

**ASHLAND GENERAL
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING
MINUTES
June 5, 2025**

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 11:00AM

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 11:05

Members present: Lisa Verner, Lynn Ransford, John Love, Jessica Therkelsen, Joanie Keller-Hand, Nancy Seward, Anne Sebanc

Also present: Council Liaison Dylan Bloom and Staff Liaison Kerrick Gooden

1. Confirm quorum present

Confirmed

2. Approval of draft minutes from 5.1.2025 (see agenda packet)

Verner moved to approve minutes. Motion seconded by Keller-Hand. All ayes. Motion passed

3. Suggested additions to today's agenda

none

4. Brief announcements

Anne Sebanc was welcomed and introductions exchanged.

OCDC (Oregon Child Development Coalition) received funding for the collocation of childcare at the Sunstone Housing project.

The approved Biennial budget includes the requested \$235K for the Early Childhood Grant Program for the 2025-27 biennium.

II. Public Forum

none - no members of the public were present.

III. Time-Sensitive New Business

1. Review and finalize announcement of the Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program for recommendation to Council (see agenda packet)

Changes from last year's program was discussed. Decisions and changes included:

- Dates and information throughout the document were updated to reflect the program for the next fiscal year, 2025-26.
- Program Funding: The committee decided to leave the first-year program offering as it was last year - 'up to \$135K'.
- Program Structure: The committee discussed and decided to leave final grant award approval with the City Manager following committee recommendation as it was last year, instead of requiring final Council approval.
- Eligibility: The committee discussed whether to require the provision of a full-day program, or to instead consider scoring this higher as a preference during review. The committee considered the important role of licensed home childcare programs in meeting the needs of infants and toddlers. The committee decided to add under **Eligibility: add a number 5: Preference will be given for programs striving to provide full-time 5-day-a-week care and those serving infants and/or toddlers.**
- Discussed and decided to change Southern Oregon Median Income to Jackson County Median Income - The eligibility chart will be updated with most current available numbers for this.

Seward moved to approve the changes as reviewed by the committee. Motion was seconded by Ransford. All Ayes. Motion passed.

2. Identify local providers to notify about the grant program application process and likely deadlines

The committee discussed providers that have expressed interest. The staff liaison will notify the committee when the program goes live, so that members can notify providers.

IV. Continuation of Business from May Meeting

1. Business engagement work plan - finalize questionnaire and plan (see agenda packet)

The committee discussed the questions to ask businesses and decided:

- Item a: only ask for the number of employees and strike b and c.
- Add to item f: add an extra question with a write-in option: What other assistance do you offer?

- Item g: good as-is.
- Add to item H: If someone else was willing to run a childcare program, would you be willing to have it onsite?

The committee discussed using this questionnaire for continuity with in-person interviews and/or as an online survey for the purpose of collecting data regarding the need for childcare as perceived by local businesses. The committee's final edits will be reviewed by the Legal department for approval to use.

- 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)

This discussion was postponed until the July 3 meeting due to time constraints.

V. Adjournment to July 3 Meeting

1. Review and decide on grant program recipients and award amounts for recommendation to Council

Committee discussed hoping to review applications for the Affordable Childcare Grant Program and requested a zoom link for the July 3 meeting to maximize the likelihood of having a quorum to make funding decisions.

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

none forthcoming

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm