



Nonprofit financial and real estate resources

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## School Saves Energy and Money with Energy Efficiency Upgrades

LEARN Charter School Network, Chicago

From 2001 to 2011, LEARN Charter School Network grew from one charter school serving 110 students to a network of schools serving 2,000 students across Chicago's West and South Side communities. The Network, whose mission is to provide children with the academic foundation and ambition to earn a college degree, plans to expand its reach to 8,000 low-income elementary school students by 2019. Once LEARN's growth plans are complete, the Network will annually produce 600 graduates who will matriculate to Chicago's most competitive college preparatory high schools and eventually, college.

In September 2011, LEARN celebrated the grand opening of their Hunter Perkins Campus—the Network's fifth campus, located in Chicago's Auburn Gresham neighborhood.

To help finance the project, IFF provided the Network with a \$1 million energy efficiency loan. The loan allowed LEARN to make significant renovations to a vacant parochial school building that included several cost-saving "green" features. LEARN benefitted from a favorable interest rate thanks to an energy efficiency grant IFF received in 2011; the grant enables IFF to provide more nonprofits with affordable, flexible financing for a range of energy-related projects.

The facility's energy efficient HVAC and lighting systems, double-pane windows, and insulated roof are just a few of the features that help ensure that energy outputs are minimized. Furthermore, the building's system controls reduce energy use during periods of low occupancy, such as nights, weekends, and breaks.

Incorporating these energy efficient elements significantly cuts down on utility costs every year, enabling more funds to be directed towards program costs. Attending a school that is dedicated to conserving resources also creates a healthy, comfortable, and productive learning environment for the students.

LEARN expects to save between \$3,000 and \$6,000 a year on utility costs by making these energy efficiency upgrades.

To learn more about how your organization can cut utility costs and devote more money to your mission through IFF's Sustainable Solutions, visit [iff.org/sustainable-solutions](http://iff.org/sustainable-solutions).



**“It’s a great school, they should be proud of the education that is going on in a neighborhood that desperately needed high quality public education.**

**Additionally, without IFF this deal would not have gotten done. LEARN would have been drained of all operating cash...the interest rate we received has allowed more funds annually to flow into the classroom maximizing our students' outcomes.”**

Bryce Bowman, Director of Operations and Real Estate  
LEARN Charter School Network



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## LEARN Hunter Perkins Energy Efficiency Upgrades

- Building automation control system to manage the HVAC equipment ensuring the comfort needs are met in an energy efficient manner, including night and weekend setbacks and other extended periods of low occupancy
- 75-ton packaged rooftop unit serving a variable air volume air distribution system with individual zone thermostat controls
- 25-ton rooftop unit was completely refurbished and put into service using the existing ductwork
- Tankless hot water heaters outfitted with recirculation pump timers to minimize after-hour pump operation, making them 34% more efficient than conventional units
- Energy efficient lighting controlled by the building automation system, allowing the lighting to be operated according to building occupancy
- Installation of an energy efficient white TPO roof membrane (50% more efficient than required by code)
- Installation of Low-e double pane energy efficient windows

## Going Above and Beyond: Exceeding Building Energy Efficiency Standards

Energy codes set minimum standards and define the *least* efficient buildings that must be constructed. LEARN's goal was to exceed these standards and build a "green" facility—one that reduces energy use and costs less to operate.

LEARN's facility is more efficient than required by code in the following categories:

- Cooling: 4%
- Heating: 2.5%
- Lighting: 34%
- Domestic water heating: 34%
- Overall facility envelope: 25%

The projected reduction in annual energy usage exceeds minimum code by more than 15%.

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IFF is a nonprofit lender and real estate consultant dedicated to strengthening nonprofits and the communities they serve.

We work with nonprofits in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and Wisconsin, with a focus on those that serve low-income communities and special needs populations.

To learn more about IFF, visit [iff.org](http://iff.org).