# Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

## Feedback Loop

### August 11, 2026, ELAC Meeting (Agenda Here)

#### Early Learning Facilities Grant

- **Have you considered into entering into agreements with local banks and/or credit unions to support those with cash flow challenges?**
    - Unless called out by legislation, Commerce cannot enter into agreements and cannot partner with for-profit organizations. However, another option is the WELL Fund program.
    - The Washington Early Learning Loan Fund (WELL) program supports financing early learning programs statewide, offering loan and grant opportunities. The WELL program is a partnership between the Washington Community Reinvestment Association (WCRA), Enterprise Community Partners, and Craft3. More information can be found on WCRA's website.
- **I have heard of a long turnaround time for pre-licensing. What is being done to shorten the turnaround time for providers, has this been a barrier for participants to be able to use their ELF Grant?**
    - The pre-licensing journey is based on what the starting point is for the individual wanting to become a licensed child care provider. The length of time it takes is dependent on the individual and varies from person to person. The pre-licensing team continues to streamline the process and develop and provide resources to individuals to assist them in their journey. Any individual who has an ELF grant is supported through their journey, and any barriers they may encounter are addressed so they can fulfill their goal of opening a licensed child care.
- **Would like to know how diverse funds are being spread out. Are the same centers getting funding from this grant or is there outreach being done to help fund programs that don't have a grant writer?**
    - Most ELF award recipients are first-time awardees. All early learning programs have access to grant materials before the grant round opens. These materials support the ELF grant program, which is designed so a grant writer isn't needed.

- There are other opportunities to learn more about the grant throughout the year. Commerce offers live office hours and has an email box to provide technical assistance. The Imagine Institute is available for language translation and interpretation of grant materials.
- Applications are reviewed with many factors being considered, including geographic location (child care access desert), project readiness, and the ability to complete the project in the timeframe provided.