



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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**UNIVERSITY DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY-MINDED ENTERPRISES RECEIVE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP GRANT**

SPOKANE, Wash., September 24, 2024—Community-Minded Enterprises (CME) in partnership with the University District Development Association (UDDA) has been awarded a Department of Commerce (Commerce) Child Care Partnership Grant for \$65,000. The grant will allow the two partners to support community-driven childcare solutions by fostering partnerships and conducting planning activities that help address the shortage of childcare in the University District.

“Community-Minded Enterprises is dedicated to creating childcare opportunities in Spokane’s University District by uniting local voices to design a responsive, affordable, and sustainable childcare model,” says Suzanne Suyama, Program Director, CME. “We can’t wait to get this critical work underway with the community.”

CME staff will attend Commerce-hosted early learning meetings and, in partnership with the UD, form a community coalition/steering committee that will help guide a Community Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study to inform a childcare funding model. The grant scope will cover data collection (via focus groups, marketing surveys, QR codes, and social media posts), data analysis and case study research, and reporting. Outreach efforts will include students, staff, and faculty representatives from the six higher education institutions in the District; as well as other community stakeholders.

“We are grateful to Community-Minded Enterprises for their leadership in securing this needs assessment for future UD childcare,” says Juliet Sinisterra, UD CEO. “Accessible, affordable, and quality healthcare is central in building a strong local economy.”

The final deliverable will be a childcare cost model to determine a feasible tuition fee structure for the area and a budget based on the number of slots for Working Connections Child Care, ECEAP, and private pay slots.

“Access to affordable, quality childcare, when and where needed, is essential for parents and local economies across the state to thrive,” says Commerce Director Mike Fong. “We are eager to partner with the University District and Community-Minded Enterprises as they lay the groundwork for providing childcare options that strengthen workers, businesses, and the community.”

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About the University District (UD): The University District is a place where business and education grow together to create a collaborative, healthy, and prosperous region. The University District uses its unique connectivity to create shared community wellness, equity, environmental health, and vibrancy by developing the infrastructure and programming that enable a globally recognized hub of education, innovation, research, and health care. Find out more at www.spokaneudistrict.org.

About Community-Minded Enterprises (CME): CME transforms communities in Washington State while advancing diversity and inclusion of marginalized populations so that all people have an opportunity for equitable health, education, and safety. At our core, we are a community-focused organization and we value family life and flexibility. These values are at the foundation of our outreach efforts and the work environment we provide for our dedicated staff. Find out more at <https://community-minded.org/about-us/>.