



## GRANTMAKING FOR COLORADO'S YOUNGEST CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

[www.buellfoundation.org](http://www.buellfoundation.org)

At the **Buell Foundation**, we invest in Colorado's families every day. We do this by demanding quality — of our grantees, of the early childhood system, of ourselves.

We partner with programs and organizations to ensure that there is a quality system in place that **allows all children to be valued, healthy, and thriving**. Particular focus is placed on programs that target underserved communities.





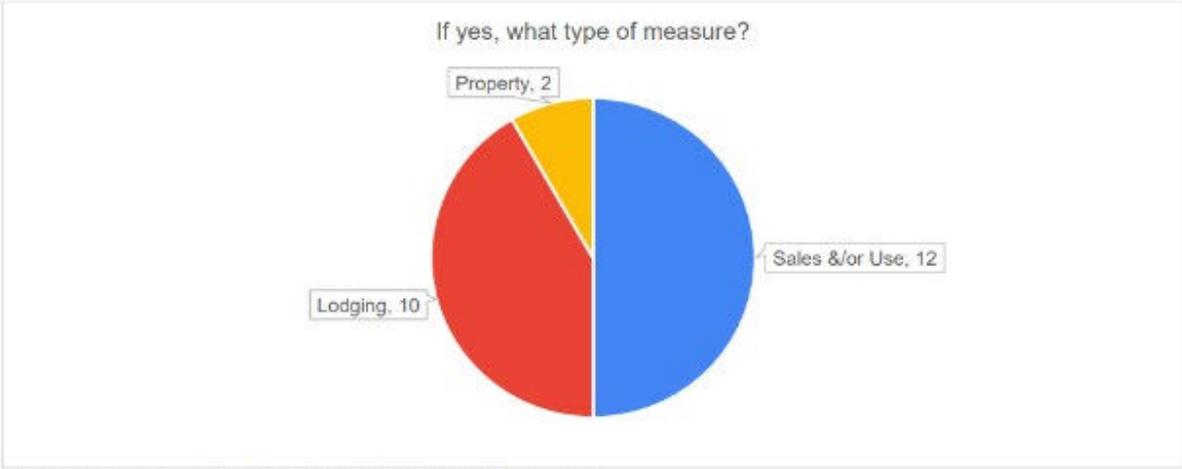
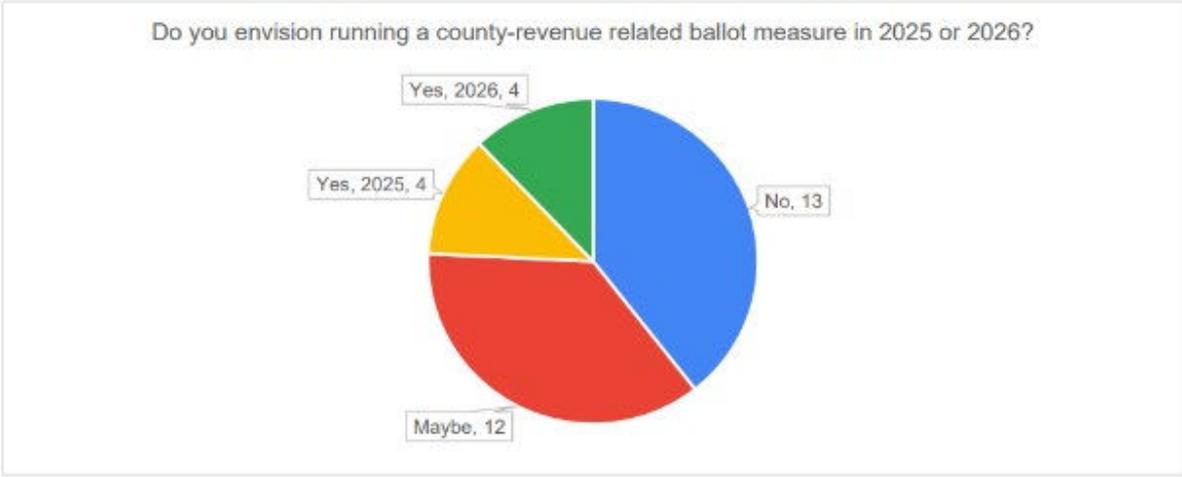
# Goals for Today

- Celebrate success and be inspired
- Update on Buell funding for local financing
- Learn from Eagle County leaders
- Learn from Hinsdale County leaders
- Get your questions answered
- Learn about ECE narrative change from Gary Community Ventures/Move Colorado Forward

# Early Childhood Systems Building



# Colorado Counties Inc. Survey Results



^ some respondents did not identify a type of measure



# LODGING TAX TOOLKIT

Tourism Should Benefit Your Community

# Legislative Update

HB 24-1247 increased the limit on county and special district lodging taxes and again expanded the permissible uses of revenue.

Counties and special districts can now:

- Impose a lodging tax in an amount up to 6%
- Use lodging tax revenue to support:
  - Marketing local tourism
  - Enhancing visitor experience
  - Child care and housing for the tourism workforce
  - Public infrastructure maintenance and improvement
  - Enhancing public safety

## Lessons Learned

- Counties are moving forward with lodging tax legislation and coalitions are not formed
- There will be a more competitive environment with additional options beyond child care and housing
- Positive peer pressure can benefit ECE — county commissioners don't want their community to fall behind
- There are an increasingly large number of communities to learn from
- Child care is bipartisan
- Ride the coattails of other necessary community supports

# Eagle County: Early Childhood on the Ballot

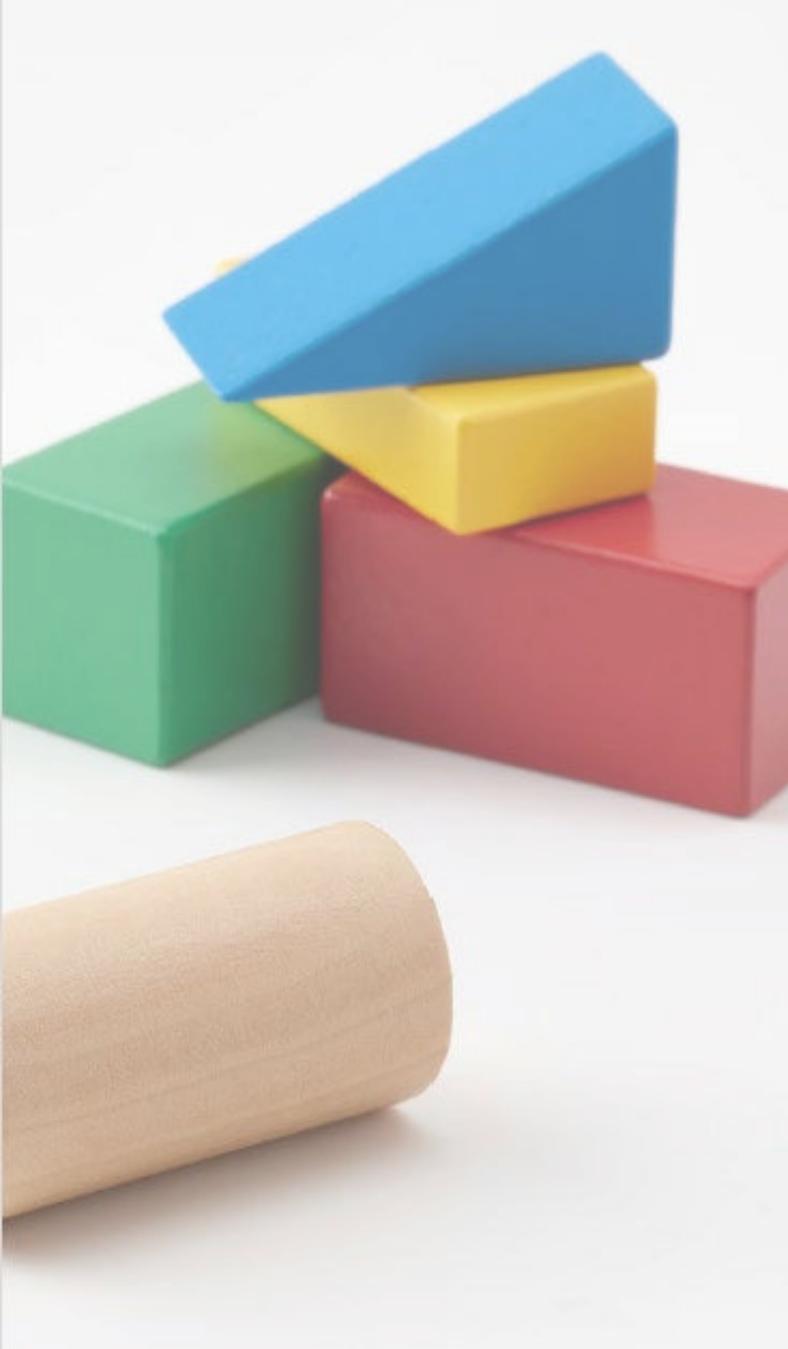
## **Current Funding, New Lodging Tax & Why We Went Back to the Ballot**

Jeanne McQueeney

Sam Markovitz



EAGLE COUNTY



# Current Eagle County Early Childhood Funding

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## November 2022: 2% Lodging Tax

- Possible uses: affordable housing & early childhood
- Collecting ~\$3.5-4 million annually
  - 90%: early childhood initiatives
    - Workforce Stipends
    - Rental/Mortgage Assistance
    - Child Care Health Consultant
    - Capital investments, health and safety enhancements, and infant and toddler expansion supports
  - 10% used for advertising and marketing local tourism (required by state law)

## Human Services General Fund

- ~\$1 million annually
- Infant and toddler subsidies and community partner supports

# Back to the Ballot

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## Why

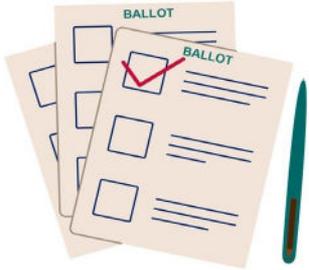
- Cost modeling with Brodsky Research = ~\$23 million to fund high quality child care system
- Why we didn't join with CECE Coalition's effort for early childhood special tax district (7A)

## What

- Additional 2% Lodging Tax passed by 82 votes in November 2025
  - 10%: advertising and marketing local tourism (required by state law)
  - 90%: early childhood, and/or public safety enhancements for local law enforcement, fire protection services, and/or emergency medical services
  - Expected to collect an additional ~\$4 million annually

## Differences between 2022 & 2025

- Expanded usage opportunities
- Opposition campaign (did not have in 2022)



# What We Hope to Fund

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## **Support the increase in child care capacity**

- ★ Up 6% since January 2024
- ★ Expecting to see an additional 12% by 2027

## **Support our current initiatives and their increased expenses**

- ★ Workforce Stipend, Child Care Health Consultant, Rental/Mortgage, Health and Safety, Infant and Toddler Enrollment Incentive

## **Support family affordability strategies**

- ★ CCCAP
  - No waitlist or freeze
  - Increase # of families

## **Support additional critical community needs/priorities**

- ★ Wildfire

# Next Steps

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Finalize \$ amounts  
for early childhood  
& wildfire from the  
expanded Lodging  
Tax

## Step 1

Convene the  
Lodging Tax  
Advisory Board in  
Q1 of 2026

## Step 2



## Step 3



# HINSDALE COUNTY LODGING TAX





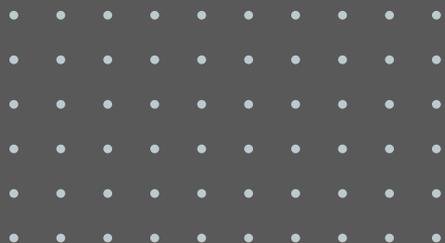
**01. SUCCESS**

**02. EARLY CHILDHOOD CHALLENGES IN  
HINSDALE COUNTY**

**03. AT THE TABLE**

**04. KEY LEARNING POINTS**

**05. NEXT STEPS**



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# HINSDALE COUNTY BALLOT MEASURE 1A PASSED WITH OVERWHELMING SUPPORT!

Current: 2% Lodging Tax

Proposed: 4% Increase

Total Lodging Tax Once Passed: 6%

## Countywide Ballot Question

**Yes:** 361 (71% support)

**No:** 111 (22% against)

**Voter Turnout:** 504 of 700 (72% turnout)

# HINSDALE EARLY CHILDHOOD BACKSTORY

- Wee Care: a year-round early learning center with care for children ranging from 1-6 years of age (licensed capacity of 15)
- Lake City Community School (LCCS): a part-time preschool program during the traditional school year

## Young Child Population



**27**  
ages 0-5

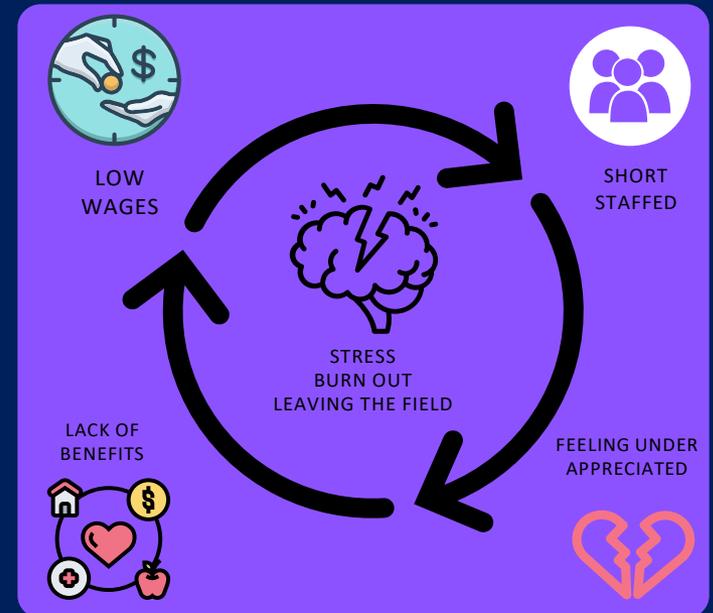


**26**  
ages 6-10

Data from 2025 Kids Count Report  
Hinsdale County

# CHALLENGES FACED BY HINSDALE COUNTY EC PROGRAMS

- High staff turnover, often due to **low wages** and **lack of benefits** leads to **program instability**.
- Limited personnel can result in inconsistent operating hours and reduced reliability for families and employers.
- Fixed costs remain in place regardless of tuition dependent on enrollment.
- Lower enrollment at times due to the small population.
- State mandates for facility and staff without financial support.



# STRATEGY AND OUTREACH

Originally discussed a ballot initiative around a local marketing district after rural technical assistance program through CSU-led community meetings

**In the first half of 2025 we completed the following:**

- **Hinsdale County Early Childhood System Strategic Planning**
- **Hinsdale County Early Childhood Needs Assessment**
- **Community Meetings with Key Stakeholders: Lodging Tax Board, EMS, Search and Rescue, County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce, Lodging Owners, Town Council, Community Members**

(thanks to generous funding from the Buell Foundation)

**Messaging around the ballot initiative was vital:**

- who pays the lodging tax
- early childhood center's connection with school district
- a young family's ability to live and work in the area
- community outreach around the critical need for all of these essential services

# Vote Yes on 1A

[www.hinsdaleessentialservicescommittee.com](http://www.hinsdaleessentialservicescommittee.com)



HINSDALE COUNTY

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES



Visitors funding essential services  
one stay at a time

Paid for by the Community Essential Services Committee



# NEXT STEPS

## Early Childhood Coalition Formation

### **Mission Statement:**

To strengthen and support a connected network of early childhood programs, families, and community partners by advocating for accessible, high-quality, and inclusive early learning opportunities that ensure every child has the foundation to thrive.



# Child Care Narrative Change Cohort

- **The challenge**

- The public's incomplete understanding of child care is preventing statewide solutions.

- **The goal**

- Raise Coloradans' awareness of the child care crisis, build support for statewide solutions.

- **The approach**

- A 12-month statewide communications campaign
- Empower artists, journalists, and other storytellers to find and tell stories that captivate and persuade Coloradans
- Measure the impact

# Invitation to Get Involved

Beginning in January 2026:

- **Collect stories** about the challenges that families and child care providers face, and about their heroic efforts to overcome them.
- **Identify local leaders** and influential community members who can help shape local opinion on this issue.
- **Share the sources of news and information** that you and your community rely on, that our narrative cohort should consider utilizing.

**Example story  
submission form:**



**URL for form:**

<https://forms.gle/ZDVevroEKTXyuTJNA>



# QUESTION & ANSWER



# Key Contacts

## Hinsdale County

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## Eagle County

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## Buell Foundation

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# Buell Funding Opportunity & Resources

Buell Early Childhood Local Financing Support

[Open Opportunity](#)

Lodging Taxes In Colorado: A Toolkit for Community Investment

[Released in Sept. 2025; a guide to communities in utilizing HB 25-1247](#)

Individual Local Early Childhood Initiative Case Studies

[Six case studies and released in June 2025: Local Ballot Measure After-Action Review: Reflections from Grand County, La Plata County, and the City of Montrose on their Lodging Tax Success](#)

Recorded Webinars Related to Our Funding Opportunity

[Seven webinars featuring panel guests hosted by Jason Callegari](#)

[Children's Funding Project – Supporting Dedicated Revenue Streams for Children](#)