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DCF Announces Project Growth Grant Recipients

Over \$20 million awarded to local communities and businesses across Wisconsin

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) today announced the award of over \$20 million in Project Growth grants to 28 cross-sector community teams and over 100 businesses to help solve the [challenges facing](#) Wisconsin's child care system and bolster the state's economy.

"We have seen in various communities across the state that when business, economic development, early learning, and other community partners come together and innovate, we all benefit," said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. "These grants are helping us kickstart and build those partnerships, as well as find innovative and sustainable child care solutions that can be modeled in communities and businesses across the state."

During the five-week application period the Project Growth grant program received a large amount of interest with over 660 Partner Up! applications and 39 Dream Up! applications. While funding was limited, DCF was able to award grants to communities and businesses in each region of the state, with an emphasis on areas deemed child care deserts.

Dream Up! Child Care Supply-Building Grant

The [Dream Up! Child Care Supply-Building](#) grant program, administered by our partner, First Children's Finance, focuses on building child care supply through a collaborative [community approach](#). Twenty-eight cross-sector teams will receive strategic planning support and \$75,000 in grant funding to evaluate, plan, sustain, and expand existing child care, and support new child care programs. Additional \$5,000 stipends will be allocated to participating child care providers who submit business improvement plans during the strategic planning process.

The [team leads and their geographic focus areas](#) include:

Spring 2022 Cohort

- Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation (Dodge County)
- Marathon County
- City of Sun Prairie
- Adams County Childcaring Alliance (Adams County)
- Sauk Prairie Area Chamber (Merrimac, Prairie du Sac, Sauk City, Leland, Witwen, Denzer, Honey Creek, Sumpter, Caledonia, and Roxbury)
- Children's Cottage (Royall School District, Elroy)
- Stockbridge-Munsee Community (Bowler, Gresham, Wittenberg, Keshena, and Neopit)
- City of Superior (Douglas County)
- Indianhead Community Action Agency (Rusk County)

- United Way of St. Croix Valley (Roberts, Baldwin, Woodville, Spring Valley, Elmwood, and River Falls)
- Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Progress Lakeshore (Manitowoc County)

Fall 2022 Cohort

- Ithaca School District (Richland County)
- City of Waupaca
- Latino Chamber of Commerce (Greater Dane County)
- United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley (Zip Codes: 54742, 54722, 54757, 54745, 54732, 54748, 54727)
- Medford Area Public Schools (Taylor County)
- Oshkosh Area United Way (City of Oshkosh and Winnebago County)
- Driftless Development (Prairie du Chien and Crawford County)
- Viroqua Area Schools
- Coop Credit Union (Jackson County)
- Lincoln County Social Services (Lincoln County)
- The Playing Field (Zip Codes: 53704 and 53705)
- August Childcare Center (City of Augusta and 54722 Zip Code)
- Waupaca County
- Grow North Regional Economic Development Corp (Oneida County)
- Crown Jewel Academy (Zip Codes: 53405, 53403, 53402, 53401)
- Child Care Matter Network, Inc. (Villard Ave. Business Improvement District, Havenwoods Area)

Partner Up! Grant

The [Partner Up!](#) grant program, administered by our partner, Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), focuses on supporting partnerships between businesses and child care providers by offering funding to businesses that purchase slots for employees' children at existing regulated child care providers. Over 100 businesses statewide, ranging from child care and health care to retail and manufacturing, will receive funding based on the true cost of care, number of slots, and age group. To view the list of Partner Up! grant recipients, visit DCF's [Project Growth](#) webpage. An additional cohort of Partner Up! recipients will be announced later this summer.

Additional Opportunities

There will be another cohort for Dream Up! in early 2023. Interested communities are encouraged to sign up for DCF's grant updates listserv by visiting the [Project Growth](#) website.

Additionally, DCF has introduced [Business Child Care Advocates](#) at Child Care Resource and Referral ([CCR&R](#)) agencies across the state to help connect local communities, businesses, and child care providers and find sustainable solutions and best practices. Organizations and communities can also access the [Business-Child Care Partnership Tool Kit](#) for further information.

To learn more about DCF, visit www.dcf.wisconsin.gov and follow @WisDCF on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Wisconsin's Child Care Crisis

Wisconsin, like most states, is dealing with a [child care crisis](#) that has been brewing for decades. Parents are lacking quality, affordable child care options and early care and education providers are struggling to attract and retain employees. To help build an early care and education system that meets the needs of *a//*Wisconsin families, Governor Evers and DCF Secretary Amundson have invested over \$824 million in federal relief funds and implemented multiple [programs and initiatives](#). These transformational investments have significantly reduced the number of permanent and temporary closures of regulated child care providers and helped [bring together](#) child providers, communities, and businesses to find sustainable solutions and partnerships.

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