



YMCA OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY
**COMMUNITY
WELL-BEING
& BELONGING**

INSIGHTS FROM THE CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT FUNDED BY THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO IN FY2024–2025

Child care providers are the backbone of San Diego’s workforce and economy. Yet most operate on thin margins, with little ability to absorb unexpected infrastructure costs. A water main break, outdated windows, or new fire alarm requirements can force a program to close, eliminating slots families rely on. **Investing in child care infrastructure is an investment in child care access.**

GRANT PURPOSE

In FY2024–2025, the County of San Diego launched a **Child Care Infrastructure Grant** to strengthen the foundation of the child care sector. YMCA Childcare Resource Service (CRS) was selected to administer the program, which reimbursed licensed family child care homes, small child care centers (serving 50 or fewer children), and new Providers which could apply for up to **\$4,500** to support:

- Minor renovations, repairs, and modernization
- Retrofitting for safety and compliance
- Expanding licensed capacity
- Enhancing staff compensation
- Purchasing materials and supplies

The goals were to enhance infrastructure, expand child care access, improve provider sustainability, and support workforce stability.

OUTCOMES

- **Over 1,100 applications** were submitted in just six weeks, demonstrating overwhelming demand.
- Funding reached **426 providers**, exceeding the original target of 375.
- **Average award: \$3,900**, supporting meaningful improvements in programs across the county.
- Projects ranged from emergency plumbing repairs and foundation work to safety upgrades like fire alarms, shade structures, and turf for outdoor play.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT PROVIDER NEEDS

- **High demand for infrastructure support.** Applications exceeded available funding, showing how urgently providers across the county need resources to keep facilities safe, compliant, and welcoming for children.
- **Heavy administrative requirements affect access.** While the administrative requirements for reimbursement ensured accountability, they required significant time, financial literacy, and administrative effort from providers to gather adequate receipts and documentation, preventing some providers from accessing support.
- **Business supports could increase impact.** Many providers do not have formal accounting systems, making infrastructure budgeting and expense tracking difficult. Pairing infrastructure investments with business supports would help providers sustain improvements.
- **Language access expands reach.** Offering webinars in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Somali successfully increased participation and ensured more providers could apply and benefit from the program.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Infrastructure Grant demonstrated both the urgency of provider needs and the value of targeted investments. It also highlighted opportunities to build on the County's leadership and make future programs even more effective:

- **Consider an ongoing infrastructure or emergency fund** to help providers address urgent repairs and avoid closures.
- **Explore flexible disbursement models**, such as direct grants or vendor payments, to reduce administrative barriers.
- **Prioritize high-impact projects**, focusing on critical infrastructure and safety improvements.
- **Allow longer timelines** for application, documentation, and project completion.
- **Pair investments with business supports** to strengthen providers' financial and administrative systems.

This work is both timely and necessary. The County's investment provided immediate relief and lasting improvements for hundreds of providers. Continued funding and thoughtful program design can play an important role in strengthening the child care system and contributing to a more resilient future for providers, working families, and our regional economy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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For child care providers interested in engaging in CRS's business support services, please email providersupport@ymacsd.org.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

