
HOUSE BILL 1777

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Representatives Kagi, Johnson, Doglio, Dent, Ryu, MacEwen, Senn, Farrell, and Nealey

1 AN ACT Relating to financing early learning facilities to support
2 the needed expansion of early learning classrooms across Washington;
3 adding new sections to chapter 43.31 RCW; and creating new sections.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there is a
6 significant and critical need for additional early learning
7 facilities to meet the state's commitment to providing high quality
8 early learning opportunities to low-income children, including the
9 legal mandate to provide preschool opportunities through the early
10 childhood education and assistance program to all eligible children
11 by 2021.

12 The legislature further finds that private and public
13 partnerships and investments are critical to meeting the need for
14 increased classrooms necessary to deliver high quality early learning
15 opportunities to low-income children across Washington.

16 The legislature intends to provide state financial assistance to
17 leverage local and private resources to enable early childhood
18 education and assistance program contractors and child care providers
19 to expand, remodel, or construct early learning facilities and
20 classrooms necessary to support state-funded early learning
21 opportunities for low-income children.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The department of early learning, in
2 consultation with stakeholders, shall review existing licensing
3 standards related to facility requirements to eliminate potential
4 barriers to licensing while ensuring the health and safety of
5 children in early learning programs.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Unless the context clearly requires
7 otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this act:

8 (1) "Department" means the department of commerce.

9 (2) "Director" means the director of commerce.

10 (3) "Early learning facility" means a facility providing
11 regularly scheduled care for a group of children one month of age
12 through twelve years of age for periods of less than twenty-four
13 hours.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The early learning facilities
15 revolving account is created in the state treasury. Revenues to the
16 account shall consist of appropriations by the legislature, early
17 learning facilities grant and loan repayments, and all other sources
18 deposited in the account.

19 (2)(a) Expenditures from the account shall be used, in
20 combination with other private and public funding, for state matching
21 funds for the planning, renovation, and construction of early
22 learning facilities as established in sections 5 through 9 of this
23 act.

24 (b) The department, in consultation with the department of early
25 learning, shall oversee the early learning facilities revolving
26 account and is the lead state agency for early learning facilities
27 grant and loan program development.

28 (c) It is the intent of the legislature that state funds invested
29 in the account be matched by private or local government funding.
30 Every effort shall be made to maximize funding available for early
31 learning facilities from public schools, community colleges,
32 education service districts, local governments, and private funders.

33 (d) Amounts used for program administration by the department may
34 not exceed an average of four percent in any two consecutive fiscal
35 years.

36 (e) Commitment of state funds may be given only after private
37 match funds are committed. Private match funds may consist of cash,
38 equipment, land, buildings, or like-kind.

1 (3) Expenditures from the account are subject to appropriation
2 and the allotment provisions of chapter 43.88 RCW.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The department must expend moneys from
4 the early learning facilities revolving account to provide state
5 matching funds for early learning facilities grants or loans to
6 provide classrooms necessary for children to participate in the early
7 childhood education and assistance program and working connections
8 child care. Grants or loans expended from the early learning
9 facilities revolving account may fund projects only for:

10 (a) Eligible organizations identified in section 6 of this act;
11 and

12 (b) School districts.

13 (2) Beginning August 1, 2017, the department shall:

14 (a) Implement and administer grants or loans funded through the
15 early learning facilities revolving account for school districts; and

16 (b) Contract with one or more nongovernmental private-public
17 partnerships that are certified by the community development
18 financial institutions fund to implement and administer grants funded
19 through the early learning facilities revolving account for eligible
20 organizations. Any nongovernmental private-public partnership that is
21 certified by the community development financial institutions fund
22 that is seeking early learning fund resources must demonstrate an
23 ability to raise funding from private and other public entities for
24 early learning facilities construction projects.

25 (3) The department shall monitor performance of the early
26 learning facilities grant and loan program. Any nongovernmental
27 private-public partnership that is certified by the community
28 development financial institutions fund receiving state funds for
29 purposes of this act shall provide annual reports, beginning July 1,
30 2018, to the department. The reports must include, but are not
31 limited to, the following:

32 (a) A list of projects funded through the early learning
33 facilities grant or loan program for eligible organizations to
34 include:

35 (i) Name;

36 (ii) Location;

37 (iii) Grant or loan amount;

38 (iv) Private match amount;

39 (v) Public match amount;

- 1 (vi) Number of early learners served; and
2 (vii) Other elements as required by the department;
3 (b) A demonstration of sufficient investment of private match
4 funds; and
5 (c) A description of how the projects met the criteria described
6 in section 9 of this act.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) Organizations eligible to receive
8 early learning facilities grants or loans include:

- 9 (a) Nonprofit early childhood education and assistance program
10 providers and working connections child care providers;
11 (b) Licensed nonprofit early learning centers not currently
12 participating in the early childhood education and assistance
13 program, but intending to do so;
14 (c) Nonprofit developers of housing and community facilities;
15 (d) Community and technical colleges;
16 (e) Educational service districts; and
17 (f) Federally recognized tribes in the state.

18 (2) To be eligible to receive funds from awarded grants or loans
19 for activities described in section 7(1) (b) and (c) and (2) of this
20 act, eligible organizations and school districts must:

- 21 (a) Commit to being an active participant in good standing with
22 the early achievers program as defined by chapter 43.215 RCW;
23 (b) Projects receiving construction or renovation grants or loans
24 less than two hundred thousand dollars must demonstrate that the
25 project site is under the applicant's control for a minimum of ten
26 years, either through ownership or a long-term lease;
27 (c) Projects receiving construction or renovation grants or loans
28 less than two hundred thousand dollars must commit to using the
29 facility funded by the grant or loan for the purposes of providing
30 preschool or child care for a minimum of ten years;
31 (d) Projects receiving construction or renovation grants or loans
32 of two hundred thousand dollars or more must demonstrate that the
33 project site is under the applicant's control for a minimum of twenty
34 years, either through ownership or a long-term lease; and
35 (e) Projects receiving construction or renovation grants or loans
36 of two hundred thousand dollars or more must commit to using the
37 facility funded by the grant or loan for the purposes of providing
38 preschool or child care for a minimum of twenty years.

1 (3)(a) Upon receiving a grant or loan guarantee, the grantee must
2 continue to be an active participant and in good standing with the
3 early achievers program.

4 (b) If the grantee ceases to be an active participant and in good
5 standing with the early achievers program, the grants or loans shall
6 be repaid to the early learning facilities revolving account. So long
7 as an eligible organization continues to provide an early learning
8 program in the facility and is an active participant and in good
9 standing with the early achievers program, the grant or loan
10 repayment is waived.

11 (c) The department, in consultation with the department of early
12 learning, is authorized to adopt rules related to this subsection
13 (3).

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** (1) Activities eligible for funding
15 through the early learning facilities revolving account for eligible
16 organizations include:

17 (a) Facility predesign grants or loans of no more than ten
18 thousand dollars to allow eligible organizations to secure
19 professional services or consult with organizations certified by the
20 community development financial institutions fund to plan for and
21 assess the feasibility of early learning facilities projects or
22 receive other technical assistance to design and develop projects for
23 construction funding;

24 (b) Grants or loans of no more than one hundred thousand dollars
25 for minor renovations or repairs of existing early learning
26 facilities; and

27 (c) Major construction and renovation grants or loans of no more
28 than eight hundred thousand dollars to create or expand early
29 learning facilities.

30 (2) Activities eligible for funding through the early learning
31 facilities revolving account for school districts include major
32 construction and renovation grants or loans of no more than eight
33 hundred thousand dollars to create or expand early learning
34 facilities that received priority and ranking as described in section
35 9 of this act.

36 (3) Beginning July 1, 2018, amounts in this section must be
37 increased annually by the United States implicit price deflator for
38 state and local government construction provided by the office of
39 financial management.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** (1) In the administration of the early
2 learning facilities grant and loan program for eligible
3 organizations, any nongovernmental private-public partnership that is
4 certified by the community development financial institutions fund
5 contracted with the department shall:

6 (a) Award grants or loans as described in section 7 of this act,
7 that meet the criteria described in section 9 of this act, through an
8 application process or in compliance with the regulations of the
9 funding source.

10 (b) It is the intent of the legislature that state funds invested
11 in the early learning facilities revolving account be matched by
12 private or local government funding each biennium. Every effort shall
13 be made to maximize funding available for early learning facilities
14 from public schools, community colleges, education service districts,
15 local governments, and private funders.

16 (2) In the administration of the early learning facilities grant
17 program for school districts, the department shall submit a ranked
18 and prioritized list of major construction or renovation of early
19 learning facilities projects for school districts subject to the
20 prioritization methodology described in section 9 of this act to the
21 office of financial management and the relevant legislative
22 committees by September 15, 2017.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** (1) The department shall convene a
24 committee of early learning facilities experts including no less than
25 one representative each from the department of early learning, the
26 Washington state housing finance commission, an organization
27 certified by the community development financial institutions fund,
28 and the office of superintendent of public instruction to advise the
29 department regarding the prioritization methodology of grant
30 applications for projects described in section 7(2) of this act.

31 (2) When developing a prioritization methodology under this
32 section, the committee shall consider, but is not limited to:

33 (a) Projects that add part-day, full-day, or extended day early
34 childhood education assistance program slots in areas with the
35 highest unmet need;

36 (b) Projects benefitting low-income children;

37 (c) Projects located in low-income neighborhoods;

1 (d) Projects that provide more access to the early childhood
2 education and assistance program as a ratio of the children eligible
3 to participate in the program;

4 (e) Projects that are geographically disbursed relative to
5 statewide need;

6 (f) Projects that balance mixed-use development and rural
7 locations; and

8 (g) Projects that maximize resources available from the state
9 with funding from other public and private organizations, including
10 the use of state lands or facilities.

11 (3) Committee members shall serve without compensation, but may
12 request reimbursement for travel expenses as provided in RCW
13 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

14 (4) Committee members are not liable to the state, the early
15 learning facilities revolving account, or to any other person as a
16 result of their activities, whether ministerial or discretionary, as
17 members except for willful dishonesty or intentional violation of the
18 law.

19 (5) The department may purchase liability insurance for members
20 and may indemnify these persons against the claims of others.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** Sections 3 through 9 of this act are each
22 added to chapter 43.31 RCW.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** If specific funding for the purposes of
24 sections 3 through 10 of this act, referencing sections 3 through 10
25 of this act by bill or chapter number and section number, is not
26 provided by June 30, 2017, in the omnibus capital appropriations act,
27 sections 3 through 10 of this act are null and void.

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