

APPENDIX D

Subsidies

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Introduction

This is Appendix D to the “Making affordable, high-quality early learning and care accessible to all children in the Walla Walla Valley” executive summary. This appendix provides a brief overview of state-level and other child care subsidies available.

State subsidy programs are an important strategy for increasing affordability for families and providers; however, families must meet work or school and income eligibility requirements and early learning and child care providers must be licensed and approved by Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) or Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), respectively.

For these reasons, state subsidies do not completely meet the need for support. For example, 1,402 households with children in Columbia and Walla Walla counties could not afford to pay the full cost of child care yet did not qualify for state subsidies in 2018.¹ In response to this issue throughout the state, Washington is gradually expanding its income eligibility guidelines through 2027 so more middle-income and Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households will be eligible for the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program. To maximize the potential benefit of state-level subsidies for families in the Walla Walla Valley, the number of early learning and care providers that meet the eligibility criteria or otherwise accept state subsidies must also increase. As of 2021, only 51% of child care providers in Walla Walla County and 0% in Columbia County accepted state subsidies.²

For more in-depth information about the WCCC program expansion, including the number of Walla Walla and Columbia County households currently eligible and that will be eligible as the program expands, see the 2021 “Creating an Accessible, Valley-Wide Child Care System Feasibility Study” starting on page 39.³ For the current project, we attempted to get access to the number of children who receive the WCCC and other state subsidy programs; however, after much effort, this data was unattainable.

Subsidy programs available in the project area

Washington State Working Connections Child Care Subsidy

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) is a subsidy program in Washington that pays a portion of tuition directly to the provider. For a family to use WCCC, their child care provider must be set up to accept WCCC. In this program, families pay a child care co-pay, which is tiered to household income in relation to qualifying state median income (SMI) (Table 33). Subsidy rates are based on the type of care (home; center; or family, friends, and neighbors) and the child’s age. A family is eligible for WCCC subsidies if they meet all the following criteria:

- Have income at or below 65% SMI and resources under \$1,000,000;
- Be a Washington State resident;
- Child is a US citizen, legal resident, or otherwise eligible for federal benefits; and

- Available parents are employed or self-employed in legal, income-generating, taxable activities, or enrolled in school or approved educational activities.

Children with disabilities may qualify for higher subsidy rates to help pay for needed additional supports.

Washington State Seasonal Child Care

Washington State Seasonal Child Care is a state subsidy program that pays a portion of tuition costs for children whose guardians are seasonally employed in agricultural work. Rates are based on the type of care (home versus center) and the child’s age. To be eligible, families must:

- Live in designated counties in Washington State,
- Be seasonally employed in agricultural work, and
- Not be receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits.⁴

Oregon’s Employment Related Day Care

Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) in Oregon is similar to Washington’s WCCC. ERDC is a subsidy program for working families and students administered by ODHS. ODHS and families pay their portions to ODHS-approved providers directly. ODHS pays the subsidy while the family pays an income-based copay ranging from \$0 to \$130 per month based on their family size.⁵ Families can use licensed family child care homes, centers, friends or relatives, or a mix

of providers as long as the providers are ODHS-approved.

Military Child Care Fee Assistance

Military Child Care Fee Assistance pays up to \$1,500 per child per month to providers to support tuition costs for children of military members on active duty, in the guard or reserve, army civilians, and guard and reserve technicians.

Provider-Specific Discounts

Some early learning and care providers offer their own subsidies or discounts not supported by state or federal funds. These supports depend on the provider, but include multiple-child discounts, multiple-year enrollment discounts, and scholarships.

TABLE 33 | Working Connections Child Care subsidy copays by family size as of 2022⁶

Family Size	\$0 Copay (0%-20% SMI)	\$65 Copay (20%-36% SMI)	\$90 Copay (36%-50% SMI)	\$115 Copay (50%-60% SMI)	\$215 Copay (60%-65% SMI)
1	\$0 to \$928	\$929 to \$1,671	\$1,672 to \$2,320	\$2,321 to \$2,784	\$2,785 to \$3,016
2	\$0 to \$1,214	\$1,215 to \$2,185	\$2,186 to \$3,034	\$3,035 to \$3,641	\$3,642 to \$3,944
3	\$0 to \$1,499	\$1,500 to \$2,699	\$2,700 to \$3,748	\$3,749 to \$4,498	\$4,499 to \$4,872
4	\$0 to \$1,785	\$1,786 to \$3,213	\$3,214 to \$4,462	\$4,463 to \$5,354	\$5,355 to \$5,800
5	\$0 to \$2,070	\$2,071 to \$3,727	\$3,728 to \$5,176	\$5,177 to \$6,211	\$6,212 to \$6,729
6	\$0 to \$2,356	\$2,357 to \$4,241	\$4,242 to \$5,890	\$5,891 to \$7,068	\$7,069 to \$7,657
7	\$0 to \$2,409	\$2,410 to \$4,337	\$4,338 to \$6,024	\$6,025 to \$7,228	\$7,229 to \$7,831
8	\$0 to \$2,463	\$2,464 to \$4,433	\$4,434 to \$6,157	\$6,158 to \$7,389	\$7,390 to \$8,005
9	\$0 to \$2,517	\$2,517 to \$4,530	\$4,531 to \$6,291	\$6,292 to \$7,550	\$7,551 to \$8,179
10	\$0 to \$2,570	\$2,571 to \$4,626	\$4,627 to \$6,425	\$6,426 to \$7,710	\$7,711 to \$8,353
11	\$0 to \$2,624	\$2,625 to \$4,722	\$4,723 to \$6,559	\$6,560 to \$7,871	\$7,872 to \$8,527
12	\$0 to \$2,677	\$2,678 to \$4,819	\$4,820 to \$6,693	\$6,694 to \$8,031	\$8,032 to \$8,701
13	\$0 to \$2,731	\$2,732 to \$4,915	\$4,916 to \$6,827	\$6,828 to \$8,192	\$8,193 to \$8,875
14	\$0 to \$2,784	\$2,785 to \$5,012	\$5,013 to \$6,961	\$6,962 to \$8,353	\$8,354 to \$9,049
15	\$0 to \$2,838	\$2,839 to \$5,108	\$5,109 to \$7,094	\$7,095 to \$8,513	\$8,514 to \$9,223
16	\$0 to \$2,891	\$2,892 to \$5,204	\$5,205 to \$7,228	\$7,229 to \$8,674	\$8,675 to \$9,397
17	\$0 to \$2,945	\$2,946 to \$5,301	\$5,302 to \$7,362	\$7,363 to \$8,835	\$8,836 to \$9,571
18	\$0 to \$2,998	\$2,999 to \$5,397	\$5,398 to \$7,496	\$7,497 to \$8,995	\$8,996 to \$9,745
19	\$0 to \$3,052	\$3,053 to \$5,493	\$5,494 to \$7,630	\$7,631 to \$9,156	\$9,157 to \$9,919
20	\$0 to \$3,106	\$3,107 to \$5,590	\$5,591 to \$7,764	\$7,765 to \$9,316	\$9,317 to \$10,093

Endnotes

¹ Saul, D., Saul, M., Newman, S., Rivera, G. (2021). *Creating an Accessible Valley-Wide Child Care System Feasibility Study*.

earlylearningwallawalla.org/images/Documents/WWVEL_C_Creating_an_Accessible_Valley_Wide_Child_Care_System_Feasibility_Study_2021.pdf

² Walla Walla Valley Early Learning Coalition.

<https://earlylearningwallawalla.org/research/reports>

³ Saul, D., Saul, M., Newman, S., Rivera, G. (2021). *Creating an Accessible Valley-Wide Child Care System Feasibility Study*.

earlylearningwallawalla.org/images/Documents/WWVEL_C_Creating_an_Accessible_Valley_Wide_Child_Care_System_Feasibility_Study_2021.pdf

⁴ Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families. *Seasonal Child Care*.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/getting-help/seasonal-child-care>

⁵ Oregon Department of Human Services. *Child Care Assistance: Information for Families*.

<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/ASSISTANCE/CHILD-CARE/Pages/Parents.aspx>

⁶ Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families. *Working Connections Child Care*.

https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/EPS_0075.pdf