

# network stories

## Milwaukee Succeeds - Milwaukee, Wis.



### actions

The Milwaukee Succeeds decision-making body uses the perspectives of family- and center-based child care providers, who are predominantly Black and Latinx women, to drive their goal-setting. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, care providers identified factors such as declining revenue and increased expenses to articulate a pressing need for funding to stabilize the sector and keep providers open. Their decision-making body mobilized philanthropists to meet that need, redirecting priorities from previously established strategic goals to focus on funding early child care stabilization and significantly revising the processes and timelines used to mobilize money quickly. Additionally, a Latinx team member and representative of care providers identified that many providers in her network were not accessing public funds due to language barriers and recommended that the state host Spanish-language webinars.

### results

The Milwaukee Early Childhood Education Civic Response Team worked with local and national philanthropic partners to award an estimated \$1.2 million in stabilization grants to 440 center- and family-based child care programs. These were strategically selected within eight zip codes with the highest concentrations of Black or Latinx residents and the highest COVID-19 infection rates in the city.



## results cont.

Among those that received grants, 70% of enrolled children are Black and 23% are Latinx. They also informed and advocated for an expansion of qualification for CARES Act funds to include stabilization of child care providers, which resulted in the State Child Care Counts Emergency Payment Program. This brought \$33 million to more than 870 providers in Milwaukee County to stay open or reopen and recruit and retain staff. Additionally, the Department of Children and Families hosted their first-ever Spanish webinar on funding opportunities within 10 days of the identified need.

## takeaways

The quick mobilization of resources to meet needs as indicated by the community — including expanded eligibility qualifications of certain funds — helped establish trust between community members, providers and policymakers. This builds the foundation for creating effective co- designing strategies in the future and paves the path for an eventual shift to community ownership.