



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE FOUNDATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Partnership Expands Childcare Workforce and Access in the Mid-Willamette Valley

Nonprofit consortium aligns with the City's 2040 Vision Plan to uplift Mid-Willamette Valley families with expanded early childhood education workforce training and increased access to affordable daycare options

Independence, Ore. - A strategic partnership between the [Willamette Valley Wine Foundation](#), [CAPACES Leadership Institute](#), [Child Care Resource & Referral \(CCR&R\)](#), and the [City of Independence](#) today announced their successful combined efforts to expand the local childcare workforce and improve access to affordable, culturally responsive early childhood education in the Mid-Willamette Valley.

Background

In 2024, CAPACES and the Willamette Valley Wine Foundation approached the City of Independence to address a growing need: quality, affordable licensed early childhood education and care in the region. With funding from a Community Development Block Grant (a program of and in direct alignment with Independence's 2040 Vision Plan), the partnership is moving forward with a licensed childcare educator training program designed to build both capacity and opportunity.

CCR&R utilized a bilingual training curriculum that introduces participants to key licensing requirements and business practices for launching and operating early childhood care programs. The training cohort includes **28 educators-in-training (15 Spanish-speaking and 13 English-speaking** participants) who will complete **30 hours of classroom instruction** and **20 hours of individualized coaching** over a 10-week period.

Training is offered in-person and remotely, ensuring flexibility and wider reach for rural community participants. Through this initiative, the partners aim to not only address the local childcare desert but also provide meaningful workforce development pathways for aspiring early childhood educators.

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Building on the City's 2040 Vision Plan

The [City of Independence's 2040 Vision Plan](#) prioritizes the creation of vibrant, livable spaces through targeted investments in workforce training, skills development, and educational access. This childcare workforce initiative directly supports these goals by:

- **Developing a new pipeline of licensed early childhood educators and entrepreneurs**
- **Increasing culturally responsive, bilingual early learning access for Latino families**
- **Creating safe, accessible childcare options that allow more parents and caregivers to participate in the local workforce**

“Our 2040 Vision Plan is about building a community where families can thrive and opportunities are within reach for everyone,” said Mayor Kate Schwarzler. “By investing in childcare workforce development, we’re not only preparing the next generation of early educators and entrepreneurs, but also ensuring that parents and caregivers, especially in our Latino community, have access to safe, culturally responsive childcare. This initiative strengthens our workforce today and lays the foundation for a more vibrant, inclusive Independence tomorrow.”

Partner Roles & Contributions

CAPACES Leadership Institute

CAPACES is leading the recruitment and outreach efforts with a focus on Latino families and educators. Laptops are provided to all participants and a **\$1,000 completion stipend** will be granted to educators to help reduce economic barriers to entry. CAPACES’ culturally responsive approach ensures that both educators and families receive support that meets their needs.

“At CAPACES, we listen closely to what our communities are asking for and this initiative is a direct response to that call,” said Jaime Arredondo, Executive Director of CAPACES Leadership Institute. “By equipping emerging educators with the tools, coaching, and confidence they need, we’re investing in families and futures that have too often been overlooked.”

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)

CCR&R brings technical training, licensure knowledge, and business development tools to the program. The team provides one-on-one coaching, helps participants create individualized professional development plans, and ensures that training is available in both English and Spanish.

“Addressing child care deserts requires more than opening doors—it requires building a skilled, supported workforce that can



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sustain high-quality care over time. CCR&R's work demonstrates the power of investing in workforce development and small business training to create lasting solutions. Continued commitment from funders and policymakers is essential to ensure every family in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties has equitable access to early learning," said Jenna Sanders, Associate Program Director.

Willamette Valley Wine Foundation (WVWF)

WVWF has played a pivotal role in convening grassroots stakeholders, facilitating partnerships, and aligning resources across sectors. They continue to support licensed daycare training efforts throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley. "Our Foundation believes that strong communities start with strong families," said Sheila Pruitt, WVWF Board Member. "This initiative is a perfect example of how the wine industry can help drive meaningful, generational impact for not only those we reach within our wine steward workforce, but also the community at large," she added.

Creating a Lasting Impact

This program addresses several pressing challenges:

- **The Mid-Willamette Valley remains a childcare desert**, with many families, particularly Latino families - facing limited access to licensed providers.
- **Educators often lack culturally relevant training, mentorship, or resources** to launch sustainable childcare businesses.
- **Rural areas face unique barriers** to workforce entry and educational access.

By addressing these gaps, this initiative is poised to:

- **Strengthen family engagement and access to pre-K services**
- **Reduce early childhood education disparities**
- **Grow the licensed childcare workforce with culturally and linguistically competent educators**
- **Build long-term educational equity and economic opportunity in the region**

The Willamette Valley Wine Foundation seeks ongoing support for these initiatives. Further details are [available on their website](#).

About the Partners

For more information about the partners involved in these efforts, please visit:

[CAPACES Leadership Institute](#)
[City of Independence](#)

[Child Care Resource & Referral \(CCR&R\)/ Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action](#)
[Willamette Valley Wine Foundation](#)