

May 2025 Partners for Young Children Coalition Meeting

MEETING AGENDA

May 13, 2025 | 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85941060290?pwd=27QanGxQOTb9bQCeBHLalbSAQiSjk0.1>

Meeting ID: 859 4106 0290

Passcode: 776523

SharePoint Folder Link:

<https://whidbeyfoundation.sharepoint.com/:f/g/ErTByepDTI1HI7sGsF2ZftEBD88XkRupXemxcsjBTntLDA?e=cny7HB>

| Timeframe | Elements | Objective(s) | Who |
|-------------|---------------|--|---|
| 11:30-11:35 | Welcome | Introductions | Katie Watkins, PYC |
| 11:35-11:40 | Share | PYC Updates | Katie Watkins, PYC |
| 11:40-11:50 | Learn | Kinship Programs Opportunity Council | Valeria Utery, Community Programs Coordinator |
| 11:50-12:35 | Give Feedback | Within Reach/Help Me Grow Partner Listening Session | Keri Nguyen, Help Me Grow Washington |
| 12:35-12:40 | Announcement | What does it mean to be a PYC member? Survey Incoming! | Katie Watkins, PYC |
| 12:40-1:00 | Share | Partner Updates/Advocacy Needs! <i>Use Sharepoint Folder or Email flyers to pyc@whidbeyfoundation.org</i> | All |
| 1:00 | Share | Good of the Order Next Meeting In-Person! September 16th | All |

In Attendance:

Caitlin Voss, South Whidbey Children's Center, Caitlin.voss@swchildrenscenter.com

Robert Sanders, Unit Director of the Oak Harbor Boys and Girls Club rsanders@bgcsc.org

Tia Collins, Opportunity Council/ChildCare Aware of WA, tia_collins@oppco.org

Lauri Johnson, South Whidbey CARES Coalition, Coalition Coordinator,
ljohnson@sw.wednet.edu

Tonia Johnston, Assistant Director of Special programs Oak Harbor Public Schools

Valeria Usery - Community Programs Coordinator at Opportunity Council, Kinship Line:
360-734-5121 ext. 1455 Kinship [Email:kinship@oppco.org](mailto:kinship@oppco.org), You can also reach me
directly at:
360-734-5121 ext. 1255, valeria_usery@oppco.org

Roxanne Grant, Skagit Valley College ECEAP on the oak harbor site,
Roxanne.grant@skagit.edu

Kristen Bowler Marere, Opportunity Council/ CCA NW, Early Learning Lead,
kristen_marere@oppco.org

Jessie Gunn, Whidbey Community Foundation Executive Director,
jessieg@whidbeyfoundation.org

Maureen Rice, Whidbey Community Foundation Communications

Lina De La Rosa, Family Support Specialist, Skagit Valley ECEAP in Oak Harbor, Wa,
lina.delarosa@skagit.edu

Crystal Tovar, Island County Human Services. c.tovar@islandcountywa.gov Outreach
Parent Support and Family Support.

Daysi Mayer, ICPH Community Health Worker, d.mayer@islandcountywa.gov

Keri Nguyen, WithinReach/Help Me Grow WA, KeriN@withinreachwa.org

Jane L³pez-Santillana, Sno-Isle Libraries - Oak Harbor, JLopez-Santillana@Sno-Isle.org

Liz Dickman, ICPH, HIYI committee chair, HIYI = Healthy Island Youth Initiative,
L.dickman@islandcountywa.gov

Mariah Farris, WithinReach, Partnership Support Manager

Anna Morrow, Sno-Isle Oak Harbor Library, amorrow@sno-isle.org

Robin Tallman, Island County Public Health New Baby, New Family Nurse
r.tallman@islandcountywa.gov

Katie Watkins, PYC Coordinator, Whidbey Community Foundation,
katiew@whidbeyfoundation.org

Notes:

Summary

Katie welcomed everyone and introduced the agenda for the Partners for Young Children (PYC) Quarterly Partners Meeting. She also introduced Maureen Rice, who works for the Community Foundation and is providing zoom & technical support.

PYC Programs Updates:

| Program Name | Enrollment |
|---------------------|---|
| DPIL | 1,467 |
| Lantern | 71 |
| HMG Quarterly | 2025Q1 Quarterly Client Report ISLAND.pdf |
| PAWI Referrals | 56 to date |
| NB Bags Distributed | Total as of 5/1 = 89 to date |
| Tabling Events | 4/26 = Safety & Wellness Fair for SW CARES Coalition |

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) Funding Concerns

Katie discussed the challenges of maintaining the 50% match funding for this free book program after the state did not include the match in the budget. It is currently funded through June and they are trying to raise some funds to keep the program going.

Other PYC Supported Programs

Katie updated other program numbers, including the Bright by Text service, which was rebranded to Lantern and has reached 71 Island County families. The Get Connected Referral form has seen a significant increase in referrals, and the Newborn Bags program has delivered 89 bags to Island Health and Skagit Valley birthing centers in addition to ICPH New Baby, New Family programs. PYC is working with San Juan and Skagit counties on a grant to expand the newborn outreach program. PYC is planning children's fair events,

the first of which is scheduled in collaboration with Coupeville Library, taking place on September 6th with a focus on central Whidbey resources for children Birth to 5. She will be seeking planning committee members this fall for a 2026 Children's day event(s). She also plans to organize in-person meetings to foster more connections for the collaborative.

Presentation from Valeria Usery from Opportunity Council on the Kinship Programs

Valeria from Opportunity Council introduced the kinship programs, which support families caring for children who are not their own. She explained that kinship care can be formal or informal, with most families in their program being informal. Valeria highlighted two programs they offer: the kinship navigation program, which provides support and information on community resources, and the kinship caregiver support program, which offers funds to eligible families. She emphasized that all kinship caregivers are eligible for the navigation program, but not all may qualify for the caregiver support program.

Valeria discussed the funding and support provided by the Kinship Program for families in need. The program offers financial assistance for food, clothing, utilities, and extracurricular activities, with funds being split into two parts for the year. The program also provides referrals and support for families in Whatcom, Island, and San Juan counties. Valeria clarified that the program is funded mainly by the state and occasionally receives private donations. She also mentioned that the program is not volunteer-based and that they have a bilingual staff member. Lauri Johnson from SW Cares inquired about support groups and Valeria informed the group of a new virtual support group called the Kinship Coffee Hour, which takes place on the fourth Thursday of every month. She encouraged anyone interested in being a guest speaker to reach out to her.

[Kinship Programs and Services \(For Staff Reference Only\).pdf](#)

[Kinship Programs Flyer.pdf](#)

Special Listening Session Led by Help Me Grow Washington/Within Reach on the Geographic Area Served Project

Background Link: [CAP-Essential-Services-2023-24_Branded-1.pdf](#)

Katie then handed over the session to Keri Nguyen from Within Reach, who discussed a project to improve the Help Me Grow Resource Directory. Keri also introduced Mariah, who led a listening session to gather feedback on the distances people and families travel when accessing resources. The session aimed to improve the results displayed online in the resource finder.

In the meeting, the participants discussed the typical distances people travel to access resources. Tia and Robin shared that the distance depends on the availability of transportation, whether it's a bus, a car, or walking. They also noted that the distance can

vary based on the area, whether it's rural or urban. Robert and Anna added that going off the island or to a different county is considered a long trip. Anna also mentioned that specialty medical issues often require travel to Anacortes or Mount Vernon, which is about 45 minutes away. The participants agreed that going off the island or traveling to a different county is considered a long trip.

The team discussed the challenges faced by families in accessing healthcare services, particularly in rural areas. They highlighted the need for childcare and the impact of distance on travel time and costs. The team also discussed the availability of resources, transportation options, and the impact of financial constraints on access to services. Daysi Mayer shared information about Medicaid's taxi service for medical appointments and the challenges of accessing specialty care. The team also discussed the impact of location within the county on travel for resources, particularly in the context of the unique geography of the island. Daysi discussed her strategy of teaching clients to use the free bus system in Island County, which includes interpreter services and on-demand pickup scheduling. She shared her experience of coordinating bus pickups for her clients, especially those with special needs, and emphasized the importance of planning ahead to accommodate their schedules. The typical ride time from Clinton to her office in North Harbor is about an hour and a half, which she considers when scheduling appointments. She also mentioned her practice of visiting clients at their homes to provide further assistance and training.

Mariah asked about how a client's location influences the resources they access, and Katie suggested that there isn't a one-size-fits-all answer due to the varying locations within the county. Daysi explained that her team goes to the community to provide services, and they also offer referral services and interpretation/translation assistance. Lauri pointed out that insurance companies may not factor in the geographical challenges of living on an island, which can affect access to services. Tia and Anna added that distance is sometimes shown as the bird flies, not actual travel time, and that some healthcare centers give preference to residents of Anacortes or Skagit County, which can impact wait times.

Medicaid Transportation Link: <https://www.nwrcwa.org/non-emergency-medical-transportation>

Liz Dickman also notes there's also Northwest Regional Council which buys ferry tickets and can reimburse for gas for AppleHealth clients.

Partner Share-Out Time – Advocacy Needs

Anna from Sno-Isle Libraries expressed concern about the potential loss of funding for the State Library, which could impact the availability of databases and training resources for libraries. She also mentioned that the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library might

lose most of its staff due to budget cuts. Anna provides a prompt for advocate for state library funding:

'FY2026 Budget Dear Appropriator Letters: Dear Appropriator letters urge members of the Appropriations Committees to support funding for specific programs, like libraries. The best way for any Congressman to demonstrate their commitment to library funding is to sign on to the letters in support of libraries. These letters will close mid-May': [Tell Congress to #FundLibraries | ALA](#)

Tonia shared that the expansion TTK programs for next year would not be funded by the State, affecting military families who rely on these programs. They will maintain the 42 spots they were able to offer this year, which is good news, any programs hoping to start or expand will not be able to do so. They will start their screening in June so families will know whether they are in the program before school starts.

Robert announced that the Boys and Girls Club would be losing 12 of its 18 team members by August, and he encouraged anyone interested in a job to reach out. Robert also provided a flier for Hustle with Heroes fundraiser 5K on May 31st: [5k flyer 2025 Boys & Girls Club Hustle for Heros.png](#)

Lauri proposed a book review of "The Age of Overwhelm" and asked for interest. Book link: [The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the Long Haul: Lipsky, Laura van Dernoot: 9781525279942: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Maureen adds, If anyone has any questions about getting connected to the WCF Nonprofit Directory and/or the WCF Nonprofit Slack for sharing updates, events, open positions please feel free to reach out to me maureenr@whidbeyfoundation.org

Tia Collins from Child Care Aware shares the Northwest childcare access survey results: [Northwest Survey Data Compiled \(1\).pdf](#) . She acknowledged much has changed in the childcare landscape since the data collection began. She offered to anyone to reach out if they want to look at the raw data.

Lina Delarosa shared fliers for Skagit Valley's ECEAP Preschool enrollment: [SVC ECEAP Preschool Enrollment.jpg](#), [SVC ECEAP Preschool Enrollment Spanish.jpg](#)

The conversation ended with Katie reminding everyone about the next meeting on September 16th and encouraging everyone to participate in a survey about membership.

Other Partner Fliers & Resource Links:

[Outreach Early Childhood and Family Support Program Flier.docx](#)

