discuss several possibilities. (Childcare is one of OCF's top priorities.)	Consider establishing a nonprofit organization to solicit donations and grants. Talk with OCF's Special Gifts Officer.