

Juneau Child Care Apprenticeship Funding

March 6, 2024

Grant Proposal: Juneau Child Care Apprenticeship Program

Organization Name: Southeast Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children (SEAAEYC)

Funding Request: \$250,000

Funding Period: FY26

I. Statement of Need

The Juneau Child Care Apprenticeship Program, launched in January 2024, was designed to address our community's critical shortage of qualified early childhood educators. With initial startup funding secured for two years, these funds will be entirely spent by the end of FY25. Without additional funding, the program will lapse, preventing new cohorts from starting and disrupting progress in building a stable and skilled early childhood workforce.

Juneau's childcare crisis has been well-documented, and the Assembly has identified childcare as an area of extreme need in the community. The apprenticeship program directly supports this priority by creating a sustainable pipeline of trained early childhood educators who will remain in the field and expand childcare capacity in the region.

Project Description

The Juneau Child Care Apprenticeship Program is a two-year initiative that blends on-the-job training with formal education, leading to two key credentials:

1. **An Occupational Endorsement Certificate (OEC) in Early Childhood Education (ECE)** from the University of Alaska.
2. **A Federal Certificate of Apprenticeship** from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

Our current cohort of four apprentices will graduate in May 2025, and we aim to launch a new cohort in August 2025. The requested \$250,000 in CBJ funding will provide a bridge period to cover program costs for the first year of the next cohort, ensuring the program continues without interruption. At the same time, we work with Senator Murkowski's office, the Alaska Department of Labor, the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, and the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to secure sustained long-term funding.

Goals and Outcomes

The program aims to develop a well-trained early childhood workforce that will remain in Juneau and contribute to long-term childcare sustainability. Success is measured by:

- Apprentices completing the program with their OEC and federal DOL certification.
- Retention in the early childhood field beyond graduation.
- Increased local childcare capacity, as some graduates plan to open childcare programs.
- Strengthened partnerships between SEAAEYC, CBJ, and the state and federal workforce development agencies.

Alignment with Assembly Goals and Priorities

The CBJ Assembly has prioritized child care as an area of extreme need. By investing in this program, the Assembly will support economic development, workforce stability, and social services—each of which aligns with the objectives of Assembly grants.

- **Economic Development:** A stable childcare workforce allows more parents to participate in the workforce, strengthening Juneau’s economy.
- **Workforce Sustainability:** The apprenticeship model creates a reliable, ongoing pipeline of trained early childhood educators.
- **Social Services:** Increased childcare availability directly supports working families, reducing economic strain and improving overall community well-being.

Budget Justification

The \$250,000 request will be used to cover costs associated with program continuation, including:

- **Apprentice Wages and Stipends:** Supporting new participants as they complete their on-the-job training.
- **Tuition and Educational Expenses:** Covering costs for OEC coursework at UAA.
- **Mentor Compensation:** Ensuring high-quality supervision and training in early childhood settings.
- **Program Administration:** Covering coordination efforts to sustain and expand the program.

Sustainability Plan

If CBJ funding provides the necessary cushion to prevent the program from lapsing, SEAAEYC will continue actively working with state and federal partners to secure long-term sustainability. We collaborate directly with Senator Murkowski’s office, the Alaska Department of Labor, and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board to integrate this apprenticeship model into broader workforce development initiatives. Additionally, UAA’s commitment to supporting the program’s educational component ensures that apprentices will continue to have access to formal training pathways.

The Juneau Child Care Apprenticeship Program has already successfully trained and retained early childhood educators in Juneau. With CBJ funding, we can maintain momentum and continue addressing one of the most urgent needs in our community: access to quality child care. By supporting this program, the Assembly will invest in long-term workforce development, economic stability, and the well-being of families in Juneau.