

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 1370

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning grants for early learning facilities.

Sponsors: House Committee on Capital Budget (originally sponsored by Representatives Callan, Shewmake, Davis, Ramos, Leavitt, Duerr, Senn, Wicks, Chopp, Bateman, Kloba, Macri, Ramel, Harris-Talley, Pollet, Rule and Goodman).

House Committee on Capital Budget
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Background:

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) administers the Early Learning Facilities (ELF) program, which provides grants and loans to eligible organizations to plan, renovate, purchase, and construct early learning facilities. The program is funded through the ELF revolving account and the ELF development account. Commerce's administration of the program may not exceed an average of 4 percent of appropriated funding. Eligible organizations include the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) providers, developers of housing and community facilities, community and technical colleges, educational service districts, local governments, federally recognized tribes, and religiously affiliated entities. In the 2021-23 biennium, eligible organizations may receive grants or loans up to:

- \$10,698 for facility predesign, feasibility planning, and project development;
- \$106,978 for minor renovation or repairs of existing early learning facilities; and
- \$855,823 to create, purchase, or expand early learning facilities.

In addition, school districts may receive grants or loans up to \$855,823 to purchase, construct, or renovate early learning classrooms for the WCCC and the ECEAP. Commerce determines the level of private or public match required for construction, purchase, or renovation projects. Any recipient of a grant or loan must own or secure a long-term lease for the project site and commit to using the funded facility for preschool or childcare for 10 years if the award is less than \$200,000 and for 20 years if the award is greater than

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\$200,000. Recipients must also commit to being an active participant in good standing with the Early Achievers quality rating and improvement system. If a recipient ceases to be in good standing with Early Achievers, the grant must be repaid.

Summary:

Early Learning Facilities (ELF) program grant or loan amounts are increased:

- to \$20,000 for predesign grant or loans;
- to \$200,000 for minor renovations or repairs; and
- to \$1 million for major construction and renovation.

Grants or loans for predevelopment activities for eligible organizations to advance a major project are allowed up to \$200,000. Program administration and technical assistance are added as eligible for funding through the ELF grant and loan program for eligible organizations.

The ELF accounts are renamed the Ruth LeCocq Kagi ELF accounts.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	90	7
Senate	46	3

Effective: July 25, 2021