

Project Oasis – Solutions for a childcare desert

The Problem We Aim to Address:

Not unlike other rural Oregon counties, Yamhill County has been identified as a childcare desert. COVID-19 has brought even more devastating impacts as many small service providers shut their doors permanently amidst growing concerns and regulations related to this global pandemic.

“Even before COVID-19 arrived on the scene, Yamhill County was considered a childcare desert. According to a 2019 study out of OSU, only 16% of our children age 0-5 had access to a regulated childcare slot. Now, over 4,000 children from kindergarten through 5th grade are also in need of care while our schools are engaged in distance learning. The need is great – and we need to work together to find solutions, both for family wellbeing and for the economic viability of our community.”

Jennifer Richter, Early Learning Program Manager – Yamhill CCC

The State of Oregon has identified childcare as one of the top priorities for economic recovery, allowing working parents to return to their jobs and provide for their families. Issues with distance learning structures for school aged children, still too young to be home alone, have exacerbated the need for childcare and are challenging parents to identify alternate care options for this unprecedented time in our nation’s history. Additional stresses on family structures have family support program partners concerned about how they can deliver services to families who are no longer congregating at schools and other community spaces. This leaves them looking for new access points to deliver vital services to families in need.

Ultimately, this is a problem that needs to be addressed cooperatively, with employers, day care operators, local government and economic development leaders leveraging resources to provide affordable, quality childcare options for the Yamhill County workforce.

Our Mission:

Project Oasis seeks to provide affordable, safe, localized, dynamic, community-centered childcare, cohort-style distance learning and early-family programming for wage-earning working families and underserved persons in Yamhill County. We are striving to develop a replicable model that can be used in other communities to assist in meeting similar needs.

Guiding Principal: Make earning a living while raising a family, affordable, possible, and meaningful

Project Oasis - Program Design

DCI, in conjunction with the Spencer Family Foundation and Project Bloom, aim to develop a childcare and community access facility which, at its core, will provide affordable childcare options for working parents, primarily in the Newberg, Dundee, McMinnville region who currently struggle to find safe, legal, geographically convenient options. Two buildings are currently being assessed to accommodate a 150(+)-child care facility, a dynamic community use space and a not-for-profit family services partner. Furthermore, the project would be designed in such a manner to where it could be replicated in counties around Oregon, acting as a model for private corporations, non-profit, and government partners, outlining approaches for coming together with common - but separate agendas - aiming to deliver a sustainable solution for Oregon's childcare deserts.

Our Three-legged Stool: Childcare, Cohort-style Distance Learning & Early-family Support

Workforce Development & Childcare: Childcare programming will be managed by our local, licensed service partner, Little Bird Childcare. Our goal is to partner with additional sponsors who will participate in the corporate program, sponsoring employee childcare slots to support their workforce development platforms. These slots will occupy no more than 40% of the total capacity. The remaining 60% capacity will be made available to the public. We are pursuing a tiered cost structure and participant criteria to ensure that historically underserved persons, ERDC (Employment Related Daycare for low income) program recipients, and our local wage workers receive priority access to these services.

CHILDCARE CAPACITY ESTIMATES:

<u>Childcare Composition</u>	<u># Kids</u>
Infants	20
Wobblers	25
Toddlers	30
Pre-K	45
School Age	30
Total	150

Cohort-Style Distance Learning (COVID-19 Resource): The space will be purposefully designed to allow Community Support Area(s). Defined as, modular square footage and furniture that can quickly be outfitted to serve urgent and unforeseen community issues. During the remainder of the Covid-19 relief efforts, the space can be designed as a community access

cohort-style distance learning space. Depending on architectural allowances, the child capacity could potentially host up to 20.

Early-Family Support: We know that programs designed to support our community are most effective when they can meet the community members, where they gather. In addition to being a childcare desert, Yamhill county is home to communities that struggle with higher rates of child abuse, neglect, hunger and poverty. We are partnering with the Early Learning Hub and are in conversations with the Newberg Relief Nursery to identify the best-fit-partner to provide on-site aid and services to families in need. Other programs being explored are medical/dental clinics for children, modeled after the Gladstone Center for Children and Families program. The program selected for partnership will operate as a private 501c3 non-profit in shared space to support the needs of our community.

Intended Impacts:

- Workforce Development - Provide dedicated daycare options for corporate sponsor(s) for the purpose of retaining and attracting a reliable workforce.
- Childcare - Create subsidized daycare options for the wage-level employee, who can find childcare to be a barrier to entering the workforce or retaining a job
- COVID Response & Dynamic Community Space – Develop a modular cohort-style distance learning platform to offer parents an option for children ages 6-12 who require supervision while distance learning. This space will be repurposed to adapt to changing community needs
- Family Support – Offer onsite support for families in need, through partnership with a 501c3 service organization
- Pilot a solution - Foster the practice of ideating solutions for community problems through collaboration of private, non-profit, and government sector efforts; together they can add up to a greater impact than the sum of the parts

Committed Partners:

Industry Partner: **DCI**

Foundation Partner: **Spencer Family Foundation**

Childcare Service Provider: **Little Bird Childcare** (<http://www.littlebirdchildcare.com/>)

Regional Economic Development Partners: **Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR) & Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG)**

Municipal Partner: **City of Newberg**

Educational & Programming Partners: **Newberg School District & Early Learning Hub**

Architectural Partner: **Bric Architecture** <https://www.bric-arch.com/>

Project Cost Modeling _ Y1:

Project Oasis

September 2020

Startup Expenses

Architectural/Engineering Drawings	\$	35,000	
Construction	\$	350,000	
Fire Suppression	\$	100,000	
Parking Lot	\$	30,000	
Permits	\$	20,000	
Furniture and Equipment	\$	100,000	
Technology/Servers	\$	150,000	
System Development Charges (SDC)	\$	65,000	*Discussing moratorium with City
Transportation Utility Fee	\$	500	
Development & Construction Contingency	\$	212,500	
Advertising	\$	75,000	
First Six Months Operating Expenses	\$	500,000	
	\$	<u>1,638,000</u>	

Committed Private/Non-Profit Funding

DCI	\$	25,000
Spencer Family Foundation	\$	50,000
Project Bloom	\$	150,000
	\$	<u>225,000</u>

Requested Government Contributions

Federal	\$	400,000	
State	\$	500,000	
Yamhill County	\$	400,000	
City of Newberg	\$	100,000	*Commitment Forthcoming
	\$	<u>1,400,000</u>	

Total Requested Funds: \$ 1,625,000

Committed Funding To-Date	\$	225,000
Current Funding Gap	\$	1,413,000

Request for Support:

With an understanding that County funding for this project would be a reimbursable expense through Cares Act Funds, Project Oasis partners, led by DCI, humbly request \$400,000 from the Board of Commissioners to support the development of this project.

Accepted by Yamhill County
Board of Commissioners on
10/8/2020 by Board Order
20-357