



Population Health Trust July Newsletter

Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health

July 2025

The need for quality, affordable child care was identified as a priority area by the Trust in our Covid Recovery Plan. Essential to a child's wellbeing, child care centers provide kids with the social, emotional, and intellectual opportunities that they need to thrive. Already limited, child care access was further strained by pandemic era closures. Although availability has improved since 2021, it is still not enough to meet the need.

In 2023, Skagit County only had 33% of the licensed child care capacity needed for children under age 5.

Insufficient child care access can also contribute to economic challenges. Parents may miss work or even leave the workforce altogether, to care for children. A shortage of affordable, accessible childcare has kept an estimated 15,000 people out of the workforce in the North Sound Region costing employers an estimated \$338.2M annually. Even when families can find child care, it is costly. On average, households spend over a third of their income on care for two children.

To achieve goals related to child care, the Trust partnered with the [Opportunity Council's Center for Retention & Expansion of Child Care \(C-RECC\)](#) and [Childcare Aware NW](#). Funding from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) was

successfully used to increase child care capacity through the recruitment of providers, especially those who are BIPOC and/or multilingual, and to support an employer-based center. Since 2021, C-RECC has helped increase childcare capacity by 162 new slots across the Skagit.

With ARPA funding set to expire, the Trust worked with the Skagit Community Foundation to develop a plan for sustaining its efforts. The collaboration resulted in the establishment of [The Skagit Childcare Partnership Fund](#). Initiated with funds from an anonymous donor and a dedicated group of local leaders, the fund was established to help sustain vital support services for childcare providers. Part of the funding supports a Bilingual Child Care Marketing & Recruitment Coordinator at C-RECC. The coordinator helps both new and existing childcare providers navigate licensing requirements, find funding, and support workforce development.

While an exciting step towards a more sustainable approach to child care expansion, continued funding and support is needed. Look for future updates on this important issue as the Trust continues to analyze data as part of the Community Health Assessment (CHA).

Reference: [Child Care in Skagit County. ChildCare Aware of Washington.](#)

Thank you for your partnership in keeping Skagit County healthy!



The Population Health Trust was founded in 2015 and is the Community Advisory Board to the Skagit County Board of Health. For more information, check out our [website](#).

[Population Health Trust](#)

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