



# Funds Distribution Report

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**Recipient Organization:**  
**Opportunity Council**

**Address:**  
1111 Cornwall Ave  
Bellingham, WA 98225

**Contact:**  
(360) 734-5121  
<https://www.oppco.org>

**Organization's General Goals:**  
The Opportunity Council is a private, non-profit Community Action Agency serving homeless and low-income families and individuals. Our mission is to help people improve their lives through education, support, and direct assistance while advocating for just and equitable communities.

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<b>Date of Award:</b>	<b>Level:</b>
2019 Q3	\$2,501 to \$5,000

**Specific Use for This Award:**  
For more information, please read the attached report from Opportunity Council.



November 10, 2020

Tulalip Tribes Charitable Contributions  
Marilyn Sheldon, Director  
8802 27<sup>th</sup> Ave NE  
Tulalip WA 98271-9694

Dear Marilyn,

On behalf of the Quality Child Care Division at Opportunity Council, we extend our deepest appreciation to the Tulalip Tribes for your support for the the Emergency Child Care Voucher program. We are pleased to report back on our progress over the last year.

We especially would like to thank Tulalip Tribes for making it possible to expand the program from Whatcom County to also serve families in Snohomish, Skagit Counties, Island Counties, and San Juan Counties. Previously, we had to turn away families based on their address due to funding restrictions. Saying “No” was particularly difficult because we did not have another resource to refer families to—referral resources in their zip codes were simply non-existent. It has been a joy to say “Yes” when families in need request emergency child care support.

### Who We Served

Since October 2019, the Emergency Child Care Voucher program has helped support employees-at pharmacies, hospitals, auto repair, food service, lumber, personal care, students, early childhood educators, and other workers who just needed a little extra help to keep their little ones enrolled in safe and high-quality child care while they work and keep a roof overhead.

Overall, 105 individuals were served and counting including:

- 24 single mothers
- 4 single fathers
- 2 parents fostering children
- 9 families headed by two-parents, and
- 57 children

### Success, Challenges, and COVID-19

Like every other program and industry in Washington and around the world, COVID-19 impacted every aspect of our lives and changed the way that Opportunity Council works with children and families. Thanks to the support of the Tulalip Tribes, the Emergency Childcare Voucher Program was able to expand during the pandemic and has continued to serve families without disruption during extremely stressful times.

Our already existing plans to expand ensured a smooth transition to working remotely. By the time Washington State shut down for health and safety, we had an established system in place and were operating as planned in Snohomish, Skagit, Island, and Whatcom Counties. That would not have been possible without your support.

By March, the combination of school closures, massive unemployment, and parents working remotely drastically impacted the child care situation in our region. There already was a shortage of high-quality, licensed child care providers, and the pandemic has worsened the financial outlook for child care businesses. Programs were forced to close due to exposure or to protect themselves and family members.

At the same time, essential workers with school-age children had a sudden and urgent need to access safe, high-quality child care due to school closures. Many of these families were not income eligible for the state Working Connections child care subsidy. Often, families fell just outside the income guidelines—they still have low incomes but not low enough to qualify for public assistance. For many families with school-age children, this meant a new bill not accounted for in their tight family budgets. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Emergency Child Care Voucher program had the flexibility to serve families with low incomes who did not qualify for subsidized child care, primarily single mothers.

For example, one single mother in Skagit County had previously maintained a balanced budget with a low income, but the first month of school closure resulted in a child care bill for more than \$1,300 for her two children. As an essential worker, she did not work from home and could not afford the massive unplanned bill that would be a hardship for any working family. Thanks to Tulalip Tribes, we were able to provide enough assistance to ensure that the family remained safe and stable, and the following month the children enrolled in an affordable non-profit program hosted by their school district. This is just one example of many.

Other highlighted successes include:

- 1) **Implement a streamlined application process:** Success! An online application and approval process was implemented with positive feedback from our child care partners.
- 2) **Increase Program Capacity:** In the last year, the Emergency Child Care Voucher program increased the number of families served by roughly 30%. This fell short of our original ambitious goals, largely impacted by COVID-19, but we still celebrate it as a success.
- 3) **Increase Financial Stability for Families:** 83% of families maintained stable after one month of assistance, and seven families received up to three months of assistance.
- 4) **Strengthened Relationships with Child Care Providers:** In the last year, we developed and strengthened relationships with child care programs in Lynnwood, Edmonds, Mill Creek, Everett, Concrete, Lake Stevens, Oak Harbor, Mt. Vernon, Blaine, Bellingham, and Ferndale.

## Thank You!

During stressful times for parents and families, high-quality child care is vital, especially for the youngest children during critical periods of social and emotional development. Your support has made all the difference in the world for young parents and children working hard to maintain employment, stable housing, and a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Feel free to reach out at any time with thoughts or questions. We always love to partner and share ideas and resources with others who share our vision for quality child care for all.

Kind regards,

Wilanne Ollila-Perry  
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Ps You can learn more about Opportunity Council at [www.oppco.org](http://www.oppco.org) and about our child care programs at [www.ccanorthwest.org](http://www.ccanorthwest.org).

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