

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT GRANTS: CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

2019-2021 GRANT AWARDS

United Way
of Northwest Arkansas
UnitedWayNWA.org



The United Way of Northwest Arkansas awarded 25 grants totaling \$2 million over two years. The grants are part of the United Way's Children Living in Poverty Initiative and will support programs **directly impacting 8,000 children and their families**. As a mobilizer of community resources, the United Way works in collaboration with partners throughout Northwest Arkansas to raise funds that support these programs and others like them that increase the capacity of individuals and families to achieve their human potential through education, income stability and healthy lives.

Grants were awarded across three focus areas: Kindergarten Readiness / Parents as First Teachers, Quality Out-of-School Time, and Developing Self-Sufficiency. The selection of grant awards was conducted by three grant panels consisting of 22 volunteers representing a cross-section of the community including human services professionals, academics specializing in public affairs and social work, and senior business leaders.

The following information lists program summary descriptions by focus area for the current grants. For more information or questions please contact United Way of Northwest Arkansas Resource Development Team at info@unitedwaynwa.org.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

BENTONVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parents As Teachers Parent University and Kiddie College Program

Parents As Teachers (PAT) is an internationally recognized, research based home visiting program. PAT provides services year round to low income and vulnerable families in Benton County. Parent educators work with families in the home and through monthly parent meetings to increase knowledge of child development, improve parenting practices, provide early intervention, improve children's school readiness, and support future school success. The Parent University program will expand services

and PAT's ability to support even more low income families by providing the knowledge, tools, strategies and confidence they need to break the cycle of poverty through parent training sessions and social networking events. Parent University sessions will target specific skills, including kindergarten readiness, positive behavior guidance, developing literacy and math skills and self-care.

HAVENWOOD

Havenwood Incredible Years Program

Havenwood plans to implement the Incredible Years Program (IY), a research-based parenting program curriculum. The IY curriculum is designed for parents living in poverty and with mental health problems. To decrease risk factors and increase protective issues factors through parenting education, the IY program promotes parent competency and strengthens families. This grant will provide training to the Havenwood staff to implement the IY program through group and individual sessions.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

EOA Family Engagement Program

EOA Children's Services provides targeted services to young children living at or below the federal poverty level. These services ensure school-readiness by working with the families, as full partners, to close the achievement gap and reduce the effects of chronic poverty on younger children. Parents are a child's first teacher and this shared relationship strengthens the foundation for their child's social/emotional development, as well as promotes creativity and initiative, fosters a language-rich environment, and impacts problem solving and reasoning skills. EOA Family Advocates will engage families in individualized, in-home, and group experiences to enhance parent/child interactions. Research shows that these experiences and interactions foster school readiness through consistent family routines, positive guidance and discipline, enriched home environment, and literacy activities.

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FAMILY NETWORK

Strengthening Families Program: Reaching the Marshallese Community

Family Network is a prenatal and parenting education program accredited by Healthy Families America, a national model promoting high standards and commitment to quality through their mission to promote child well-being and prevent neglect and abuse of our nation's children. Through home visits, Family Network staff will empower Marshallese families in partnership with Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese through education and support services when confronted with challenges of low income, homelessness, abuse, low educational attainment, teen pregnancy, etc. The program will focus on equipping Marshallese families through a strengths-based approach to raise healthy, nurtured children that exceed in all areas of development, physical and social-emotional. Parents are engaged as primary teachers of their child, learning ways to support brain development and increase school readiness. Parents are equipped to be their own advocates, learning to overcome economic barriers that lead to poverty.

HELEN R. WALTON CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT CENTER

Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library provides preschoolers with a library of books to encourage a love of reading and learning. From birth through age five, young children will receive a free, carefully selected book in their mailbox every month. Books are selected from themes determined by the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program and include topics like repetition and predictability, science, and folk tales. Currently over 13,000 books are mailed to children in Northwest Arkansas every year, supporting early literacy, language acquisition and parent engagement. Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center will continue to serve as the "Champion" of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Benton, Washington, Madison and McDonald counties, serving the number of children currently enrolled in the program in 2019 with plans to serve 200 additional children in 2020.

HELEN R. WALTON CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT CENTER

STP ONE Program: Support in Transition Poverty: Optimizing community, Nurturing children, Empowering families

The STP One program partners with community programs to ensure children, birth to five, living in transitional housing have access to free high-quality early childhood education, access to therapy, case management, and support services to mobilize the family to move out of poverty, creating a foundation for multi-generational change by impacting both the parent (or grandparent/guardian) and the young child. The program has adapted to a coordinated care approach where a dedicated team of partners is assigned based on the individual needs of families. The coordinated care team meets regularly to address current needs and determine next steps, which deepens the relationship with the family, builds confidence and trust, and makes the family more invested.

LEGAL AID OF ARKANSAS

ACEs-focused Legal Aid Program

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events occurring before age 18. Research has demonstrated there is a significant relationship between the number of ACEs a person experienced and a variety of negative outcomes in adulthood. This ACEs-focused Legal Aid program increases parents' capacity in ensuring their child's school readiness by addressing poverty-related stressors that significantly increase incidences of child maltreatment and household dysfunction. The program will execute an ACEs-focused education and outreach campaign that raises awareness on how adverse childhood experiences in early child development detrimentally impact a child's learning experience and academic performance. Client-families will also receive civil legal services according to the legal needs identified by the ACEs-screener.

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NORTHWEST ARKANSAS HEAD START **Northwest Arkansas Head Start & Early Head Start Behavioral Therapy Program**

Mental health is a growing concern within Northwest Arkansas Head Start and Early Head Start. This program seeks to hire a behavioral therapist to work with children who have documented or identified concerns that may impact a child's success in school. In addition to working with the child, the behavioral therapist will assist the child's parents and teachers in strategies and techniques to support the child.

QUALITY OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

APPLE SEEDS **Growing My Plate Program**

In an effort to make a deep and significant impact on eating habits of children living in poverty, Apple Seeds offers the after school program, "Growing My Plate". GMP cooking classes give youth the opportunity to step into the new environment of a farm where they harvest ingredients, learn how to cook, partake in a social dining atmosphere, and learn nutrition education. This empowering program not only teaches healthy behaviors but also teaches students life skills and gives them exposure to new career fields. The students gain independence as they master skills and gain a greater appreciation for cooking and incorporating healthy nutrition into their diets.

BENTONVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT **ROAR Program**

ROAR is an established after-school program of Bentonville High School dedicated to creating equitable opportunities for all students by providing scholastic support, enriching experiences, and richer relationships in order to ensure a high level of achievement inside and outside the classroom. Programming includes a nutritious snack, tutoring

by licensed teachers, and opportunities for students to connect socially through enriching activities. In addition, students learn life skills and soft skills, such as conflict resolution, time management, age-appropriate expectations, healthy cooking, etiquette, resume writing, and completing job/college applications. The grant will strengthen the existing BHS program and expand the benefits to Bentonville West High School.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS **Youth Mentoring: Pathway to Success in Siloam Springs Program**

This program seeks to recruit police and firefighters as mentors ("Bigs") for children in Siloam Springs. This program not only addresses the need for recruiting male volunteers as mentors to match with children facing adversity, but will also help address the high number of school disciplinary actions and gang-related activity.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF WESTERN BENTON COUNTY **"Great Futures" Out-Of-School Partner for Youth Success Program**

This program is designed to strategically increase Club participation, membership, and retention so all members on track to graduate from high school with a plan for the future while demonstrating good character and citizenship, and living a healthy lifestyle. This program will have a special focus on teens to build work and life skills that will prepare them for the future.

GIRLS ON THE RUN OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS **Girls on the Run of Northwest Arkansas Program**

GOTR is a physical activity-based positive youth development program for girls 3rd through 8th grade. It is designed to develop and enhance girls' social, psychological and physical competencies to successfully navigate life experiences. Over

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the course of the program, girls will develop and improve competence, feel confident in who they are, develop strength of character, respond to others and oneself with care and compassion, create positive connections with peers and adults and make a meaningful contribution to community and society. These life skills will prevent unhealthy and risky behaviors, such as physical inactivity and negative body image, and promote positive health outcomes. The GOTR program teaches girls essential life skills and core values, especially for economically disadvantaged girls, and sets them up for success in their high school years and beyond.

HELEN R. WALTON CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT CENTER

Early Childhood Trainings for Early Childhood Educators Program

ECIC's Early Childhood Education Program will train 490 early childhood professionals annually on language, brain development, behavior guidance, parent communication, math, science and literacy, all necessary to give children in poverty a strong start. Children who have strong relationships with their teacher have greater academic success and more positive social-emotional adjustment than their peers who lack a positive relationship with a teacher.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS WOMEN'S SHELTER

Safe Zones II: Expanding Safe Zones for Children Program

"Safe Zones II: Expanding Safe Zones for Children" utilizes a multi-tiered approach to assist children and families in recovering from the emotional, behavioral, and social impacts of domestic abuse. This program expands the previously funded "Safe Zones for Children" pilot program by providing more capacity for the NWAWS Counseling program to implement therapeutic activities for children who have experienced trauma in local schools. This will be done by providing quality programming for children who have experienced trauma in addition to after-school care allows parents time to receive one-on-one services from the NWAWS Counseling and Advocacy programs.

SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

#SecondgradersRead Program

#SecondgradersRead will focus on rising first and second grade students that are not performing at grade level proficiency in reading. The program will support 300 rising first grade students to develop literacy skills during the summer. The 2nd grade program will support 300 students (students in the first cohort that are still significantly below grade level and a new cohort of rising 1st graders) to strengthen their literacy skills preventing the "summer slide" in reading. Students will be given books to take home for independent reading for the month of July, with follow up from the teachers. The goal is to close the achievement gap in reading before 3rd grade.

TEEN ACTION AND SUPPORT CENTER

The Station Community Hub- Benton County Program

TASC's Station Community Hub is a collaborative community approach to reduce barriers and activate potential in youth in Benton County based on learning from the successful CLIP funded Station expansion in Washington County. It offers a safe, welcoming, and transformational environment led by TASC and its collaborative partners for youth-led social change throughout Benton County, participating with Benton - County Juvenile Justice. Services offered at the Station would include resource programs for those struggling with homelessness, teen parents, or the under-resourced; education, service learning, and life skills services with a life skills area with cooking, laundry, and wellness opportunities; counseling and mental health services; and STEAM programming in a Makerspace and technology area.

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THE CURATORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Noel Tech Wizards/Mustang Pride Program

The Noel Tech Wizards/Mustang Pride program will utilize junior high to high school mentors to assist elementary students in practicing STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) skills that will inspire students to pursue college-level technical degrees. The Noel Elementary student population is ethnically diverse, with students representing over 14 nationalities and 94% are from low-income families. The program is designed to increase the number of girls and minorities graduating from high school who will then move on into technical job fields.

DEVELOPING SELF-SUFFICIENCY: WORKFORCE READINESS & FINANCIAL LITERACY

CASA OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS, INC.

Transitioning Teens Program

By combining consistent mentoring and youth directed life planning, Transitioning Teens (TT) aims to prepare young adults for successful futures outside of the foster care system. TT pairs at-risk, foster teens with volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). Specially trained to work with this population, older youth advocates not only fight for their children's best interests in court but also serve as academic mentors, accountability partners, job coaches, parental figures, and friends. To prepare these teens for life after care, the CASA collaborates with the teen and the Dept. of Human Services to conduct annual Transitional Life Planning (TLP). During the TLP, teens actively define their long-term goals and short-term action steps for education, employment, health, housing, and life connections. The TLP, which is submitted to and monitored by the court regularly, then serves as a guide for the youth's development and resource acquisition.

DONALD W. REYNOLDS BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Future U Career Launch Program

Future U Career Launch will create opportunities for teens and pre-teens from low-income families to gain valuable employment experiences and provide them with the tools they need to set them on the path to success. These young people will learn essential workplace skills they need to launch them on a career path to succeed in the 21st-century workplace. Utilizing proven programming and community partnerships, participants will take the first step to being independent and self-sufficient—a successful first-time job experience. With the support of the United Way, Future You can help disadvantaged teens break the cycle of poverty and impact our community for future generations.

LINCOLN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT

LCSD Career Pathway to Success Program

LCSDs Career Pathway to Success (CPS) will provide career opportunities with necessary employment skills to prepare our future community members with the skills for a pathway out of poverty. LCSD CPS will enrich the lives of our students by developing relationships, supporting education, removing barriers, and channeling resources to empower students to find their own pathway to success by instilling drive, self worth, and perseverance to strive for higher wage jobs. LCSD CPS will connect students with career opportunities based on their strengths and interests. The program will continue providing certifications and/or college credit opportunities for our students during school paired with support systems for success. Our students need to understand that low socioeconomic status does not define their future.

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OPEN AVENUES

Special Need Student to Employment Transition Program

Open Avenues is launching a program to help students with special needs make the difficult transition from high school to employment. Partnering with high schools to target juniors and seniors, the program includes an assessment, job exploration, work readiness training, counseling on post-secondary training opportunities, self-advocacy training, and work-based training. Programming will take place outside of school hours. Year one will focus on soft skills & job shadowing. Year two will focus on work-based learning.

SINGLE PARENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Northwest Arkansas, Inc. Program

SPSF's unique program offers both direct financial assistance as well as supportive services to ensure the recipients of the program achieve both academic and career success. Support services include mentoring, resume building, interview tactics, and networking. Within six months of graduation, the program participants will secure sufficient employment to meet the needs of their families and eliminate their dependence on government assistance.

TEEN ACTION AND SUPPORT CENTER (TASC)

Teen Thrive 2.0: Moving Beyond Crisis to Prevention and Stabilization Program

Teen Thrive is a program of TASC that provides a hub for transition-aged youth aged 13-24 who are struggling with homelessness. Teen Thrive 2.0 is a new facet of the program encouraging participants in our resource programs to participate in activities that will aim to lift them out of or prevent them from homelessness. This program will offer services

developing financial literacy, life skills, educational and career attainment, and a strong sense of self through psychosocial support.

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Marshallese Individual Development Account (IDA) Program as a Pathway to Family Self-Sufficiency Program

We will develop, implement and evaluate a Marshallese Individual Development Account (IDA) program for 50 adults (18+) that complements the current CLIP-funded Marshallese Child Savings Account (CSA) program for 225 children (age 0-18) by increasing intergenerational human capital and asset development for Marshallese families. IDAs are dedicated savings accounts designed to support savings and asset building through homeownership, post-secondary education, small business, and vehicle ownership. The IDA Program addresses equity issues by providing access to wealth building systems for Marshallese families participating with EOA, CCOA AE Coalition of Marshallese UA office for diversity inclusion. Like the CSA Program, the IDA Program reflects a community-based, inclusive, social and economic investment that impacts Marshallese families and NWA.