

Thriving Spaces Milwaukee Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Thriving Spaces Milwaukee?

[Thriving Spaces Milwaukee](#) is a program designed to increase capacity and improve access to quality early childhood education (ECE) across three (3) Milwaukee neighborhoods (Brewer's Hill, Halyard Park and Harambee). Participating ECE providers receive:

- **Grants** to improve facility quality
- **Access to relevant professional development**

Providers will go through an application process, with a total of 8-10 providers being selected to participate. Providers are required to attend and participate in four (4) learning sessions in order to receive grant funding for facility improvement projects.

Who can apply for grants?

Eligibility varies based on whether providers are applying for an enhancement or expansion facilities project. In addition to the eligibility criteria listed below, providers must also be willing to participate in 4 required learning sessions on Saturday mornings.

Providers interested in **maintaining existing ECE slots** and improving facilities quality must meet the following criteria:

- Be a licensed home-based or center-based provider
- Have at least a 2 on the YoungStar rating system
- Been in operation a minimum of 2 years
- Be able to demonstrate a legal right to make changes to the building
- Serve ages infants (ages 0-3) in Brewer's Hill, Halyard Park, or Harambee neighborhood

Providers interested in **increasing ECE slots** through facilities improvements must meet the following criteria:

- Be a licensed home-based or center-based provider
- Been in operation a minimum of 2 years
- Be able to demonstrate site control
- Have 3 stars or above on the YoungStar rating system
- Serve children ages 0-5 in Brewer's Hill, Halyard Park, or Harambee neighborhood

How do I apply?

The application information and deadline will be posted and available effective Monday, July 18, 2022 at www.iff.org/thrivingspaces. Providers will hear back from an IFF representative within 2 weeks of the deadline. The timing for the whole process varies, but review and approval generally takes 4-6 weeks. Please email us with questions at thrivingspaces@iff.org.

Who is funding this?

In 2021, [The Greater Milwaukee Foundation](#) awarded a grant for this initial program. ECE leaders across the city are partnering to support this program and provide information, resources and connectivity to broader services to strengthen ECE.

When and where are the required learning sessions?

Providers accepted into the program will participate in four (4) required learning sessions on Saturday mornings, held at 4C For Children, 1736 N. 2nd Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212. Wisconsin Registry credit will be provided.

- ❖ Saturday, October 22, 2022
- ❖ Saturday, October 29, 2022
- ❖ Saturday, November 5, 2022
- ❖ Saturday, November 12, 2022
- ❖ All sessions are from 9:30AM – 11AM CT and providers must be on time.
- ❖ The 4C For Children Offices are accessible on the 19, 57 and 80 bus routes.

Is my facility eligible and what documents do I have to provide?

Your facility is eligible for a Thriving Spaces grant if you either own your building or your lease agreement allows you to make facility improvements. Program participants must show either a deed indicating proof of ownership or a lease evidencing that building improvements can be made. If your lease does not explicitly state building improvements or construction is allowed, you may need to provide a letter from your landlord stating building improvements are allowable.

What type of facility improvements can I make to my space?

Improvements that are related to indoor air quality, temperature, ventilation, noise, lighting, classroom furnishing, and outdoor play areas are IFF priorities as these factors contribute to high-quality learning environments, which are proven to positively impact young children's learning, development, and well-being.

Will I need a building permit?

All grant funded work must adhere to applicable building codes and permit requirements and must be completed by licensed and insured vendors. These requirements are designed to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the building's occupants.

Who is IFF?

IFF is a mission-driven lender, real estate consultant, and developer that helps communities thrive by creating opportunities for low-income populations and individuals with disabilities. Working closely with clients from every sector, IFF offers affordable, flexible financing; full-scale real estate consulting; and community development services. IFF has a long history of expanding early education by identifying the need for as well as designing, financing, and building quality childcare facilities throughout the Midwest.