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<https://www.bizjournals.com/dayton/news/2024/01/23/sugarcreek-packing-west-dayton-childcare.html>

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Food manufacturer's west Dayton childcare project to ease workforce strain



John Richardson, Michael Richardson and Jennifer Hutcheson with SugarCreek Packing.

COURTESY SUGARCREEK



By **Zachary Jarrell** – Staff Reporter, Dayton Business Journal
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A food manufacturer has plans to put \$1 million into renovating a childcare center near its Dayton facility. As **workforce concerns** continue, the company sees the effort benefiting its employees – as well as the community.

Blue Ash-based SugarCreek Packing Co. earlier this year purchased the building at 4257 Hoover Ave. near the Westwood neighborhood, just across the street from its Dayton location at 4249 Beerman Ave. The property was the site of Young Dimensions Child Care Center.



The company did not purchase the business as part of the deal. Instead, it plans to "completely refurbish" the building and open with a new childcare provider, said Ron Holbrook – corporate affairs for SugarCreek.

"We're working with local and state agencies to build our operating model and identify a licensed provider who will run the center," Holbrook told the *Dayton Business Journal*. "We plan to parallel path the provider search with the building construction improvements to open as soon as feasible."

The manufacturer outlined its plans in a Dayton Region Priority Development & Advocacy Committee (PDAC) application under the project title "Sugar Creek Westwood Neighborhood Childcare Center." The company is seeking \$350,000 for equipment purchases.

"Sugar Creek has a childcare model which has been successfully implemented at a number of its other facilities whereby it provides the childcare facility, furnishes and maintains the building for a licensed childcare provider to operate in," the company said in the application. "The provider can focus on childcare at affordable rates without the burden of the building costs."



A photo of the building at 4257 Hoover Ave. in 2018.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY AUDITOR

The facility currently includes four classrooms, indoor and play areas, a kitchen, and a nursing room.

The company projects creating 11 to 25 new jobs.

SugarCreek Packing directly referenced the challenges childcare presents employees and the "workforce crisis of today" – saying it's "proposing this project to address this exact need."

"It's commonly known that access to quality, affordable childcare is a barrier to work for many," Holbrook said. "SugarCreek seeks to provide benefits and support to retain its current employees and attract future applicants."



A SugarCreek production line.

COURTESY SUGARCREEK

SugarCreek Packing attached several letters of support from local businesses in its application, including Delphos Machine & Tool at 4239 Hoover Ave., Esteidge Market at 4230 Hoover Ave. and Dragon China at 4211 Hoover Ave.

"This project creates early childhood education/childcare and school readiness services in an area lacking in those services and will put them right where the jobs are," the letters said, adding the facility will benefit "SugarCreek employees and (other) community members who need childcare to join the workforce."

There is no timeline for the project included in the application. But SugarCreek Packing did indicate it would be ready to spend the PDAC within six months to a year.

The PDAC process' public comment phase ended Nov. 15. All submissions are evaluated by one of five review panels, which submit their recommendations to the full committee for final consideration.

SugarCreek Packing employs over 2,000 people at its six manufacturing facilities, according to its website, serving clients across the U.S. and internationally. It reached \$1 billion in sales in 2022.

THE LIST

Dayton-Area Manufacturing Companies

Local employment

| Rank | Prior Rank | Company |
|--------------------------------|------------|--|
| 1 | 1 | Honda Development & Manufacturing of America,LLC |
| 2 | 2 | AK Steel (Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.) |
| 3 | 3 | Fuyao Glass America Inc. |
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