



## Project Brainstorming Guide for Providers

This guide will help you think about how you might use money from the Montgomery County Facilities Loan Program to expand, improve quality, and serve more families. This brainstorming guide is for both family child care and center-based programs.

### Step 1: Start With Your Needs

| Ask yourself:                                                    | Examples:                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Are there any safety issues I need to fix right away?            | "My center's entrance has a tripping hazard"                                                         |
| What problems do I see in my space every day?                    | "My floors are uneven"<br><br>"The playground has no shade and gets too hot."                        |
| What would make things easier for children, families, and staff? | "We need more shelves to store toys and books."<br><br>"Parents with strollers can't get in easily." |

### Step 2: Explore Project Ideas by Category

Use these categories to spark ideas. You can circle, check, or write in your own.

| Possible Categories | Examples for each ~ to spark ideas                       |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Safety First        | Fix broken floors or steps<br><br>Put in better lighting |

| Possible Categories                        | Examples for each ~ to spark ideas                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            | <p>Add childproof locks, gates, or outlet covers</p> <p>Improve air flow or air filters</p>                                                                                                                                     |
| Easier for Everyone to Use (Accessibility) | <p>Add ramps for wheelchairs and strollers</p> <p>Make bathrooms easier for children to use</p> <p>Add signs in English, Spanish, or other languages</p> <p>Create a quiet, sensory-friendly space for children who need it</p> |
| Better Indoor Learning Spaces              | <p>Add a reading corner or STEM activity area</p> <p>Install child-sized sinks or counters</p> <p>Get more storage for toys, books, and learning materials</p> <p>Reduce noise so children can nap or focus</p>                 |
| Fun and Safe Outdoor Play                  | <p>Add shade or awnings</p> <p>Put in safe play equipment</p>                                                                                                                                                                   |

\*To determine whether your project requires a permit, please review the [Child Care Centers Permitting Process](#)

| Possible Categories        | Examples for each ~ to spark ideas                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                            | Build a garden or nature space<br><br>Fix or replace fences and gates<br><br>Resurfacing                                           |
| Comfort and Energy Savings | Upgrade windows to keep heat in or out<br><br>Improve heating or air conditioning                                                  |
| Bigger or Better Spaces    | Turn an unused room into a classroom<br><br>Add space for more children<br><br>Create a room for group activities or family events |

### Step 3: Is the Project Eligible under the Montgomery County Facilities Loan Program's Eligibility Requirements?

Will this project improve your facility?

Will this project increase your capacity?

### Step 4: Think About What Resources Are Needed

For each idea, jot down:

|                |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Idea 1:</b> | Cost (low, med, or high) |
|----------------|--------------------------|

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|                |                                        |
|----------------|----------------------------------------|
|                | Time to complete (days, weeks, months) |
|                | Permits or approvals required*         |
| <b>Idea 2:</b> | Cost (low, med, or high)               |
|                | Time to complete (days, weeks, months) |
|                | Permits or approvals required*         |
| <b>Idea 3:</b> | Cost (low, med, or high)               |
|                | Time to complete (days, weeks, months) |
|                | Permits or approvals required*         |
| <b>Idea 4:</b> | Cost (low, med, or high)               |
|                | Time to complete (days, weeks, months) |
|                | Permits or approvals required*         |

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### Step 5: Narrow Down, Choose Your Top 3 Projects

Pick the one that is the:

- Most urgent
- Fits your budget and timeline
- Improves your facility
- Increases your visibility (i.e. projects that market your program or possibly give you leverage to expose new families to your program. Signs, new outdoor spaces, etc.

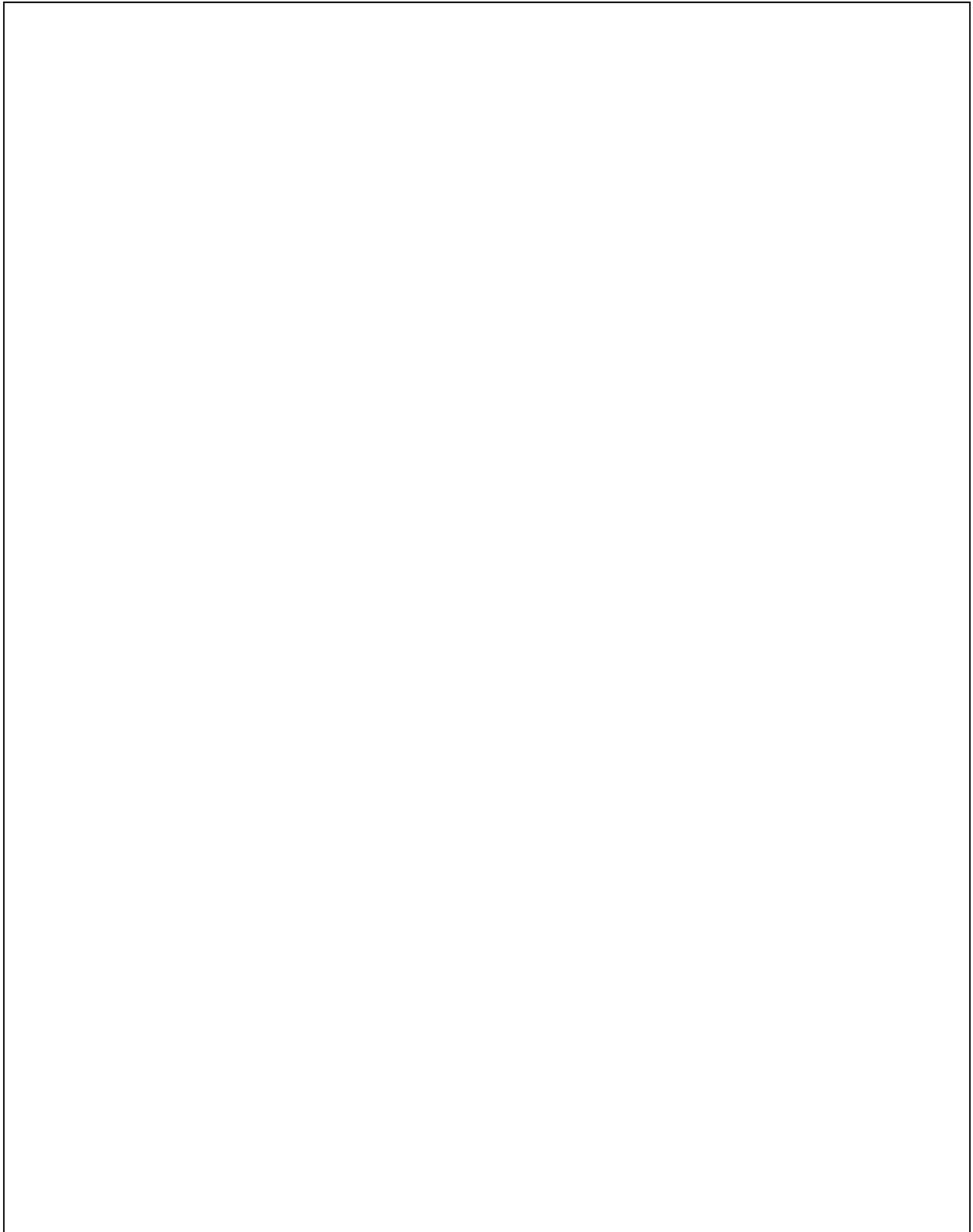
|    |
|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

### Step 6: Write a Simple Project Description

Write 2–3 sentences about each top idea.

Example: I plan to install a safe, smooth pathway in my backyard to provide a designated riding area for the children in my child care. This path will allow children to enjoy riding tricycles and other wheeled toys. This upgrade promotes outdoor play while keeping playtime safe.

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