

January 2, 2025

Valdez Child Care Initiative: Project Status Update

Overview

The Valdez childcare initiative is progressing toward creating a sustainable and scalable childcare model aligned with the community's needs and long-term strategic goals. This initiative focuses on enhancing childcare capacity, supporting economic development, and addressing the challenges identified in the Valdez Child Care Task Force recommendations, Valdez by the Numbers, and the Valdez long-term strategic plan.

Key Milestones Achieved

1. Stakeholder Engagement

- Met with Valdez City Council members, Economic Diversification Commissioners, and Child Care Crisis Task Force alumni to share updates and gather feedback.
- Attended meetings with Prince William Sound College and Alyeska Pipeline Service Company representatives to explore collaborative opportunities.
- Presented evidence-based solutions and funding models and answered subject matter questions at several EDC meetings.

2. Start-Up Grant Program Design

- Established a framework to manage the start-up grant program, including an advertised request for Letters of Interest (LOIs), interviews with prospective providers, and a transparent project recommendation process for funding allocation.

3. Operating Grant Program Development

- A cost model has been proposed, recommending an operating grant of \$400 per child per month to support ongoing operations of childcare providers.
- Collaboration with stakeholders, including the Economic Diversification Commission, has refined the approach to funding distribution.

4. Alignment with Strategic Goals

- Integrated initiatives with the Valdez long-term strategic planning document to ensure continuity and alignment with economic diversification objectives.

Current Focus Areas and Next Steps

1. Operationalizing Grant Programs
2. Continue engaging stakeholders through regular updates and collaborative discussions.
3. Develop a public awareness campaign to promote the initiative and its impact.
4. Strengthening partnerships with local employers, educational institutions, and state-level organizations to increase childcare capacity and workforce development opportunities.
5. Developing metrics to evaluate program effectiveness, track capacity growth, and ensure transparency in funding outcomes.

Challenges

- **Provider Recruitment**
Identifying and supporting potential childcare providers who meet community standards and capacity needs.
- **Sustainable Funding**
Ensuring long-term financial support through municipal investments, state funding, and private partnerships.
- **Public Awareness**
Increasing community awareness of the critical role of child care in economic development and workforce retention.