



Preschool for All: Facilities Fund Overview

Why Early Learning Facilities Matter

To meet the goal of universal preschool access by 2030, Multnomah County must grow the number of high-quality preschool seats, and ensure that PFA-funded programs operate in spaces that are safe, welcoming, and developmentally appropriate. In a recent study conducted by Preschool for All, families who chose not to enroll in a PFA program frequently cited the condition and location of the facility as a deciding factor. Facilities are a critical, but often overlooked, part of what makes preschool accessible, effective, and sustainable.

Yet for most providers, facilities are a major barrier. The costs of renovation, expansion, or construction are out of reach for many small businesses and nonprofits. Zoning and permitting can be difficult to navigate, and traditional financing is rarely available to early learning programs, which are often seen by banks as high-risk and low-margin enterprises. Without dedicated funding and support, many providers simply cannot expand.

Investment in physical space influences capacity, but it also shapes trust, enrollment, and long-term participation in the program. Through the PFA Facilities Fund, we're building the infrastructure needed to support lasting, equitable access to early education in Multnomah County.



About the PFA Facilities Fund

Launched in 2024, the Preschool for All Facilities Fund provides capital investment and technical assistance to preschool providers seeking to build, expand, or improve the physical spaces where they operate. The fund is administered by [BuildUp Oregon](#), which was created specifically to meet the unique capital needs of early care and education providers – needs that traditional lenders, developers, and grantmakers are often unable or unwilling to support.

Providers enter the Facilities Fund pipeline through a low-barrier interest form, and receive customized support throughout their project. This may include help with financial planning, zoning, permitting, design, licensing, and lender navigation. Providers are not expected to arrive “project-ready” – they are met where they are and supported through each stage of development.

Funding Structure

The Facilities Fund supports projects across a range of scales and settings, including family child care providers, child care centers, and school districts. Grant and loan options include:

Grant Type	Max Award	Examples of Eligible Uses
Pre-development	\$10,000 (family child care) / \$100,000 (center)	Feasibility, planning, architectural services
Renovation & repair	\$75,000 (family child care) / \$250,000 (center)	Health and safety improvements, accessibility, playgrounds, commercial equipment
New center development	Up to \$1 million	Acquisition, construction, major renovations, fixed equipment

Projects that exceed the grant limits may qualify for low-interest loans (6–7%), bundled with grant funds as part of a customized financing package. All loans and grants are accompanied by robust technical assistance.

In order to be eligible, providers must be licensed and in good standing, or on track to become licensed and qualified to participate in Preschool for All.



Funding Priorities

The Facilities Fund prioritizes projects that:

- Create new Preschool for All seats
- Address urgent health and safety issues
- Improve the quality and accessibility of existing PFA classrooms
- Are co-located with affordable housing
- Serve children with disabilities, or operate during nontraditional hours
- Provide culturally and linguistically specific programming
- Operate in neighborhoods with a significant shortfall of preschool seats



These priorities reflect a commitment to equity and ensure that investment reaches providers who have historically been left out of mainstream funding and development processes.

Progress to Date

Since its launch in March 2024, the Facilities Fund has made rapid progress in deploying resources and growing PFA seats:

Total Capital Committed	\$26 million
PFA Seats Created or Preserved*	952
Early Childhood Education Seats Improved**	680
Leveraged Funds	\$21 million

Data current as of 11/23/25

* Preserved seats are at sites that would close without PFA Facilities Fund investments. 172 of the 949 seats are preserved seats.

** These seats have been improved through renovation and repair investments and include any early childhood education seat impacted by the Facilities Fund. Adding a new kitchen to serve

meals or updating the HVAC system improves the experiences of all children at that site. This count is unique and does not include PFA seats created or improved.

To date, the Facilities Fund has created just over 950 Preschool for All seats through direct investment – by investing in new centers and program expansions, or ensuring that existing preschools stay open when threatened by facilities related closures. The demand for support continues to grow. As of November 2025, over 500 interest forms had been submitted by providers seeking to expand or improve their spaces. The pipeline is robust, diverse, and full of promising projects – some already shovel-ready, others just beginning – but nearly all would be out of reach without this fund.

Community Impact

The Facilities Fund is already transforming early learning spaces in communities across Multnomah County. Here are just few examples:

- [Friendly House](#) (NW Portland) received a \$60,000 pre-development grant to plan a major renovation of their 1929 building. The project will add 40 new Preschool for All seats and has attracted more than \$2 million in co-funding, including an additional \$1 million grant from the PFA Facilities Fund.
- [IRCO Early Beginnings](#) (NE Portland) is using a \$1.1 million Facilities Fund grant to build two new preschool classrooms co-located with affordable housing. Opening in 2026, the center will serve multilingual families in a culturally responsive environment.
- [CAIRO Early Learning Center](#) (SE Portland) secured \$1.1 million to purchase and renovate its own building, creating five new classrooms for up to 100 children. CAIRO's existing classrooms operate out of elementary school buildings. This new site will allow CAIRO to offer extended hours to better meet the needs of working families.

Each of these projects demonstrates the ripple effects of strategic infrastructure investment, creating not just seats, but long-term community assets that reflect and serve the families who use them.



Risk Mitigation and Accountability

Public capital investment requires care and oversight. The Facilities Fund is designed to ensure responsible use of funds, sustainable project outcomes, and long-term benefit to the community. Key safeguards include:

- Eligibility and review: All applicants must meet PFA and licensing standards. Proposals are reviewed for financial and operational viability before funding is awarded.
- Site control and service terms: Projects must demonstrate long-term site control and commit to participating in PFA for 3–15 years, depending on award size. Lease terms are aligned with PFA participation requirements.
- Monitoring and support: Providers receive technical assistance through the full lifecycle of the project. Grant agreements include reporting requirements, and providers who default before completing their service term are required to repay a portion of the funds.
- Flexibility for providers: The fund is structured to accommodate providers at different stages. Projects that begin with pre-development grants can reapply for full capital funding after feasibility is established.



Looking Ahead

The Preschool for All Facilities Fund demonstrates Multnomah County's commitment to building an early learning system that works – for families, for educators, and for the long term. With more than \$26 million already invested and hundreds of seats created, the fund is delivering real, measurable impact. And with continued investment, we can ensure that providers have the physical foundation they need to keep growing.

This is infrastructure that delivers now, and lasts for generations.