



# General Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND GENERAL

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING AGENDA

Thursday, April 2, 2026

Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way - 10:30 AM

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## I. Call to Order

1. Confirmation of quorum present
2. Approval of draft minutes of 3/5/26 meeting (see agenda packet)
3. Suggested additions to today's agenda
4. Brief announcements

## II. Public Forum

## III. Continuation of Business from Previous Meetings

1. Review edits needed for City's Childcare Affordability Grants application process (suggested edits in agenda packet).
  - a. Are there goals we would prioritize?
  - b. Process for reaching out to potential applicants
2. Brief update regarding potential partnering with the Ashland Schools Foundation
3. Business engagement work plan
  - a. Who are the key business leaders we should engage?
  - b. What do we want to learn?
  - c. What is our ask?

## IV. New Business

1. Review the committee's charge; what do we still need to do? (see agenda packet)

## V. Anticipation of May 7, 2026 Meeting and Adjournment

1. Continue discussion of potential with the Ashland schools.
2. Business engagement
3. Committee members' suggestions for other topics
4. Adjournment

*If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, including electronic attendance, please contact Kerrick Gooden at [citymanageroffice@ashlandoregon.gov](mailto: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  
March 5, 2026**

10:30AM - Siskiyou Room - 51 Winburn Way

NOTE: These are draft minutes until approved by the committee

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:34 am

Present were committee members Paula Hyatt, Jessica Therkelsen, Joanie Keller-Hand, Anne Seban, and John Love

Also present was staff liaison Kerrick Gooden

1. Confirm quorum present

Confirmed

2. Approval of draft minutes of 2-5-26 meeting (see agenda packet)

**Therkelsen moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Keller-Hand. All ayes. The motion passed.**

3. Suggested additions to today's agenda

4. Brief announcements

Hyatt will not be able to attend the next meeting. The issue of pre-K childcare was taken up by the governor, who convened an [Early Childhood Care and Learning System Roundtable](#).

**II. Public Forum**

None

**III. Continuation of Business from previous meetings**

1. Cultivating future funding, aka the future of our *ad hoc* committee
  - a. Further discussion of partnering with the Ashland Schools Foundation
  - b. How best to use the \$100,000 remaining in Affordability Grant funds designated for 2026-2027

Love approached Erica Thompson, Executive Director of the Ashland Schools Foundation (ASF), regarding the committee's recent discussions. Thompson explained ASF's Charter has a K-12 focus, which could only be changed by the Ashland School District (ASD), but could act as a fiscal sponsor of an existing non-profit and/or help get the word out through their newsletter. The committee discussed not having the capacity to stand up a dedicated non-profit, but how its work could join ASD efforts to lobby in Salem for ongoing State support. The committee also discussed models of childcare support in other states, such as New York, and the potential benefit to ASD of increased local pre-K programs that would feed ASD. Hyatt agreed to approach Joseph Hattrick to explore further.

The committee discussed recommendation options for the remaining \$100K allocated for the Childcare Affordability Grant program for the 2026/27 school year. Discussion included positive impacts demonstrated from previous distributions and the importance of clear and early communication to potential applicants regarding the expected closure of the program after the next award. The committee decided on making only minor/required edits to the program narrative and application to

align with program year, etc. and will coordinate with Gooden regarding suggested edits before the next meeting.

2. Business engagement work plan (see agenda packet)
  - a. Let's decide what we actually can do, are going to do—while our ad hoc committee still exists—or not do.

The committee discussed the purpose of the business engagement work plan as a template for engaging the business community in the exchange of experiences and ideas regarding childcare, or lack thereof, rather than a survey only aimed to gather data. Conversations and/or the convening of local business leaders including Asante, SOU, ASD, the City, OSF and the Chamber of Commerce could inform the group as it winds down its existing form as an ad-hoc advisory committee to council and considers a pivot to another form in support of local pre-K early education. The committee considered a kickoff gathering of key local leaders in May and a larger summit of regional stakeholders towards the fall. The committee also discussed working with Mayor Graham on this as a regional issue prior to the Oregon Mayors conference in August.

- Therkelsen agreed to begin a draft invitation for what is being proposed for a larger gathering in the fall
- Hyatt agreed to talk with Hattrick regarding ASF, and to meet with Rooklyn and Love regarding the potential for an initial gathering in May
- Love would like to revisit the ad hoc committee's original charge at its April meeting, and will draft a progress report in preparation for a potential presentation to Council in May or June.

#### **IV. New Business**

#### **V. Anticipation of April 2, 2026 Meeting and Adjournment**

1. Continue discussion of future funding
2. Business engagement progress
3. Committee members' suggestions for other topics
4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11.34 am

City of Ashland website's  
<https://ashlandoregon.gov/787/Economic-Development-Grants>  
**Spring 2026 announcement for childcare affordability grants –  
edited in red, from spring 2025 announcement**

## AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE GRANTS

### Early Childcare Affordability Grant Program

**Applications are now open for the 2026-2027 fiscal year!** The purpose of this program is to increase affordability and access to quality childcare providers to attract and retain a local workforce through enhanced quality of life and support of economic development in Ashland.

[Full details and grant requirements \(PDF\)](#)

[Grant Application](#) Submission deadline: **June 1, 11:59 p.m.**

- Sliding Scale Scholarships
- Infrastructure Investment
- Staffing Support, Special Needs Integrated Programming, and/or Behavioral Support.

### Eligibility:

- Have an 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).
- Be a legal entity currently registered to do business in the State of Oregon.
- Be located within Ashland City limits and provide programming within the City of Ashland.
- Carry liability insurance as follows:
  - Commercial General Liability, Amount \$2M Per Occurrence \$2M / Aggregate \$3M with the City listed as additional insured, and
  - For those transporting children: Commercial Auto Liability, Amount \$2M Per Occurrence.
  - Sexual Abuse/Molestation Liability Insurance, Amount \$1M Per Occurrence / Aggregate \$2M.
    - Providers who do not have the required levels of insurance can submit a letter from their insurance agent or provider stating that, if awarded the grant, the provider will obtain the necessary insurance levels before receiving the grant funds.
- Preference will be given to programs striving to provide full-time, 5-day-a-week care and those serving infants and/or toddlers.
- Providers awarded the grant will be required to provide Abuse Prevention Training for all childcare provider staff. If the provider does not already have training in place, the City will provide a reference to an approved training course.

In August 2023, the Ashland City Council adopted the Early Childcare Affordability Grant Program and authorized City staff to begin implementation. The City launched the grant pilot program in September 2023, and grants were awarded in 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26. 2026-27 will be the final year for these grants. ~~After a successful first year, the grant program expanded to allow local childcare and early learning providers to seek funding for:~~

Please [email](#) the City Manager's Office with any comments or questions.



## Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program

The City of Ashland is accepting grant applications for the Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program for the 2025/2026 fiscal year (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026).

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### 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
- *support childcare/early learning providers to enhance their programs in ways that create greater sustainability.*

### Program Funding:

Up to \$135,000 will be available for distribution under the Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program. *100,000*

Additionally, the Ashland City Council has authorized funding only through the 2025/27 Biennium.

**Funding in future years is not guaranteed.**

### Program Structure:

1. Program providers may apply for the Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program funding in any of the following categories: *one or more*
  - 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. *semi-annually*

*requirements" in sections A4, B6, and C2.*

## Eligibility:

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

1. Have an 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 / Aggregate \$3M with the City listed as an additional insured.
  - b. For those transporting children: Commercial Auto Liability, Amount \$2M Per Occurrence.
  - c. Sexual Abuse/Molestation Liability Insurance, Amount \$1M Per Occurrence / Aggregate \$2M.
  - d. An applicant may submit a letter from an insurance provider stating that, if awarded the grant, the childcare provider will obtain the necessary insurance levels.
5. Preference will be given to programs striving to provide full-time, 5-day-a-week care and those serving infants and/or toddlers.
6. Providers awarded the grant will be required to provide Abuse Prevention Training for all childcare provider staff. If the provider does not already have training in place, the City will provide a reference to an approved training course.

## 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. *charged*

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. Describe how you will work with families in your program, and applying to your program 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 2026.
    - i. The Early Childhood Affordability Grant Program serves households at or below 200% of the Jackson County Median Income.

Household Size	200% of Jackson County Median Income
2	\$158,526
3	\$192,344
4	\$199,416
5	\$168,758
6	\$209,862
7 or more	\$295,800

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 <sup>children are</sup> are between the ages of 0 and 5 years, excluding children enrolled in kindergarten.
  - c. Scholarship recipients demonstrate a financial need.
    - i. Financial need is defined as a household earning at or below 200% of the Jackson County 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:

- Semi-annual*
- 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~~ <sup>before</sup> the Early Childhood Affordability Grant dollars versus total enrollment with the grant dollars. <sup>were awarded</sup>
    - 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:
 

*Semi-annual*

  - 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~~ <sup>Semi-annual</sup> 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 Affordable Childcare Ad Hoc Committee:  
City Council 2023 Charge**

<https://ashlandoregon.gov/932/Ad-Hoc---Affordable-Childcare-Ad-Hoc-Com>

1. [ABOUT](#)
2. [MEMBERS](#)
3. [MEETINGS](#)

**Mission:**

Create a tangible network of early learning care options within our community, supportive of working families, the Ashland economy, and most importantly our children.

**Goal:**

Support Ashland working families with affordable early-learning childcare solutions that focus on attracting and retaining Ashland’s workforce, strengthening Ashland School District enrollment, and preparing our youngest citizens for kindergarten, independent of economic status.

**City of Ashland Value Statements Supported by this Ad Hoc Committee:**

- Community affordability, including available housing and childcare
- Belonging through mutual respect and openness, inclusion, and equity
- Quality of life that underpins the City's economic vibrancy

**Committee Charge:**

Define the existing early learning environment in Ashland including total number of early learning seats, both private and non-profit, the composition of programs (in-home, centers, other), and the economics of existing programs (Head Start, Preschool Promise, Private Tuition, annual costs to family and caregivers). Assess and define Ashland’s unaddressed early learning requirements.

Identify resources capable of contributing to an early learning solution including, but not limited to:

- Physical Assets (Brick and Mortar, tangible supplies to provide service, etc.)
- Business Partners
- Non-Profit Partners
- Coordination of Service Expertise
- Options to support families with special needs

Consider and plan for the needs of the care providers, specifically:

- Living wage positions,
- Appropriate benefits,
- Training opportunities, and
- Recruitment of educators and staff.

Recommend a communication plan, including:

- Where residents and families can find information about early learning opportunities
- How to keep such resources up to date
- Contact information for existing programs

*Develop a strategic plan capable of tangibly providing for Ashland’s unaddressed early learning needs.*