

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT GRANTS: CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

WESTERN BENTON CO.

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.

WESTERN BENTON CO. PROGRAMS

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.

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.

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.

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SILOAM SPRINGS

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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 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.

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.