



## WEST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Valley County • Cascade • Donnelly • McCall • Meadows Valley

### **West Central Mountains Region STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN: 2020 - 2025**

Based on our Early Learning Advisory Committee's 2020 Needs Assessment, we have identified a strategic action plan that we believe is achievable over the next 5 years. Below we lay out the Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, Strategies and Tactics we would like to achieve through our regional coalition and expanded partnership opportunities. Items highlighted in **GREEN** are must-dos, items in **YELLOW** are nice-to-haves and items in **RED** are should do's as bandwidth allows.

**Vision:** Equal access to early learning and development for children age birth through five across our region.

**Mission:** Provide meaningful, outcome-driven business retention and expansion resources to local preschool and childcare providers, as well as entrepreneurs.

#### **Values:**

- Compassionate
- Inclusive
- Thoughtful
- Data-driven
- Balanced
- Intentional

#### **GOALS:**

- ❖ **STABILIZE:** By the end of 2022, stabilize vulnerabilities to available childcare and preschool spaces across the region.
  - **STRATEGIES:** Starters
    - Resource aggregation and staffing
      - **TACTICS**

- ◆ Host an inclusive early childhood education and childcare summit with partners and interested stakeholders to define the challenge and opportunities publicly, create a feedback loop and begin building a coalition around this plan. SUMMER 2021
- ◆ Pull together a database/web page of known support resources and partnership opportunities for existing area providers and promote this information widely. SUMMER 2021
- ◆ Aggregate stakeholders, foundations, and funding partners to pull together funding for a full-time early childhood education position to support West Central Mountain businesses and stakeholders with expanding and creating new childcare facilities. SUMMER 2021
- ◆ Define the comprehensive scope and duties (job description) for a full time position, commensurate with attainable funding opportunities. Also specify the administrative structure, reporting requirements, benefits package, and under which organization this position resides. SUMMER 2021
- ◆ Recruit and hire the position. FALL 2021
- ◆ Pull together additional resources for employer led collaboratives and high quality in-home care. ONGOING
- ◆ Explore and evaluate opportunities for overhead cost sharing (co-op) for things like insurance, transportation and meals to help lower costs and offset inefficiencies at scale. ONGOING
- Stakeholder advocacy
  - TACTICS
    - ◆ Create and deploy a communications plan for outreach and coalition building between providers and support resources to ensure engagement remains high. Utilize ACS' messaging for brand continuity. Some possible stakeholders:
      - School districts
      - Municipalities
      - Counties
      - Chambers
      - U of I and BSU
      - Providers
      - Hospitals
      - Southern Valley Recreation District
      - Employers/Industry
      - USFS

- Libraries
  - Parks and Rec/IDPR
  - Ponderosa State Park
  - Community groups et al (Rotary)
  - FALL 2021, ONGOING
  - ◆ Evaluate all stabilization metrics for effectiveness  
DECEMBER 2022
  - ◆ Continuous improvement: Work with providers like Education Northwest who have research capacity and who might be able to assist with program expansion and refinement. ONGOING
  - ◆ Write letters and attend policy discussions at the local, state and federal level to encourage investment in early childhood education in Idaho. ONGOING
- Facilities planning
  - TACTICS
    - ◆ As part of the early childhood summit, survey attendees to determine their facilities deficiencies and opportunities (up to 3 month survey lifespan). SUMMER 2021
    - ◆ Expand WCMEDC's civic campus analysis to include available spaces in each community where childcare and preschools could be located. ONGOING
    - ◆ Engage area commercial RE brokers to create partnerships and mindfulness about the need for these types of facilities. ONGOING
- ❖ NORMALIZE: By the end of 2023, have an ecosystem in place that makes starting a high-quality childcare or preschool a desirable and rewarding endeavor.
  - STRATEGIES: Resources
    - Training
      - TACTICS
        - ◆ Work with partners to create an inclusive best practices regular professional development program for both continuing education and new providers and staff. Evidence based/research based--job embedded professional development. Identify and deploy a continuing education framework that is: required, collaborative, regular, expert, researched, analyzed, effective, is retention-oriented and continuous improvement-oriented. FALL 2021
        - ◆ Establish an employee hiring set of standards. FALL 2021
        - ◆ Create, socialize and deploy a universal screening and assessment model for baseline continuity--standards and expectations for 1. CHILDCARE and 2. PRESCHOOLS

- ◆ Establish a federal registered apprenticeship program for early childhood education that includes robust on the job and in the classroom advancement components. ONGOING
  - ◆ Identify and deploy a feedback loop structure (living database) that promotes solutions to local opportunities and challenges--includes parents, policymakers and industry. ONGOING
- Recruitment/Retention
  - TACTICS
    - ◆ Create a start-up kit for in home providers that covers everything from permitting to best practices. SPRING 2022
    - ◆ As part of the communications plan, reach out to a targeted demographic who may be interested in starting a preschool or childcare facility. ONGOING
    - ◆ Provide area providers with a wage and benefits model that will encourage retention. FALL 2021
    - ◆ Provide support resources and funding opportunities for start-ups and expansion projects, as well as training options. ONGOING
    - ◆ Deploy professional development partnership with Universities, Idaho Stars, IAAYC. FALL 2021
- Work/life balance
  - TACTICS
    - ◆ Partner with school districts to integrate a CTE work based learning program opportunity for high school students. SPRING 2022
    - ◆ Identify / deploy best practices modeling for use of volunteers at various scales. SPRING 2022
    - ◆ Create / deploy a recruitment and retention plan to attract and retain talent from out of the area (Boise, Lewiston, Spokane, Moscow markets) using early childhood degree and CTE availability and graduation data. ONGOING
- Finance / Operations
  - TACTICS
    - ◆ Identify opportunities to normalize market fluctuations and scheduling variations to better account for seasonality and cost concerns from parents in our highly seasonal market. SUMMER 2021, ONGOING
    - ◆ Evaluate all normalization metrics for effectiveness. DECEMBER 2023
    - ◆ Build a relationship model with local lenders and grant making bodies. ONGOING

- ◆ Incorporate a preferred list of finance options for start-ups needing resources. Improve access to capital and remove barriers to entry. ONGOING
    - ◆ Expand the communication plan to include these resources. ONGOING
- ❖ EXPAND: By the end of 2025, increase capacity for early childhood education and childcare spaces by 100 plus 5% of the base population (by age), or 35 new spots, for a total of 135 new spaces.
  - STRATEGIES: Outreach
    - Outreach: Business Attraction
      - TACTICS
        - ◆ Locate the top 2 locations for a medium to large “center” facility in each community (McCall, Donnelly, Cascade, New Meadows) and actively promote these sites with brokerage and community partners. Include business attraction incentives from state and local entities. ONGOING
        - ◆ As part of the communication plan, launch a marketing and outreach initiative for high quality in home and employer led start ups/collabratives. ONGOING
        - ◆ Meet with no fewer than 10 serious prospects for new facility start up. SUMMER 2023, ONGOING
    - Outreach: Business Expansion
      - TACTICS
        - ◆ Implement a regular communication and collaboration process with all local school districts, pursuant of a central theme/goal: being able to serve all kids rather than just select groups. Determine opportunities and work them into a programming and funding plan. SUMMER 2023, ONGOING
        - ◆ Expand the communication plan to cultivate deal flow for incumbent expansion based on market demand. ONGOING
        - ◆ Evaluate all expansion metrics for effectiveness. DECEMBER 2025
        - ◆ Meet with no fewer than 5 serious incumbents who are looking to expand their facility. SUMMER 2023, ONGOING
        - ◆ Launch a central facility that services the whole region: Developmental Preschool, Early Head Start / Head Start and Child Care. SUMMER 2025