

LISC CHILD CARE FACILITIES SMALL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONS

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)'s Rhode Island Child Care and Early Learning Facilities Fund (RICCELFF), in partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS), is excited to announce the Child Care Facilities Small Capital Improvement Grant Program. Through this Program, a total of up to \$400,000 is available to help eligible child care providers access funding to improve child care facilities in Rhode Island. This is a referral-based grant program, which means interested providers have already worked with an agency/organization (i.e.: DHS, Center for Early Learning Professionals [CELP], Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children [RIAEYC], LISC, etc.) to identify health, safety, and quality improvements that need to be made to a child care facility. All organizations will consult with RICCELFF staff prior to submitting a funding request. Before a funding decision can be finalized, a site visit may be made by LISC staff and/or consultants, and additional documentation may be requested to gain a better understanding of program and facility needs.

Applications for this Program will be accepted on a rolling basis starting on December 15th, 2024. Decisions will be made on a first-come, first-served basis, depending on availability of funds, and we will provide an answer within 30 days of receiving your application. Projects are to be completed by November 30, 2025.

This is a reimbursement-based grant program, though eligible family child care providers may qualify for advanced-based funding. Funds may ONLY be used for the small capital improvement projects outlined in the grant contract.

Purpose of Grants

The following menu identifies the types of small capital improvement projects that will be considered for funding:

Small Capital Improvement	Grant Award Maximum	Use
Fencing	Up to \$25,000	Create safe and secure outdoor space meeting licensing regulation. Including, but not limited to, removal of old fence/gate and debris and installation of new fencing/gate.
Sunshade/Awning Installation	Up to \$1,500 for sunshade purchase only	Create shaded or covered area at entrance/exit or in outdoor space.

	Up to \$18,000 for purchase and installation	
Deck Replacement/Installation	Up to \$20,000	Repair or replace existing outdoor deck to be utilized for outdoor activities or entrance/exit. (This does not include/allow for installation of a new deck.)
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment – Classroom Furniture	Up to \$10,000 per classroom/FCC	Furnish or replace child care specific furniture in disrepair. Including, but not limited to, tables and chairs, changing stations, low display shelves, cubbies, cribs (including evacuation cribs), room dividers, dramatic play components, water table, sand table, etc. This does not include materials like books, crayons, or other manipulatives.
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment – Outdoor Play	Up to \$30,000	Equip outdoor play area with enriching activities that promote gross motor development. Including, but not limited to, the purchase of ground level play components, mud kitchens, tunnels, balance beams, riding toys, balls, outdoor sheds for play component storage, etc. This does NOT include any climbing structures.
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment – Outdoor Garden	Up to \$20,000	Develop outdoor gardening space for children. Including, but not limited to, the purchase of landscaping, garden boxes, soil, plants, rain barrels/rain garden, gardening tools, etc.
Drainage Improvements	Up to \$20,000	Any work intended to reduce flooding and improve drainage. Including but not limited to, improving stormwater management/runoff, replacing impervious surfacing with pervious, adding rain barrels, installing vegetation, etc.
Plumbing Renovations	Up to \$38,000	Health and safety improvement to bathrooms and handwashing area. Including, but not limited to, replacement of full-size toilets to

		child-sized toilets, installation of additional toilets/sinks, installation of touchless faucets, installation or purchase of outdoor sinks, installation or purchase of sanitizing washer/dryer and sanitizing dishwasher.
HVAC Upgrades	Up to \$32,000	Health and safety improvements, replacement, and repair to outdated heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to improve indoor air quality and thermal comfort.
Electrical Upgrades	Up to \$25,000	Health and safety improvement to unsafe/noncompliant electrical systems, including upgrading electrical panels, fixtures, etc., and replacement of outlets with GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) receptacles.
Environmentally Conscious Improvements	Up to \$25,000	Specific green design improvements intended to increase building efficiency and reduce overall carbon footprint. Including, but not limited to, improving air sealing (around windows, doors, or other areas of air infiltration) and insulation, installing low-flow plumbing fixtures, incorporating lighting controls, purchase of high-efficiency lightbulbs and HEPA filters, etc.
Small-Scale Renovation	Up to \$75,000	Improvements that would result in an expansion of care slots or meet an immediate health and safety regulation. Including, but not limited to, wall removal/wall installation, addition of natural light, addition of appropriate egress, etc.

PLEASE NOTE: An estimate must be submitted with the application for consideration of grant funds. If the estimate is for services that require hiring a contractor, it must include Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage. Estimates that do not note compliance with prevailing rates will not be considered in grant application review. If the application is for furnishings, fixtures, and equipment, evidence from store/supplier that includes total and itemized cost with shipping will be considered an acceptable estimate. Contractors may charge a fee to develop an estimate and/or they may require a guaranteed selection for use of estimate in grant request. LISC does not reimburse for applications that elected to obtain paid estimates for project proposals.

Eligibility Criteria

Nonprofit and for-profit licensed child care or early learning providers located in Rhode Island and operating in good standing in the State of Rhode Island are eligible for this grant program. Organizations must also meet the following criteria:

- Provide service to DHS subsidized children through the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) with greater priority given to programs serving even higher percentages of high needs children. If you do not serve at least 30% DHS subsidized children, alternate proof of charitable purpose will be required.
- Must be BrightStars rated with a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).
- Must be able to clearly demonstrate the capacity to manage the capital improvement project and all grant requirements (including obtaining estimates independently, reviewing contract scope, scheduling contractor/delivery, managing paperwork, maintaining communication of project status through reporting, emails, and meetings) and have a plan to complete the proposed project(s) in a timely fashion and no later than November 30, 2025.
- Must be assigned a Unique Entity ID through [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) – if you do not have one, you can visit SAM.gov ([click here to see a guide and a video on how to obtain your Unique Entity ID](#)).

Programs should be aware that all contractors used must be licensed and insured. Proof of licensure and insurance may be requested. Labor costs must comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act and the Davis-Bacon Wage Act (prevailing wage). All construction must follow proper building and fire codes.

Funding Priorities

For applicants who meet the qualifying eligibility requirements (above), this Program's funding priorities include:

- Programs currently enrolling children with high needs, with priority given to higher levels of this service.
- Programs actively participating in BrightStars who can demonstrate plans to increase quality rating and examples of previous improvements/investments made to increase program quality.
- Programs proposing to provide some level of matching funding for the project (though there is no match requirement).
- Programs that can demonstrate the capacity to manage the proposed project.
- Programs that can demonstrate long-term site control (i.e. own the building or have a favorable long-term lease, usually greater than three years).
- Programs seeking grant funds to address the following priority issues:
 - Documented health and safety concerns.
 - Maintenance of state licensure.
 - Improvement of overall quality of facility.
- Programs seeking Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)/Women Business Enterprise (WBE) contractors/design professionals (visit the State's directory of certified MWBE entities here: <https://dedi.ri.gov/divisions-units/minority-business-enterprise-compliance-office/minority-business-enterprise-mbe>).

Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by LISC's RICCELFF and DHS, with final award decisions made by DHS. Notification will be sent to the email address provided in the online application form.

In addition to the eligibility requirements and identified priorities outlined above, selection will also be based on:

- The clarity and completeness of the application,
- The applicant's demonstrated ability to carry out the project in a timely manner,
- An assessment prior to the final decision to award funding, either done by phone, virtual meeting or on site, and,
- The availability of funding.

The decision for acceptance of an application will be made at the discretion of LISC's RICCELFF in partnership with DHS. Please note: **Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.**

How to Apply

- Applications will be accepted starting on **December 15th, 2024**. Decisions will be made on a first-come, first-served basis, depending on availability of funds, and we will provide an answer within 30 days of receiving your application. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.
- Online application can be found at: <https://lisc.tfaforms.net/1268>.
- If your organization has multiple sites, you must submit separate applications for each site.
- If you have technical difficulties with the submission of your online application or other questions, please contact the RICCELFF team at riccelff@lisc.org or 401-331-0131.

What You Will Need to Apply

PLEASE NOTE: The following list of information requested in the online application is for REFERENCE ONLY, applications must be submitted electronically via the online application.

Information about Your Program

- The legal name of your organization (as written on your business tax return).
- Type of organization (sole proprietor, limited liability corporation, nonprofit, etc.)
- Unique Entity ID (sam.gov).
- The name and address of the program applying.
- The name of the Executive Director/Owner/Principal.
- The grant contact person's name, title, phone number, and email address.
- The program's total licensed capacity broken down by infant/toddler, preschool, and school age.
- The program's current *actual enrollment* (children served, not slots) broken down by infants, toddlers, preschool, and school age.
- The total numbers of children enrolled who fit each of the following descriptions:
 - Receive DHS Child Care Assistance Subsidy.
 - Are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch.

- Have IFSPs/IEPs.
- Are involved with Child Welfare/DCYF.
- Are English/Dual Language Learners.
- Receive Head Start or Early Head Start services.
- Are homeless.
- The program's current BrightStars rating.
- If the program is a Head Start or Early Head Start provider, a State Pre-K, or a Pathways partner.
- Whether the space is owned (if owned, whether there is a current mortgage on the facility) or leased (if leased, what is the term of the lease and the monthly lease payment).

Information about the grant request

- The small capital improvement menu item (see above) being requested.
- The dollar amount being requested, documented with an attached estimate from industry professional or supplier.
- The age group(s) served by improvements funded by the proposed grant.
- Whether the organization has secured or committed additional funding towards this project and, if so, the amount committed.
- A summary of the grant request, based on the menu of improvements.
- Whether the project fits any of the following priority areas and, if not, a description of what issue the project addresses:
 - Compliance with State Licensing Regulations.
 - Health and Safety - Overall Building Condition/ Building Code Issues.
 - Health and Safety - Playground Issues.
 - Physical Space Barrier to Program Quality.
 - Building/program expansion.
 - Other (applicant will need to provide a description).

Other required information to be uploaded as an attachment

- A narrative document describing the following:
 - Summary of your organization including mission, history, goals, and key achievements.
 - Overview of organization's structure and programs.
 - Summary of key leadership staff and board members (if applicable) including a summary of their qualifications.
 - Explanation of the proposed project and its impact on program health, safety, or quality.
 - Description of how your organization will ensure the project is completed within the allowed time frame, including outline of who will be responsible for grant project management work.
 - Description of your organization's plan to prioritize obtaining estimates from and hiring minority- and women-owned businesses in the hiring of professionals for proposed grant-funded work.
- A written estimate of the capital improvement project proposed. *Please note that if you are selected to receive grant funding you are required to seek multiple bids (we recommend at least three) and document this process prior to beginning work. In addition, for capital funding, the selected contractor must follow the Fair Labor Standard Act and the Davis Bacon Wage Act (prevailing wage). All professionals used must*

have appropriate licensure and must carry proper insurance. Projects must follow all appropriate building and fire codes.

- Financial information
 - Year-to-date financial statement for the current fiscal year (balance sheet and an income statement/profit and loss statement).

Please note: If awarded grant funding we will require the three most recent independent audits, account reviews, or tax returns before execution of grant agreement

Optional information to support application

- Backup documentation from licensing or other regulating agency indicating the regulations that need to be met to maintain licensure or meet compliance building code.
- Previous BrightStars or LearnERS observation report or scorecard noting capital improvement required to increase quality rating.
- Facility Self-Assessment Evaluation (ex: Child Care Space Checklists at <https://riccelff.org/child-care-physical-environment-checklist/>).
- Organization's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).