

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Illinois Early Childhood Construction Grant Program**

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## Introduction

The State of Illinois has released the Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) Program, a state-sponsored initiative to invest in quality early childhood education (ECE) facilities where they are most needed. The ECCG Program will provide \$60 million in grants for early childhood education centers who are ready to renovate, expand, or newly construct facilities to serve more children now, and an additional \$40 million to centers who will be ready for facility construction in the fall.

This FAQ sheet provides details on the IL ECCG Program. Section 2 provides examples of ECCG projects from 2011. Sign up to receive updates by visiting [www.iff.org/QFA](http://www.iff.org/QFA).

## Section 1: IL Early Childhood Construction Grant Program FAQs

The state of Illinois released the Early Childhood Construction Grant Program on July 12, 2022. Below is some information on what the ECCG Program is and what you can do to prepare to apply.

### **What is the Early Childhood Construction Grant Program?**

The Illinois Early Childhood Construction Grant (ECCG) Program is a state-sponsored initiative to invest in quality early childhood education (ECE) facilities where they are most needed. It was first established in 2009 and renewed in 2019 as part of [Rebuild Illinois](#), the state's \$45 billion capital plan. The ECCG Program provides \$100 million in grants for school districts and nonprofit ECE centers to renovate, expand, or newly construct facilities to serve more children.

The ECCG Program is administered by the [Capital Development Board](#) (CDB), an independent state agency that oversees construction of state facilities and other public purpose capital projects. The CDB will consider and then award grants on a competitive basis to applicants that demonstrate a combination of community need, project readiness, and ECE program quality. Read on to learn more about what you can do to prepare for the application. Visit the [Illinois.Gov](#) website for updates.

### **Who is eligible to apply for the ECCG Program?**

Public schools or private not-for-profit entities with experience providing educational, health, social and/or child development services to young children and their families. The facility must operate in the future as an ECE center for 10 years if awarded the grant. Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) are not eligible. If eligible for licensing, appropriate DCFS license must be current.

### **What expenses does the ECCG Program cover?**

Funded through proceeds from the sale of *Build Illinois Bonds*, grants under the ECCG Program can only pay for [bondable capital improvements](#) as defined by state and federal law. Generally, this means that grant funds must be used for non-recurring durable improvements, such as:

- Constructing an addition onto an existing building.
- New construction of a facility or renovations to an existing facility to create a new early childhood center.
- Acquisition of a facility.
- Purchase or replacement of equipment that meets bondability guidelines.
- Safety improvements.
- Classroom conversions.

Funds can only be used for a property that is owned, or they must be used to purchase a property. ECCG Program funds cannot be used to pay for any operational costs or program expenses, routine building maintenance, existing debt, or space unrelated to the ECE services. Examples of projects that have been funded previously by the ECCG Program can be found in Section 2 of this FAQ sheet.

**How much can a school district or nonprofit ECE provider apply for?**

CDB regulations do not specify any minimum for the grant amount. The grant ceiling is \$10 million.

**Do grant recipients have to provide matching funds?**

Yes, all grantees need to contribute a match ranging from 3-10% of their total grant amount, depending on their school district’s designated “tier.” These tiers are determined by the Illinois State Board of Education’s (ISBE) evidence-based funding formula. [Find your local school district’s tier.](#)

ISBE-Designated “Tier”	Minimum Match (% of grant amount)
Tier 1 School District	3%
Tier 2 School District	7.5%
Tier 3 School District	8.75%
Tier 4 School District	10%

**When will the ECCG Program start accepting applications?**

Applications will be accepted now through October 10<sup>th</sup> at 5pm CT through the [IL Capital Development Board webpage](#). Once applications are submitted and grant awards made, the grant period will begin no sooner than December 1, 2022, and extend for a maximum of five years from the execution date of the grant agreement. All construction work and any close-out requirements must be completed within that term.

**What can I do to get ready to apply?**

CDB will be looking at the following in an application:

- **Community Need.** CDB must prioritize applications from communities with the most children in need of ECE services. Priority will be given to areas with the most children from marginalized communities and populations of children 0-5, with an emphasis on children 0-36 months, who exceed the number of enrolled slots designated for their age groups at ECE centers in the area served by those centers. **How can I demonstrate the need in my community?** A good starting

point is [IFF's statewide needs assessment from 2019](#) and the [Illinois Early Children Asset Map \(IECAM\)](#).

- **Project Readiness.** CDB needs to know that applicants, if selected, are ready to move forward with their projects. That means applicants should have a clear renovation/expansion plan, budget, and team. There is \$60 million allocated for centers that are project ready now, and a separate Notice of Funding Opportunity will be released at a later date allocating additional funds for centers that need more time to plan or find a new facility.
- **ECE Program Quality.** CDB asks applicants about the quality of their ECE program and their track record as an ECE provider.

### **What documents should I have ready to submit with my application?**

In addition to thinking through the questions above, providers will also need to submit various documents with their application, including:

- Current DCSF child care center license
- Deed/proof of ownership
- Documentation of non-profit status
- Good standing with IL SOS
- UEI number, GATA ID, SAM CAGE code
- Register/authenticate on the Illinois.gov authentication portal
- Certify ability to generate 3-10% match
- Ability to sustain operations outside of ECCG funding
- Demonstrates need in your community, organizational history, ability to recruit/sustain child care slots, quality factors
- Collaborative relationship with EI/CFC

### **What can I do to stay informed?**

Sign up for updates by visiting [www.iff.org/QFA](http://www.iff.org/QFA). Additionally, register for an upcoming information session by visiting [www.iff.org/QFA](http://www.iff.org/QFA). We also recommend visiting the [Capital Development Board](#) website for updates.

## Section : Examples of 2011 ECG Projects

The State of Illinois funded a similar grant program for early childhood education educators in 2011. Here are some of the projects that resulted from that effort.

**Brown Bear Daycare and Learning Center** (Harvard) – \$3.2 million

Expansion of the current facility of approximately 18,750 square feet to provide additional infant rooms and infant and toddler play areas.

**Chicago Urban Day School** (Chicago-Englewood) – \$183,690

Renovation of the interior and exterior of the current facility, including a new roof and windows. The renovations allowed for the re-opening of classrooms.

**Christopher House** (Chicago-Belmont) – \$5 million

Demolition of the current structure and construction of a new 28,500-square-foot building, consisting of classroom and office spaces.

**Dolton Park** (Dolton) – \$3.5 million

Demolition of the current facility and construction on the current site of a new 15,300-square-foot facility consisting of classroom space, play areas, nursery, and computer lab.

**Harlem Community Center Hand-n-Hand Child Care Center** (Loves Park) – \$4 million

Construction of a new 20,540-square-foot facility that will include infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms.

**Keeneyville School District 20** (Hanover Park) – \$1.6 million

Construction of a 6,000-square-foot separate preschool facility on the Greenbrook Elementary Site.

**Korean American Community Services** (Chicago-Irving Park) – \$847,625

Renovation to expand the current facility, consisting of classroom space and child activity center. The grant allowed for an increase in 2-5-year-old slots, and the ability to offer services in Korean, Spanish, and English.

**Lighthouse Early Learning** (Cahokia) – \$1.3 million

Construction of a new 8,000-square-foot facility to provide full-day, full-year services to children from birth to age 5.

**One Hope United** (Joliet) – \$3.1 million

Purchase of an existing building and renovation to convert the building into an early childhood facility.

**Roseland Community Good News Daycare Center** (Chicago-Roseland) – \$461,820

Demolition and construction of a new building. The program focuses on serving high school and low-income working moms.

**Through A Child's Eyes** (Cicero) – \$5 million

Purchase of an existing building and renovation to convert the building into an early childhood facility.

**Tiny Tots Villa** (Chicago-Chatham) – \$100,000

Renovation and repair of the current 2,115-square-foot facility, where 97% of the children served were from single-female households.

**Tom Thumb Community Childcare Center** (Carpentersville) – \$5.0 million

Construction of a new 27,000-square-foot facility, which became the only infant and toddler center in Carpentersville.

**YWCA Kankakee** (Kankakee) – \$2.4 million

Demolition of a portion of the existing facility and construction of classroom, kitchen, and staff workroom space.

**Chicago Public School Grants**

In 2011, 20% of the Illinois ECCG funds (\$20 million of the \$100 million) went directly to the Chicago Public Schools, which then developed its own criteria and process for awarding its funds to grantees. Listed below are the 2011 grantees.

**Chicago Commons** (Chicago-Bronzeville) – \$999,994

**El Hogar del Niño** (Chicago-Pilsen) – \$855,000

**Metropolitan Family Services** (Chicago-Multiple Locations) – \$731,712

**Asian Human Services Award** (Chicago-Multiple Locations) – \$603,900

**Chicago Child Care Society** (Chicago-Hyde Park) – \$563,089

**Mary Crane Center** (Chicago-Multiple Locations) – \$464,105

**Concordia Place** (Chicago-Multiple Locations) – \$127,100

**Northwestern University Settlement Association** (Chicago-Noble Square) – \$116,649

**Southeast Asia Center** (Chicago-Uptown) – \$78,097

**Children's Place Association** (Chicago-Humboldt Park) – \$64,231

If you have any additional questions regarding the Illinois ECCG or QFA Technical Assistance program, please reach out to us at [QFA@IFF.org](mailto:QFA@IFF.org).