

Impact100MKE 2025 Finalists

St. Frances Children's Center: <https://sfcckids.org>

Based in Milwaukee and founded 55 years ago, St. Francis Children's Center (SFCC) serves, educates and offers supportive services to special needs children aged birth through high school in an inclusive environment. In 2023, their team of therapists, teachers and service coordinators **worked with 363 children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families in their Birth to Age 3 program. Many of these children have an immediate need for adaptive equipment and gear to aid in their continuing development. SFCC seeks to create a "Gear for Growth" Lending Library to benefit these children through immediate access to mobility, communication, bathing, clothing or feeding equipment that can be tested until the right item is found to best address the delay or disability.** For those infants and toddlers already diagnosed with a delay or disability, early intervention can positively impact academic and future success. Unfortunately, it can take up to six months or longer to obtain the needed equipment due to insurance approval delays and delivery issues. **The Lending Library would offer immediate access to adaptive equipment for short-term usage that can then be returned and used by other children in the program as needed.** The total estimated project cost is \$110,000.

Neighborhood House: <https://neighborhoodhousemke.org>

Neighborhood House, a community center serving Milwaukee's near west side since 1945, strives to inspire discovery in children and families of all backgrounds, so they become lifelong learners and confident leaders. **An Impact100 grant would support their Children's Playground Project (CPP) to transform their outdated and unsafe outdoor play and garden area, making it more engaging and inclusive for children ages 2-12 in their Early Childhood and School-Age Youth Programs. This will fill a gap for many program participants who live in under-resourced neighborhoods and lack access to safe outdoor spaces, ensuring that they have abundant opportunities to explore, play, and learn in a secure, interactive outdoor area at NH.** The CCP will upgrade and expand their current play area to replace old equipment and deteriorated play surfaces with two new play sets that meet ADA accessibility requirements and replace the wood chip base with a much safer and more durable surface that is cushioned and easier to move across. In addition, they plan to rebuild their deteriorating raised garden beds and add a greenhouse for the children to engage in evidence-based natural science and urban agriculture lessons.

Wisconsin Conservatory of Music: <https://wcmusic.org>

The Wisconsin Conservatory of Music (WCM) has more than 125 years of experience in music education. The organization is Wisconsin's largest and oldest community music school. They served more than 11,000 students last year, ranging in age from 0 to 99. They deliver curriculum-based music education in nearly 50 locations, including all types of schools and early childhood centers. WCM aims to eliminate barriers to access by bringing programming to Bronzeville, enhancing community music education and leveraging the rich history of the neighborhood. **Bronzeville is the home of jazz music in Milwaukee, and WCM has a legacy of jazz music instruction. They are leasing**

2,622 sq ft in a new mixed-use building at 6th and North. The Bronzeville Creative Arts & Technology Hub will house a performance space, another nonprofit and WCM, to open in early 2026. The Impact100 grant will be used for build-out costs including sound proofing, equipment, and construction costs to help open the door to music education for many young people and families that would not otherwise have access to it.

Serenity Inns, Inc.: <https://www.serenityinns.org>

Serenity Inns, Inc. (SI) was founded in response to the urgent challenges of drug addiction, homelessness, and preventable deaths in Milwaukee's most vulnerable neighborhoods. In 2004, five Lutheran congregations from areas facing high rates of substance use disorders (SUD), trauma, and housing insecurity joined forces to establish free, residential recovery housing. Since opening its first treatment center in 2004, Serenity Inns has expanded its continuum of care to include the Alumni House (2016), which supports program graduates, and a newly launched Residential Treatment Facility (2024) to serve even more individuals in need. In February 2025, SI launched its Drop-In Clinic, operating three days a week at Olga Neighborhood Wellness Services in the lower level of Redeemer Lutheran Church. This innovative, free, one-of-a-kind clinic offers a low-barrier, harm-reduction model to engage vulnerable individuals, both men and women, regardless of their stage in recovery. It serves as a compassionate and judgment-free entry point into the recovery journey. The clinic services include SUD and mental health counseling, peer support, housing and treatment referrals, and life skills training. **A \$100,000 Impact100 grant will enable SI to expand clinic operations from three to five days per week for the next two years. This increased availability will dramatically improve access to care, particularly for individuals facing multiple systemic barriers.**

Safe & Sound: <https://safesound.org>

Safe & Sound unites residents, youth, law enforcement and community resources to build safe and empowered neighborhoods in 5 of the 7 Milwaukee Police Districts and part of the City of Racine. They serve as a connector of people to organizations, resources, programs and services at a grassroots level. Safe & Sound's main office recently moved to an old, renovated church in an area between Milwaukee's Parklawn and Sherman Park neighborhoods. **While the building is an active community hub, hosting over 100 community events annually, indoor space is limited, leaving only the parking lot for outdoor events. The neighborhood itself lacks safe outdoor spaces. A grant from Impact 100 would transform the outdoor space into a vibrant community asset with a covered meeting area, picnic tables, landscaping, a large colorful mural created by Fred Kaems, and green space for wellness and physical activities. The plan integrates lighting and landscaping designed by law enforcement to reduce crime opportunities and allows residents to be more connected.** Regular use of the space for events, nature programs, and recreation will reduce isolation and marginalization, giving residents a place to connect and build collective efficacy—proven to deter crime and strengthen neighborhoods. By providing a space where everyone can collaborate,

this project will empower residents to take an active role in shaping a safer, more connected community.