

# Mapping the Road to Child Care

Lessons from Garfield County, WA

Presenters:

**Alesia Ruchert & Martha Lanman**

Garfield County Public Health District

Pomeroy Community Connection

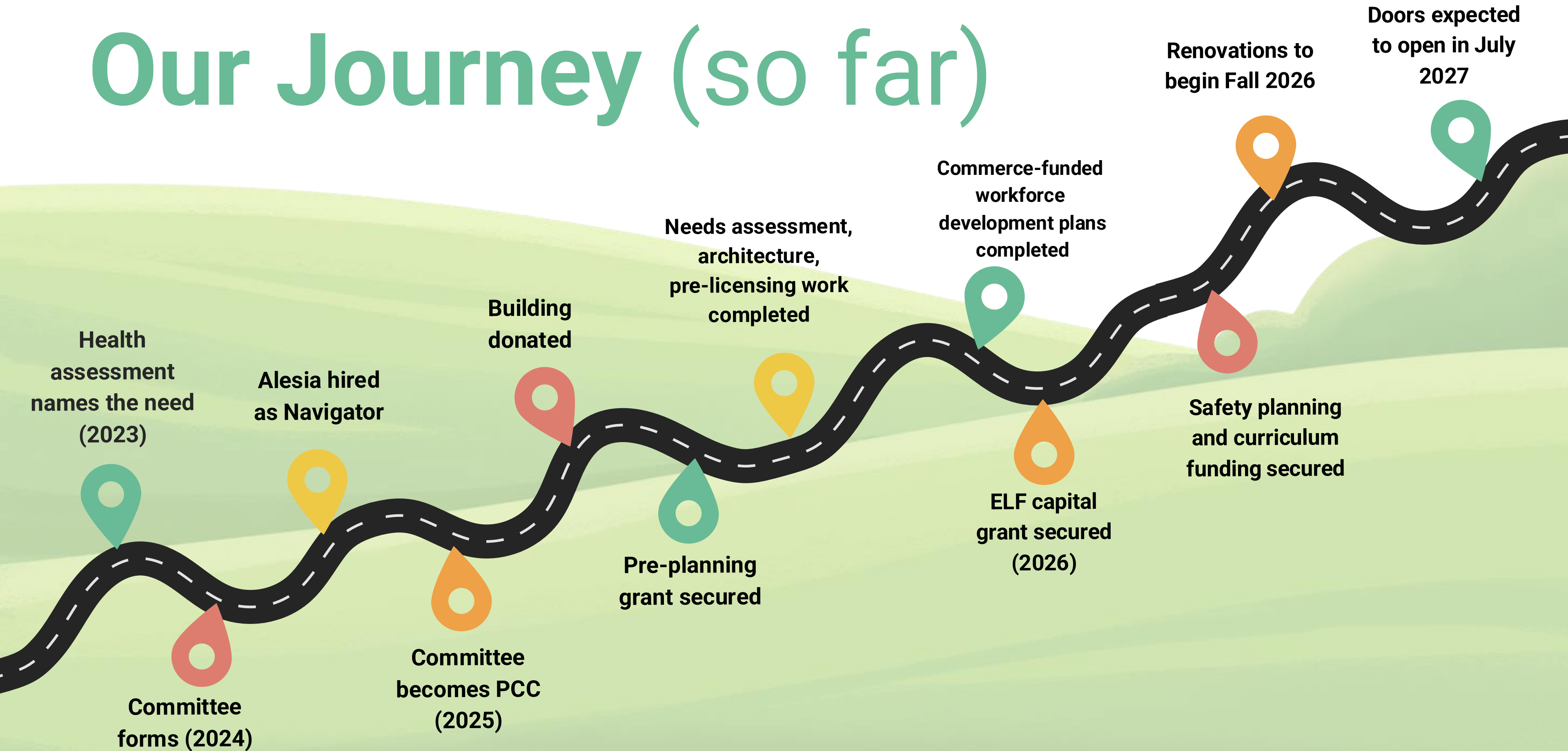




**YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO BUILD  
THE BUS**



# Our Journey (so far)



# Today's Route

## GET READY

Where are we now? Where do we want to go?

## GET SET

How do we make our dreams come true?

## GO!

Put the planning into motion

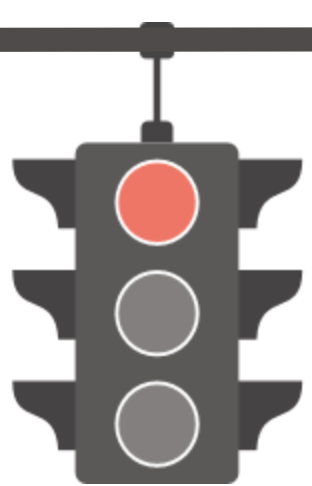
## Today's Destination

Build a sustainable  
child care model that  
works for YOUR  
community

Understand ways  
to meet your  
community's needs

Bring the right  
people together

Hear from a real-  
world example  
(PCC's story)



GET READY

# Check the Dashboard

## What does your community need?

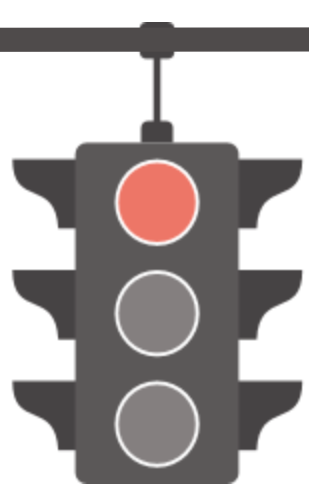
The need is likely already flashing at you, you just have to **look**.

Seek out what data already exists



PCC'S JOURNEY

Garfield County health assessment identified child care as one of the top three community needs



GET READY

# Find a Driver

Every successful effort starts with someone who is willing to lead the work.



## Who can the driver be?

- A champion (or a group of champions)
- Someone who can organize, communicate, build partnerships, and maintain momentum
- Someone passionate about the work
- Someone connected to community

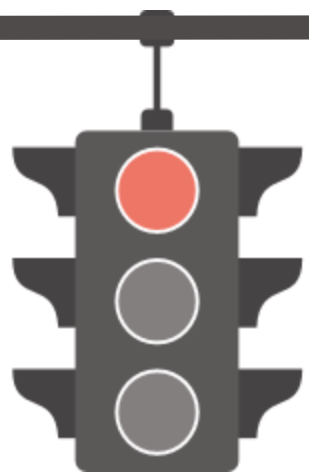
### PCC'S JOURNEY

Garfield County health assessment identified child care as one of the top three community needs

Committee forms

Alesia hired as Navigator

Committee becomes PCC



GET READY

# Hold the Doors Open

## Start with community engagement immediately

Host a town hall

Ask people to coffee to chat/ do 1-1 meetings

Present to local decision-makers

Begin building visibility and urgency

Facilitate surveys

Conduct focus groups

## Key questions the community should answer

What type of child care resources are needed?

How urgent is the need?

Who is most affected?

What barriers currently exist (cost, access, hours, facility, location, etc.)

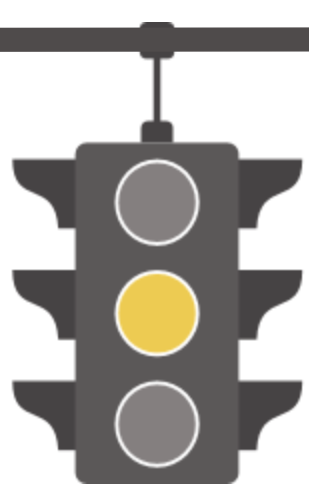
## PCC'S JOURNEY

Garfield County health assessment identified child care as one of the top three community needs

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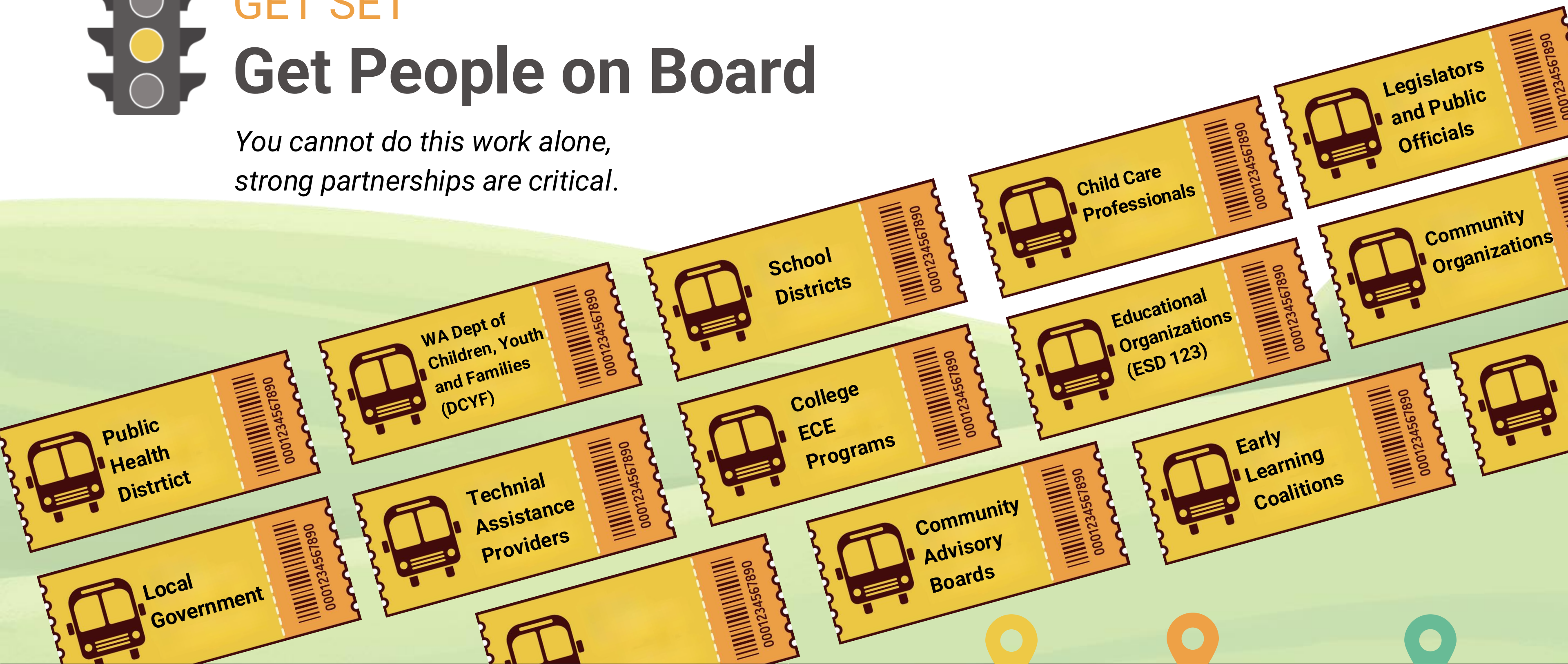
Committee becomes PCC



GET SET

# Get People on Board

*You cannot do this work alone,  
strong partnerships are critical.*



PCC'S JOURNEY

Alesia hired as  
Navigator

Committee  
becomes PCC

Community  
engagement starts

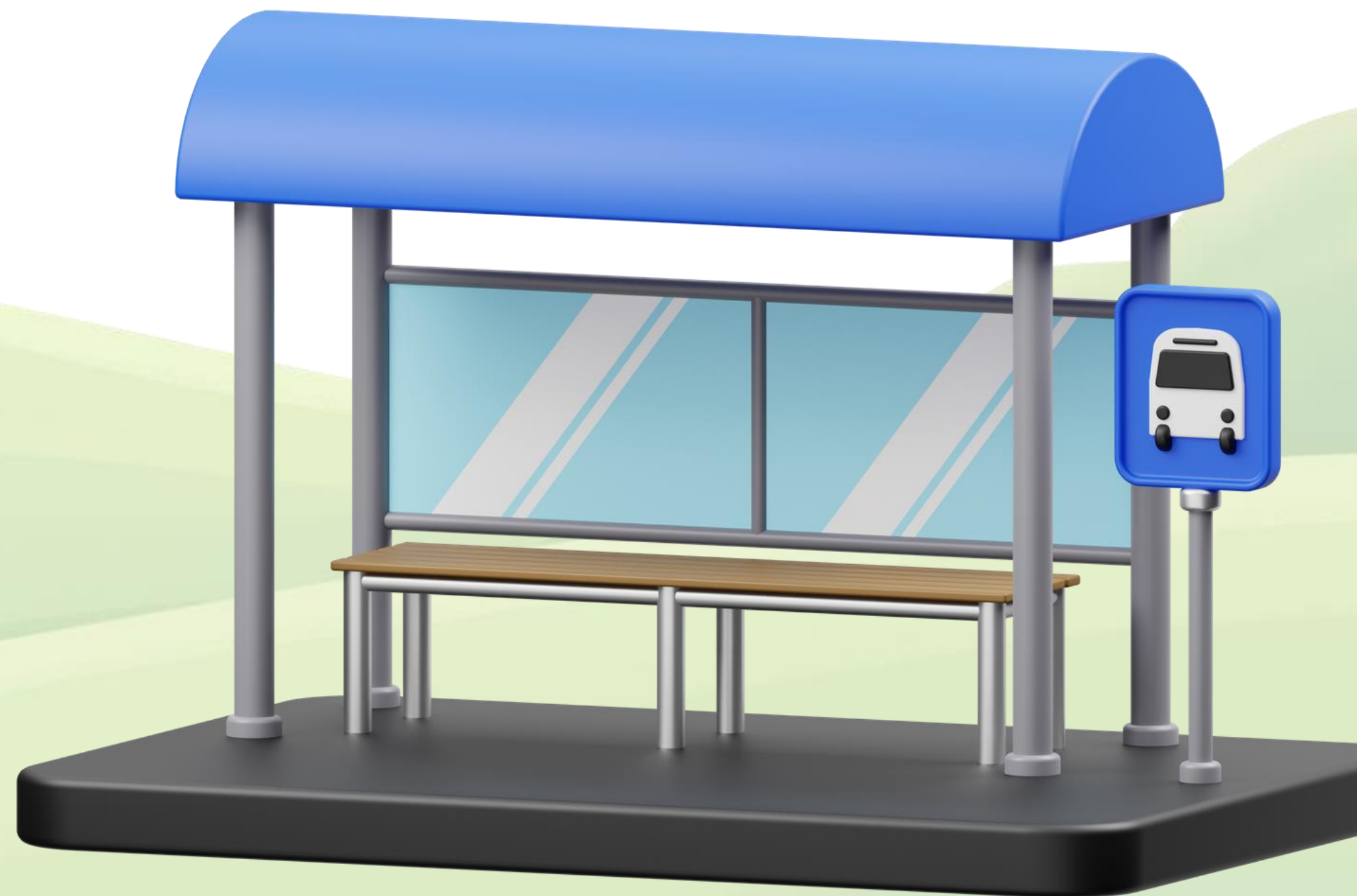


GET SET

# Find Your Depot

## Facility Considerations:

- New construction vs. existing building
- Location in the community
- Accessibility and community fit
- Renovation needs
- Is the space licensable?



## PCC'S JOURNEY

Community  
engagement continues



Created  
funding plan



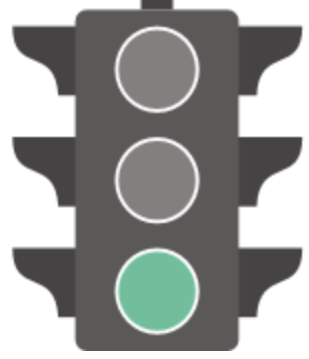
Building  
donated



Starts DCYF pre-  
licensing process



Starts working  
with architect



GO!

# Hit the Road



## Choose a Business Model

### Key considerations:

- Community needs
- Affordability
- Funding opportunities
- Sustainability



## Put together a Funding Plan

...and APPLY!

The right timing can unlock early-stage funding that makes the project possible



## Plan for Operation

### Key considerations:

- Workforce
- Costs for families
- Community support needed
- Sustainability

### PCC'S JOURNEY

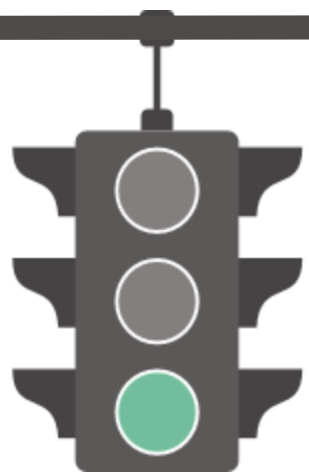
Created  
funding plan

Building  
donated

Starts DCYF pre-  
licensing process

Starts working  
with architect

Runs cost models, plans for  
workforce recruitment & retention



GO!

# Expect Detours

Challenges  
are part of  
the process.

## Potential examples of common issues:



Funding delays



Facility challenges



Contract delays



Staffing shortages



Bridge funding



Changing community needs

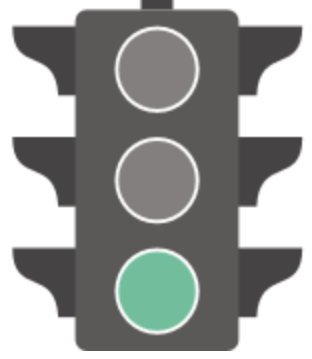
## PCC'S JOURNEY

Runs cost models, plans for  
workforce recruitment & retention

Re-runs cost models  
with new plan

Bridge funding  
secured

Re-runs cost models  
AGAIN with new plan



GO!

# Share Your Journey

Figure out ways to communicate the story with local community *and* larger audiences.

Local trust is built through visibility.

Outside attention builds credibility and momentum.

Every milestone is a storytelling opportunity.

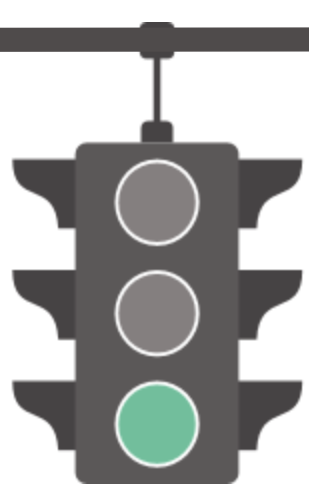
## PCC'S JOURNEY

Bridge funding secured

Community engagement starts

Seattle Times article published

Resource Rural documentary produced



GO!

# Slow and Steady



**This is a legacy project, not a bandaid.**

Let the journey be part of the story — the impact is bigger than a building.



**Don't try to do it all at once.**

Acknowledge the urgency, but real solutions take a real process.



**It takes time.**

Build that expectation into your plan from the start.

## PCC'S JOURNEY

Funded for renovations

Funded for curriculum

Opening Summer 2027

Biggest unknowns are still ahead

This work is already happening all around you.



You don't have  
to build the bus,  
you just have  
to get your  
community on it.

# Thank you!



**Martha Lanman**

Administrator  
Garfield County Public Health  
509-843-3412

**Alesia Ruchert**

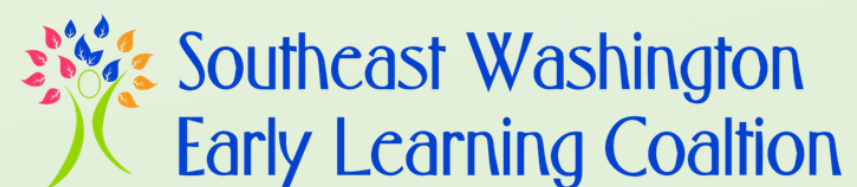
Childcare Navigator  
Garfield County Public Health  
509-843-3412



Treasurer  
Pomeroy Community Connection

Secretary  
Pomeroy Community Connection

**...and thank you to all who have hopped on our bus!**



+ many more!