

Expand Access to Early Care and Education through investments in **THE EARLY LEARNING FACILITIES (ELF) FUND**

BACKGROUND ON THE EARLY LEARNING FACILITIES (ELF) FUND

Through ELF Fund programs, Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and/or Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) providers can access grants for pre-development, remodel, purchase, construction, and/or minor renovations of early learning facilities and classrooms. ELF Fund resources are distributed through three grant programs including:

- Eligible organizations grant
- Health and safety minor renovation grant
- Public school district grant



To support providers undertaking capital projects, the Department of Commerce and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families contract with community-based organizations with specialized expertise, including:

- **Enterprise Community Partners.** Together with the Washington Community Reinvestment Association and Craft3, Enterprise provides grants, early learning facilities technical assistance, and low-cost, flexible, lending opportunities—often to assist with match requirements or start-up costs that ELF grants don't pay for —through the Washington Early Learning Loan (WELL) Fund.
- **Imagine Institute.** The Imagine Institute currently provides technical assistance to ELF Fund applicants to support equitable language access. Imagine has also provided application and pre-contract assistance through previous grant programs.

THE ELF FUND HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED ACCESS TO EARLY LEARNING

Since its inception in 2017, the ELF Fund has **retained and/or created a total of 17,676 early learning slots** and has leveraged \$274.4 million in non-state resources. Many of these resources have been prioritized for communities in greatest need, including rural counties and/or small cities and towns; child care deserts (where the demand for care far outweighs the supply); and communities with low incomes.



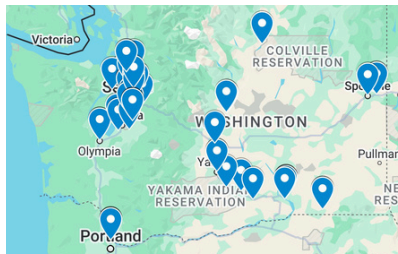
2017-2024	Eligible Organizations Grants	Health & Safety Minor Renovations Grants	Public School Districts Grants
Applications Awarded	247	257	23
Total Dollars Awarded	\$133,696,272.00	\$27,354,216.00	\$13,004,420.00
Total Matching Funds	\$138,463,666.11	N/A	\$31,764,437.07
Total New Slots	11,675	N/A	1,945
Total Completed Projects	75	200	14

READINESS FOR ELF GRANTS EXCEEDS RESOURCES AVAILABLE

2023-2025 Early Learning Facilities (ELF) Program

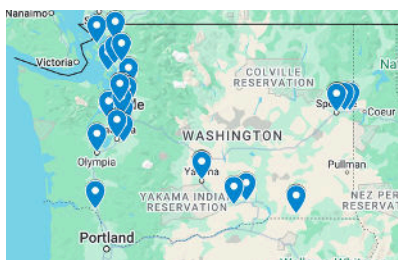
	Health and Safety Minor Renovations	Eligible Organizations	Public School Districts
Received	179 applications (\$21 million)	212 applications (\$196 million)	N/A
Awards	64 applications (\$7 million)	48 applications (\$37.5 million)	5 applications (\$5.406 million)
Funding Gap	115 applications (\$14 million)	164 applications (\$157 million)	N/A
New slots	N/A	2,326 slots	N/A

Health + Safety Minor Renovations



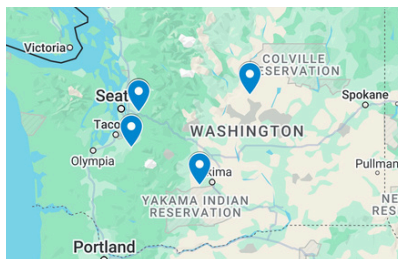
	Awardees		Awardees		Awardees	
Benton	2	Island	2	Pierce	5	
Chelan	1	King	27	Snohomish	4	
Clark	4	Kitsap	1	Spokane	3	
Douglas	1	Kittitas	1	Thurston	2	
Franklin	4	Okanogan	1	Walla Walla	2	
				Yakima	4	

Eligible Organizations



	Awardees		Awardees		Awardees			
	New Slots		New Slots		New Slots			
Benton	2	162	Pierce	2	162	Thurston	1	N/A
Cowlitz	1	N/A	San Juan	1	N/A	Walla Walla	2	N/A
Island	1	50	Skagit	1	50	Whatcom	2	29
King	8	408	Snohomish	8	408	Yakima	4	184
Kitsap	1	332	Spokane	1	332			

School Districts



	Recommended		Recommended	
Adams	1	Spokane	2	
Benton	1	Stevens	1	
Kittitas	1	Walla Walla	1	
Pierce	1	Whatcom	1	

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAIR START FOR KIDS ACT REQUIRES CAPITAL INVESTMENTS IN THE ELF FUND

The ELF Fund makes high-quality, affordable preschool and child care available to more Washington families by preserving and expanding physical capacity to serve children. With significant operating expansions slated for 2025-2027, capital investments are essential for maximizing operating investments in the 2021 Fair Start for Kids Act.



SUPPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S 2025-2027 BUDGET REQUESTS



In alignment with this proposed operating expansion, the Department of Commerce made essential budget requests for the 2025-2027 Capital Budget:

- **\$50 million** for the ELF Fund
- **\$8.6 million** for the ELF Public School District program to serve **302 additional children** through **nine capital projects** in **Adams, Benton, Kittitas, Pierce, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla** and **Whatcom Counties**.

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The Early Learning Facilities Group is convened by Start Early Washington.
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