

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

CONSENT AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Amanda Christofferson, Grants Administrator

DATE: October 13, 2025

SUBJECT: **LETTER OF SUPPORT:** Jefferson County Early Learning and Family Support Center
Olympic Peninsula YMCA application to Washington State Dept. of Commerce Early
Learning Facilities (ELF) grant program

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Whereas Jefferson County has undertaken to work with our partners Jefferson Health Care and the Olympic Peninsula YMCA to increase the number of full day childcare opportunities for young children. The county has directly supported this effort by securing \$3.375M in grant funding and contributed additional CARES Act funding to this effort. Construction of the facility is not able to proceed due to a funding gap that exceeds \$2M.

YMCA's application to the ELF program is to fill the gap in funding necessary to complete construction of the facility.

ANALYSIS:

The ELF program is the best fit opportunity originating from Washington State Department of Commerce for this need. The program removed their funding cap this year and thus presents an opportunity to fulfill the funding gap with only one additional funding source.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No direct fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the Board approve a motion to sign the Letter of Support for the YMCA application to the Washington State Department of Commerce Early Learning Facilities Program.

REVIEWED BY:



Josh Peters, County Administrator



Date



Board of County Commissioners
1820 Jefferson Street
PO Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Heather Dudley-Nollette, District 1 Heidi Eisenhour, District 2 Greg Brotherton, District 3

October 13, 2025

Washington State Department of Commerce
Early Learning Facilities Program

To Whom It May Concern:

We are pleased to write this letter in support of the Olympic Peninsula YMCA's funding request to the Department of Commerce Early Learning Facilities program.

Access to childcare remains a significant challenge and serves as a barrier to employment for many young families. According to the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), **the current availability of childcare in Jefferson County meets less than 15% of the estimated need for early learning.**

Jefferson County has made confronting this childcare crisis a top funding priority for the last five years. In 2021 Jefferson County awarded \$50,000 in CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Funds to Jefferson Healthcare to proceed with fact finding and development of a childcare facility plan. In 2022 the County awarded \$290,000 in America Rescue Plan Act dollars to fund the design for a childcare facility. Additionally, in 2022 Jefferson County made a powerful ask of our Federal Legislators and were awarded \$1.375 million through a congressionally directed spending request via USDA – Rural Development to move toward construction. In 2023 we were awarded \$2 million by the Washington State Dept. of Commerce via the CDBG – General Purpose program for construction of the facility. Our partners, the YMCA and Jefferson Healthcare, have brought further funding to the table to finalize the capital stack. However, all seven of the responses to our request for construction bids this spring came in at a staggering \$2 million over our capital funding budget.

Once the funding gap is closed this project is ready to go – with our excellent partners we have achieved 100% of our design and have an approved building permit from the City of Port Townsend.

There are many types of infrastructure that our rural county needs to improve, including everything from wastewater facilities and roads to community facilities such as this one - which are critical to support our residents. We simply do not have the existing building stock to accommodate the requirements of a large DCYF certified childcare facility. This Early Learning and Family Support Center will be large enough to provide childcare for 42 children and will also house essential family support services for our community. The facility will be built on the campus of the Port Townsend High School which is centrally located within a fifteen-minute drive of the largest employers in Jefferson County. Childcare is one of our region's primary barriers to employment and economic development. This new facility will serve to leverage and support the broad economic development initiatives the Olympic Peninsula is focused on through the Recompete program. This facility brings with it significant multi-benefits; it will ensure that more of our working parents are able to remain engaged in their professions; more of our young children have the care and engagement they need to thrive; our employers can improve workforce recruitment and retention; and it will create an estimated ten jobs for early-learning professionals.

We strongly encourage your support of the Olympic Peninsula YMCA's request for the Jefferson County Early Learning and Family Support Center. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Heather Dudley-Nollette, Dist. 1

Heidi Eisenhour, Dist. 2 - Chair

Greg Brotherton, Dist. 3