



Council Business Meeting

June 6, 2023

Agenda Item	Early Learning Small Grant Opportunity – Scienceworks Museum		
From	Joseph Lessard	City Manager	
Contact	Joe.lessard@ashland.or.us ; 541-552-2103		
Item Type	Requested by Council <input type="checkbox"/> Update <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Direction <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/>		

SUMMARY

Scienceworks Museum is requesting a \$5,000 grant to serve as matching funds to help secure \$75,000 in combined funding from the Oregon Community Foundation and Ford Family Foundation (see attached Scienceworks Museum Early Learning Project Grant Application). Combined funding from the City and two foundations will be used to purchase modular building units with the goal of providing approximately 40± early learning and childcare placement positions/spots. The modular units are temporary classrooms leased by the Ashland School Districts (ASD) and placed at the Scienceworks Museum, on Southern Oregon University property, as part of the remodeling/expansion programs at Ashland Middle School and Walker Elementary. With completion of the ASD work, the modular units are subject to removal unless they can be purchased for continued use locally. The Scienceworks Museum is working with The Ivy School and other regional partners to provide early learning programs in the modular units for the Ashland community. The opportunity to secure these structures is time sensitive since they will be removed from the Scienceworks Museum site unless purchased.

Jackson County currently has the infrastructure and capacity to serve just 23% of the 0-5 yrs. of age population. In the Southern portion of the County, Ashland/Talent, that percentage is even lower. The pandemic, the Alameda fire and the limited availability of usable facilities forced the closure of many of the smaller childcare providers in the valley, exacerbating the shortage. In the same period, to navigate the pandemic, Scienceworks leased their undeveloped land to the Ashland School District so that Ashland Middle School and Walker Elementary could remodel their schools.

The ASD schools have now been successfully remodeled, Scienceworks has negotiated to purchase two of the modular building units and a bathroom unit for a favorable price with the two foundations and private donors pledging supporting resources. The infrastructure of water, sewer, and power, and modular classrooms and bathrooms are already installed on the Scienceworks Museum property. The modular buildings are currently under a conditional use permit for temporary buildings at the Scienceworks Museum site. To retain the modular buildings at the current site, Southern Oregon University will need to apply for a site review for permanent buildings through Community Development.

These classrooms represent an opportunity to develop community collaborations to meet a community need. ScienceWorks’ long-range plan is to partner with the Ivy School to deliver quality early learning programs. The first step in this process is to secure the modular buildings. The requested City grant support will enable





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Scienceworks to meet match funding requirements and leverage additional support to expand early learning and childcare within the City of Ashland.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

The Council's Economic Roundtable of March 6, 2023, identified three next step efforts to help confront Ashland economic challenges. One of the identified next steps was the establishment of a partnered effort by key Ashland economic institutions to plan potential joint efforts on affordable childcare and early childhood development. In follow-up to the Economic Roundtable, the City Council authorized the establishment of an Ad Hoc committee on Early Learning at the request of Councilor Hyatt at the March 15, 2023, Regular Meeting (see attached Request for Early Learning Ad Hoc Committee). The committee membership solicitation has closed, and the list of potential participants is being finalized for appointment consideration by the Mayor. Councilor Hyatt has offered to act as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The proposed 2023-2025 BN Budget includes \$240,000 (\$120,000 for FY 2023-2024) for early childhood development and childcare, a portion of which would be used to fund the \$5,000 Scienceworks Museum grant request.

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

City staff recommends Council approve the issuance of a \$5,000 grant for Scienceworks Museum to acquire modular buildings for the provision of an early childhood learning program in cooperation with regional partners, including the Ivy School. A motion to authorize grant would be as follows:

I move to authorized the City Manager to enter into a grant agreement with Scienceworks Museum for \$5,000 to serve as matching funds for the purchase of two modular classroom and one bathroom unit for use in an early childhood learning program.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

- Request for Early Learning Ad Hoc Committee
- Scienceworks Museum Early Learning Project Grant Application

Request for Early Learning Ad Hoc Committee

Challenge Statement

The current inventory of pre-school seats is not adequate to meet the demand of Ashland families as evidenced by waitlists in excess of 6 to 12 months. Limited early learning opportunities in Ashland are directly related to the following:

1. Program closures,
2. Reduced seats due to relocation, and
3. Increasing staffing challenges, consistent with national job market trends, resulting in fewer pre-school options for families.

These challenges result in subsequent concern for future enrolment in Ashland School District, kindergarten readiness, socialization opportunities for our children, a continuation of the worker shortage due to lack of childcare and impacts to the economic vitality of Ashland as a whole.

The Economic Round Table discussion held on March 6, 2023 further highlighted the need for early learning options in our community. Many stakeholders communicate strong support for affordable early learning and childcare programs. Specifically, such support focused on the need for early learning to attract and sustain working families in Ashland, and as a key service required to sustain and grow our economy.

Request:

- Convene an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of the City of Ashland, ASD, and local partners to respond to our mutually recognized need for early learning access in Ashland, and the Rogue Valley.
- Develop a charge that explores tangible actions we can take, as economic partners, in support working families, our economic development, and most importantly, our children.
- Respond to the conversation on March 6th with action.

Past Policy Analysis

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the critical nature of quality, reliable, affordable early learning, and childcare options for working families in Ashland, across the state of Oregon and nationally.

State Level Policy

Insufficient slots for childcare and early learning opportunities were a serious challenge in Oregon Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak in March of 2020¹. The prevalence of inadequate childcare supply across Oregon was exceptionally high with a blended rate of 72% of communities lacking necessary care options². This translates to only enough early learning and childcare options to support one third of the total need. When studying more detailed data, 85% of communities lacked a satisfactory number of slots for infant and toddlers while 61% of communities required additional preschool options². According to conversations with Oregon Community Foundation, Ashland and the Southern Rogue Valley are considered childcare deserts.

Addressing the challenges of childcare and preschool options in a community must not be considered a micro issue specific to an individual household. When such challenges endure, they transform into economic development and operational problems for businesses and local economies. Staffing paradigms suffer and directly impact the viability of businesses as well as the local economies these businesses comprise. The Census Household Pulse Survey for October 2021 found, in Oregon, over 88,000 eligible workers reported difficulty with childcare as the main reason for opting to stay home and not participate in the workforce³.

Local Policy

Local to Ashland, preschool is not the direct responsibility of city government or the local school district. Traditionally preschool and childcare needs are met through a patchwork of private and non-profit providers of varying size, philosophy, and licensure status. Programs with ten or fewer students in a home environment are not required to be licensed and comprise a significant segment of the preschool slots available to Ashland residents. This patchwork model is not unique to Ashland, nor the state of Oregon. Preschool and childcare are predominantly delivered via a private market, characterized by a fee for service payment structure, that annually approaches the cost of a years' college tuition. According to the 2020 Oregon Child Care Market Price Study a year of fulltime preschool is approximately \$14,400 annually, \$1,200 per month. The same study cites fulltime infant and toddler care at approximately \$19,200 annually, \$1,600 per month⁴.

To further compound the challenge for childcare providers, many report absorbing the cost of Covid-19 protocols. This increases the strain on existing programs especially with fewer paying clients⁵. Finally, the City of Ashland, and the Ashland School District before the city, leased the Briscoe School to the Oregon Childhood Development Coalition (OCDC). OCDC operates preschool and childcare opportunities specifically designed to serve Southern Oregon's migrant worker families. The City of Ashland's policy related to the OCDC program is strictly as that of tenant/ landlord and does not constitute a formal policy endorsement of early learning solutions for Ashland working families.

Footnotes:

1. <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/oregon-s-child-care-industry>
2. <https://health.oregonstate.edu/early-learners/research/supply-and-demand-oregon-young-children>
3. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>
4. <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/ASSISTANCE/CHILD-CARE/Documents/CCMR%202020%20Report.pdf>
5. <https://www.ijpr.org/education/2021-12-09/oregon-child-care-industry-grapples-with-funding-delays-staffing-shortages>

Application for Grant

Organization	Scienceworks Museum		
Mailing Address	1500 East Main Street Ashland 97520		
Contact Name	Cynthia Salbato	Phone	541-261-2828
Email	cynthia@scienceworksmuseum.org		
Secondary Contact	Ash Friend	Phone	531-646-4790
Email	ash@scienceworksmuseum.org		
Federal Tax ID	93-1309725	IRS Class (exemption)	501(c)(3)

Grant Request	
Total Request	\$ 5,000.00

- 1) Briefly describe the purpose and objectives of your organization and mission statement ***(please limit to 200 words)***.
- 2) Briefly describe how the City grant would be used ***(please limit to 500 words)***.

3) If your grant request is for date specific events, programs or activities, please complete the following table *(use additional pages as necessary)* :

Scienceworks Museum is requesting a \$5K grant as matching funds to help secure \$75K in combined funding from Oregon Community Foundation and Ford Family Foundation. This funding will be used to purchase modular units with the goal of providing 40+ early learning and childcare spots. We are working with The Children's Museum/The Ivy School, regional leaders in providing early learning programs to develop a partnership that will yield affordable and accessible early learning for the Ashland community.

The need for this funding is urgent, the opportunity to secure these structures is time sensitive.

Jackson County currently has the infrastructure and capacity to serve just 23% of the 0-5 population. In the Southern portion of the County, Ashland/Talent, that percentage is even worse. The pandemic, the Alameda fire and the limited availability of useable facilities forced the closure of many of the smaller childcare providers in the valley, exacerbating the shortage.

In the same period, to navigate the pandemic, Scienceworks leased their undeveloped land to the Ashland School District so that Ashland Middle School and Walker Elementary could remodel their schools. The infrastructure of water, sewer, and power, and leased classroom modulares and bathrooms were installed on our property.

The schools have now been successfully remodeled and Scienceworks has negotiated to purchase two of the modulares and bathrooms for a very good price. We have foundations and private donors pledging their resources.

These classrooms are a perfect opportunity to develop community collaborations to meet an urgent community need. ScienceWorks' long range plan is to partner with the Ivy School to deliver quality early learning programs.

The first step in this process is to secure the buildings.

A demonstration of support from the City of Ashland will help us meet the funding requirements and leverage additional support for this priority community need - expanding early learning and childcare for the City of Ashland

Program/ Event Title	Anticipated Event Date(s) Start End		Funding Request
Foundation for Early Learning/Childcare Center			\$5000K

			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$

4) If you do not receive the full amount of your request, describe how your organization would use a smaller amount of funds. Be specific. **(please limit to 500 words).**

Organization Board Member
(use additional sheets as necessary)

Name	Jessica Murrey Board President 541-941-6967
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Name	Chris Brimhall
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Name	Krynn Lukacs
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Name	Candy Hoppe
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Name	Cassandra Dexter
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Name	Anna Dunlap
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Grants Program Budget*

Please use this form to identify costs associated with the program, activity or event that you are requesting funds for.

***This form is provided as a template to use. If your organization tracks grant related financials in a different reporting format, please submit in that format.**

Program/Event Name	Early Learning/Childcare Program at Scienceworks
Project Period:	ongoing

REVENUE		
Source	Funding title	Amount
City of Ashland Grant Funds:		\$5,000
Jackson County Funds/ Identify:	United Way of Jackson County	\$1,000
State Funds/ Identify:		\$
Federal Funds/ Identify:		\$
Other funds/ Identify:	Ford Family Foundation	\$50,000
Other funds/ Identify:	Oregon Community Foundation	\$25,000
Other Funds:	Don Kaizer	\$60,000

Other funds/ Identify: \$

TOTAL REVENUE

\$ 141,000

EXPENDITURES

Personal Services		
Total Salaries:	% of Time to Project/Event:	Salaries specific to

		Project/Event:
	\$ %	\$
Total Benefits:	% of Time to Project/Event:	Benefits specific to Project/Event:
\$	%	\$
Total Project/Event-Specific Personal Services		\$
Materials & Services		
2 Modular Classrooms at 25K each		\$50,000
2 Modular Bathrooms at 40k each		\$80,000
Installation of modular Classrooms 5k each		\$10,000
		\$
Total Project/Event Specific Materials & Services		\$ 140,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$

Signature Page

Thank you for your time and efforts in preparing this information for consideration by the Grants Committee.

By signing below you certify that:

You, the grantee, understand that you must comply with all federal, state, and local requirements applicable for the activities funded by this grant. Award of a grant by the City does not waive the grantee's obligation to obtain, at grantee's sole expense, all applicable permits that may be required for grantees program or project.

And, that a grant will be conditioned on submission or other approvals to the City of a Certificate of General Liability Insurance Per City Contract, naming the City of Ashland, its officers and employees as additional insured.

And, that you the undersigned have legal authority to submit the above information on behalf of the organization named below.

Signature *Cynthia Salbato*

Name (print): Cynthia Salbato

Title: Board Member Scienceworks Museum Board of Directors

Organization: Scienceworks Museum