



Women's Fund Childcare Initiative

Expanding access to high-quality, affordable childcare in Ashland County



Executive Summary

Lack of access to childcare is among the top needs in Ashland County, holding back women, children, families and businesses from reaching their full potential.

In particular, demand exceeds supply for infant and toddler care as well as for center-based care outside traditional work hours. Additionally, the high cost of childcare is a barrier for many families, particularly for single mothers and low-income families with multiple children. These factors keep some parents—most often women— out of the workforce or force families into less desirable or even unsafe childcare arrangements.

Led by the Women's Fund Steering Committee of Ashland County Community Foundation, the Women's Fund Childcare Initiative aims to expand access to high-quality, affordable childcare in Ashland County, Ohio.

By starting a new childcare center in our city's industrial park, Ashland Business Park, we will create additional childcare spaces for families in our community who need them most. Our innovative funding model will ensure our center operates sustainably while providing high-quality care and remaining affordable and convenient for families.

To bring this goal to fruition, the Women's Fund Steering Committee is convening strategic partners, forming a new nonprofit agency to own and operate the center, and laying the groundwork for the center's future.

Thanks to our committee's extensive research and planning, the public's trust in our organization and the community's belief in our cause, we have already gained buy-in from key players in our local government and social services sector as well as from the community at-large. Our plan has been met with strong support from local business leaders and from the local faith community.

We are confident that with grant funding as well as support from businesses, organizations and individuals, we can raise \$4.5 million to build the center, cover startup costs and establish partial endowment for ongoing operations. We plan to begin construction on an approximately 12,400 square foot facility in spring 2023, with a target opening date of fall 2023.

About the Women's Fund

The Women's Fund is a permanently endowed fund held at Ashland County Community Foundation and managed by the Women's Fund Steering Committee. The fund was established in 2004 to create a permanent legacy that enhances the lives of women in Ashland County. Annual fund distributions are used to make grants and provide scholarships that build community among women, promote women's advancement and strengthen Ashland County women.

Historically, the Women's Fund Steering Committee has focused on growing the endowment fund through fundraising and awareness campaigns, as well as on careful management of fund distributions through our grant and scholarship award process. As the fund has matured, the 15 members of the steering committee recognized an opportunity to



become more proactive with our efforts and resources. In 2019, the committee voted to tackle what we have identified to be one of the top barriers women in Ashland County face—lack of access to high-quality, affordable childcare. Today, the committee continues the fund’s annual, reactive grant cycle while also devoting significant time and energy to the Women’s Fund Childcare Initiative.

We believe collaborating to address our community’s childcare needs will have the following benefits:

- For women and parents: Access to affordable, quality childcare allows parents to remain in the workforce and advance in their careers. It gives them the ability to provide financially for their families while meeting the physical, emotional, educational and social needs of their children.
- For children: Children need safe, stable and educational environments to thrive. Providing this in their most formative years sets them up for success in school and in their future lives.
- For businesses: When childcare resources are adequate, businesses will be better positioned to recruit and retain high-quality job applicants. They will save time and money by reducing absenteeism and turnover. They will benefit from greater workplace diversity. In addition to significant immediate workforce benefits, businesses will benefit from the better-prepared future workforce that will result from this investment in early childhood education and care.
- For community: When families and businesses in our community thrive, it lifts up our entire community. Improved access to childcare for workers will help fuel economic development. Meanwhile, drug use and crime may be reduced as a result of increased employment for parents, greater financial stability for families and the provision of positive environments for children.

“One of the biggest challenges facing our community is finding enough skilled workers to fill the many jobs that are available at the businesses here in our great city.

This important community initiative will help our moms and dads to go back to work, provide for their families and contribute to our local economy.”

—Matt Miller, City of Ashland Mayor

About Ashland County Community Foundation



Ashland County Community Foundation is like the “charitable bank” of our community. We pool resources from community members into endowment funds, invest those assets and use the proceeds to make grants for the betterment of the entire community. We exist to serve donors, nonprofit organizations and the community as a whole.

ACCF serves as our community’s connection point between donors who care and causes that matter. Donors appreciate our deep understanding of our community’s needs and our strong track record of enhancing the quality of life in Ashland County.

Since our founding in 1995, ACCF has given back more than \$20 million to the Ashland County community through grants, scholarships and other fund distributions. ACCF has more than 560 endowment funds under management, and we closed the 2020-2021 fiscal year with assets totaling more than \$83 million. The foundation has earned the trust of more than 7,000 local donors and holds endowments for approximately 40 local nonprofit agencies.

Statement of Need

Though Ashland County is home to approximately 3,000 children under the age of five, the county has only three licensed childcare centers that accept infants and toddlers. Together, these centers provide only 26 spaces for infants and 56 for toddlers. Moreover, our county has no Type B licensed home-based care providers.



Two-thirds of Ohio parents have trouble finding childcare, according to a 2020 report from Childcare Aware of America. A 2021 report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation shows 11 percent of parents in the United States have turned down a job due to lack of childcare.

According to a 2019 Ashland County Community Health Assessment from the Ashland County Health Department, 12 percent of Ashland County parents said they had missed work in the

past year due to lack of childcare. This number has likely grown since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even when childcare center spaces are available, many families are unable to access care because of non-traditional work hours or unaffordable costs.

Ashland County has no childcare centers open past 6 p.m., so second and third-shift workers are unable to utilize center-based care. There are a number of home-based childcare options in our county, but none are licensed.

Average full-time childcare costs for a single parent of two children in Ohio total \$17,879—or 74 percent of the median income for an individual in our state, according to a 2020 report from Childcare Aware of America. This startling statistic shows why so many single parents in our community cannot afford to support their families through work while also providing quality care for their children. One quarter of Ashland County children live in a single-parent household.

Even for two-parent households, center-based care for two children accounts for 19 percent of median income. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, child care is considered affordable if it costs no more than 7% of a family's income.

This challenge takes a toll not only on families but also on employers. Nearly 90 percent of employers nationally are looking for childcare solutions for their employees, according to 2021 report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Through extensive conversations with local business leaders and our local Chamber of Commerce, we have confirmed this is a significant issue for our local businesses. Business leaders and human resource officers have told us the need for employee childcare solutions is increasing as younger employees are replacing a wave of retiring workers.

“Packaging Corporation of America’s (PCA) Ashland, Ohio location is excited to support the new childcare center being built in our industrial park. We see this as a great opportunity to support our employees and the community.”

—Michael Strahler, PCA Ashland General Manager

Needs Assessment

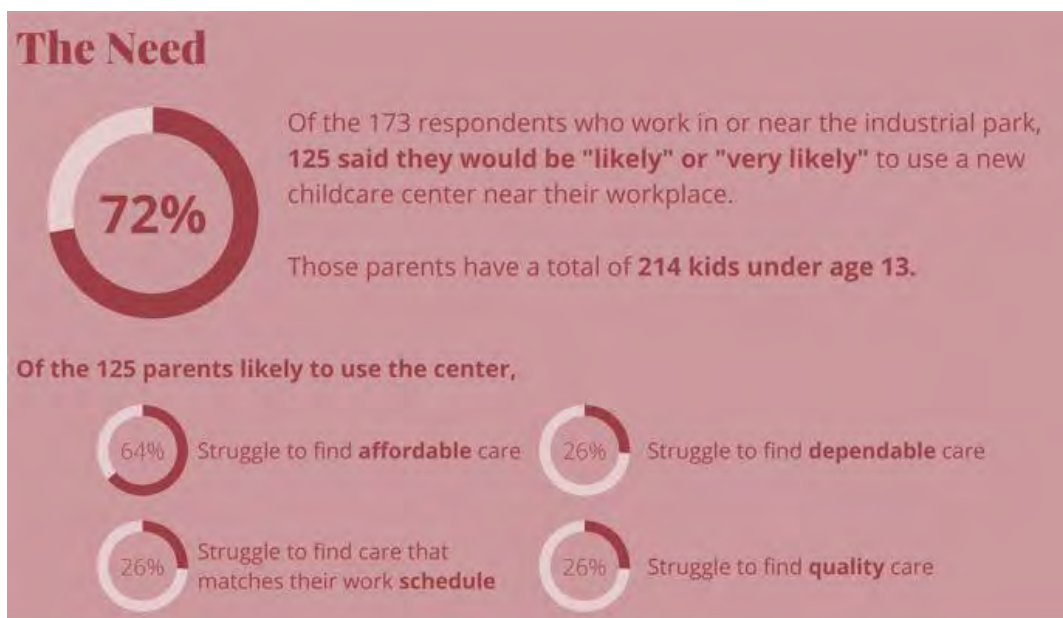
The area in and around Ashland Business Park is home to 27 businesses employing a total of approximately 1,200 full time equivalent employees. Our May 2021 needs assessment—a survey of parents working in the industrial park— shows more than half struggle to find affordable care for their children.

Approximately 70 percent of employees surveyed report earning less than \$75,000 per year, and 40 percent earn less than \$50,000 per year. In our county, 200 percent of poverty level for a family of 4 is \$53,000.

On a Likert scale, three-quarters of survey respondents said they would be “likely” or “very likely” to use a childcare center located near their workplace, if they could afford it. These 125 parents have a total of 214 children under age 13.

These results show only parents who have already found some way to work, despite their childcare concerns. Since many businesses in Ashland Business Park are continually hiring, it is safe to assume more parents could be working in those businesses if additional childcare spaces were available to them in a convenient location, at an affordable cost.

Our assessment provided strong confirmation that a childcare center in Ashland Business Park would meet an important need for families in our community.



Parent characteristics

Income of parents likely to use the center

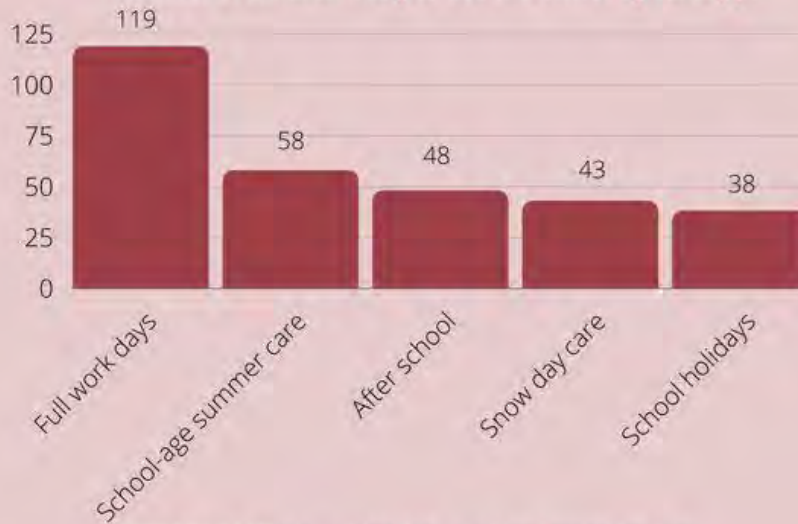


Percentage of parents needing various care types

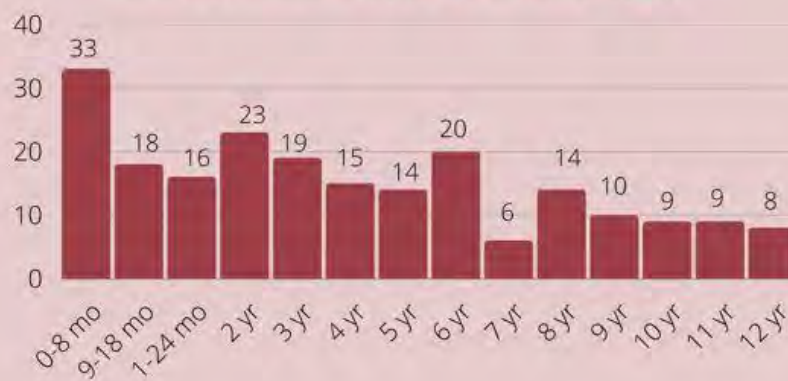


Child characteristics

Number of children likely to use the center by care type



Number of children likely to use the center by age



Vision, Goals and Evaluation

Our vision is to expand access to high-quality, affordable childcare in Ashland County.

To ensure that each decision we make and each action we take is in alignment with this vision, we have set five specific goals. The goals outlined below will also serve as criteria for evaluating the center's success in the future.

1. Expand access to childcare
 - Supplement—not duplicate—the childcare offerings that exist in our community by meeting unmet needs of women and families
 - Increase the total number of licensed childcare spaces available in Ashland County
 - Reduce or eliminate the shortage of infant and toddler care spaces in Ashland County
 - Expand childcare access for women and families whose work schedules require childcare outside the hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
2. Offer affordable childcare
 - Help provide childcare access to single mothers and lower income families who otherwise may not be able to afford quality childcare or to work at all
 - Help women achieve financial security and stability for themselves and their families by making both work and childcare more accessible
 - Help working women advance in their careers and remain in, or enter, the workforce
3. Create a sustainable childcare solution
 - Develop a business plan that balances revenues and expenditures
 - Create a structure to ensure the center's continued operation long into the future, regardless of ever-changing circumstances
 - Avoid harming the viability of existing childcare providers in our community
4. Offer high quality childcare
 - Provide safe, stable and educational environments for Ashland County children in their most formative years
 - Set children up for success in school and their future lives
5. Develop our community and our local economy
 - Help local businesses recruit and retain employees, especially female employees with children
 - Help businesses reduce absenteeism and boost productivity
 - Build the workforce of tomorrow and prepare the future leaders of our community by investing in early childhood education and care

- Fuel economic development by making Ashland a more desirable place to locate a new business or expand an existing business
- Grow Ashland by making it a more desirable place for families to live and work
- Reduce drug use and crime as a result of increased employment for parents, greater financial stability for families and the provision of positive environments for children

“The idea for this project began with the question, ‘What is the number one thing holding Ashland County women back?’ The answer was lack of access to quality childcare.

We believe investing in a solution will empower women, support families, boost businesses and benefit our whole community.”

—Kristin Aspin, Ashland County Community Foundation Chief Program Officer

Timeline of Activities

Identify strategic partners: Complete

One of our first steps in this undertaking was to convene a meeting of key players in our community who could serve as strategic partners in bringing our vision to fruition. After presenting our plan, we gained enthusiastic support from the following community players: City of Ashland Mayor Matt Miller, Ashland City Council, Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce, Ashland County Job and Family Services, and industry leaders at Ashland Business Park.

Secure property: Complete

A local property developer has donated a piece of land in Ashland Business Park to be the location for the center. Located in a safe and accessible cul-de-sac on the western side of Ford Drive, this three-acre property is ideal for a childcare center designed to serve parents working in the 27 surrounding businesses.

Design and build facility: In progress

We have enlisted the help of a local construction company to conduct a feasibility study of the property and create a preliminary design for a 12,400 square-foot center. The center will be able to serve 120-150 children initially, with space available for expansion. We expect construction to take place in 2023.

Identify nonprofit owner/operator: Complete

After exploring potential partnerships with existing non-profit agencies in our community, the Women's Fund Steering Committee decided to pursue formation of a new non-profit agency to own and operate the center. This will allow us to ensure the new center's organizational structure and operational plan is centered around our vision and goals, rather than adapted to fit within the mission of an existing entity. The new non-profit, Foundations Community Childcare, has filed articles of incorporation with the Ohio Secretary of State and received an EIN number. It is officially on the IRS records as a 501(c)3. Its 13-member board has begun meeting in preparation for its role in the center's creation and management.

Develop startup and operating budgets: Complete

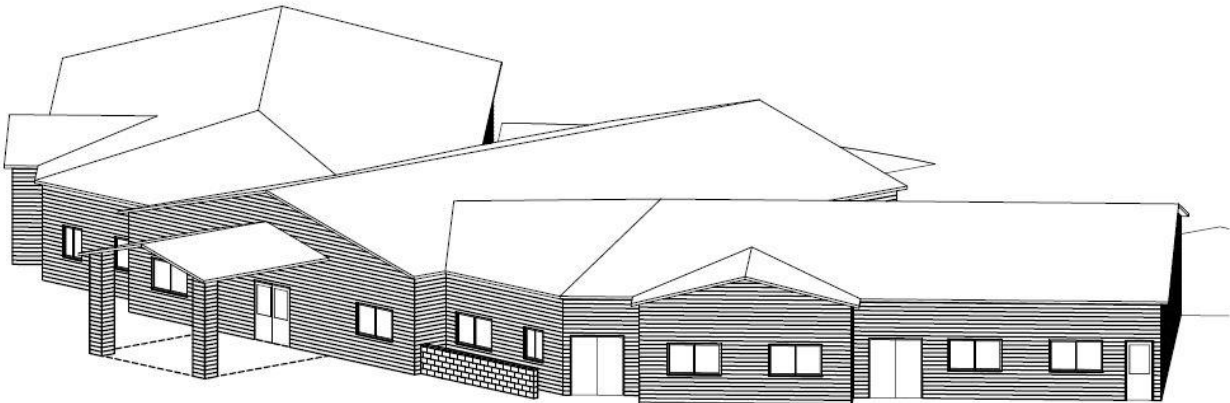
Through her existing knowledge of nonprofit and childcare center budgets as well as her extensive research, ACCF Chief Program Officer Kristin Aspin developed detailed budgets for both capital/startup and operating costs for the center. We estimate a capital/start-up budget of \$3.5 million, and an additional \$1 million for endowment to support the center's sustainability. We anticipate an annual operating budget around \$1 million. While exact figures will be refined as the project progresses, these preliminary budgets are excellent tools for planning and fundraising purposes.

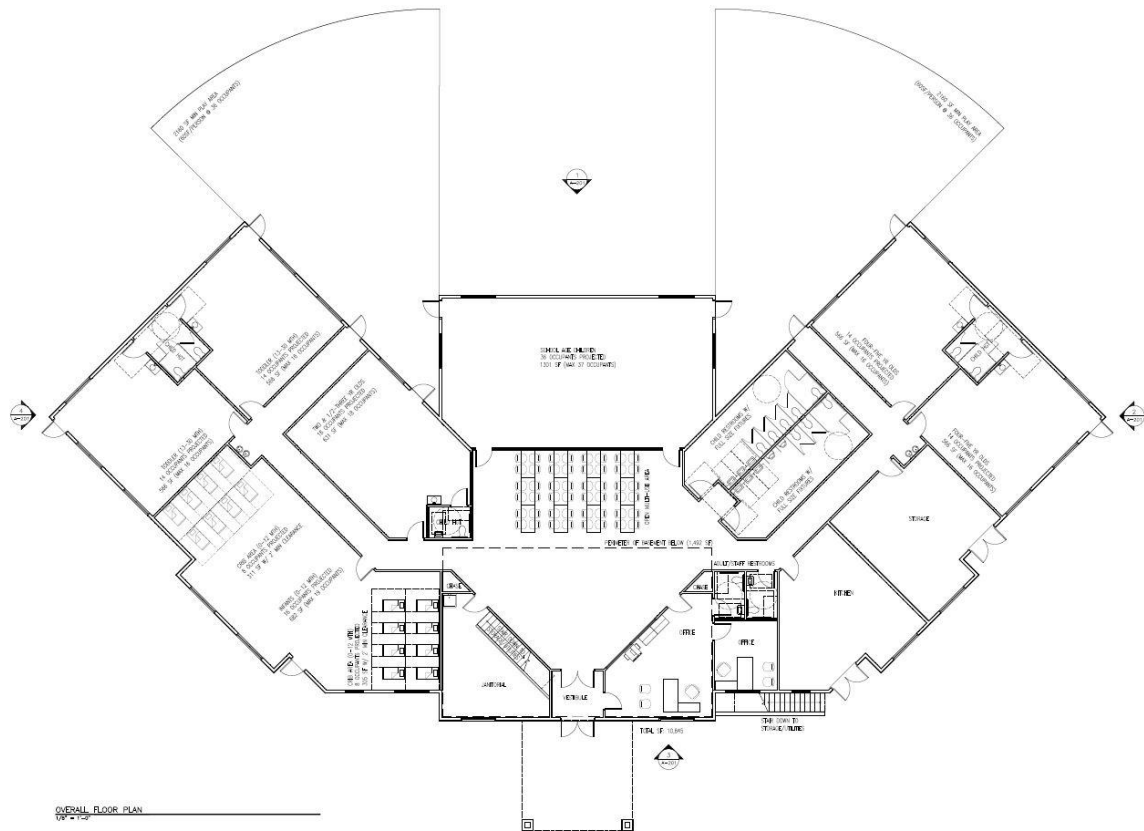
Raise start-up and endowment funds: In progress

We have already secured in-kind contributions, including the property donation and some donated time from the construction company. Through our communications with business owners, managers and human resources professionals in Ashland Business Park, we anticipate significant financial support from many of these businesses. Some of this support will be in the form of employee benefits to make the center more affordable for families, while some will be direct donations to the center for capital and startup costs. We also anticipate financial support from some of our local churches and nonprofits such as service clubs. Currently, we are working to secure state and local grant funding and executing a fundraising campaign that will continue through October 2022. We have received significant contributions—both large and small—from individual donors. We also are holding a small number of community events and fundraisers to raise awareness and funds for the cause.

Project Site and Building Design

The following illustrations from Simonson Construction Services show the planned location and design of the new childcare center.





Budget Information

Preliminary budgets for our project are provided in this proposal. Our start-up budget anticipates various revenue streams including support from businesses, state and local grant funding, nonprofit contributions, individual donations, community fundraising and in-kind gifts. Our estimated start-up expenses account for construction costs, three months of operations and a \$1 million endowment.

Our operating budget demonstrates how revenue and expenses may look on a monthly and annual basis. In addition to tuition, we expect employer stipends, endowment income, grants and donations to be sources of ongoing revenue. This innovative funding model will be key to the center’s sustainability. With these diversified revenue streams, we are confident we can provide high-quality care at an affordable cost for families.

Our tuition estimates are based on a plan to serve 23 infants, 33 toddlers, 39 pre-school aged children and 36 school-age children.

CHILDCARE CENTER CAPITAL/START-UP BUDGET

REVENUE			
	Business/Industry (corporate)		
	Grants - State, County, foundations, banks, etc. (grants)		
	Churches, service clubs, etc. (nonprofit)		
	Individual donors		
	Community events & fundraisers		
	In-Kind Contributions		
	Other Revenue		
	Total Revenue	4,546,830.00	
EXPENSES			
	CAPITAL PROJECT (\$3,284,300)		
	Sitework/Engineering Fees/etc.		
	Build/Materials/etc.		
	Driveway/Lot		
	Lighting (indoor/outdoor)		
	Kitchen/Equipment	2,810,570.00	
	Signage (outside)	7,500.00	
	Security (cameras, etc.)	5,000.00	
	Landscaping	20,000.00	
	Playground & Fencing	150,000.00	
	Furniture/Fixtures	50,000.00	
	Contingency (7.5%)	228,230.00	3,271,300.00
	Opening Inventory		
	Classroom Supplies	2,500.00	
	Office Supplies	2,500.00	
	Kitchen Supplies	2,500.00	
	Food/Drinks/etc.	2,500.00	
	Bathroom Supplies	1,000.00	
	Janitorial/Cleaning Supplies	1,000.00	
	Other Supplies	1,000.00	13,000.00
	OPERATING/START-UP (\$262,530)		
	Location & Admin Expenses		
	Utility Deposits	1,000.00	
	Legal & Accounting	5,000.00	
	Prepaid Insurance	5,000.00	
	Background Checks (for 48 ppl)	3,000.00	
	Staff Training (for 48 ppl)	6,800.00	20,800.00
	Advertising & Promotional		
	Advertising (for hiring, enrollment, etc.)	2,500.00	
	Printing	1,500.00	
	Inside signage, dedication & accompanying materials	7,500.00	11,500.00
	Operating		
	First 3 months @ \$76,743/mo	230,230.00	230,230.00
	ENDOWMENT (\$1,000,000)		
	Fund at ACCF to support operations	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00
	Total Expenses	4,546,830.00	

CHILDCARE CENTER ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET			
REVENUE			
	Stipends incl in tuition	month	annual
	Tuition - Infants	\$19,933.33	\$239,200.00
	Tuition - Toddlers	\$25,025.00	\$300,300.00
	Tuition - Preschoolers	\$27,040.00	\$324,480.00
	Tuition - Schoolagers	\$9,120.00	\$109,440.00
	Endowment Fund distributions	\$4,166.67	\$50,000.00
	Grants	\$2,083.33	\$25,000.00
	Donations	\$833.33	\$10,000.00
	Registration Fees	\$470.83	\$5,650.00
	Less discounts (multifamily, FN, etc.)	(\$4,166.67)	(\$50,000.00)
	Other Income	\$416.67	\$5,000.00
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$84,922.50	\$1,019,070.00
EXPENSES			
Staffing			
	Base Pay	\$59,903.33	\$718,840.00
	Taxes & BWC	\$7,083.33	\$85,000.00
	Benefits	\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00
	Staff Appreciation	\$166.67	\$2,000.00
	Background Checks	\$83.33	\$1,000.00
	Staff Training/Professional Developme	\$340.00	\$4,080.00
	Professional Organizations	\$83.33	\$1,000.00
Building Costs			
	Mortgage	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Utilities	\$2,083.33	\$25,000.00
	Security	\$50.00	\$600.00
	Maintenance/Repair (capital)	\$416.67	\$5,000.00
	Cleaning Services		in staffing
	Landscaping/Mowing/Snow Removal		in staffing
Equipment			
	Phone & Internet	\$250.00	\$3,000.00
	Copy/Printer - maintenance	\$166.67	\$2,000.00
	New Equipment	\$166.67	\$2,000.00
Office Supplies			
	Office Supplies	\$416.67	\$5,000.00
	Postage	\$200.00	\$2,400.00
	Publicity/Marketing	\$166.67	\$2,000.00
	CC, Bank Fees, cloud-based system	\$166.67	\$2,000.00
	Insurance	\$1,250.00	\$15,000.00
Program Materials			
	New Furniture	\$166.67	\$2,000.00
Learning Materials			
	Learning materials (curriculum, books, e	\$250.00	\$3,000.00
	Events/Fieldtrips	\$166.67	\$2,000.00
	Hospitality for families	\$83.33	\$1,000.00
Kitchen			
	Groceries	\$2,083.33	\$25,000.00
	TOTAL EXPENSE	\$76,743.33	\$920,920.00
	NET	\$8,179.17	\$98,150.00

Conclusion

The Women's Fund Childcare Initiative's childcare center will be a catalyst for change in our community. With collaboration among key entities in our community and an innovative plan for sustainability, we expect to transform the childcare landscape of Ashland County. By improving access to high-quality, affordable childcare, we will empower women, support families and help businesses thrive.

While the Women's Fund is spearheading this initiative, we cannot bring our vision to fruition without support from a network of strategic partners and funding from generous individuals, businesses and grantmaking organizations.

We respectfully request your consideration to assist with capital/start-up costs, which total approximately \$3.5 million. Subsequent and concurrent fundraising efforts will focus on endowment and sustainability funding to support our families, children, businesses and Ashland County community long into the future.

Women's Fund Steering Committee Members

Brenda Uselton, Chair

Jane Roland, Vice Chair

Dr. JoAnn Ford Watson, Past Chair

Dr. Deborah Sullivan, Project Planning Subcommittee Chair

Lindsey Roberts-Gasche, Marketing/Fundraising Subcommittee Chair

Nicki Aber

Erin Chandler

Marilyn Harshman

Erin Kick

Kay Kick

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Barbie Lange

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