

Request for SOREDI Investment \$30,000 Childcare Catalyst Grant Funds

To support the Josephine County Childcare Business Accelerator Pilot Program



SOREDI Funds will be invested to catalyze childcare businesses through a new pilot small business mentoring partnership between the Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub (SOELS) and Rogue Community College Small Business Development Center (RCC SBDC).

Participants who sign up for the “Childcare Accelerator” program will be required to register for SBDC advising and mentoring and must meet a checklist of readiness and training.

SOREDI Grants will be disbursed to childcare businesses upon completion of the program. SOELS offers to administer and distribute funds. The RCC SBDC will facilitate outreach, business startup and growth advising, mentoring, and state licensing checklists coordination with SOELS.

Economic and Industry Impact

Every business and industry sector relies on childcare for its workforce, and Oregon’s Workforce Boards identify lack of childcare as a key contributor to the overall workforce shortage.

Josephine County’s Small Business Survey identified lack of childcare as an operational constraint for Josephine County employers and their employees.

SOREDI funds will:

- Provide grants specific to a critical obstacle for startups and expansions: state-mandated equipment, supplies and materials. SOELS will assess these needs specific to the business.
- Align with regional economic development and workforce partners in Josephine County.
- Meet a critical need for reaching all of Josephine County, including rural communities.
- Be promoted throughout Josephine County to capture interest and incentivize childcare business startups and expansions to meet state-certified childcare standards.
- Support a baseline pilot program modeled after other successful childcare regional economic development partners in Oregon.
- SOREDI funds will also be leveraged with other funding and partners.
 - \$10,000 match from the Southern Oregon Early Hub (specific to Josephine County).
 - \$30,000 City of Grants Pass childcare grants (Community Development Block Grants restricted to inside Urban Growth Boundary and only for low to moderate income).
 - Operational Matching investments to administer, build, and promote the pilot:
 - \$48,000 Business Oregon Capacity Building and Marketing funds
 - Approximately \$59,000 RCC SBDC Staff and Advisors matching efforts
 - Rogue Community College (RCC). RCC has provided funding to support the SBDC since 1984.

Supporting Workforce and Childcare Needs

“Southern Oregon is considered a childcare desert because fewer than 33% of children 0-5 have access to a slot due to lack of availability.” (Rene Brandon, SOELS)

The Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub assessed the needs, barriers and opportunities in Southern Oregon. The study identified critical barriers and developed strategies to increase the availability of childcare in our region.

The *Childcare Business Accelerator* pilot project will address one of four key areas of need: The establishment of in-home licensed childcare businesses and expanding childcare providers in Josephine County. The pilot will build new SBDC curriculum and training programs and will increase alignment of the childcare support ecosystem available to entrepreneurs in Josephine County.

Proposed and Confirmed Funding Partners



Proposed: SOREDI Childcare Accelerator Catalyst Funding

SOREDI funding will generate interest and provide incentive to entrepreneurs, in addition to grant funds after childcare business program completion.



City of Grants Pass / Community Development Block Grant funds

The city of Grants Pass Community and Economic Development has identified childcare as a strong need and committed \$30,000 in grant incentives to low to moderate income households in the city's Urban Growth Area.



2024-25 Business Oregon Capacity Grant

Rogue SBDC received 2024-25 Business Oregon funding to develop curriculum and increase small business advising for childcare business support throughout Josephine County.



Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub (SOESL)

SOESL launched its Southern Oregon Child Care Expansion Campaign in 2023. They have set aside \$10,000 for startup costs of new childcare facilities in Josephine County. An additional \$30,000 is needed to support needs.

Michelle Gallas – Imagine That Creative Children’s Centers, LLC

Twenty years ago, Michelle Gallas came to the Rogue Community College SBDC with a dream to open her own childcare center. She developed a business plan, pursued education, sought support from the RCC SBDC, Southern Oregon Educational Service District, and others. She has expanded her childcare business over the years, now offering childcare in four locations.

“It is our hope that by empowering children and their families with creative opportunities, they will discover the joy of lifelong learning.” Michelle Gallas

