

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Architectural Services – Tenant Improvement for Licensed Child Care Classroom

Issued by: Whatcom Family YMCA

Issue Date:, April 27, 2026

Proposal Due Date: June 4, 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

The Whatcom Family YMCA is seeking proposals from qualified architectural firms to provide professional design, assistance with bidding and related services for the tenant improvement (TI) of an existing multi-purpose space to be converted into a licensed child care classroom.

This project is funded through grant awards from Whatcom County. As such, all work must comply with applicable county, state, and federal requirements associated with public grant funding.

2. ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The Whatcom Family YMCA is a nonprofit organization serving children and families in Whatcom County, WA. We provide early learning, youth development, and family support programs. In response to growing community need and county investment in expanding child care access, we are converting an existing multi-purpose space into a licensed child care classroom serving children ages 1–5 years.

3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Location

Whatcom Family YMCA Heart House Early Learning Center
1705 Gladstone St.
Bellingham, WA 98229

Existing Space

- Approximate size: 950 Square Feet
- Current use: Multi-purpose/program space

- Project Background: The existing child care and multi-purpose space occupy the ground floor of a three story mixed use apartment building. Construction on this building was completed in 2022. The tenant improvements for the new classroom include relocating interior entry into classroom, construction of a child care kitchen area, bathroom remodel including access relocation, relocating access to mechanical room and installation of casework and sink.

Project Goal

To design and support the tenant improvement necessary to convert the existing space into a fully compliant, licensed child care classroom in accordance with:

- State child care licensing requirements
 - Local building and fire codes
 - ADA accessibility standards
 - County grant requirements
 - Health and safety regulations
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4. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected firm will provide full architectural services, including but not limited to:

A. Assessment & Programming

- Site visit and review of existing conditions
- Code and licensing analysis (child care-specific requirements)
- Coordination with organization leadership on classroom capacity and design goals
- Preliminary space planning and programming

B. Design Services

- Schematic design
- Design development
- Construction documents suitable for permitting and bidding
- Specifications as required

C. Permitting & Approvals

- Submission to local jurisdiction for building permits
- Coordination with fire marshal and relevant agencies
- Support with state child care licensing review (as needed)

D. Construction Administration

- Support during bidding (if applicable)
 - Review of submittals
 - Site visits during construction
 - Responses to RFIs
 - Substantial completion walk-through
 - Support with final inspections and occupancy approval
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5. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The design should prioritize:

- Health, safety, and supervision visibility
- Developmentally appropriate classroom layout
- ADA accessibility
- Secure entry and egress
- Restroom access (existing or modified)
- Required sink and plumbing fixtures
- Storage for materials and personal belongings
- Durable, child-appropriate finishes
- Adequate lighting and ventilation
- Access to outdoor play space (if applicable)

Firm must demonstrate familiarity with state child care licensing regulations and educational environments.

6. PROJECT BUDGET

The construction budget is estimated at approximately \$160,000

Proposals should include:

- Fee structure (lump sum or not-to-exceed preferred)
- Breakdown of services by phase
- Identification of reimbursable expenses

As this project is funded through county grants, the selected firm must be willing to comply with all grant-related documentation and reporting requirements.

7. PROJECT TIMELINE (ESTIMATED)

- RFP Issued: April 27, 2026
- Proposal Due: June 4, 2026
- Firm Selection: June 8, 2026
- Design Kickoff: June 15, 2026
- Permit Submission: July 30 2026
- Target Construction Start: October 30, 2026
- Target Completion: March 31, 2027

Respondents should confirm availability to meet this schedule or propose an alternative timeline.

8. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Please include the following:

1. Firm overview and qualifications
2. Relevant experience (particularly child care, educational, or similar tenant improvement projects)
3. Project team and roles
4. Approach to this project
5. Proposed timeline
6. Fee proposal
7. References (minimum of three)
8. Proof of insurance and licensure

Optional but encouraged:

- Sample projects with photos
 - Experience working on publicly funded or grant-funded projects
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9. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Experience with child care or educational facilities
- Understanding of licensing and regulatory requirements
- Quality and clarity of proposal
- Proposed timeline
- Cost
- References
- Experience with publicly funded projects

The Whatcom Family YMCA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to select the firm deemed in the best interest of the organization.

10. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format to:

Patrick Check
Association Director of Facilities
pcheck@whatcomymca.org
(360) 733-8630 ext. 1102

Subject line: “Architectural Services RFP – Child Care TI”

Proposals must be received no later than May 21, 2026.

11. QUESTIONS

All questions must be submitted in writing to pcheck@whatcomymca.org by May 14, 2026. Responses will be shared with all known respondents.

12. NONDISCRIMINATION & COMPLIANCE

The Whatcom Family YMCA is an equal opportunity organization. The selected firm must comply with all applicable federal, state, and county regulations related to publicly funded projects.
