**Newsletter Articles**

**NEWSLETTER 1: PROJECT GROWTH OVERVIEW**

**HEADING:**

Local businesses are teaming up for success with grant funding from Project Growth.

**COPY:**

Wisconsin businesses and early childhood programs have a great opportunity. An opportunity to partner up, work toward shared goals, and receive money and support along the way.

Project Growth is a new initiative designed to help solve the challenges facing Wisconsin’s child care system. How? By awarding grant funding to businesses and child care providers that work together to add benefits employees want, find child care solutions, and innovate. Project Growth invests in partnerships that aim to strengthen their businesses and community by making quality, affordable child care more accessible and sustainable.

And the best part? There are concrete benefits beyond the funding that businesses and child care providers receive from Project Growth grants.

Benefits for businesses include:

* Staying competitive in a tight labor market by offering attractive benefits
* Increasing employee productivity
	+ Employees who know that their children are in safe, reliable, and high-quality environments are more engaged
	+ Employees are more reliable when they are available to come to work
* Strengthening the local community and economy and feeling good knowing your employees get a great benefit that strengthens their families and your business

Benefits for early childhood programs include:

* Affording quality workers, training, materials, and facilities
* Retaining quality staff through offering higher pay
* Stabilizing enrollment numbers by having reserved business subsidized spots
* Making long-term connections with businesses and organizations that can help improve the quality and scope of your care

Why is there a need for initiatives like Project Growth? Because Wisconsin’s child care system has faced so many challenges over the years — and dealing with an ongoing pandemic hasn’t helped. Families and other caregivers are struggling to find quality, affordable care, which has affected their ability to work. Businesses across the state are having trouble finding employees in a tight labor market — putting a strain on local economies. And child care providers are continuously battling to stay afloat and retain quality workers.

How did we get here?

At its most basic level, the child care crisis in Wisconsin is due to years of inadequate investment and lack of focus on the brain-building, expert work of providers. Working families need quality child care, but programs don’t earn enough to pay high wages or cover costs because most families can’t afford the high tuition. This dilemma makes it challenging for parents and caregivers to stay working, so communities can’t maintain a high quality child care workforce or attract new business.

Wisconsin is not the only state facing a child care crisis, but we are among the first to invite all communities and businesses to be a part of the solution. After all, that’s how Wisconsin solves problems — together.

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) is calling on businesses and early childhood programs across the state to get involved. When you partner up and apply for a Project Growth grant, you are helping lead the way toward solving Wisconsin’s child care challenges.

To learn more about Project Growth, get involved, or apply for one of our unique grants that will be available in early 2022, visit [ProjectGrowth.WI.gov](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/projectgrowth).

**NEWSLETTER 2: PROJECT GROWTH GRANTS**

**HEADING**

Give your business a boost — apply now for Project Growth early child care partnership grants.

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Are you ready to give your business a boost? Add great benefits your employees want and be a part of an innovative solution to Wisconsin’s child care challenges? Oh, and let’s not forget the best part — receive funding and support along the way? If so, Project Growth has an opportunity for you!

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) is now accepting applications for the first year of its Project Growth grant program. This new initiative is designed to support businesses and child care providers that partner and work together to add benefits employees want.

With a total investment of $20 million, Project Growth is offering two unique grants aimed to make quality, affordable child care more accessible and sustainable across Wisconsin.

The Partner Up! grant program focuses on supporting partnerships and existing child care providers. Money awarded from a $10 million fund can help provide quality child care benefits, increase staff compensation, pay expenses, or add new offerings to improve program quality. Businesses are eligible for the Partner Up! grants and are encouraged to apply.

The Dream Up! grant program focuses on innovation and growth in communities. Money received from this fund can help create a new child care business or enhance existing providers through expansion, new programs, and other offerings. Businesses, child care providers, community organizations, and local government agencies or school districts are encouraged to apply for the Dream Up! grants.

Now is the time to take advantage of these innovative grants. The application window is open but will be closing soon. So don’t miss your opportunity to get all the great benefits of a Project Growth grant.

Let’s work together to help solve Wisconsin’s child care challenges.

Apply online for a Partner Up! or Dream Up! grant at [ProjectGrowth.WI.gov](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/projectgrowth).