



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
CENTER FOR EQUITABLE FAMILY
& COMMUNITY WELL-BEING
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

COMMUNITY PRIORITY FUND IMPACT EVALUATION

2023-2024

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATIONS
CONTRIBUTION TO THE
WASHTENAW COUNTY
RESCUE PLAN

Report Prepared By: Authors listed in alphabetical order

Ethan Park, Michael Kloc, Patrick Meehan, Quincy
Bloxom, Trina R. Shanks



Meet Our Team!



Trina R. Shanks
Executive Director



Patrick Meehan
Program Manager
Lead Evaluator



Michael Kloc
Project Coordinator
Lead Evaluator



Ethan Park
Lead Evaluator



Ashley E. Cureton
Lead Evaluator



Camille R. Quinn
Lead Evaluator

In partnership:

Erase The Divide



Quincy Bloxom
Project Evaluation
Consultant



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
PROGRAM EVALUATION GROUP
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

partnering
with you
TO MEASURE WHAT MATTERS



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Introduction & Background

Washtenaw County received over \$71 million in funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and promote economic recovery. The county developed the Washtenaw County Rescue Plan to guide the equitable use of these funds, aiming to assist households and businesses while building a more resilient future. After the passage of Washtenaw Rescue Plan ARPA 1.0 in 2021, ARPA 2.0 and ARPA 3.0 in 2022 there has been a total of 16 actions by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners approving the use and/or reclassification of Washtenaw County's allotted ARPA funds of which 3 had implications on the Community Priority Fund (CPF)¹. In June 2023, the Center for Equitable Family and Community Well-Being (the Center) at the University of Michigan School of Social Work was hired as an external evaluator for the Community Priority Fund.

Out of the \$71 Million allocated to Washtenaw County, a small percentage (8.6%) was allocated to the 23 community organizations that are the subject of this report. This equates to \$6,142,530. Each organization received a contract from the county. (The UM evaluation team did not receive copies of all of the contracts made to awardee organizations.) The Washtenaw County Rescue Plan increased the county's prioritization of community engagement, especially in under-resourced areas (e.g. zip codes 48197 and 48198). Listening sessions and a public engagement process revealed strong support for targeted investments in youth, seniors, violence intervention, and community agencies. ARPA 2.0, in particular, focused on these community priorities, leveraging data and community expertise to guide investments.

The Board of Commissioners and County Administration strategically integrated operational leadership of the County ARPA Strategic Team and comprehensive Washtenaw Rescue Plan evaluation responsibilities within the County Racial Equity Office (REO). This decision mostly aligned with the County's commitment to address structural racism and systemic inequity and Equity Policy. There were additional efforts and actions taken by the county's REO to ensure grassroots and other under-resourced non-profits receive additional administrative support and special categorization under the creation of the Community Priority Fund. This approach ensured equity considerations were central to the design, implementation, and subsequent evaluation of the Washtenaw Rescue Plan.

The ultimate goal of the CPF was to foster a more sustained, equitable distribution of ARPA funds while promoting lasting positive impacts on the community, according to the Director of the county REO. The importance of CPF was further evidenced by the REO's inclusive awareness campaign contributing to increased

¹ Washtenaw County Board Resolutions 22-030, 22-134, and 22-201.

accessibility and distribution of funding to providers servicing zip codes 48197 and 48198 and county census tracts (4074, 4105, 4106, 4107, 4108, 4112, 4119, 4120, 4121, 4123, 4130) with “very low access to opportunity” according to the Washtenaw County Opportunity Index² and CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index³. The CPF aimed to dismantle barriers preventing service providers, especially grassroots organizations, from accessing county resources. By removing obstacles related to size and experience, a wider range of organizations were able to apply for and receive funding.

Methodology & Evaluation Design

Introduction

The comprehensive evaluation design utilized by the Center represents best practices in program evaluation adhering to the core principles of evaluation (i.e. rigor, relevance/utility, transparency, independence, and ethical practice). Due to the broad nature of programming conducted by the grantees the Center designed and implemented an inductive program evaluation approach to capture the outputs and expressed impact of grantees; versus a more typical and stringent deductive approach limiting grantee directions and observations in a manner best utilized to validate existing theories. This was accomplished through crawling then walking with the grantees based on their organizational strengths and capacity. This allowed for a more intentional sprint towards the predetermined sub-contract performance period finish line with all previously agreed upon individualized deliverables for each grantee submitted to Washtenaw County unless otherwise agreed upon by the county as the subcontractor and funder.

From Theory to Practice

Program and learning theories were heavily relied upon throughout evaluation ideation, development, and implementation. A non-exhaustive list of relevant program theory descriptions include: “plausible and sensible model of how a program is supposed to work”; sets of assumptions related to strategies adapted by a program for social benefit; interrelated assumptions or propositions to explain or guide social actions; and explanations of causal links tying program activities into expected results⁴. The learning theory underpinning the Center and grantee interaction is Knowles’ Adult Learning Theory⁵.

According to Knowles et al. andragogy is an adult learning theory that emphasizes more effective learning when a sense of equality exists between the teacher and learner, with strategies connecting to the learners work and/or

² <https://umich.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=b96eb25d91f844ceafd1c0d2ba69b801>

³ <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=cdb68d9887574a10bc89ea4efe2b8087>

⁴ [W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook](#)

⁵ [CE 000 509 The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species. American Society for Training and Development, Gulf Publishing Company, P.O.](#)

life. The model is based on six key learning assumptions—(1) need to know, (2) self-concept, (3) experience, (4) readiness, (5) orientation, and (6) motivation—that educators should be aware of when designing learning around the needs of adults. Some examples of the manner in which the Center’s work with grantees aligned with these key assumptions are as follows. All learning activities centered around what the grantees needed to know for their respective capacity development and contract deliverables. The learner’s (i.e. the grantee’s) self-conceptualization was embraced through ensuring they were a part of the learning through interactive activities. In addition to learning activities grantees were encouraged to choose their next steps versus receiving directives. The grantees’ learning experiences were also considered at length contributing to decisions to individualize center staff and grantee interactions based on the needs of the organization rather than standard meeting regiments decided without their agreement. Their readiness to learn was indicated by their mandatory and voluntary meeting attendance while the learning activities were task oriented to ensure the work at hand was connected to their organization and contractual needs. Motivation was maintained during the performance period by ensuring there was no busy work for the sake of meeting contractual obligations and all interactions were necessary without seeming transactional in nature.

Several andragogical principles were also utilized throughout the project period. The learner's involvement in the learning experience was ever present during planning and implementation phases of the evaluation process. Experience based learning was also utilized during logic model working meetings and group convenings to construct a county wide needs assessment. The process of building a logic model was constructive for grantees, as the ability to articulate how program elements connected toward a larger goal of helping individuals, youth, families, and communities aided grantees not only for this work, but could also guide future work and funding opportunities as well. Similarly, problem centered approaches were utilized while the grantees’ experiences and expertise were drawn from in order to conceptualize solutions. In addition to this approach and experienced based learning there was also an effort to keep all training practical and relevant to the real-life barriers confronted by the grantees in their attempts to increase capacity in accordance with program theory and andragogy.

Adhering to andragogy as the art and science of adult learning paired well with the Center’s planned approaches. Introductory meetings were held with each grantee to gain a better understanding of their needs to begin the crawling phase of the partnership. This provided Center staff with an opportunity to understand the capacity needs of the organization in their own words while simultaneously informing where they were positioned in the overall county ecosystem.

During grantee check in meetings the Center’s evaluation leads were able to monitor progress toward deliverables and suggest solutions to help with administrative burden. This approach increased the ability for

the Center to begin ideating around how to best assist the grantees and their respective clients without creating work stoppages or dictating administrative needs from the county. Instead, rapport building and alignment of the grantee's work and how to best represent their work at the county level was the focus. The outputs from these check-ins were tracked and later utilized for center strategic planning to assist the grantees. The outputs were also utilized to align grantee logic models to determine what tools were best to use during the performance period to ensure grantees' sub-contract deliverables were met.

The subsequent sprinting phase was more time restricted and consisted of arranging data and other pertinent information with grantees in order to finalize deliverables considered and created while crawling and walking. Each grantee had unique deliverables; evaluation leads provided guidance when prototyping their project measurement tools and impact statements. These two-page documents detailed the organization's mission, its work and achievements, and included voices of individuals and community members whose lives improved by working with each grantee.

Team Members

Dr. Trina Shanks served as the Principal Investigator on the project. She is the Harold R. Johnson Collegiate Professor of Social Work at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, the Director of Community Engagement, and the Director of the Center for Equitable Family and Community Well-Being.

Dr. Patrick Meehan served as the Project Manager. He is an Assistant Research Scientist at the Center for Equitable Family and Community Well-Being.

Micheal Kloc, LLMSW, served as the evaluation lead for grantees under the Direct Assistance to Households expenditure category. He is the Project Coordinator for the Center for Equitable Family and Community Well-Being.

Dr. Ashley Cureton was the evaluation lead for grantees under the Addressing Educational Disparities and Expanding Early Childhood Education expenditure categories. She is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Michigan School of Social Work.

Dr. Camille Quinn served as the evaluation lead for grantees under the Community Violence Intervention expenditure category. She is an Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Michigan School of Social Work.

Dr. Sunggeun Park served as the evaluation lead for grantees under the Addressing Housing and Homelessness expenditure category. He is an Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Michigan School of Social Work.

The Center subcontracted with Dr. Quincy Bloxom to serve as the evaluator of the Washtenaw County Rescue Plan. He is the CEO of Erase the Divide.

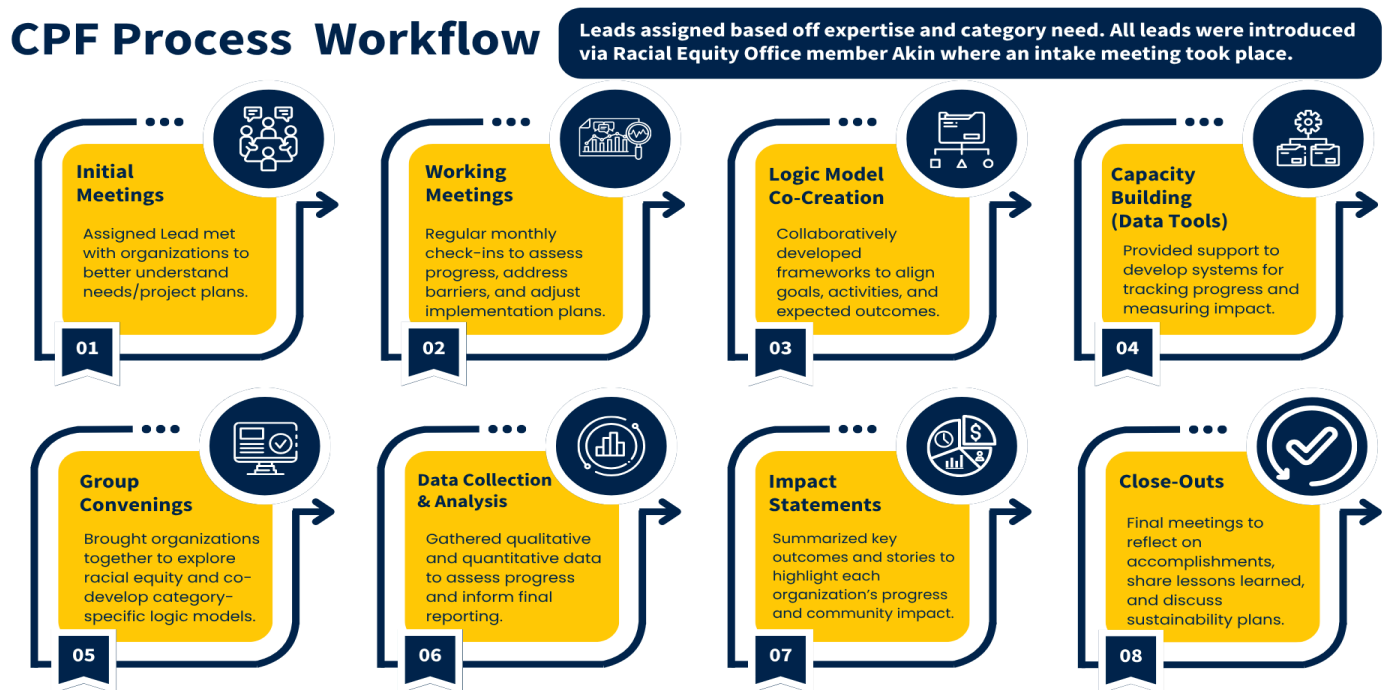
The Program Evaluation Group at the University of Michigan School of Social Work was subcontracted to provide technical assistance to CPF awardees and evaluation leads.

The table below identifies the CPF awardees that were led by each team member.

Awardee	EC	Dr. Cureton	Dr. Quinn	Kloc,MS W	Dr. Park	Dr. Meehan
Children's Literacy Network	AED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Growing Hope	AED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Hope Network	AED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Hutan	AED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Our Community Reads	AED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Washtenaw Community College Foundation	AED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Community Family Life Center	AED					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Family Empowerment Program	AED					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Family Learning Institute	AED		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Bottles-N-Backpacks	ECE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Child Care Network	ECE				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Foundations Preschool	ECE				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
A Brighter Way	CVI		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Dispute Resolution Center	CVI		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Life After Incarceration	CVI		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Supreme Felons	CVI		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
We the People Opportunity Farm	CVI		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Buenos Vecinos	DA			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Northfield Human Services	DA			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Swoop Pantry	DA			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
WISD Trusted Advisors	DA			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Women and Men Working for Change	DA			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Dawn Farm	AHH				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Workflow

The Center's engagement with grantees can be conceptualized in the following diagram.



The remainder of this report details the work of each grantee, organized according to expenditure category as noted in their final executed contract with Washtenaw County:

- Direct Assistance to Households
- Addressing Educational Disparities
- Addressing Housing and Homelessness
- Expending Early Childhood Education
- Community Violence Interventions

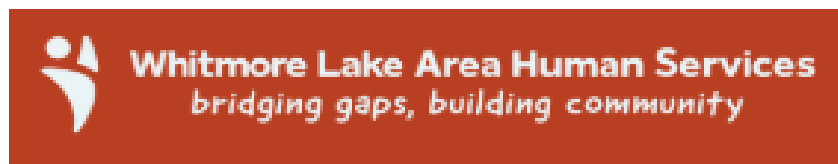
The report also includes summaries of accomplishments and challenges for each expenditure category. We then identify system level findings, reflections and discussion on the Community Priority Fund, recommendations for Washtenaw County on next steps for engaging and partnering with community organizations, and final conclusions.

Direct Assistance to Households

Organizations funded under this expenditure category were those “programs that provide assistance to households or populations facing negative economic impacts due to COVID-19, including, but not limited to food assistance, cash assistance, job training, and other basic needs” (ARPA 2.0 memo).

In Washtenaw County they included:

- Buenos Vecinos
- Eastern Michigan University - Swoops Pantry
- Northfield Human Services (**Whitmore Lake Area Human Services**)
- WISD Success by Six Great Start Collaborative
- Women Working for Change (DBA - Women and Men Working for Change)



Washtenaw



Buenos Vecinos - Direct Assistance to Households



Organizational History

Buenos Vecinos was founded in 2014 following the Encuesta Buenos Vecinos, a research project assessing the needs of the Latinx community in Washtenaw County. Initially focused on leadership and advocacy, it grew into an organization dedicated to providing direct financial assistance, advocacy, navigation, and interpretation services for Spanish-speaking immigrants, particularly in the Ypsilanti Community Schools district. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Buenos Vecinos pivoted its services to focus on keeping families housed, maintaining utilities, and ensuring food security. Recognizing the ongoing need, Buenos Vecinos formalized its crisis response program to provide direct aid and improve access to essential services.

Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), Buenos Vecinos aimed to expand financial assistance programs, build sustainable infrastructure, and advocate for long-term economic stability for the Latinx community. This report outlines the accomplishments, capacity-building efforts, and future directions made possible through CPF support.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Buenos Vecinos was awarded **\$418,450** through the CPF to address economic hardships and systemic barriers faced by Latinx residents in Ypsilanti by:

- Distributing direct financial assistance to 540 households, covering rent, utilities, food, and other essential needs.
- Providing emergency cash assistance for Spanish-speaking immigrants who face challenges accessing traditional support programs.
- Hiring contractors to manage program implementation, advocacy, and direct service coordination.
- Developing policies and procedures for the equitable and transparent distribution of financial aid.
- Implementing a cloud-based system to improve real-time coordination of aid distribution.
- Establishing a Community Leadership Table, ensuring Spanish-speaking residents have oversight and input into financial assistance programs.
- Conducting program evaluation to assess impact and inform future initiatives.
- Expanding advocacy efforts to address language access barriers, tenant rights, and financial literacy, promoting long-term stability for Latinx families.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Through implementation, Buenos Vecinos made critical pivots to protect organizational bandwidth and deepen impact.

- Focused assistance on rental support only by 2024, ensuring program sustainability.
- Limited administrative overhead to under \$60,000 to maximize direct community benefit.
- Opted out of long-term administration of direct assistance, advocating instead for County Led-Initiatives with full-time staff to assume that role.
- Developed a data system that both protected sensitive information and **surfaced the invisibility of Spanish-speaking residents in existing county data.**
- Prioritized partnerships with evaluation and strategic planning consultants to translate raw impact data into storytelling and policy tools.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Buenos Vecinos entered the CPF project without formal systems for data collection, evaluation, or reporting. Through strategic consultation and support, the organization established new infrastructure that enabled secure intake, qualitative storytelling, and geographic impact mapping. Working with Emergence Collective and Center evaluation lead, the team conducted interviews and surveys, analyzed demographic trends, co-created a logic-model ⁶ and visualized outcomes to amplify the structural issues affecting Latinx residents.

“We gathered a lot of data and created new systems to indicate evidence of the need for continued investment in the immigrant community.” - Team member

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

From May 2023 to December 2024,

- **Households served:** 257 unique households
- **Total assistance:** \$290,000 in direct financial aid
- **Demographics:** All Spanish-speaking Latinx residents
- **Employment:** Over 92% worked at least one job, primarily day labor
- **Average support amount:** \$1,213 per household
- **Primary uses of funds:** Rent, food, and utilities
- **Geographic distribution:** Over 50% of recipients lived in ZIP code 48197

More details: See the Impact Statement for additional information.⁷

“That money benefits the entire Latino community. We are surviving on the help they are giving us... It is a huge help—lifesaving.” - Community Member

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Moving forward, Buenos Vecinos seeks **general operating support** to sustain core infrastructure, transition to a new **fiscal sponsor**, and eventually hire salaried staff with benefits. While the organization does not plan to continue direct assistance in its current form, it aims to support institutional partners in doing so. The team is also exploring future **collaborations in evaluation and community organizing**, building upon relationships formed through CPF. With growing demand and visibility, Buenos Vecinos remains committed to **amplifying Latinx voices**, leveraging data for systems change, and pursuing opportunities that invest in the **long-term resilience of Washtenaw’s Latinx community**.

⁶ [BV_LogicModel_Timeline.pdf](#)

⁷ [BuenosVecinos_ImpactStatement_ARPA_Dec2024.pdf](#)

Organizational History

The Eastern Michigan University [Swoop's Pantry](#) was founded in September 2015 when BSW student Haley Moraniec saw fellow undergraduates lining up outside professors' offices for basic food and hygiene items. Securing institutional support within EMU's School of Social Work ensured newcomers would inherit, rather than reinvent, the pantry's mission. From a cramped closet in Marshall Hall, the pantry moved to a larger space in Pierce Hall by fall 2016. In 2017, an advisory board of faculty, alumni, and community partners formalized governance.

When COVID-19 forced campus closures, Swoop's Pantry overcame safety challenges by launching an online ordering system and curbside pick-ups. These adaptations preserved access during the pandemic's worst months. A grant from EMU's GameAbove initiative in summer 2023 allowed for a student lounge—complete with coffee, microwaves, and phone-charging stations—alongside an expanded shopping area and a curated free thrift section. Through these strategic expansions, Swoop's became more than a food pantry: it emerged as a community hub for connection and resource sharing.

"Having a consistent space and team made all the difference. Students knew they could count on Swoop's, and that reliability helped build trust across campus." – Pantry Graduate Assistant

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

With a **\$50,000** award from the Washtenaw County Community Priority Fund (CPF), Swoop's Pantry committed to:

- **Cultural & Dietary Foods:** Conduct annual surveys to identify needs for halal, vegan, gluten-free, and non-dairy options, then stock and rotate items accordingly.
- **Year-Round Workforce Stipends:** Pay undergraduates and graduate assistants \$16.52/hour for 20 hours/week, bridging summer staffing gaps and reducing reliance on limited Federal Work-Study funds.
- **Marketing & Donor Outreach:** Design materials and online campaigns to normalize pantry use, drive participation, and strengthen relationships with campus donors.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

- **Hybrid Service Model:** Pandemic innovations—online ordering and delivery—remained after campus reopening, with 501 orders fulfilled alongside in-person visits.
- **Sustainability Coordinator Role:** Funds redirected to hire a coordinator (5/1/23–4/30/24) who professionalized protocols for free thrift exchanges, launched a composting system, and scaled the community garden from a single bed to multiple campus plots.
- **Staffing Strategy:** CPF stipends allowed students to work 20 hours/week year-round, elevating service quality and freeing donated dollars solely for pantry supplies.
- **Data-Informed Purchases:** Annual intake (3,000+ responses) and year-end surveys revealed a high demand for cultural foods and feedback on service hours, guiding purchasing and schedule adjustments.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Over the CPF project, Swoops strengthened its evaluation practices to support continuous learning. Intake forms were refined for demographics, food-security indicators, housing status, and SNAP participation, while open-ended surveys provided richer feedback on pantry experiences. Daily operational logs now systematically record both the number of shoppers served and the pounds of food distributed—averaging **1,221 lbs per day in Fall '23** and 815 lbs per day in Winter '24—to ensure transparent reporting to EMU leadership and CPF stakeholders. Beyond quantitative measures, focus groups and informal interviews surfaced nuanced insights into student experiences; for example, one participant noted, “Working at Swoop’s Pantry taught me professional skills I never got from textbooks.” As a result of targeted coaching and collaborative planning sessions, staff and partners now seamlessly integrate logic models⁸, impact frameworks⁹, and mixed-methods analysis into program refinement, positioning Swoop’s Pantry to adapt responsively to emerging needs.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

CPF funding accelerated measurable outcomes between April 2023 and July 2024:


- **Participation:** **18,242 visits** (70 avg. shoppers/day in Fall '23 → 92 in Winter '24); 501 online pick-ups.
- **Food Distribution:** 243,170 total lbs dispensed—including ~\$20,000 in cultural/dietary goods—reducing student food insecurity and broadening dietary options.
- **Workforce Impact:** ~\$17,000 in stipends paid over two summers; student hours increased by 50% compared to pre-CPF semesters. Over 1,000 hours worked.
- **Thrift & Sustainability:** 8–10 bags of donated clothing and household items processed weekly; expanded garden beds producing fresh herbs and vegetables for meal kits.
- **Pilot Innovations:** Sixty Easy Eats meal kits tested new service models.

"I wouldn't have graduated without Swoop's Pantry, knowing I had food on the table meant I could focus on my studies." – First-Generation Student Shopper

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Swoop’s Pantry plans to carry forward the systems, tools, and lessons from its CPF-supported work to strengthen future programming. The team will continue refining their survey tools and data collection practices to guide purchasing decisions and service improvements, particularly around culturally relevant food offerings. Staff expressed a desire to secure additional grant funding to sustain and expand this work, with particular interest in garden-related initiatives and culturally specific food access. Despite recent challenges in securing grants, the CPF process has built organizational confidence in navigating federal and state funding streams, especially around reporting and fiscal accountability. Strengthened campus partnerships—such as with the EMU Botany Club, who are expected to support ongoing food production and sustainability efforts. Looking ahead, the pantry remains committed to presenting its impact in accessible, data-informed ways that support visibility, deepen trust, and attract future investments

⁸  Logic Model - EMU Swoop Pantry.docx (1).pdf

⁹  SWOOPS Impact Statement (1).pdf

Northfield Human Services - Direct Assistance to Households

Organizational History

[Northfield Human Services \(NHS\)](#) has been a pillar of the Whitmore Lake community since the early 1990s, when founder Carol Odekirk—otherwise known as 'Christmas Carol'—began sharing food with neighbors from her own kitchen. Over the years, NHS expanded from a small-scale food pantry operating out of the Senior Center to a full-service organization dedicated to food security, health, and community well-being. By the 2000s, NHS had moved to a larger space to accommodate increasing demand, and in 2020, the organization secured a permanent location on Brookside, ensuring long-term sustainability.



Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), NHS leveraged funding to enhance its capacity, infrastructure, and impact, marking a significant step forward in its ability to serve the community. Grantee snapshot highlights the accomplishments, capacity-building efforts, and future directions made possible through CPF support.

"[CPF Assistance] made me really plan and think about stuff not just right this second, but what it can do long-term." - NHS's Managing Director

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

NHS was awarded **\$111,000** through the CPF to address food insecurity and transportation barriers exacerbated by COVID-19 by:

- Increasing access to healthy food for 50 residents weekly.
- Establishing in-site open shopping, home deliveries, and emergency food boxes.
- Purchasing and installing pantry equipment (freezers, refrigerators, generators, utility carts, shelving, shopping carts, signage, and coffee machines).
- Acquiring two delivery vans to improve food access for residents with mobility limitations.
- Implementing building and parking lot improvements for safety and accessibility.
- Enhancing community awareness and engagement with NHS's services.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

While NHS adhered closely to its initial objectives, the project evolved to better meet community needs. Key shifts included:

- Expanding services to include **health screenings, fitness programs, and nutrition**.
- Redirecting funds from a promotional sign to **a coffee station**, in an effort to reduce social isolation.
- Strengthening data collection and evaluation practices.
- Hiring a Marketing & Social Media Coordinator to enhance outreach efforts.

During the performance period, NHS received monthly technical assistance and a site visit to build capacity and systematically document the incredible work they were doing. A key component of this support was building an

NHS Logic Model¹⁰, where we developed a living document to continuously track and update the project. This tool ensured alignment with the original contract while allowing for strategic revisions to better meet the community needs.

Building Evaluation Capacity

One of the most significant takeaways from this process was the development of NHS's ability to track and evaluate its impact. Initially unfamiliar with evaluation tools, NHS leadership gained confidence in logic models, impact statements, and reporting structures.



An example of this capacity-building was NHS's first qualitative community voice evaluation activity. The Director and our Center lead designed an interactive evaluation process, where Whitmore Lake residents responded to prompts during checkout, sharing how the pantry benefited them and suggesting improvements. We then coded themes, analyzed responses, and **co-created a report¹¹**, revealing that the pantry was not just a food source but also a social hub. This insight inspired the Director to later develop a second logic model, then secured funds for expanded social programming in health and wellness.

"Now I feel like I can get a grant, spend it down, get the reporting done, and also give the results." - NHS's Managing Director

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

Since receiving ARPA CPF funding in April 2023, NHS has doubled participation at the pantry, increasing from 40 to over 144 in-person shoppers weekly. Over the grant period, NHS provided essential food assistance, delivery services, nursing care, and outreach efforts, strengthening its role as a community hub. These efforts, made possible through strategic use of CPF funding, have deepened NHS's impact on the Whitmore Lake community. For a detailed breakdown of outcomes, **please refer to the full impact statement¹²**

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

NHS's project catalyzed **long-term organizational growth**. Now equipped with stronger evaluation tools, expanded service offerings, and a clear vision for sustainability, NHS is poised to continue meeting the evolving needs of Whitmore Lake residents.

Key priorities include: **Expanding wellness programming**, including fitness classes and mental health initiatives. **Continuing home food delivery services**, particularly in response to SNAP reductions. **Leveraging partnerships** to sustain services and secure diverse funding sources.

Additionally, through the hiring of a Social Media & Marketing Coordinator, NHS underwent a strategic rebrand, changing its name to **Whitmore Lake Area Human Services**, reflecting its broader mission and commitment to holistic community well-being.

¹⁰ NHS Logic Model - Northfield Human Services.docx (2).pdf

¹¹ NHS Eval Activity (1).pdf

¹² NHS ARPA Impact Statement (2).pdf

Organizational History

Founded in 2017 within the [Washtenaw Intermediate School District](#) by a coalition of the ISD, Washtenaw County, United Way, and the Community Foundation, Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative was created to ensure that every Washtenaw County family has access to a comprehensive network of early childhood programs and supports. Early efforts focused on canvassing neighborhoods (notably zip codes 48197/48198) to connect eligible families with preschool and home-visiting programs, revealing deeper challenges around housing and food insecurity. Over the years, our Trusted Parent Advisors have grown from a small outreach team into a county-wide network of seven community-based advocates, building authentic relationships that bridge families to services and feed real-time feedback into system improvements.

When the Community Priority Fund (ARPA) awarded WISD **\$110,945** in late 2023, they leveraged it to deepen community organizing capacity, formalize our Education Project intake and referral systems for families experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and launch caregiver advisory structures.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

WISD was awarded **\$110,945** through the CPF to support families experiencing homelessness in Washtenaw County by:

- Providing direct services to 250 caregivers, including warm hand-offs for mental health services, housing, food, and transportation assistance.
- Expanding outreach efforts through the Trusted Parent Advisors (TPAs), ensuring families in crisis receive necessary support.
- Developing a caregiver advisory group to provide feedback on education and human service systems.
- Evaluating and enhancing the Education Project's intake, referral, and follow-up processes to better align with family needs.
- Implementing a summer continuity plan to maintain educational support for families in transition.
- Presenting recommendations to Washtenaw County human service organizations to improve support systems for vulnerable families.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Throughout the grant period, Success by 6 adapted its approach to better meet the evolving needs of families. Trusted Parent Advisors took on expanded roles, supporting families facing eviction and assisting with technology access, including connecting Chromebooks to reliable internet. In parallel, the organization deepened its commitment to grassroots leadership by integrating COFI (Community Organizing and Family Issues) training for both core staff and caregivers, fostering peer-to-peer learning and community empowerment. Midway through the grant, staff redesigned key components of the Education Project, introducing new intake forms, refining the distribution of resources, and tailoring case management for greater responsiveness. After facing low participation in initial caregiver advisory efforts, the team shifted toward lighter-touch feedback strategies that reduced burdens on families while still capturing valuable insights.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Through collaborative conversations over the grant period WISD established several changes to tools that capture every referral, intake call, and service provided through the database, complemented by surveys for Education Project caregivers and post-event debriefs for Parent Cafés. Intake forms now track housing status, race, child ages, and follow-up needs; our custom survey collected 23 caregiver responses on stressors and resource gaps; and logic-model¹³ workshops equipped staff to translate qualitative findings into actionable metrics. Together, these systems have laid the groundwork and interest by the team to grow evaluation capacity and program tracking.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

Between Fall 2023 and Winter 2024, Success by 6:


- **Intake & Support:** Completed 532 intakes and delivered 3,566 direct supports (warm handoffs, transportation, emergency supplies, case-management).
- **Referrals:** Made 18 early-childhood referrals and linked families to 857 community organizations.
- **Engagement & Feedback:** Hosted 72 Parent Cafés (216 attendees, 75 % repeat; 83 warm handoffs), convened one 3-member caregiver advisory, and collected 23 caregiver surveys.
- **Systems & Capacity:** Rolled out a redesigned intake/referral protocol, trained 7 staff (5 as COFI trainers), and introduced COFI to 3 caregivers.

These outcomes directly feed into the impact statement ¹⁴ demonstrating how streamlined processes and community organizing have not only expanded service reach but also strengthened families' trust, voice, and stability across Washtenaw County.

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Success by 6 will build on this momentum by pursuing upcoming capacity-building and equity-focused grants from the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development and United Way for Southeast Michigan. These proposals aim to expand the integration of COFI (Community Organizing and Family Issues) as a core leadership model, empowering caregivers to drive systems change. Staff also identified the Michigan Health Endowment Fund as a future opportunity—one they had previously viewed as out of reach but now feel better prepared to pursue. Internally, the team has begun applying logic model tools and impact language from the CPF process to other projects, signaling a growing capacity for long-term strategy and storytelling. Strengthened partnerships with organizations like Ozone House, the EMU Resiliency Center, and the national COFI office will continue to inform this work. As one staff member reflected, having external partners affirm the value of their efforts helped them “**see not just the bumps in the road, but the surface we’ve created.**”

¹³  Logic Model - WISD.docx (1).pdf

¹⁴  Copy of Success By 6 Impact Statement.pdf

Women & Men Working For Change

Direct Assistance to Households

Organizational History



Women and Men Working for Change (WMWFC) was founded in 2017, by initially gathering a team to organize a Domestic Violence 5K Walk/Run in Ypsilanti. What began as a single event grew into a dedicated community organization focused on domestic violence awareness, teen parenting support, homelessness assistance, and senior care. Over the years, WMWFC expanded its initiatives to include Totes4Teachers for local educators, Community Dinners for vulnerable residents, and the exploration of elder care programs.

Through the CPF, WMWFC sought to expand services, secure resources for direct aid, and build long-term sustainability, ensuring continued impact in Washtenaw County. This report outlines the accomplishments, capacity-building efforts, and future directions made possible through CPF support.

“We don’t just serve, We show up. We listen. And if we don’t have the resources, we make sure people know where to find them.” - Executive Director

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

WMWFC was awarded **\$185,000** through the CPF to address public health disparities and the economic challenges exacerbated by COVID-19, with a focus on supporting vulnerable residents in Ypsilanti’s 48197 and 48198 ZIP codes by:

- Distributing direct utility assistance or payments to 25 families.
- Hosting an annual holiday dinner in the community, providing meals, companionship, and winter essentials.
- Organizing a Domestic Violence Walk to support victims of domestic violence and their children.
- Supplying classroom essentials to 10-25 local teachers through the Tools4Teachers Program.
- Delivering food, toiletries, and companionship visits to 50 elders who may be without family.
- Displaying posters with statistics and resources related to domestic violence to raise awareness with a purple campaign in downtown Ypsilanti Walk.
- Obtaining permits, hire drivers, contract set-up/clean up, to host Domestic Violence activities.¹⁵

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Securing the ARPA Community Priority Fund (CPF) grant initially posed challenges for Women and Men Working for Change (WMWFC). A delayed contract and fluid funding requirements meant that plans for rental and utility assistance, senior support, and community events had to be constantly readjusted. However, once the project rolled out, direct assistance quickly proved vital for residents in the 48197 and 48198 zip codes.

After successfully launching the first phase of **direct assistance**, WMWFC recognized a **significant gap**—families needed more than immediate relief; they also needed **financial literacy tools** to prevent recurring crises. In response, the organization **partnered with (blank) to pilot a 90-minute financial education course**, requiring attendance before participants received utility/rent assistance.

¹⁵ This effort shifted per county conversations and direction on what Treasury Guidelines would allow.

Building Evaluation Capacity

As a smaller grassroots organization, WMWFC recognized early on that meeting the county’s reporting demands would require new systems and skills. With support from their contracted evaluator and evaluation team, staff participated in multiple hands-on training—beginning with logic-model¹⁶ workshops that yielded a collaboratively drafted model and iterative “renditions” as the program evolved. Simultaneously, the organization established a digital intake and tracking system using Google Forms, linked to a Google Sheets database, to record client status and key service metrics. A suite of custom spreadsheets was also developed to monitor assistance disbursements and program participation. These tools, combined with the creation of a formal impact statement, not only ensured accurate reporting for CPF close-out but positioned WMWFC to sustain evidence-based decision-making long term.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

Throughout the CPF grant period, Women and Men Working for Change (WMWFC) delivered critical services that prevented crises, fostered community engagement, and strengthened local partnerships. These activities included \$49,168.26 in rental and utility assistance—helping families avoid evictions and shut-offs—and the development of programming for seniors and educators. The organization also hosted impactful events such as a Holiday Community Dinner (over 200 attendees) and the Adopt a Community gift initiative, reaching nearly 200 individuals.

For a comprehensive breakdown of these outputs, including detailed data on senior meal services, financial education outcomes, and Totes for Teachers distribution, please refer to the **full Impact Statement¹⁷**.

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Building on CPF-funded infrastructure, WMWFC’s immediate priority is to secure additional grants to expand its domestic violence direct-assistance intervention. The organization is finalizing a contract with a new evaluator to continue strengthening internal data capacities while integrating its logic model and intake database into day-to-day operations. By formalizing these systems and demonstrating measurable outcomes, WMWFC aims to attract diversified funding, deepen community partnerships, and solidify an evaluation framework that will guide growth and advocacy efforts into the next grant cycle.



¹⁶ WMWFC LogicModel.pdf

¹⁷ WMWFC Impact Statement (3).pdf

Accomplishments and Challenges

Grantees funded through the Direct Assistance to Households expenditure category worked tirelessly to ensure that Washtenaw County neighbors facing housing and food insecurity received the direct help they needed to stay safe, healthy, and connected.

Together, these grantees distributed more than **\$620,000** in emergency aid—rent, utility, and grocery assistance—most of it targeted to the communities of Ypsilanti and Whitmore Lake, where economic hardship hit hardest during the pandemic. One coalition of partners developed a clear road map for delivering direct rental and utility support to prevent evictions and shut-offs among the most vulnerable households. In Ypsilanti’s Latino neighborhoods alone, 891 Spanish-speaking residents received critical financial support, closing gaps left by language barriers and cultural disconnection.

Recognizing that basic sustenance is a foundation for stability, food-assistance programs collectively distributed nearly a quarter-million pounds of groceries. More than \$20,000 of that was spent on culturally diverse foods, ensuring that food-insecure students could access staples and familiar ingredients. In addition, through creative “Adopt a Family” and community gift drives, over 300 individuals—even those without permanent addresses—received holiday care packages and warm meals when they needed them most.

Understanding that family well-being encompasses more than food and shelter. One agency even launched an on-site health-services program, offering free screenings and wellness classes. Another agency referred those receiving direct cash assistance to the County’s Financial Empowerment Program—linking residents to longer-term budgeting and credit-building support.

Challenges

Yet despite these successes, program leaders confronted persistent challenges. Immigrant families continued to struggle with limited language access, and many grantees found themselves translating materials and meetings on the fly. The County’s own financial-education workshops, while well-intentioned, often lacked the cultural nuance necessary to engage and resonate with diverse participants—leaving organizations frustrated and eager for co-developed curricula. At the administrative level, grantees reported heavy burdens in managing reimbursement-based funding models, and several noted that administering direct cash assistance for eviction prevention became so complex that they expressed desire to have the County assume a leading role—while still retaining community-based oversight and partnership.

Perhaps most frustrating was the lack of a structured feedback loop: grassroots providers contributed insights on what worked and what didn’t, only to see those recommendations stall before County leadership. Many pointed out that ideas shared in listening sessions were logged but not elevated toward decision-makers, leaving substantial opportunities for program co-creation on the table.

Nevertheless, these organizations remain committed to the shared vision of preventing homelessness, nourishing families, and forging pathways out of poverty. Having laid the groundwork—both in measurable outcomes and in lessons learned—they now look to strengthen their collaborations with Washtenaw County, so that future efforts may be more seamlessly administered, more culturally attuned, and more deeply responsive to the voices of those they serve.

Addressing Educational Disparities

Organizations funded under this expenditure category were those providing “evidence-based educational services and practices to address the academic needs of students, including tutoring, summer, after-school, and other extended learning and enrichment programs” (ARPA 2 memo).”

In Washtenaw County those included:

1. Community Family Life Center
2. Children’s Literacy Network
3. Family Empowerment Program - Eastern Michigan University
4. Family Learning Institute
5. Growing Hope
6. Hope Network
7. Hutan
8. Our Community Reads
9. Washtenaw Community College Foundation



Community Family Life Center - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History

Community Family Life Centers (CFLC) was founded as a neighborhood-based nonprofit serving the Sugarbrook neighborhood and greater Ypsilanti area. With a mission to promote social, educational, physical, and economic well-being, CFLC provides after-school and summer programs aimed at improving academic performance, leadership skills, and overall youth development. By offering free after-school tutoring, arts, health, and recreation programs, CFLC became a critical resource for families with limited educational and extracurricular options within a three-mile radius



Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), CFLC expanded its After-School Youth Enrichment Program (ASYEP) and Summer Playground Program (SPP), increasing access to structured academic and social development activities. This report outlines the accomplishments, capacity-building efforts, and future directions made possible through CPF support.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

CFLC was awarded **\$676,582.8** through the CPF to increase its efforts to combat learning loss and food insecurity brought by COVID-19 for underserved families in Sugarbrook and the greater Ypsilanti area by:

- Expanding the After-School Youth Enrichment Program (ASYEP) and offering reading and math tutoring, STEM learning, and arts education.
- Operating the Summer Playground Program (SPP), offering structured physical and creative activities for children aged 6-11.
- Hiring additional staff, including tutors, a program manager, and youth activity assistants to enhance student engagement.
- Purchasing a van to provide transportation for students, ensuring accessibility to CFLC programs.
- Strengthening partnerships with local schools, public health agencies, and literacy organizations to enhance services.
- Tracking student progress with pre- and post-assessments, measuring gains in reading, math, and social-emotional development.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

CFLC's work throughout the grant period adhered closely to their original proposal. Some highlights included:

- Mental Health Services: A nurse practitioner was hired to provide mental health counseling to youth.
- Transportation Services: A minibus was purchased that allowed CFLC to provide more than 200 rides to youth to expand its service area and programming.
- Management: A program manager was hired to oversee the organization's planning and operations of after school and summer activities. The program manager worked closely with the evaluation lead on tracking tools and evaluation capacity.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Over the course of the grant period, CFLC developed numerous tools to help with youth and program tracking. These included among other things the ability to document progress youth made in reading and math from their AFYES programming, as well as youth satisfaction surveys at the conclusion of each academic semester.

“If you [have a child who] can’t read at all, or having struggled, you could show...they may improve half a grade, or whatever it may be, but there’s some progress. So that’s very important for us. And we realize that that’s what we’re now at the point of having the staff to help us do that.” - Executive Director

CFLC also worked with the UM evaluation lead to position their data tracking for future funding opportunities in a wide variety of areas including STEM, the digital divide, USDA, and more.¹⁸

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

- 40 youth in the Sugarbrook neighborhood attended summer camp.
- 75 youth attended AYSEP, more than 50% of whom were reading below grade level.
- During tutoring sessions, more than 6,000 meals were served to youth.¹⁹

“CFLC has been a tremendous support for our family. They have gone above and beyond in understanding my complicated work schedule and accommodating transportation for my child.”

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

CFLC has partnerships with Ypsilanti Community Schools and the Ann Arbor School District to better align their AFYES programming with grade-level expectations for youth. Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Washtenaw County also partners with CFLC to refer youth to their services. With the addition of a nurse practitioner, CFLC also partners with Washtenaw County Community Mental Health. Importantly, the Executive Director described the network of nonprofits CFLC belongs to in the Sugarbrook neighborhood. “We’re part of the Hub coalition, which is like maybe 9 or 10 different nonprofits in the area. And so that is something excellent, because oftentimes, you know, nonprofits are competitive against one another because it- they, you know, you go for a grant, the same grant I’m going after, and then, right? But so in this way, we are building relationships so that we can all invest in the community and help the community. We are here for a purpose, and that is to help the community.”

Through CPF funding, CFLC has provided additional services to the Sugarbrook neighborhood and developed the capacity to expand its reach and track its progress.

CFLC will continue to expand its understanding of youth and the community. It is hoped that by better tracking its progress with youth, CFLC can also improve family environments at home, school environments, and the neighborhood environment around Sugarbrook.



¹⁸ [W Community Family Life Center.docx](#)

¹⁹ [PDF Community Family Life Center.pdf](#)

Children's Literacy Network - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History

[Children's Literacy Network](#) was founded in 1991 as primarily a book giving organization. With a change in leadership in 2017 and focused strategic planning,



Children's Literacy Network (CLN) has become a volunteer-based nonprofit agency in Washtenaw County, working on increasing reading proficiency rates among low-income students. CLN's mission is to design and implement literacy-based programs to provide equitable opportunities for children. CLN accomplishes this mission through innovative programming at the early childhood and school-age levels. CLN's strategic goals are **a)** Significantly increase the number of proficient readers by third grade, thereby increasing childhood literacy and improve the graduation rate of socio-economically disadvantaged students; **b)** Lay the foundation for literacy building blocks with both children and their parents; **c)** Build home libraries in socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods; **d)** Be a bold voice for equitable access to books and literacy programs; and **e)** Serve as a collaborator and leader for children's literacy.

Read With Kids is one of its four core programs focused on empowering literacy mentoring that pairs reading skills development with nurturing a love of reading in early elementary school students. The **Read With Kids** goal is to prepare every child in Ypsilanti to be reading at grade level by 2nd grade.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Children's Literacy Network (CLN) was awarded \$44,000 to hire a literacy specialist and purchase books and supplies to offer its evidence-based **Read With Kids** program to Ypsilanti Pre-K - 1st grade students. The plan was to train 50 volunteers to offer weekly mentoring sessions for all Pre-K and kindergarten students in participating schools and personalized training to struggling 1st grade students as recommended by classroom teachers after a Fall reading assessment.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Once volunteers were trained and the program got started in October of 2023, CLN did schedule weekly meetings throughout the school year as planned. **Read with Kids** is not a "one-size" fits all model—so the program taught mentors how to make adjustments depending on how quickly the students mastered concepts. They also developed a board game to assess reading, establishing additional skills to track progress over time. They had to adapt and make up missed sessions when there were school closures due to snow days. CLN also had to adjust, make a new hire, and redistribute work when the literacy specialist hired went on maternity leave.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Children's Literacy Network had a comprehensive evaluation protocol with assessments scheduled throughout the year (building on school performance records and required testing), crossover school planning meetings with teachers and key administrators, surveys of mentors and students, bins of books to be distributed as students completed milestones, and end-of-year celebrations in May for student participants and volunteers. CLN hadn't formally generated logic models²⁰ before, but after creating one for this **Read With Kids** program,

²⁰ CLN Read With Kids Program Evaluation and Logic Model.6 (2).docx.pdf

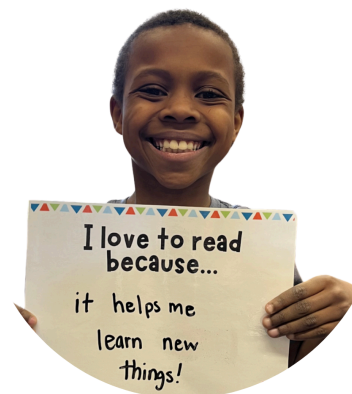
they recognized the value of the process and started generating logic models for other programs outside of ARPA funding.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact²¹

- 52 mentors completed required two hours of training
- 645 students mentored at Ford Early Learning Center
- 45 mentees matched with mentors at Perry Early Learning Center
- Over 130 game assessments completed
- 33% of children demonstrate comprehension of a 'book' by asking relevant questions or providing key details in literary texts
- 30% of students increased language arts assessment scores by the end of the school year
- 82% of students increased their confidence in reading and writing

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Children's Literacy Network partners with the Washtenaw Promise, the Washtenaw ISD and Success by 6 program and consults with its parent advisory group to finetune programming and make sure activities meet the needs of participants and their families. CLN uses the feedback to modify content and create parent workshops. Their plan is to build upon momentum they have created by offering classroom level mentoring for Pre-K and kindergarten students, while providing more intense individualized support with those that continue to struggle with reading, and eventually raise the proportion of Ypsilanti youth reading at grade level. The Executive Director Betsey Durant retired and a new Director has been hired, but the organization will continue working to improve literacy in the county.



²¹ Children's Literacy Network_ARPA Impact Statement PEG Draft (1).pdf

Family Empowerment Program - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History

The [Family Empowerment Program \(FEP\)](#), housed at Eastern Michigan University, serves as a critical support system for residents of Hamilton Crossing, Strong Housing, and New Parkridge in Ypsilanti. Coordinated by community-based social workers, FEP provides educational support, social services, and resource navigation to families facing economic and social challenges. Recognizing the long-term effects of educational disruptions and economic hardship, the program has shifted its focus toward education, wellness, and trauma-informed care to break cycles of poverty and instability.



Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), FEP has enhanced tutoring programs, wellness initiatives, and family engagement efforts, ensuring sustainable impact for families in Ypsilanti. This report outlines the program's achievements, capacity-building efforts, and future goals supported by CPF funding.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

FEP was awarded **\$129,296**. The FEP sought to use ARPA funds to address a variety of educational disparities across the lifespan. This was particularly salient amid COVID and the genesis of the idea. As a team of community-based social workers serving under resourced, marginalized communities, the FEP witnessed firsthand the disparate impact of the pandemic. Ranging from job loss, financial crisis, eviction, missed time in school, technological gaps for virtual education, loss of life, vaccine availability/access, and more. This spurred us to seek out funding to bring additional educational programs in-house and engage community partners with sector-specific knowledge to stymie this disparity and ideally reverse this trend.

The focus of ARPA-funded efforts were residents living in Ypsilanti Housing Commission (YHC) properties. These neighborhoods include the subsidized housing communities of Hamilton Crossing, New Parkridge, and Strong Housing. Programming was held on-site, at various YHC communities throughout the year. We prioritize those of higher need by virtue of who lives in our communities to begin with. In order to income-qualify for any YHC community, residents are required to make less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) for Washtenaw County. However, the average income of a YHC resident as of February 2024 is \$23,940, or 28% of the AMI for Washtenaw County. The areas of Ypsilanti that this program will serve have been identified by Washtenaw County's Opportunity Index as 'Very Low' or 'Low Opportunity'. Additionally, 85% of individuals housed by the YHC identify as Black or African-American, compared to 28% of Ypsilanti City residents and 12% of Washtenaw County residents.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Funds were utilized as intended. This initiative was initially proposed as a separate role entirely – FEP Education Coordinator. Due to not being fully funded, the components of this proposed role were split among 3 existing staff, supervised by the Program's Director.²² In addition to providing supportive housing services to residents across all Ypsilanti Housing Commission Communities, staff worked to:

²² [w](#) EMU Family Empowerment Program.docx

- Establish tutoring programs at each major community center
- Provide community engagement opportunities for youth and families
- Host financial education workshops with sector specialty partners
- Provide needs-based wellness and mental health programming

Building Evaluation Capacity

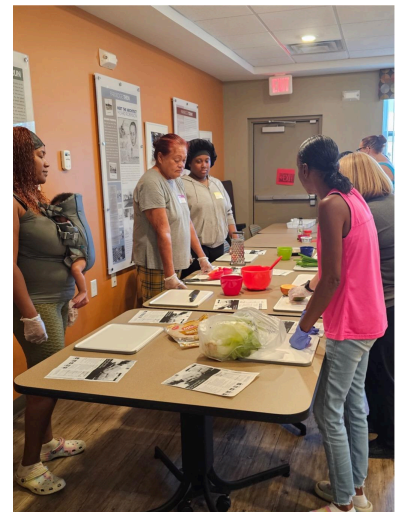
During the project period, FEP developed new techniques to track attendance and youth progress at New Parkridge tutoring. Additional assessments were developed for workshops.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

Opportunities like Project Decoded were of immense value to youth participants. As one explained: Being a part of Project Decoded means a lot to me and has opened a plethora of doors that I never would have known about otherwise. It has also helped to build a community with other like minded people.

In total, 604 youth attended the 70 coding sessions over 2023 and 2024. This was in addition to the 515 children who attended after school tutoring at New Parkridge.

Throughout 2023 and 2024 the largest community centers the FEP serves became hubs of programmatic activity. First through establishing tutoring programs in our communities and then through layering in customized programming with trusted, culturally competent partners (UMPMCH, Operation Hope, Code 313). This was particularly important for us to rebuild a sense of community and support that had largely been lost during the pandemic. From 2020-2022 the FEP overwhelmingly was responding to crises and functioned primarily as a reactive force in the community. ARPA funding allowed the FEP to continue to provide supportive housing services to at-risk YHC communities while pivoting to a primary prevention model – through resource navigation, information sharing, partnerships, and more. Prior to the pandemic, community centers were hubs of activity, prior attempts to reengage families fell short largely due to a lack of resources and a misunderstanding what communities desired in a post-COVID world. ARPA funding enabled the continuation of supportive housing services for residents as well as the return of resident-driven, well funded programs and activities.²³



²³ PDF Family Empowerment Program.pdf

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

One of our most exciting new programs born out of this work is Project Decoded (PD). PD provides twice a week computer programming classes from 5-8pm for ~10-15 teens (depending on the class). The first hour of programming instruction is conducted by Code 313. Throughout the past two years, participants have learned coding fundamentals, how to create and animate objects, and produced their own video game.

In order to attract and retain participants for the educational component, classes are followed by dinner, then an opportunity to play video games from a local video game tournament host, Senpai Tournaments for an hour. As a result, two individuals have been selected for an internship with CODE 313 and one has since been hired on as a staff member, teaching the very course he was participating in just a year ago. The other is in the midst of his internship.

The opportunity to access technology (both for education and play) that would typically be out of reach for many FEP families has been incredibly exciting. In addition, seeing older classmates selected for internships and formal positions has been uniquely motivating and inspiring for this group. With ARPA funds, we were able to pay FEP staff to recruit the participants, provide transportation, and ensure program continuity and success. This captures the core function of FEP and how the program sought to use ARPA funding: partnering with programs to bring their specialty knowledge to our communities by designing thoughtful programs that address educational inequities, reduce barriers, and provide opportunities for families that would otherwise be inaccessible.

The University of Michigan's Program for Multicultural Health has been a partner of the FEPs for over a decade. Their team collaborated with FEP staff at multiple communities during the grant period to host Health Cafés in 2023 and 2024 and a Parent Café training in June '24. The FEP worked to develop programming and topics that were of interest to residents, while PMCH engaged topic specialists and leveraged the vast University knowledge base to ensure information was up to date, presented in an accessible manner, and relevant to the population. In total, PCMH assisted the FEP in developing and hosting 11 events across the grant period, with 129 adults and teens (18+) attending.

Family Learning Institute - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History

The Family Learning Institute (FLI) was founded in 1999 as a nonprofit dedicated to improving literacy for elementary students struggling with reading in Washtenaw County. Initially focused on small-scale tutoring, FLI expanded in 2019 through a partnership with Ypsilanti Community Schools (YCS), launching an after-school tutoring program at Erickson Elementary, later adding Holmes Elementary in 2021.



Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), FLI expanded tutoring capacity, strengthened volunteer training, and provided year-round literacy support. This report outlines the accomplishments, capacity-building efforts, and future goals made possible through CPF funding.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

FLI was awarded **\$184,424.33** through the CPF to respond to increased learning loss caused by COVID-19 pandemic and support literacy intervention among students in Ypsilanti for Ypsilanti Community Schools (YCS) by:²⁴

- Providing one-on-one reading tutoring for 70 students in 2022-23 and 80-90 students in 2023-24.
- Offering weekly tutoring sessions at Holmes and Erickson Elementary Schools and virtual tutoring for accessibility.
- Implementing a summer reading program for continued literacy support from July to August.
- Training volunteer tutors and equipping them with customized lesson plans based on students' literacy needs.
- Monitoring student progress through pre- and post-tutoring assessments to track reading proficiency gains.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

For FLI, keeping students on track in elementary school is a foundation for the social and emotional well-being of Ypsilanti's children. The ability to read proficiently affects every other academic area. The students in Erickson and Holmes Elementary School are among the lowest performing in Washtenaw County. FLI did not encounter any significant disruptions to their work over the course of the performance period, and if anything was able to build out its virtual tutoring to an even greater degree than it anticipated.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Reporting for the Community Priority Fund strengthened already existing documentation of FLI's work, partly through greater ability to perform tutoring virtually. This has expanded FLI's reach to more students who haven't been able to get in-person tutoring because of transportation issues.

²⁴  Logic Model - Family Learning Institute.docx

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

Seventy students in grades two through five participated in the tutoring program, including 28 from Erickson Elementary, 40 from Holmes Elementary, and two attending the YCS online school. Each student worked one-on-one with the same volunteer tutor for an hour once a week. Among these, 22 students, primarily second and third graders, received in-person instruction at their schools, while 48 participated via Zoom. Of the 43 students who completed the full tutoring period of six to seven months, nine made between 2 and 2.5 years of progress, ten achieved 1.5 years of progress, and twelve made one year of progress, six of whom have a language-based learning disability. Among the 12 students who participated for a partial period of two to five months, one achieved 1.5 years of progress, two made a year of progress, and nine advanced by half a year, including two with language-based learning disabilities. Overall, 55 of the 70 students were assessed during the program.²⁵

“I see the confidence the program has given my daughter. Every child deserves to have that same confidence.” - Parent

The record of one of our fifth-grade students from this tutoring year illustrates what the program can accomplish. This student participated in the program for three years, from third through fifth grade. He did not have a reading disability, missed a few tutoring sessions, and each year also attended our six-week summer program. The student’s DRA assessment, taken at school, shows scores for each year:

- The student started the program in third grade with an end of kindergarten reading level, and that year moved up 1.5 years, to the mid-second grade level
- In fourth grade, he advanced from the early third grade level (one year behind grade level) to the approximate early fourth grade level (note: school testing indicated that he moved up to the fifth-grade level, but I believe this assessment overstated his reading level – which is borne out by his beginning of fifth grade school testing)
- At the beginning of fifth grade he tested at early fourth grade level, and at the end, at the mid to end fifth grade level, now caught up to grade level

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

FLI has been awarded \$150,000 through the State of Michigan to continue its excellent work tutoring youth in both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. Receiving this award is both an acknowledgement of FLI’s success, and a recognition of its ability to communicate its success to funders through the careful documentation.



Growing Hope - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History



Growing Hope was founded in 2003 as a community-driven organization dedicated to food justice, nutrition education, and urban agriculture in Ypsilanti. What began as a small-scale initiative has evolved into a comprehensive urban farm and youth training center, empowering local residents to grow, prepare, and access fresh, culturally relevant food. The Growing Hope Urban Farm serves as an educational and demonstration site, offering hands-on programs for all ages. Through initiatives like the Farm to School program, Teen Leadership Program, and Seed 2 Plate curriculum, Growing Hope fosters STEM learning, food literacy, and sustainable agriculture skills among youth. By working closely with Ypsilanti Community Schools and local partners, the organization ensures that children and families have the resources to make healthy food choices and engage in food production.

Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), Growing Hope has expanded youth education programs, strengthened school partnerships, and enhanced urban farming initiatives. This report outlines the program's accomplishments, capacity-building efforts, and future impact made possible through CPF support.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Growing Hope was awarded **\$166,791** through the CPF to expand agriculture-based education and food justice initiatives for youth in Ypsilanti by:

- Implement evidence-based STEM and food-justice youth curriculum in a garden setting
- Expand elementary school partnerships with multi-touchpoint agriculture lessons
- Enhance the Seed 2 Plate middle-school after-school program
- Advance Farm-to-School initiatives within Ypsilanti Community Schools, including teacher professional development
- Sustain and develop the Teen Leadership apprenticeship program with post-graduation support

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Over the performance period, Growing Hope refined its model to meet emerging needs:

- Adopted logic-model and impact-statement practices with the evaluation lead to align activities with real-time feedback.
- Modified field-trip formats based on youth and educator input, adding hands-on STEM stations and nutrition demos.
- Introduced weekly Grizzly Learning and Parkridge summer camps to extend learning beyond the school day.
- Expanded Teen Leader roles to include both on-farm instruction and community outreach projects.
- Streamlined Farm-to-School committee workflows for more efficient teacher support and resource sharing.

Building Evaluation Capacity

In collaboration with an evaluation lead, Growing Hope built a unified data system that captures participant intake, attendance, and outcomes. Custom intake forms feed a centralized dashboard tracking 638 field trips, 45 Seed 2 Plate enrollments, and 17 Teen Leader apprenticeship hours. A post-program survey (n=45) measures self-efficacy, dietary behavior changes, and leadership gains, while qualitative reflections inform continuous curriculum improvements.

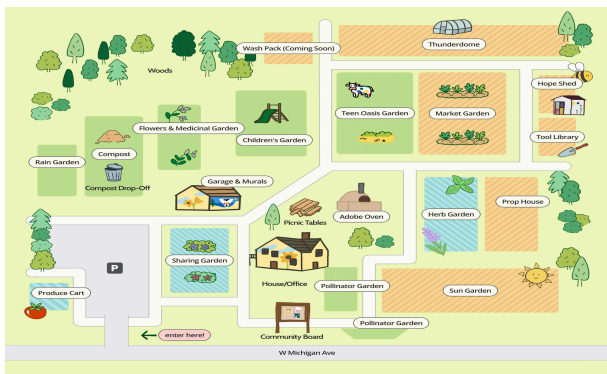
“I think that the practice of doing the logic model, and the impact statement, impact report were really helpful in thinking about how to, you know, talk about and like, you know, nicely package up the work that we’re doing and thinking about, you know, what we say we’re going to do and what we end up doing and how that changes along the way.”

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

- 638 youth participated in STEM-based farm field trips
- 45 students completed the Seed 2 Plate after-school program
- 17 local teens served as paid Teen Leaders
- 12 schools integrated garden-based lessons through Farm-to-School activities
- 100 % of surveyed participants reported understanding how food affects health
- 100 % reported increased confidence in preparing nutritious meals
- 70 % increased their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables
- 90 % tried a new fruit or vegetable

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Growing Hope will leverage its established logic model²⁶ and impact statement²⁷ to secure foundation, municipal, and federal funding, deepen partnerships with Ypsilanti Community Schools and Neutral Zone, and implement longitudinal follow-ups with Teen Leaders. Commitment to equitable access, data-informed programming, and community collaboration will guide efforts to empower even more youth as agents of lasting change in Ypsilanti’s food system.



Interactive map²⁸

²⁶ [Growing Hope_Logic Model.pdf](#)

²⁷ [Growing Hope_Impact Statement.pdf](#)

²⁸ [Growing Hope Urban Farm](#)

Hope Network - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History

[Hope Network's](#) Michigan Education Corps ([MEC](#)) Reading Corps and Math Corps were founded in 2012 to address Michigan's early literacy and math achievement gaps. By leveraging AmeriCorps members, the program provides one-on-one literacy intervention and small group math support to students performing just below grade level. These interventions are embedded within schools to complement classroom instruction and promote long-term academic success.



Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), Hope Network has expanded tutoring services, recruited additional interventionists, and strengthened program oversight. This report outlines the impact, capacity-building efforts, and future goals made possible through CPF funding.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Hope Network was awarded **\$122,000** through the CPF to expand targeted reading and math intervention programs for students in Ypsilanti Community Schools by:

- Providing one-on-one literacy tutoring through Reading Corps for 75 K-3 students, focusing on phonics, fluency, and comprehension.
- Delivering small-group Math Corps interventions to 125 students in grades 4-8, strengthening foundational math skills.
- Placing interventionists at Holmes, Erickson, and Ypsilanti International Elementary Schools, as well as Ypsilanti Connected Community School K-8.
- Recruiting and training additional AmeriCorps members to serve as tutors, expanding intervention capacity.
- Collaborating with Ypsilanti Community Schools, AmeriCorps, and the Michigan Department of Education to support program implementation.
- Tracking student progress, with a goal of 70% of participants meeting or exceeding grade-level literacy or math benchmarks.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

This is an evidence-based high-impact tutoring model that is part of a statewide network. Hope Network already had a strong intervention with scripts, training and supports to improve reading and math achievement. This CPF funding allowed the organization to expand their capacity to offer supplemental math and literacy interventions for students at-risk for low achievement in Washtenaw County, with a focus on Ypsilanti schools. Staff screened students three times a year to identify those at-risk and then provided one-on-one and small group tutoring to help improve academic performance.

Relationships with school leadership were positive and the program was delivered with fidelity. The biggest barrier was attendance. Both students and teachers were out sick at higher than average rates so students missed both school instruction and tutoring sessions. Results might have been even better without such COVID cases and other noted illnesses.

Building Evaluation Capacity

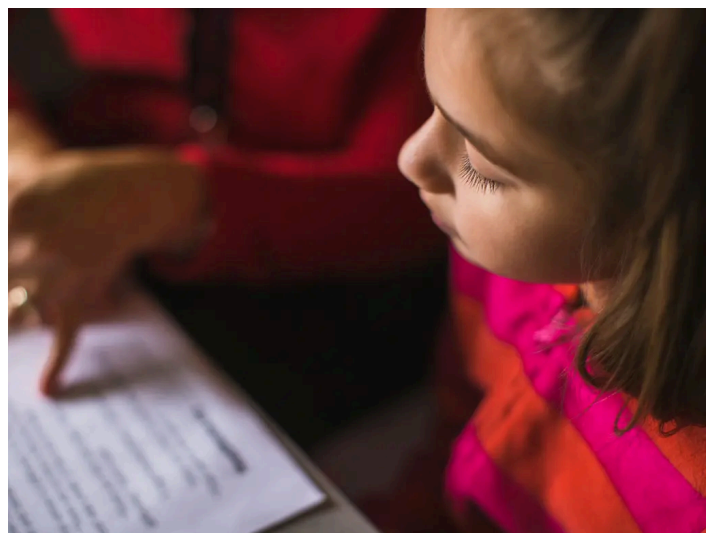
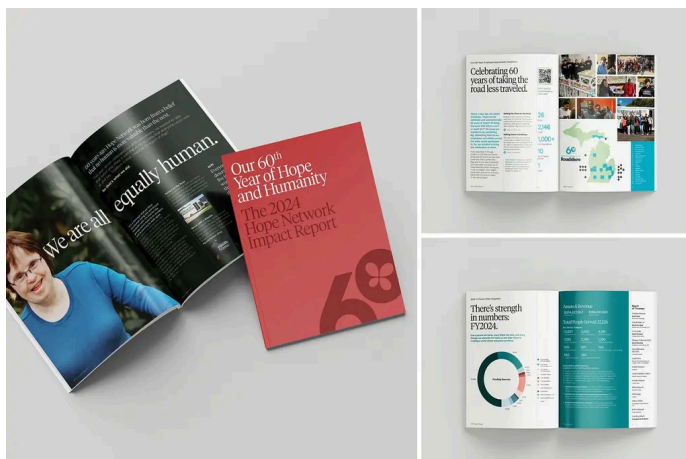
Hope Network had an existing evaluation plan and a web-based data management system. They regularly monitored student progress and continued individualized tutoring until a child reached exit criteria. They measured pre- and post benchmark assessment of grade level math and reading skills. They had a strong quantitative capacity, but desired support with qualitative data collection and analysis.²⁹

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact³⁰

- Hope Network served 327 Ypsilanti Community School students in grades K-8.
- Seventy five percent of Kindergarteners closed literacy gaps, 66% percent of 3rd graders closed reading achievement gaps, 53% of students exceeded grade-level growth targets.
- Reading Corps served 230 students, was implemented with 98.4% fidelity, averaged 53.6 sessions per student, and helped 59.4% of students to exceed target growth.
- Math Corps served 97 students, with 774 completed sessions, with 53% exceeding state growth targets and 73% achieving benchmark growth.

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Although this is a proven program that has a history of success, much of the workforce was composed of volunteers—particularly via the AmeriCorps program. As of April of 2025, Michigan lost \$15 million in federal AmeriCorps funding and will have to cut its 1218 participants statewide, including Washtenaw County ([‘It’s devastating’: Michigan loses about \\$15M in federal AmeriCorps cuts](#)). Thus, it is unlikely that this Hope Network’s programming will continue in its current form. Ideally, a portion of the relationships formed and progress gained will be maintained.



²⁹ [PDF Hope Network_Logic Model MEC Reading Corps and Math Corps.pdf](#)

³⁰ [PDF Hope Network_ARPA Impact Statement November 2024.pdf](#)

Hutan - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History



Hutan was founded in 2014 as a nonprofit dedicated to early childhood development through movement-based learning. Its flagship program, **Bob-a-loo**, was designed to address educational disparities, physical inactivity, and social-emotional development in young children. By incorporating storytelling, music, and motor skill activities, Bob-a-loo fosters early literacy, problem-solving, and confidence-building for children ages 3-6. Since its inception, Bob-a-loo has reached over 1,200 preschool children across Michigan, demonstrating measurable improvements in focus, social interaction, and early literacy skills.

Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), Hutan has extended Bob-a-loo's reach to more schools, enhanced teacher training, and developed additional resources to support educators, caregivers, and families. This report outlines the impact, capacity-building efforts, and future objectives made possible through CPF support.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Hutan was awarded \$70,950 through the CPF to expand the Bob-a-loo early childhood movement-based learning program in Ypsilanti by:

- Expanding Bob-a-loo to two additional schools, reaching 150 preschool children.
- Providing each school with 75 pieces of agility equipment, hand-eye coordination tools, and large-format educational materials to support movement-based learning.
- Developing new teacher training programs on blended learning and movement-based literacy techniques.
- Creating six new movement-based literacy videos and instructional resources for teachers and parents, available online.
- Delivering in-class Bob-a-loo stations and distributing interactive storytelling materials to encourage creative expression.
- Hosting virtual and in-person community events to foster collaboration among educators, parents, and caregivers.
- Conducting outreach to increase awareness and accessibility of Bob-a-loo's free educational resources.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Since CPF funding, Hutan has fine-tuned Bob-a-loo to meet emerging needs:

- Transitioned from a large "Babalu" station to compact in-class literacy-movement stations for seamless classroom integration.
- Added a focused literacy component—28 alphabet videos featuring the Alfie puppet and printable letter-learning sheets.
- Shifted evaluation methods from lengthy confidence-course pilots to streamlined teacher pre/post surveys and qualitative interviews.
- Engaged a dedicated social-media specialist and videographer to expand digital reach and accessibility.
- Introduced "Cool Stuff" take-home bags and parent handouts to foster home-school learning connections.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Hutan began by co-creating a logic model³¹ that mapped Bob-a-loo’s inputs, activities, outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes, ensuring every component of the program was clearly tied to its intended impact. Hutan partnered with its evaluation lead to design a simple, replicable data system: a baseline needs-assessment with a 10-point teacher survey³², structured pre/post implementation surveys for educators and students, and qualitative teacher focus groups at training start and end. Administrative logs capture key shifts—such as children’s first attempts at letter naming—and testimonials are systematically recorded. This approach allows Hutan to track fidelity, coach teachers in real time, and quickly iterate materials based on frontline feedback.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact


By spring 2024, Bob-a-loo had reached **180** new children weekly across two schools, trained **20** educators in movement-literacy methods, and produced **26** literacy videos with **1,100** handouts distributed to families. Teachers report improved classroom climate and on-task behavior, with selective-mutism cases easing and early literacy engagement surging. As one instructor enthused, “children who were afraid to try new things are now stepping out on their own,” underscoring gains in confidence alongside social and cognitive development.

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

With CPF support concluding and no viable replacement funding identified, Hutan has made the difficult decision to wind down operations at the end of this cycle. Although Bob-a-loo demonstrated strong promise—reaching over 1,200 children statewide, training dozens of educators, and developing a suite of digital and print resources—the organization was unable to secure the multi-year grants or institutional partnerships needed to cover ongoing program delivery, staffing, and equipment maintenance. Though Hutan’s direct services will cease, its legacy will endure through these partnerships and the embedding of movement-based literacy practices into early childhood settings across Washtenaw County.



³¹  Hutan_LOGIC MODEL 4_5_24.docx (1).pdf

³²  Hutan Impact Statement 2024.pdf

Our Community Reads - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History

[Our Community Reads \(OCR\)](#) was founded in 2020 with a mission to foster literacy, cultural pride, and community engagement among Black children and families in Ypsilanti. What started as a virtual storytelling initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic soon expanded into in-person storytime events, book clubs, and literacy-based community gatherings. OCR's Queens Club and Pharaoh's Club provide structured mentorship and academic support for young girls and boys, while partnerships with Ypsilanti Community Schools (YCS), Black Men Read, and Books 4 Kids have strengthened its reach. Over the years, OCR has facilitated book giveaways, field trips, and youth development workshops, ensuring that literacy remains a tool for empowerment and self-discovery.



Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), OCR has expanded its programming, provided critical literacy resources, and strengthened its infrastructure. This report highlights the achievements, capacity-building efforts, and future directions made possible through CPF support.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

OCR was awarded \$44,000 through the CPF to enhance literacy, mentorship, and cultural enrichment programs for families in Ypsilanti's 48197 and 48198 ZIP codes by:

- Hosting monthly Queen's Club and Pharaoh's Club meetings focused on reading, mentorship, and personal growth.
- Facilitating book clubs and literacy activities at Erickson Elementary's Lunch Bunch program and other YCS schools.
- Organizing six to eight field trips annually, including educational excursions to Howard University, the National Museum of African American History, and cultural sites.
- Distributing 500 free books to children and families to foster home-based literacy.
- Providing adult literacy programs, including Books and Brews storytime events in collaboration with Black Men Read.
- Investing in staffing and operational support, hiring an executive director, administrative assistant, and bookkeeper to ensure program sustainability.
- Improving transportation access by covering mileage and gas costs for program participants.
- Enhancing community engagement through branding efforts, outreach initiatives, and digital tools.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Although the program is primarily organized and managed by volunteers, the ARPA funding gave leaders the opportunity to plan ahead, launch an advisory group, and be more consistent in programming. They could also be clear about available resources and how they could provide added value to their key partners (by giving away books and showing up to offer storytime sessions). Young people participating in Our Community Reads events received the formal literacy training, but also were exposed to other valuable information such as financial literacy, cultural insights, fitness and wellness. Funding for field trips allowed for other new experiences (such as trying unfamiliar foods, dining etiquette, museums, college fairs, riding on a subway train).

Building Evaluation Capacity

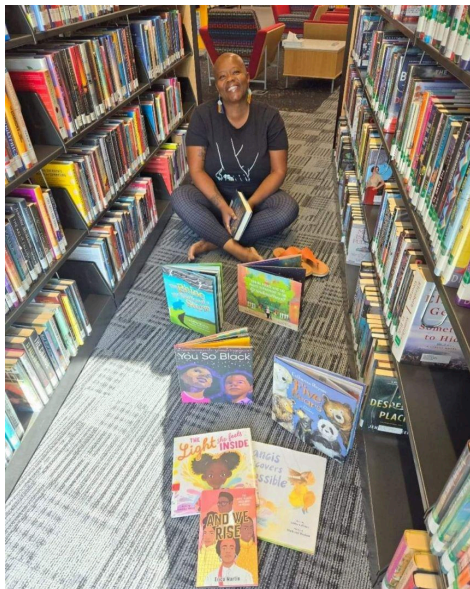
The organization had little initial evaluation or data management capacity. They collected testimonials and quotes from participants and parents via social media, but didn't formally track participation. Going through the process of generating the logic model³³ & impact statement³⁴ helped emphasize the importance of collecting ongoing data. There was interest in conducting a parent survey, but this was challenging without paid staff or capacity to manage the process.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

- Hosted storytime events for adults and youth to improve literacy.
- Sponsored monthly Queen's Club and Pharaoh's Club sessions for school-aged youth.
- Distributed over 750 free children's books.
- Took 30 students (as well as a few parents and chaperones) on field trips to California, Washington DC, Pittsburgh, and New York City.
- Hosted local trips in Ohio and Michigan for college tours, college fairs, and theatrical performances.

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Our Community Reads continues to host monthly book club meetings and storytime events. The Executive Director was never paid and is planning to return to graduate school where she can continue to grow personally and continue to build upon the success of this program. Leaders are likely to continue to engage with the schools and partnerships where they have strong relationships and a track record of impact. Leaders are committed to the organization and have expressed interest in continuing to volunteer as feasible and applying for additional grants to sustain this work.



³³ PDF Logic Model - Our Community Reads .docx.pdf

³⁴ PDF OCR Impact Statement.pdf

Washtenaw Community College Foundation - Addressing Education Disparities

Organizational History

[Washtenaw Community College \(WCC\)](#) has served Washtenaw County for over 35 years, offering educational and workforce development programs. Through long-standing partnerships with the Parkridge and Harriet Street Centers, WCC has provided after school programs, summer camps, and training workshops to youth and families in Ypsilanti. To address educational disparities, WCC launched targeted programming to help teens and young adults build soft skills, college readiness, and career awareness. These efforts focus on youth from neighborhoods facing high poverty and low academic achievement.



Through the Community Priority Fund (CPF), WCC expanded outreach, hosted HBCU-focused college events, and strengthened skills-building programs. This report highlights the outcomes and future direction supported by CPF funding.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

WCC was awarded \$ 231,680 through the CPF to expand employability and soft skills and host college readiness programming in Ypsilanti by:

- Offering soft skills workshops at six middle and high schools.
- Hosting Washtenaw HBCU Day, reaching over 400 students annually.
- Organizing an HBCU tour to schools in Georgia and Alabama.
- Facilitating team-building, public speaking, and emotional development activities.
- Supporting college pathway education with a focus on affordability and transfer options.
- Partnering with schools and community groups to reach youth in neighborhoods near Parkridge Community Center, including Hamilton Crossing and Sauk Trail Pointe.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Even with some staff turnover, the project proceeded according to plan. The only issue was that some schools took longer than anticipated to return all the necessary paperwork so some programming started on a delayed time schedule. In the end, employability and soft skills workshops were offered in six schools: Lincoln Middle, Ypsilanti Middle, Scarlett Middle, Belleville High, the ACCE program, and Pathways to Success. The content focused on college readiness, college affordability, sense of belonging, and employability skills with a focus on creating and communicating clear pathways to HBCUs after attending Washtenaw Community College. In particular, they emphasized utilizing dual enrollment options and providing guaranteed admission and in-state tuition for partnering HBCUs. Students were also able to develop collaborative skills, public speaking skills, and demonstrate growth in their interpersonal skills and confidence through a variety of interactive team building activities, social and emotional exercises, and participatory engagement. Ten students went on a HBCU tour visiting campuses in Georgia and Alabama.

Building Evaluation Capacity³⁵

The program had efficient enrollment and participant management systems. They focused on tracking program attendance and whether students would go on to enroll at WCC and transfer to a HBCU or some other educational institution to complete other degrees. They collected evaluation surveys from participants in their HBCU Days and also collected quotes and input via social media.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact³⁶

- WCC served 80 students across six schools between August 2023 and December 2024, offering transformative workshops to prepare them for college and careers.
- WCC hosted an annual Washtenaw HBCU day on June 2, 2023 and May 3, 2024—serving over 400 students each time.
- WCC took 10 students on a HBCU tour visiting schools in Georgia and Alabama between November 14-16 in 2024.

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Washtenaw Community College has developed the internal capacity and partnerships to help expose underserved students to opportunities to attend college, in Washtenaw County and at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). One of the program leads retired and the others associated with the program have moved on to other positions. However, the programming content and feedback can be used to support future activities.



³⁵ Washtenaw Community College_Logic Model_09_2024.docx copy.pdf

³⁶ WCC Impact Statement Presentation - Final-2.pptx.pdf

Accomplishments and Challenges

Grantees under the Addressing Educational Disparities expenditure category made significant strides in narrowing educational gaps for Washtenaw County's most underserved learners. Through targeted literacy interventions, over 1,200 students—particularly Black youth in low-income neighborhoods, learners with language-based disabilities, and those attending under-resourced schools—received individualized tutoring, participated in reading groups, and engaged in skill-building workshops. One provider identified that 59% of its tutored students met or exceeded grade-level benchmarks in reading, and 73% in math, underscoring the power of consistent, personalized support.

Beyond traditional literacy efforts, programs embraced innovative, hands-on approaches to learning. More than 1,600 young people explored nutrition science through cooking labs, practiced reading via movement-based games, and even dove into basic coding in computer programming classes. To ensure no child was left behind by logistical hurdles, several organizations arranged free transportation to and from learning centers, produced digital lesson content for remote study, and distributed books and tablets—bridging both geographic and technological divides.

For older youth, grantees expanded horizons through college and career readiness initiatives. Teens participated in job-skills workshops, attended an annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) fair, and toured campuses in Georgia and Alabama—experiences that demystified higher education and inspired future aspirations. Recognizing that lifelong learning doesn't stop at high school, adult learners were also served through communal reading circles, practical financial-literacy seminars, and health-focused courses.

Challenges

Despite these achievements, systemic challenges persist. The COVID-19 pandemic widened pre-existing divides, disrupting learning for low-income, bilingual youth, and students of color—many of whom lacked reliable internet, quiet study spaces, or adult supervision during remote learning periods. Underlying issues such as persistent poverty, unstable housing, food insecurity, and health inequities continued to undermine academic progress. For graduating students, affordability remained a formidable obstacle: low-income students of color faced daunting financial hurdles in accessing and persisting in college.

Looking ahead, grantees are eager to build on these successes by deepening partnerships with schools, local businesses, and Washtenaw County itself. By addressing the intertwined social and economic factors that impede learning—and by scaling the most effective tutoring models, experiential programs, and support services—they aim to ensure that every student, regardless of background or circumstance, can access the tools and opportunities they need to thrive.

Addressing Housing and Homelessness

Organizations funded under this expenditure category were those “programs or services that address housing insecurity, lack of affordable housing, or homelessness, such as supportive housing, residential counseling, housing navigation, legal services, eviction prevention, and other housing needs” (ARPA 2.0 memo).

In Washtenaw County, those included:

- Dawn Farm



Dawn Farm - Addressing Housing & Homelessness

Organizational History

Founded in 1973, [Dawn Farm](#) provides treatment and recovery support for individuals with substance use disorders, with a focus on low-barrier access, long-term recovery, and community reintegration. Dawn Farm's approach combines housing, employment support, and peer-led services, meeting the needs of those who are often homeless and unemployed when they seek help. In response to high overdose rates in Ypsilanti, Dawn Farm expanded its transitional housing program by securing apartments at Aspen Chase. Residents receive support including employment groups, transportation assistance, and housing scholarships, enabling early recovery without the financial stress of housing instability. Through the Community Priority Fund, Dawn Farm was able to increase housing capacity and provide essential services to stabilize individuals in early recovery.



Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Dawn Farm was awarded **\$21,040.02** through the Community Priority Fund (CPF) to expand transitional housing and recovery support services in Ypsilanti by:

- Offering temporary housing for one month free of charge to a minimum of nine people in recovery, including a house manager
- Purchasing furniture replacement in an apartment.
- Provide substance screening and monthly bus passes to 8 to 16 residents

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Following the original proposal, Dawn Farm provided transitional housing and supported residents' access to employment and education resources, such as public transportation and internet connectivity. It fosters a supportive community for individuals in recovery by promoting interpersonal connections to establish a robust support system. Dawn Farm leased accommodation that can house up to eight residents as well as an on-site house manager, purchased replacement furniture, and offered housing fee scholarships for the first month to remove financial entry barriers. To help unemployed residents, Dawn Farm conducted employment group sessions until jobs are secured and provides monthly bus passes for one month.³⁷ Additionally, 32 bus passes were distributed to residents with active Medicaid to facilitate transportation to work, treatment, and meetings. The community is reinforced through weekly house meetings and scheduled and random drug screenings, ensuring a stable and supportive living environment. Housing and utility expenses are covered to further alleviate financial stress on residents.

Building Evaluation Capacity

In collaboration with an evaluation lead, Dawn Farm has effectively advanced its evaluation capacity by employing tools such as logic modeling and power mapping, which have been instrumental in refining both its strategic operations and communication of impacts. The implementation of a logic model has enabled the organization to clearly delineate its resources, activities, outputs, and targeted outcomes, providing a transparent framework that helps stakeholders understand how each element contributes to the overall mission. This

³⁷ [W Dawn Farm_Logic Model_20241203FINAL.docx](#)

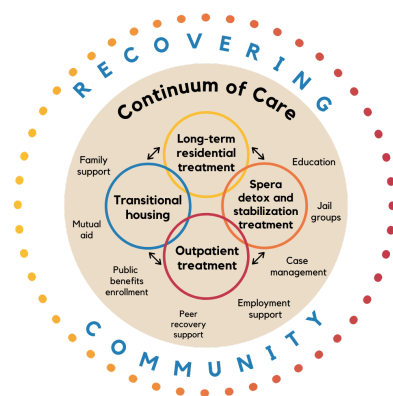
structured approach has not only facilitated systematic evaluation but also improved internal alignment and accountability. Power mapping, on the other hand, has illuminated key relationships and networks, allowing Dawn Farm to identify and engage influential stakeholders and advocates effectively. Equipped with these insights, the organization has been able to craft targeted communication strategies that highlight the tangible impacts of its programs, thereby enhancing its narrative to funders, partners, and the community. By combining these methodologies, Dawn Farm has strengthened its capacity to evaluate and convey its successes and areas for growth, ultimately fostering greater support and collaboration.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

Between January 2023 and August 2024, Dawn Farm completed intakes for 38 individuals for Aspen Chase transitional housing and provided bus passes for 32 residents to facilitate transportation. Residents participated in community service, contributing one hour weekly, and underwent significant support measures, including scheduled and random drug screenings and attending house meetings. All residents engaged in mutual aid meetings and documented their involvement. Employment was a critical focus, with all unemployed residents required to attend weekly job search groups until they secured employment. Within two weeks, many residents found jobs, demonstrating the effectiveness of these programs. While 47% of the residents maintained sobriety and successfully transitioned to independent living after an average stay of 187 days, another 47% returned to substance use, with some being referred to further care or other agencies. Despite not tracking certain metrics like internet usage or financial and legal outcomes, Dawn Farm supported residents' social connections and recovery, with all residents having access to someone to talk to. Ultimately, the program contributed to maintaining long-term sobriety, improving well-being, increasing recovery capital, and achieving stable housing and employment for many residents. Half of the residents were able to find and afford stable housing after leaving, a quarter maintained employment for at least a year, and a quarter earned a degree or certificate, signifying significant personal and professional development.³⁸

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

To sustain its efforts, Dawn Farm will continue leveraging its comprehensive suite of long-term treatment services to support individuals in achieving lasting recovery and housing stability. This includes maintaining and expanding services such as residential treatment, transitional housing, outpatient care, and sub-acute detoxification. Dawn Farm will emphasize building a strong recovery support system for each client, which extends beyond treatment and into lifelong community engagement through 12-step meetings, sponsorship, and service work. Dawn Farm will continue to provide care irrespective of clients' financial situations, supported by its Scholarship Fund for those in need. Additionally, the organization plans to strengthen its partnerships with community stakeholders to enhance outreach programs and explore new opportunities for collaboration.



³⁸ P Dawn Farms Impact Statement PEG Draft.pptx

Accomplishments and Challenges

Through transitional housing programs, 38 people recovering from substance use disorders found a safe, stable place to live for an average of 187 days. Nearly half of these residents maintained their sobriety throughout their stay, demonstrating the power of consistent housing paired with recovery support. To further lower barriers to re-entry, the lead agency in this expenditure category strategically located housing units along major bus routes, ensuring that residents could easily access employment, treatment appointments, and other community services without the burden of unreliable transportation.

Challenges

Despite these successes, the scope of impact was limited by the relatively small share of CPF dollars dedicated to housing and homelessness. Affordability across Washtenaw County remains an urgent and unrelenting challenge: rental markets continue to outpace the incomes of low-wage workers, and the upfront cost of first month's rent plus a security deposit often puts stable housing out of reach—especially for those emerging from substance use treatment who may lack savings or credit history. Providers noted that even when beds were available, prospective tenants struggled to meet these initial financial requirements, creating a bottleneck at the very moment they were ready to rebuild their lives.

Looking ahead, grantees emphasize the need for more expansive investment in both rapid rehousing and supportive housing models. By pairing deeper subsidies or deposit-assistance funds with on-site case management and transportation support, Washtenaw County can help more individuals move quickly from crisis to stability—and sustain their recovery beyond the walls of a single program. Although funding for this category was modest this cycle, these early achievements lay a foundation for scaled solutions that reduce barriers, strengthen partnerships, and ultimately make affordable, recovery-centered housing a reality for all.

Expanding Early Childhood Education

Organizations funded under this expenditure category were those offering “programs or services to help develop new or expanded high-quality childcare to provide safe, supportive, and educational care for children” (ARPA 2.0 memo)

In Washtenaw County, those included:

- Child Care Network
- Foundations Preschool
- Bottles-N-Backpacks



Child Care Network - Expanding Early Childhood Education

Organizational History

Child Care Network (CCN), founded in 1971, works to increase access to affordable, high-quality child care for families across Washtenaw County. Its Family Support Program provides child care scholarships, case management, and referrals for families experiencing low income, homelessness, domestic violence, or other life crises. Family Support Program helps parents pursue work, education, or job training, while ensuring children receive safe, developmentally appropriate care that supports kindergarten readiness. In its most recent cycle, the program supported 86 children from 57 families, with the majority identifying as BIPOC and residing in high-need areas.



Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

CCN was awarded **\$2,180,000** through the Community Priority Fund to expand the Family Support Program for high-need families in Washtenaw County by:³⁹

- Awarding at least 300 child care scholarships for children ages 0–14.
- Providing individualized case management and referrals to child care, preschool, and basic needs services.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

CCN diligently adhered to its originally proposed plan of awarding scholarships for families in low-income and high-need families to contribute to the development and welfare of the child as well as the parent's ability to invest in the family's future. Families are prioritized based upon the combination of eligibility criteria they meet, including income (e.g., up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level or 65% of the Gross Median Household Income), residence in a Low-Very or Low Opportunity Zone (i.e., 48197/48198 zip codes), and the current state of crisis. In addition to the scholarship, CNN offered a Family Support Program that includes customized case management to meet the families' goals and needs and referrals to child care programs and community resources.

Building Evaluation Capacity

CCN collaborated with the evaluation lead to elevate its capacity to evaluate program effectiveness and strategically position in service provision and advocacy by incorporating methodologies such as logic modeling, power mapping, and design thinking. The logic model framework has been pivotal in helping the organization systematically map out its resources, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes, ensuring a clear pathway to achieving its objectives. Power mapping has further enhanced CNN's strategic approach by identifying key stakeholders and influencers within the community and Michigan, enabling the organization to effectively harness partnerships and leverage support networks for policy and administrative advocacy efforts. Meanwhile, the adoption of design thinking has fostered a culture of innovation and user-centered problem solving, encouraging staff and stakeholders to collaboratively develop and refine solutions that meet the community's

³⁹  Child Care Network_Logic Model_20250228.pptx

evolving needs. Together, these methodologies have strengthened CNN's capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs, adapt to changing circumstances, and maximize its impact.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

CNN provided child care scholarships to 407 children through Community Priority Fund and awarded additional 323 scholarships through other partnerships. CNN also offered case management services to 182 economically disadvantaged families.⁴⁰

CNN's services have had a profoundly positive impact on the Washtenaw County community. A significant 77% of parents involved in the program were employed, with an additional 19% actively seeking employment and 22% enrolled in educational or job training programs. The overwhelming majority, 98% of parents and 96% of families, reported making progress toward financial stability through at least one key indicator, highlighting the program's effectiveness. Furthermore, CNN's scholarships and family support services facilitated valuable improvements in quality of life and well-being for participating families: 99% were able to access quality childcare programs, 99% experienced less stress, and 97% reported greater stability in their childcare arrangements. Additionally, 38% of families saw tangible advancements in their employment situations, such as a raise, a promotion, or securing a better job. These statistics underscore CNN's success in enhancing financial stability, reducing stress, and promoting overall life satisfaction for families in the community.

“Peace of mind has been the greatest reward for me. I don’t have to worry about who will watch (child) on a weekly basis. I find great comfort in knowing she’s in a licensed facility where she is getting the tools and knowledge that will give her a wonderful start in Kindergarten.” - Former Family Support Program participant

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Child Care Network (CCN) is committed to sustaining its impactful work⁴¹ by continuously supporting low to moderate income families and those experiencing homelessness or life crises. By providing child care scholarships, CCN enables these families to access quality child care, thus helping them maintain employment and pursue higher education goals. As the trusted regional child care resource center, CCN will persist in offering vital resources to licensed child care programs, license-exempt providers, and families, ensuring that community members have the support they need to thrive. Central to CCN's enduring success are its robust partnerships with other agencies and community groups, which facilitate ongoing awareness, training, development, and support for child care programs and stakeholders. Through these collaborative efforts, CCN remains steadfast in its mission to enhance the success of children, families, and the broader community through quality child care education, advocacy, and family support.



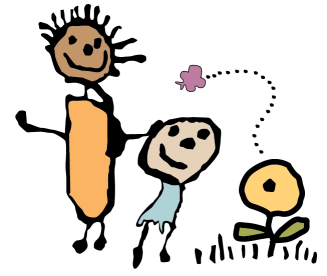
⁴⁰ P Child Care Network_Impact Statement_20250228.pptx

⁴¹ PDF Child+Care+Network+2025+Vision+of+Greatness.pdf

Foundations Preschool - Expanding Early Childhood Education

Organizational History

Since 1934, [Foundations Preschool](#) has provided equitable and high-quality childcare for families in Washtenaw County and received the highest distinction from state and federal assessments. Foundations Preschool serves primarily low income families in the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti area, and prioritizes enrolling the most vulnerable families. Recognizing significant needs for infant and toddler care, where costs are the highest and subsidy programs are scarce, Foundations Preschool opened a room for children from 18 months to 2.5 years in 2019. Quickly, Foundations Preschool realized the growing demands for infant and toddler care and sought Community Priority Fund funding to expand the infant and toddler care, which help children develop social, emotional, physical, and language skills while supporting parents' ability to work and sustain family stability.



Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Foundations Preschool was awarded **\$20,000** through the Community Priority Fund to expand infant and toddler care in Washtenaw County by:


- Hiring one full-time teacher to support increased enrollment.
- Purchasing a four-seat stroller to safely take infants outdoors.
- Providing essential classroom supplies for daily operations.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Foundations Preschool has successfully executed its plan to expand capacity, thereby providing essential child care services to low-income families. While the Community Priority Fund initially financed one month of the full-time teacher's salary, additional support was secured from the Ann Arbor Rotary Club and the State of Michigan's Infant/Toddler Quality Improvement grant. These funds enabled Foundations Preschool to enhance families' access to care through tuition scholarships and coordination with DHHS subsidies. The expansion of the infant and toddler program has increased available care in Washtenaw County by adding 13 new spots, all eligible for tuition and subsidy assistance. This initiative ensures that children at Foundations Preschool receive critical early childhood education, equipping them with the foundational skills needed for kindergarten and future academic success. This collaborative effort and diversified funding approach not only address immediate community needs but also underline the organization's commitment to creating enduring impacts on children's educational journeys.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Foundations Preschool has partnered with its evaluation lead to enhance its ability to assess and communicate program effectiveness. By incorporating methodologies such as logic modeling⁴² and power mapping, Foundations Preschool is equipped with robust tools for strategic planning and execution. The logic model framework has been instrumental in systematically mapping resources, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes, ensuring a clear pathway to achieving organizational objectives. Through power mapping, Foundations Preschool has identified key stakeholders and influencers within the community, enabling the

⁴²  Foundations Preschool_Logic Model.docx.pdf

organization to build effective partnerships. Collectively, Foundations Preschool bolstered its capacity to evaluate program effectiveness, respond to emerging challenges, and maximize its impact on the community.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

The Community Priority Fund enabled Foundations Preschool to significantly enhance its infant and toddler program by expanding enrollment from 11 to 24 children and providing approximately 1,130 hours of care to 13 additional low-income families. This funding facilitated the hiring of an additional full-time teacher and the purchase of a four-child stroller, as well as covering costs for program supplies. Though the funding was temporary, the expansion is sustained by existing resources and community support. As a result, children exhibited notable developmental improvements, such as enhanced social and collaboration skills, critical thinking, on-task behavior, and large motor skills. They also showed increased physical activity, letter recognition, and a higher interest in learning. For teachers, the funding helped identify children's interests, introduced innovative teaching methods, and provided opportunities to observe and respond to children's needs more effectively.⁴³

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

To sustain its expanded efforts, Foundations Preschool will continue leveraging essential partnerships and resources to ensure long-term impact and stability. A pivotal aspect of this strategy is the ongoing collaboration with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which provides crucial subsidies helping to significantly reduce childcare costs for eligible families. Foundations Preschool will remain proactive in referring families to DHHS and supporting their access to affordable and quality child care and early childhood education. Additionally, in-house tuition scholarships will continue to further offset costs, making quality early childhood education accessible to more families. By maintaining strong relationships with community partners like the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor, Foundations Preschool will seek additional opportunities, such as enhancing facilities and acquiring necessary equipment. Anchored by its mission and vision, the organization will continually strive to meet the unique needs of families in Washtenaw County. These efforts not only reinforce its commitment to preparing children for future success but also empower families with opportunities for further professional and personal growth.



⁴³ Foundations Preschool_Impact Statement.pdf

Bottles-N-Backpacks - Expanding Early Childhood Education

Organizational History

Bottles-N-Backpacks is an African-American owned and operated early childhood education center that opened its first Ypsilanti location in 2008. It is a family oriented center run by a husband and wife couple. Bottles-N-Backpacks concerns itself with holistic health and well-being that supports the households of the children as well as the communities where it resides. At the beginning of the grant period, Bottles-N-Backpacks was licensed to service 128 children across two locations and wanted to grow its capacity to provide more high-quality culturally responsive childcare in Washtenaw County.



Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Bottles-N-Backpacks was awarded **\$600,000** through the CPF to reduce the learning gap for children in zip codes 48197 and 48198, including enhancing and expanding its STEAM curriculum serving children ages 3-12 to be implemented year-round across the organization.

- Enhance ongoing training opportunities, provide benefits and professional development opportunities for new and existing early childhood education teachers and administrative personnel who will support STEAM programming during the school year and summer period.
- Formalize partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and schools to complement STEAM curriculum.
- Plan and implement parent workshops and workforce development training.
- Secure new building/facility to increase enrollment capacity.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Bottles-N-Backpacks successfully planned and implemented their first two pillars: 1) retaining and training early childhood education teachers and 2) developing a proprietary STEAM curriculum which they shared with a parent focus group to get feedback. Their third pillar—securing a new building facility—proved more difficult in the current Ann Arbor housing market. They evaluated 5 property submissions with a realtor, toured 4 potential new buildings for purchase, and pursued property loans, but in the end they were not able to close on a property within the constrained grant period.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Bottles-N-Backpacks contracted with an outside evaluator that responded to Center team requests. This person documented the work, collected data, and helped generate the requested logic model⁴⁴ and impact statement.⁴⁵ They had a well thought out evaluation plan with clear outcomes which were systematically documented.

⁴⁴ BnB CPF Evaluation Plan '23-24 (1).xlsx - Logic Model.pdf BnB CPF Evaluation Plan '23-24 (1).xlsx - Evaluation Plan.pdf

⁴⁵ Bottles N Backpacks ARPA Impact Statement_10.2024.pdf

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

- Provided 6 professional development sessions for teachers and administrative personnel, 100% of those surveyed said this training motivated them to continue working at BnB.
- Provided medical and dental benefits to the staff for the first time.
- Hired two new early childhood education teachers.
- These hires allowed BnB to double its capacity in two classrooms (18 additional seats)
- Offered 25 additional summer camp spots
- Convened a 10 member curriculum committee with deep subject matter expertise in science, tech engineering, arts, and math.
- The committee convened 20 times to develop 3 learner profiles (PreK, Grades K-3 and 4-7) that are culturally responsive and multi-lingual.
- Participants in the parent focus group were excited about the sample content and believed it would be engaging for their child (See impact statement for more details).



Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Bottles-N-Backpacks will continue to serve students in its two existing locations, develop and implement its STEAM curriculum, and serve the Ypsilanti community. They intend to write grants and apply for funds to sustain the staff, benefits, and programming launched with this funding.

Accomplishments and Challenges

Grantees in the Expanding Early Childhood Education expenditure category awarded over **730 child-care scholarships**, dramatically reducing cost barriers for low-income families. In parallel, **182 families** benefited from dedicated case management and referrals to wrap-around supports, ensuring parents could navigate subsidy programs and other community resources. To serve the youngest learners, one program expanded infant and toddler care by adding **13 new subsidized slots**, delivering more than **1,100 additional hours** of safe, developmentally appropriate care. Early assessments revealed that children in these expanded slots made **measurable gains** in literacy, motor skills, and social-emotional growth. Across all sites, curricula were enriched with culturally responsive practices and regular family-engagement activities. One program established an expert advisory committee that generated a STEAM curriculum for early learners.

Challenges

Despite these strides, persistent challenges threaten to limit long-term impact. Gaps remain in infant and toddler care, where the highest per-child costs outpace available subsidies. Recruiting and retaining qualified early-childhood educators also proved difficult amid sector-wide workforce shortages and stagnant compensation—leading some programs to worry about sustaining health and dental benefits for their staff beyond the CPF performance period. Meanwhile, though providers demonstrated strong responsiveness to community feedback, few formal mechanisms exist to integrate **parent voice** into program design—leaving opportunities for co-creation on the table.

Looking ahead, grantees are calling for deeper investment in the earliest years—both through expanded subsidy pools for infants and toddlers and through competitive wages and benefits to stabilize the educator workforce.

Community Violence Interventions

Organizations funded under this expenditure category provided “evidence-based, community violence intervention and response programs to prevent violence and mitigate the impact of increased violence experienced during the pandemic” (ARPA 2.0 memo).

In Washtenaw County, those included:

- A Brighter Way
- Dispute Resolution Center
- Life After Incarceration Transition and Recovery
- Supreme Felons
- We the People Opportunity Farm



A Brighter Way - Community Violence Interventions

Organizational History

[A Brighter Way \(ABW\)](#) provides assistance for successful reentry of adults who were previously incarcerated (often referred to as "returned citizens") through one-on-one relationships and connections to local resources. The organization's mentoring program pairs returned citizens, or "mentees," with mentors who have often faced similar challenges and collateral consequences of incarceration. ABW builds relationships with community resources and advocates to address the depth and breadth of the barriers to re-entry faced by returned citizens including housing, employment, and education. Our intent is to achieve systemic change and improve our community's well being by nurturing these relationships and educating the community on the contributing factors to recidivism (return to prison).



Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

ABW was awarded **\$250,000** from the Community Priority Fund. The organization's plan was to implement a comprehensive mentoring program for approximately 50 returned citizens each year, providing individualized counseling, wrap-around services, and resources to support successful reentry and prevent recidivism. The plan included employing one full-time mentoring/programs coordinator, hiring two part-time peer mentors, contracting a web developer to build an improved website with resources for mentees, securing supplies and equipment for a multi-use resource center, and developing a video toolkit for returned citizens.⁴⁶

The deliverables included a mentoring curriculum, a new or updated website, a video toolkit, and formalized community collaborations for processing referrals. The plan also included timelines for each deliverable, with specific completion dates for the mentoring curriculum, website, video toolkit, and referral tracking. Regular check-ins will be conducted to report on the progress of formalized community collaborations.

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

ABW stuck closely to its proposal during the performance period, and utilized every opportunity available through the Community Priority Fund to grow its practice. For example, they attended every session of the non-profit management course at Washtenaw Community College that the Racial Equity Office arranged. They met regularly with their UM evaluation lead and in between sessions devised new methods for tracking their impact, such as their quality of life indicator.

Building Evaluation Capacity

So much of the conversation regarding the success of returning citizens, and programs to help them, revolves around recidivism. A Brighter Way felt strongly that many unreported factors contributed to the recidivism rate, and that it was important to document a returning citizen's quality of life. Devising a measure to capture quality of life represents a significant contribution to the work of organizations like A Brighter Way that work with returning citizens, and give them a more encompassing measure of success than recidivism alone.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

⁴⁶  Logic Model - A Brighter Way.docx.pdf

Whereas the national average for employment of returning citizens one year after release is 34%, for A Brighter Way it was 100%, across 229 mentees. By comparison, only 22% were employed at intake. Similarly, 100% of participants had stable housing one year after beginning their participation with A Brighter Way.⁴⁷

As one participant explained, “Through continuous direct services and compassionate support, ABW has helped me tailor life plans that align with my specific circumstances, strengths, and aspirations. Returning home after an extended incarceration can be an intensely stressful experience. I am grateful for ABW's comprehensive support.”

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

A Brighter Way is a multifaceted organization that sees multiple pathways to sustaining its work. While they have principally been a workforce development program, and will continue to lean on funds in this area, they see their work expanding into continuum of care and social determinants of health, particularly with respect to housing. They are also exploring social enterprise similar to [Homeboy Industries](#) in Los Angeles through a partnership with We the People Opportunity Farm for paid internships.

A Brighter Way is very excited about the applicability and reach of its quality of life measure. This is a work product they see as scalable to other organizations working with returning citizens, and a metric that can change the discussion on recidivism and returning citizens by directing it to what can make these individuals whole when they return home.

Reflecting on the goals of the Community Priority Fund, the executive director noted,

“[The CPF] created an opportunity to invest in agencies and organizations who probably never would have been invested in to such a degree, and they were given some grace and some leeway to learn some things that went along, instead of acting like they already knew everything.”

This “incubator” opportunity, as he put it, would be wonderful to replicate in normal budget circumstances. If more nonprofits had opportunities like A Brighter Way had through CPF it would create a healthier network within the county. “So like a lot of the nonprofits that have been through this process that have grown, that are in the that intermediate stage kind of like we are, we could be helpful to some who are smaller and still continue to learn from some that are larger, and I think we can also remind some of the larger ones where they came from because sometimes they get caught up and think they know all the answers, and they don’t.”



⁴⁷ P ABW ARPA Impact Statement PEG Draft.pptx

Dispute Resolution Center - Community Violence Interventions



Organizational History

[The Dispute Resolution Center's](#)⁴⁸ Restorative Justice Team aims to address the negative public health and social impacts of community violence and incarceration. The team is part of their Restorative Justice Deflection and Diversion Program in partnership with the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office to deflect and divert people away from the criminal legal system. The program uses a **peacemaking/restorative justice approach** and process to repair harm and prevent people from entering the criminal legal system.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

DFC was awarded **\$200,000** to expand its Community Restorative Justice Program in partnership with the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office. This funding supported several key activities, including hiring and training a full-time Restorative Justice Program Administrator and a part-time Restorative Justice Program Coordinator. The organization conducted training with the Prosecutor's and Public Defender's Offices, participated in workshops on Restorative Justice, Trauma Informed Practices, Criminal Justice Reform, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. Additionally, the DRC hired an evaluation consultant to develop data collection systems and program metrics, and planned community educational forums and surveys to increase awareness of Restorative Justice practices, with a specific focus on highly impacted communities in Washtenaw County.⁴⁹

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

DRC was able to pursue its restorative justice model during the CPF performance period. Accordingly, DRC prepares the person who was harmed and the person who caused harm for sessions where both people and their identified support persons can openly discuss what brought them there, how to move forward, and be part of the solution(s). Restorative Justice approaches can be used in any situation where harm, crime, or wrongdoing has occurred, and focuses on repairing relationships between people. The nature of DRC's work with offenders and victims requires carefully structured, prolonged engagement to bring the two together in circle. For participants that go through the Restorative Justice program through the Prosecutor's Office or Courts in Washtenaw County, these cases will be placed on hold for up to 18 months - but it can be less dependent upon progress. Because of this time commitment, the demands of the Prosecuting Attorney's office and the nature of dispute resolution clashed, which impacted the office's enthusiasm for engaging with this kind of diversion.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Through CPF funding DRC hired an evaluator to develop a logic model for their Restorative Justice program. This helped the DRC team articulate the interconnected nature of the restorative justice model with larger community violence intervention goals, such as decreased violence and cycles of retaliation in the community but structured in ways that value victim and offender alike.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

⁴⁸ [The Dispute Resolution Center](#)

⁴⁹ [P DRC-Logic Model Restorative Practices April 2024.pptx](#)

The Dispute Resolution Center contracted to service an estimated 50 cases, instituting Restorative Justice processes and Peace Circle practices, annually referred by the Washtenaw County's Prosecutor's Office for deflection and diversion. The Dispute Resolution Center provides safe spaces, transportation, and meals and food for the participants of the restorative Peace Circles, when needed and requested.⁵⁰


DRC's impact on individuals and families goes beyond violence prevention. It is restorative in every sense of the word.

"The DRC staff reached out at our lowest point. Our work together brought us into direct, safe contact with the person who harmed... but that was the start of enormous relief and healing. Our child got to ask "why" and taught us bravery and compassion in response. I did not expect or believe we could reach such forgiveness, empathy and understanding with one another. Much love to the DRC Staff and those we worked with... we won't forget." - Parent

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Beyond the performance period of the Community Priority Fund, DRC will continue its Restorative Justice Deflection and Diversion Program with the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office, the Washtenaw County District Court Judges, and the Washtenaw County Public Defenders's Office to receive referrals for both deferral and diversion cases.

DRC has a 40-year history of relationships with community partners and stakeholders, including other non-profits, law enforcement agencies, and community leaders that will be critical to sustaining their work. Foundations, private donors, and public sector partners have rewarded DRC's demonstrated ability to resolve conflict without incarceration with generous support through the decades.

⁵⁰  Dispute Resolution Center Impact Statement PEG Draft.pptx

Life After Incarceration - Community Violence Interventions

Organizational History

The occupational therapy program operates in partnership with Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office. This program was developed in alignment with the Department of Justice's Roadmap to Reentry Principles to address and supplement efforts in reducing recidivism rates, especially those due to technical violations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, service providers have not been permitted to enter the jail and provide services, resulting in delayed release due to delays in completing required pre-release services, as well as a backlog of demand for OT services. In addition, inmates were locked down in cells for longer durations to reduce the spread of COVID-19, resulting in poorer social, mental and physical health and more challenges upon reentry into the community. With this program model, the occupational therapist works with clients on a case-by-case basis assessing individual needs, desires, skills and barriers to develop client-centered goals and a plan for meeting those goals. The occupational therapist works with the individual both in the correctional setting and in the community once discharged for as long as determined appropriate to meet the individual's goals.



Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

[LAITR](#) was awarded **\$142,000**. LAITR used CPF funds to hire one FTE and turn one PTE occupational therapist into a FTE. This would allow LAITR to take 1:1 client referrals from the community as well as provide life skills groups to the Washtenaw County jail.⁵¹

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

LAITR's performance period began January 2023, which immediately led to the planned transition of one part-time occupational therapist to full-time. Near the end of 2023 LAITR was able to hire a part-time grant writer, and in early 2024 it was able to run its SHINE work program. Later in 2024, LAITR's contract with the Washtenaw County Jail expanded in scope and size.

Building Evaluation Capacity

When LAITR was awarded CPF funding it was a small organization with one full time staff member. Through CPF funds it was able to hire a second full time position, and at the conclusion of the performance period they hired a third full time occupational therapist. Building out administrative procedures, including clinical supervision, was key to successful expansion. Structurally, the organization changed from a LLC to a nonprofit organization, obtained a board of directors, all of which necessitated record-keeping systems. Fortunately, this was an established practice from LAITR earliest days as a pilot project. Spreading the ethos to additional staff through the entire organization to track client progress was also key to successful growth.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

⁵¹ [W](#) Logic Model - Life After Incarceration.docx

Through CPF funding, LAITR was able to provide services to 82 justice-involved individuals from 2023-2024. For participants, they experienced improved quality of life once individual client-centered occupational therapy was extended outside jail for up to one year. Four clients who exited Michigan Department of Corrections were now employed with LAITR as part of its new work program.⁵²

“It’s a good program. I think I’ve accomplished pretty much every goal...it helped me get what I needed to do, you know, to get out of this place [jail].” - Client

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

LAITR provides a service—occupational therapy—that is in high demand across the county. Importantly, because it fills a high-need area, LAITR’s reputation in this space has grown. As the executive director put it,

“We’re looking for anything that’s going to improve our ability to keep providing the work we’re doing.”
- Executive Director



There is a particular need for **occupational therapy within the substance use** space, so that is an area of funding it is actively pursuing to meet demand. It is also contracted with both the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Office and the Michigan Department of Corrections. These contracts have not only been extended, but also expanded in scope.



⁵² PDF LAITR.pdf

Supreme Felons - Community Violence Interventions

Organizational History

Supreme Felons Incorporated is a grassroots organization located in Ypsilanti, Michigan, that takes a holistic view of community violence intervention. That is, in addition to providing supportive services to returning citizens, they also intervene directly in neighborhoods to prevent violent crime from occurring, host youth programming to offer constructive outlets, and safeguard the welfare of seniors through basic care services and community events.



Addressing community violence on multiple fronts, Supreme Felons relies on what they refer to as “the sauce” to make their programming successful. The key ingredients to the sauce are their personal connection and history with Ypsilanti, as well as violence and incarceration. Delivering straight talk to returning citizens, cutting out the jargon, and seeing individuals directly for who they are allows Supreme Felons to earn the trust of the community. Serving as a first line of intervention when conflicts escalate in the community ensures the well-being of individuals. If Supreme Felons can prevent a crime from occurring, then many consequences do not have to occur, individuals can have their lives back, and communities can heal without violence. None of these outcomes are possible without the authenticity that defines “the sauce.”

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

Supreme Felons was awarded **\$1,200,000**. Recognizing they could not indefinitely operate without writing down their recipe, Supreme Felons proposed using funds from the Community Priority Fund to systematize their procedures for intervening in the community. Accordingly, their proposal included:⁵³

- Expanding youth programming by establishing a youth mentorship program in partnership with local middle and high schools, as well as organizing and hosting events and activities for youth. The program will include assistance for at-risk youth involved in the juvenile judicial system to increase access to housing, physical and mental health care, and other community services.
- Establishing a peer-to-peer mentor program for returning citizens, including referral assistance to increase access to housing, physical and mental health care, and other community services.
- Establishing a Community Violence Response program and neighborhood patrols in neighborhoods within the 48197 and 48198 zip codes to prevent and de-escalate street violence.
- Distributing food, COVID-related personal protection equipment, and items to meet the basic needs of older adults in the community.

Importantly, Supreme Felons would also deliver written policies for their peer-to-peer mentorship program. This was not simply an accountability exercise, but also a branding opportunity for Supreme Felons to more formally write out “the sauce” that makes their programming successful.

⁵³  Copy of Logic Model - Supreme Felons.docx

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

Supreme Felons used every resource available through the Community Priority Fund to learn and grow. For example, they attended every non-profit management session at Washtenaw Community College that the Racial Equity Office had arranged. They met regularly with their evaluation lead to check in on program operations, discuss methods for tracking and documenting progress. Their team soaked up this information like a sponge, and adopted practices that improved their ability to show the impact their work was having on the community.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Supreme Felons team developed numerous systems over the project period to document their work. They demonstrated remarkable growth over that time, from tracking information on poster boards to having an entire infrastructure to capture engagement and impact. This began with a more comprehensive intake procedure for individuals returning at the Ypsilanti bus terminal, but also in-person at their Ypsilanti office. Using Smartsheets, the team created numerous ways to track their work at an individual and program level.

A more vexing problem for Supreme Felons was a product of their success. How do they measure or document a crime they prevented? Their neighborhood watch program was deployed to Ypsilanti neighborhoods with the greatest likelihood of violent activity. Through careful documentation of the routes they took, and the engagements they had with community members, Supreme Felons was able to record all of the meaningful work they performed in the community that would otherwise go unreported because of the absence of crime.

Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

From 2023 to 2024, the neighborhood watch program had **885 recorded interactions** with the community. Of these, 375 were direct one-on-one interactions, often providing service to a resident. During that period, the neighborhood watch program directly intervened in potentially violent conflicts 109 times.⁵⁴

In addition to the violence prevented from these interactions, it is important to consider the additional knock on effects from preventing a crime from occurring. Most importantly, there were 109 fewer victims of violent crime, whose lives and futures have been unalterably changed by not only having a future, but also a future devoid of the trauma they would have otherwise experienced were it not for Supreme Felons' interaction. For the potential perpetrators of violent crime, their lives have also been unalterably changed. By Supreme Felons intervening and deescalating the situation, these individuals have been given their lives and futures back by not having to through the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system in Washtenaw County itself benefits tremendously from Supreme Felons' intervention. That is 109 fewer cases it has to adjudicate, resources it can devote to other matters.

Supreme Felons' neighborhood watch program is only one pillar of their comprehensive approach to community violence prevention. They see youth service as critical to interrupting cycles of violence in the community. Accordingly, 95 youth participated in its basketball program. Similarly, seniors in the community are often victims of crime, so Supreme Felons provide services to seniors so they know the individuals helping them will not victimize them. They provided service to **31 seniors from 2023 to 2024**. They also host bingo nights for seniors and **600 attended** these events during that time.

⁵⁴ P Supreme Felons ARPA Impact Statement PEG Draft.pptx

Another pillar to Supreme Felons' work is providing assistance to returning citizens. They support returning citizens with a range of services including emergency housing, bus tokens, hygiene kits, clothing, and food cards. They have served more than **500 returning citizens since 2023**. While the needs of each returning citizen are different, they distributed 64 \$15 hygiene kits, 152 \$1.50 bus tokens, and 16 \$25 food cards. They also provided emergency housing to an average of 6 individuals each month, which equates to a dollar value of **\$11,437 in emergency housing assistance annually**.

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

An important ingredient in “the sauce” of Supreme Felons work is the trust and support of the community. Feeling confidence that turning to Supreme Felons before law enforcement will deescalate the situation and prevent unnecessary violence and incarceration is paramount to their work. They feel confident the community is with them in these efforts.

Equipped with evidence of their success, Supreme Felons is looking to train leaders in other communities in their method of violence prevention and community service. However, distilling “the sauce” down to distinct training modules will be difficult. Replicating their work will require identifying individuals in other communities who have the same experience, authenticity, and commitment they have for Ypsilanti. One key ingredient in the “sauce” is their own experience with incarceration related to substance use. Speaking from this experience allows returning citizens, or those in the community, to feel seen, or, as they put it, “I know me when I see me.”



Because of this relatability, the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department is working with Supreme Felons on a project to interrupt retaliatory violence. The program would involve working with victims of violent crime to deescalate the need and desire to retaliate.

Importantly, Supreme Felons recognizes it does not work in isolation, but has surrounded itself with a cohort of like-minded organizations committed to improving the community. As their executive director put it, “It’s not always Supreme Felons just having the ability to engage with those that’s doing similar work.” He continued, “I can name four or five off the top that actually brought us to success in dealing with different clients.”

We the People Opportunity Farm Community Violence Interventions



Organizational History

We the People Opportunity Farm's (WTPOF) mission is to break cycles of incarceration through employment, education, and healing-centered engagement. It was founded on the belief that everyone deserves a second chance. Through farming, they create opportunities for personal growth, skill-building, and a fresh start for returning citizens, empowering them to rebuild their lives while giving back to the community.

Internship Program

Our paid internship program supports formerly incarcerated people, inclusive of all genders/identities, to become self-sufficient by offering an above living wage. In this program, interns learn about workforce development (interviewing, resume building), financial coaching/literacy, community building with Habitat for Humanity, and community engagement through the No-Cost Food Distribution Program (see below). As a result of participating in the paid internship program, individuals are equipped with skills and tools to return home and stay home. WTPOF works with our interns to create individualized off ramping plans to meet the unique needs of each intern.

No-Cost Food Distribution Program

Our No-Cost food distribution program provides fresh locally grown produce to low-income families, annually from May through October. Located in the Sugarbrook Neighborhood of Ypsilanti, WTPOF staff, volunteers, and interns operate a 0.75-acre farm returning about **4,000 pounds of fresh produce** back to the community. Interns not only learn ways to become engaged in their communities, but also become active players in strengthening community support networks. Through participation in the food distribution program, interns learn about ways to support themselves and their community, in addition to learning about marketing, product distribution methods, and communication skills.

Proposal Document: Original Contract Commitments

WTPOF was awarded **\$180,000** through the Community Priority Fund. With that funding, they proposed to do the following:⁵⁵

- Compensate six (6) interns in the 2023 cohort, through our paid internship program more than the fair living wage in Washtenaw County, of \$21/hour (including FICA).
- Prepare and develop land at the current farming site for 2023 growing and harvest season.
- Identify, survey, and develop new farming site
- Provide transportation for both our interns and vegetables we sell to vendors and feed our surrounding community at no cost to them
- Provide around 7,000 lbs of fresh produce to an estimated 400 people per year
- Supporting administrative professional development for WTPOF three (3) full time staff, and training to gather the skills necessary to take our organization to the next level

⁵⁵  Logic Model - We the People Opportunity Farm.docx

Project Evolution: Changes and Adaptations

WTPOF closely followed their original proposal. They also took advantage of opportunities through the Community Priority Fund, such as the non-profit management courses at Washtenaw Community College. WTPOF regularly checked in with their UM evaluation lead.

Building Evaluation Capacity

Part of building evaluation capacity for WTPOF was recognizing the many sectors the program falls within. Although the EC for the Community Priority Fund for WTPOF was Community Violence Interventions, their work has important workforce development components that could be the source of future funding. Similarly, their No-Cost Food Distribution represents programming that has relevance to USDA and SNAP. Helping WTPOF to recognize these applications and track their work so they can pursue this funding with the right documentation was a key part of their work with the UM evaluation team.



Outputs & Outcomes: Measuring Impact

Six returning citizens completed the carefully structured, paid internship. Five of these individuals obtained permanent employment, an indicator of the program's success as a workforce development opportunity for this population.⁵⁶

As one participant noted, **"You get a lot of metaphors when you're working out here...you're like, okay, I can apply this to my daily life, the growth with produce and how it brings growth within my life on a daily basis."**

Looking Forward: Sustaining the Work

Reporting requirements through the Community Priority Fund has provided WTPOF the infrastructure to document their work and its impact moving forward. This has particular relevance as it seeks sources of funding to sustain its work. By documenting the successful pathway to sustained employment, WTPOF can position itself for workforce development funding in the future.

In the near term, WTPOF is launching a social enterprise cafe in Ypsilanti that will sell coffee so that it can continue to hire "people that our systems impacted, not the other way around," in the words of its executive director. This venture is innovative in not only community violence interventions, but in nonprofit enterprise, organizational development, and community practice. Whether it be community agriculture, paid internships, and now social enterprise, WTPOF is at the leading edge of practice in this space.



⁵⁶ P WTPOF Impact Statement PEG Draft.pptx

Accomplishments and Challenges

Grantees under the Community Violence Interventions expenditure category have made remarkable strides in supporting Washtenaw County’s returning citizens and neighborhood safety through restorative, trust-centered approaches to violence prevention. Across multiple programs, more than 822 individuals transitioning from incarceration received comprehensive reentry services—including job readiness, trauma-informed mentoring, and life skills training—with employment rates exceeding 80% in organizations that tracked outcomes. Notably, one organization reported that 100% of its mentees were employed one year post-release, compared with a 34% national average, while another saw five of its six formerly incarcerated interns secure long-term positions after completing paid internships in fresh-food production.

One peer-to-peer mentoring program served nearly 230 participants, all of whom gained both employment and stable housing within twelve months—underscoring the power of lived-experience support in building resilience. Another grantee focused on occupational therapy hired four former clients into its own staff. Recognizing that stable housing and recovery go hand in hand, one agency provided temporary housing to more than 60 returning citizens in 2024..

Beyond individual support, efforts to shift systems took shape through restorative justice practices: 50 cases were diverted or deflected from the County Prosecutor’s Office into Peace Circles and community-based resolutions, reducing reliance on traditional enforcement. Community engagement events fostered social connection, healing, and employment readiness. Even grassroots safety initiatives thrived, with a new Neighborhood Watch group contributing to measurable declines in violent crime and firearm discharges in targeted areas.

Challenges

Despite these gains, significant barriers persist. Job opportunities for returning citizens remain scarce, compounded by financial obligations and ongoing struggles with substance abuse. Social stigma continues to marginalize this population, undermining community reintegration efforts and exacerbating isolation. At a more technical level, organizations wrestled with how to document and quantify “violence that did not occur” thanks to proactive interventions, and how to reconcile restorative approaches with traditional systems that emphasize prosecution and incarceration.

Looking forward, grantees emphasize deepening partnerships with Washtenaw County to scale up proven models—expanding trauma-informed mentoring, paid work placements, and transitional housing—while advocating for policy shifts that center equity and prevention.

System-Level Findings

Category Logic Model Convening

In April 2024, CPF grantees participated in a countywide convening designed to explore systems-level impact and future visioning across three priority areas: **community violence and housing/homelessness, educational disparities, and direct assistance/early childhood**. Facilitated by the Center evaluation team, the session introduced a shared framework for developing field-level logic models. The convening marked a shift from documenting individual programmatic outputs to mapping the collective efforts, assets, and aspirations needed to create sustainable change.



Participants began with grounding activities and an overview of the CPF initiative’s arc—from initial logic model development and long-term evaluation goals. During breakout groups, grantees co-created logic models identifying current inputs, activities, and outcomes, followed by future-facing discussions about what structural changes and investments would be necessary to expand impact beyond the CPF period.⁵⁷

Thematic Breakouts & Field-Level Logic Models

1. Addressing Community Violence + Housing & Homelessness

Participants in this group envisioned systemic change rooted in lived experience and self-recognition, coalescing around a quality-of-life model. Key outcomes included ending mass incarceration, expanding mental health and employment supports, and de-stigmatizing reentry. Strategies emphasized community mobilization, dismantling institutional gatekeeping, and promoting restorative justice. A core goal emerged: shifting from recidivism tracking to holistic wellbeing.⁵⁸

“How do you quantify love? How do you quantify a hug?... We’ve talked people out of pulling a trigger just by listening—just by caring.” - Excerpt from convening

2. Addressing Educational Disparities

This group focused on ensuring every child reaches grade-level proficiency in reading, with expanded efforts to support adults experiencing literacy barriers. Key strategies included youth mentorship, culturally affirming instruction, high-quality accessible programming, and solutions to transportation and digital access. The vision prioritized racial equity in staffing, curriculum, and student experience.⁵⁹

“When at any age we’re enjoying what we’re doing, we’re going to be more motivated to continue. Joy and fun in learning create motivation.” - Excerpt from convening

⁵⁷ [ARPA Group Logic-model Presentation.pptx.pdf](#)

⁵⁸ [CV Part Logic Model.pdf](#)

⁵⁹ [AED Part Logic Model.pdf](#)

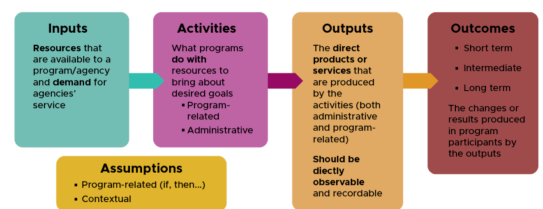
3. Direct Assistance to Households + Early Childhood

Grantees in this combined group centered their vision around unrestricted funding, community-rooted systems, and legislative advocacy. The logic model emphasized building systems of care, integrating cultural and holistic family support, and fostering collaboration through coalitions and task forces. The ultimate goals included eradicating homelessness, expanding universal childcare, and securing long-term support for domestic violence survivors.⁶⁰

“We’re not just offering services. We’re building systems of care. That means joy, rest, language justice, housing protections, financial literacy for survivors—and a holistic approach that doesn’t stop at the door.” - Excerpt from convening

Feedback

Participants found the convening energizing and meaningful. As one respondent shared, “I enjoyed the logic model exercise—it was good to do it in a group.” Another noted, “Learning about logic models and how they support the mission and goals of the organization... can be used for growth.” Feedback also surfaced the time and resource demands required for such strategic work, especially for smaller nonprofits. Still, the convening laid the groundwork for shared visioning and future policy conversations across sectors.



Reflections on CPF Process

The Community Priority Fund was an ambitious initiative on the part of Washtenaw County to direct funds to areas hit hard by the pandemic and to organizations that had never received such substantial resources before. In scaling this effort it was inevitable that there would be challenges and opportunities to improve. The following are reflections and issues that if addressed could realize some of its original goals. Reducing inequities is challenging in general, particularly because they grow over decades. Thus these examples were common across many grantees but shine light on the difficulties that must be overcome to improve overall community well-being.

Aspirations for Deeper Integration

Washtenaw County launched CPF intending not merely to distribute ARPA dollars, but to weave county initiatives into the fabric of grassroots service providers. Grantees hoped to better integrate their work with county priorities, such as through the construction of a new equity index that would be used to inform where county resources could be directed. In doing so, grantees would have the knowledge to adapt their own work to address unmet needs. However, such generative conversations and formal feedback loops did not materialize during CPF's performance period.

Varying Organizational Capacities

Although some grantees were established organizations, many were small, volunteer-led programs. Because the County did not conduct an initial capacity assessment, supports were not tailored to help them build capacity beyond what was necessary to fulfill their contractual obligations. By not scaffolding services to organizations based on initial need, there was an opportunity cost to capacity building during CPF. Time devoted to the construction of systems to collect and track program data, and to consider how their programs were evidence-based, was time that could not be devoted to sustainability. This made small-capacity organizations particularly vulnerable at CPF's conclusion. In fact, two grantees have ceased operations.

Reimbursement Model Strains on Small Providers

A recurring concern among awardees was the requirement to front expenses and wait for reimbursement. The CPF's reimbursement model placed a disproportionate burden on small organizations with limited cash reserves, undermining their ability to expand staffing or procure necessary equipment in a timely way. The reimbursement model was difficult for grantees, a reality that undercut the very equity goals the CPF sought to advance.

Insights from Collaborative Convenings

Regular gatherings—focused initially on racial equity, later on logic-model development—revealed instructive patterns:

- **Shifting Equity Focus:** While racial equity was an early centerpiece, county priorities seemed to shift throughout the performance period, diluting momentum on realizing equity metrics.
- **Local Knowledge as Leverage:** Grantees repeatedly emphasized that people who are closest to the problem are closest to the solution, validating the CPF's core rationale but also signaling the need for ongoing co-design rather than one-off grants.

A Normative Case for CPF's Value

Despite these administrative and logistical hurdles, the CPF demonstrated immense normative value:

- **Strengthening Networks:** By convening organizations across housing, violence intervention, early childhood and educational disparities, and direct assistance sectors, the County seeded relationships that have the potential to outlast individual grants.
- **Embedding Equity:** Positioning CPF under the Racial Equity Office—and partnering with the University of Michigan's Center for Equitable Family and Community Well-Being—affirmed a commitment to build a bridge to eligibility for future federal funding.

Administrative Commitment to Common Metrics

Grantees were awarded funding based on the location of their services according to either the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index or the Washtenaw County Opportunity Index. However, there was not an overall evaluation framework or common metrics to show that CPF was responding to these documented inequities. Consequently, it was difficult for the County to track how each grantee's work contributed to WCRP's overall goals. Evaluation leads worked with each grantee to develop their own logic model and impact statement, which while informative could not work synergistically to achieve broader community change.

With these reflections in mind, in the next section we make recommendations to improve how future County-community collaborations can be improved.

Recommendations & Next Steps

Strengthen Data & Evaluation Frameworks

To move beyond basic output counts and truly measure impact, we suggest that Washtenaw County's future community-based initiatives adopt a unified evaluation framework that all grantees can use. This means developing a common set of metrics—aligned with both organizational logic models and county-level goals—so that outcomes and impacts (e.g., number of students reading at grade level) not just activities (e.g., number of afterschool participants) become the focal point of reporting. Incorporating more nuanced strategies will ensure data reflects the full scope of community needs and program effects. By doing so, small CBOs can compare progress against shared benchmarks, and the County can more easily aggregate findings for documenting progress and qualifying for future federal allocations.

Cultivate Sustainable, Collaborative Funding Mechanisms

Rather than funding organizations in isolation, we recommend the County invest in coalition building—encouraging entities like Success by Six and other similarly-focused grantees to pool resources, share best practices, and present joint proposals for follow-on funding. This could leverage the relational networks formed during the CPF convenings and activate commitments laid out in the County's racial equity and public health resolutions. Proactively funding cross-organizational initiatives (e.g., joint staffing or shared administrative support) will reduce overhead costs for individual CBOs and sustain the CPF's equity goals beyond the initial grant period.

Streamline County–Grantee Communication & Reporting

Grantees consistently reported that contract modifications, reimbursement delays, and evolving County priorities created confusion and administrative strain. To address this, we suggest that when Washtenaw County funds grass roots community organizations they establish regular, structured check-ins. Embedding dedicated County liaisons with grant management authority will create clearer lines of accountability, reduce repetitive reporting burdens, and ensure feedback loops are closed so insights from frontline providers genuinely inform policy and process adjustments.

Develop a Roadmap for a Countywide, Data-Driven Evaluation

Looking ahead to future community collaborations, we recommend the County craft a multi-phase evaluation plan that sequences small-scale pilots into scalable initiatives. Early stages would focus on building CBO evaluation capacity—through hands-on logic model workshops and digital intake systems such as Google For Nonprofits—then transition into full program assessments that compare interventions across geographies and populations. This evidence-based roadmap will allow Washtenaw County to expand successful pilots, refine or sunset less effective approaches, and cultivate a countywide culture of continuous improvement and equity advancement.

By implementing these next steps, Washtenaw County can transform the CPF from a one-off funding stream into a sustainable, learning-driven partnership with its community organizations—ensuring that those closest to the problems are empowered to shape and scale future solutions.

Conclusion

By intentionally crawling, walking, and sprinting in phased partnership with grantees—moving from foundational support to co-designed implementation and finally to accelerated impact—the County and its community partners have built a scalable, equity-centered model. Several enduring themes emerge from this effort:

Tangible Successes Amid Resource Constraints

CPF grantees delivered impactful services deep in Washtenaw’s most under-resourced neighborhoods—providing food security, educational supports, violence intervention, and elder care—often with minimal staffing and infrastructure. Despite getting minimal assistance beyond CPF awards, these organizations persevered, demonstrating both ingenuity and dedication in addressing urgent community needs.

Partnerships Rooted in Local Knowledge

Most awardees live and work in their communities, bringing nuanced understanding of local challenges and assets. This proximity proved invaluable: those closest to the problems were best positioned to pilot solutions, validate approaches in real time, and build trust with residents—affirming the County’s decision to center grassroots expertise in its funding strategy.

A Springboard for Future Equity-Driven Investments

CPF laid the groundwork for sustained collaboration: grantees and County staff alike recognize an opportunity to build on these relationships for future county initiatives. By weaving these CBOs into the fabric of Washtenaw’s broader recovery and equity agenda—rather than treating CPF as a one-off grant cycle—the County has the opportunity to accelerate outcomes, deepen impact, and take it to another level of equity, provided it resists a return to business as usual.

The Cost of Standing Still

Given that funding ended in December 2024, with no possibility of additional funding, in many ways the Community Priority Fund abruptly ended. Without building in sustainability such as subcontracting these organizations for subsequent projects and supporting them through their next growth arc the County risks losing the nascent successes (i.e. implementation know-how, human capital, work products, etc.) that the CPF incubated. Investing in capacity building, advancing these innovative partnerships, and aligning future funding mechanisms with the lessons learned will ensure that the CPF’s legacy endures and expands.

In sum, the CPF has proven both a lifeline for small, community-based organizations and a strategic model for equity-centered recovery. The true measure of its success will be whether Washtenaw County seizes this moment to transform one-time relief into a sustained, deeply integrated partnership—unlocking lasting, positive change across every neighborhood it serves.

Appendix

Three Group Logic Models

1. Addressing Community Violence + Housing & Homelessness
2. Addressing Educational Disparities
3. Direct Assistance to Households + Early Childhood



Community Violence Present Logic Model

Inputs/Resources

ARPA Funding Organizations:

- We the People
- Dispute Resolution
- Supreme Felons
- Life After Incarceration
- Brighter Way
- Dawn Farms

Stakeholders:

- Staff of organizations
- Community residents
- Other grantees in various categories
- Evaluators
- Volunteers at organizations
- Center for Equitable Family & Community Well-Being
- Community members
- Currently and formerly incarcerated individuals
- Referral Partners (Probation officers, MDOC, sheriff's department, prosecutor's office, public defenders office, schools, specialty courts)

Geographic Location

Partnerships

Support Services

- Type and number

Other Funding Sources:

- Federal
- State
- County
- City
- Foundation
- Private Donors
- Donors

Challenges and Considerations:

- People not aligned with the work
- Control issues
- Bullies in the room

Activities

Employment Activities:

- Job training for sectoral positions
- Career and professional development (hard and soft skills)
- Workforce development

Support Services Activities:

- Intensive case-management
- Basic needs support
- Food access services
- Transportation assistance

ARPA Funding Administration Activities:

- Managing funding for sectoral job training and follow-up
- Allocating funds per person for employment services

Other Activities:

- Peer-to-peer work
- Trauma-informed services
- Occupational Therapy
- Conflict management training
- Restorative justice circles
- Connection building
- Peer facilitation trainings in schools
- Financial literacy workshops
- Nonviolent communication workshops
- Participation in community engagement
- Grant management
- Reporting to partners and funders
- Volunteer management
- Administrative work
- Mistake Interruption (prevention-focused work)

Outputs

Employment Outputs:

- Number of people employed in sectors (specify types of jobs)
- Number of people who completed job training
- Number of people promoted

Quality of Life Indicators:

Number of people served or referred for:

- Housing services
- Education services
- Transportation assistance
- Food security services

Outcome/Impacts

Systemic Change:

- End of mass incarceration
- Community mobilization for hiring practices and living wage standards

Outcomes Based on Lived Experiences:

- Individual self-recognition and empowerment ("I know me when I see me")

Sustainability and Movement Continuation:

- Sustainable practices to maintain the movement
- Community Impact:
- Improved health, wellness, and quality of life for justice-impacted individuals
- Increased time spent in the community and prevention of re-entry into the system
- Longer periods of sobriety
- Enhanced community connection and reduced stigma for previously incarcerated individuals

Employment and Stability:

- Employment opportunities and stability
- Support for mental health and well-being

Violence Prevention and Conflict Resolution:

- Reduced incidence of violence
- Improved conflict resolution skills



Community Violence Future Logic Model

Inputs/Resources

Support from Different Levels of Washtenaw County Ecosystem:

- Support from local government
- Support from community organizations
- Support from businesses and enterprises
- Support from educational institutions
- Support from healthcare providers

Roles of All Players in the Community:

- Grantees (as mentioned in the previous logic model)
- Local government officials and policymakers
- Community leaders and influencers
- Businesses and employers
- Educational institutions (schools, colleges, universities)
- Healthcare providers and social service agencies
- Non-profit organizations and advocacy groups
- Faith-based organizations and spiritual leaders
- Media and communication channels

Relationships, Community, and Agencies:

- Collaborative relationships between different stakeholders
- Engagement with community members and residents
- Partnerships with agencies and service providers
- Networking opportunities and community-building initiatives

Activities

Outreach Activities:

- Community outreach programs
- Public awareness campaigns
- Engagement with stakeholders and residents

Re-entry Programs:

- Support programs for individuals re-entering society after incarceration
- Reintegration services and resources

Data Collection and Documentation:

- Consistent data collection and analysis methods
- Documentation strategies to sustain the movement and attract additional funding

Relationship Building:

- Personal relationship-building efforts
- Professional networking and collaboration
- Resource-sharing initiatives and partnerships

AI Interviews:

- Utilizing artificial intelligence for interviews and data analysis

Workforce Development:

- Programs focused on skill development and career advancement
- Opportunities for professional growth and training

RTM (Return to Meaningful):

- Programs and services aimed at helping individuals find meaning and purpose in their lives

Invisible Labor Support:

- Recognition and support for invisible labor roles and contributions

Capacity Building:

- Building organizational and community capacity for sustainable growth and impact

Stress Buffering and Reduction Activities:

- Stress management programs
- Mental health and wellness initiatives

Outputs

Knowledge, Skills, and Aspirations:

- Acquisition of specific knowledge related to the program's goals
- Development of essential skills for personal and professional growth
- Nurturing and realization of aspirations and goals among participants

Quantifying Love and Empathy:

- Measuring levels of empathy and compassion among participants
- Assessing the impact of love and empathy in community interactions

Social Isolation Metrics:

- Quantifying social isolation reduction
- Assessing social connection and community engagement outcomes

Outcome/Impacts

Systemic Change:

- Transformation of systems and policies towards equity and justice

Outcomes Based on Lived Experiences:

- Empowerment and self-recognition among individuals ("I know me when I see me")

Sustainability:

- Ability to sustain the movement and initiatives over time

Community Mobilization:

- Advocating for fair hiring practices and living wages
- End of mass incarceration and adoption of restorative justice practices

Quality of Life and Well-Being:

- Improved health, wellness, and quality of life for justice-impacted individuals
- Increased time spent in the community, reduced recidivism, and longer periods of sobriety

Community Connection and Stigma Reduction:

- Enhanced community connections and reduced stigma for previously incarcerated individuals

Employment and Stability:

- Increased employment opportunities and stability

Mental Health Support:

- Support for mental health and well-being

Violence Prevention and Conflict Resolution:

- Reduced incidence of violence
- Improved conflict resolution skills
- Increased use of restorative justice practices

Social Justice and Policy Change:

- Advocating for the removal of racist, xenophobic, and homophobic laws and policies
- Removing large-scale institutions as gatekeepers of basic needs

Community Perspective Shift:

- Community viewing conflict as an opportunity for positive change
- Shifting from a recidivism model to a quality of life model



Addressing Educational Disparities Present Logic Model

Inputs/Resources

ARPA Funding

Organizations

- Foundations Preschool
- Community Family Life Center
- Family Empowerment Program
- Bottles and Backpacks
- Family Learning Institute
- Children's Literacy Network
- Hope Network
- Hutan for World Health
- Growing Hope
- Our Community Reads
- Washtenaw Community College Foundation
- Childcare Network

Community Organizations and Volunteers:

- Churches, Greek organizations, Rotary clubs
- Parents, Pro bono workers
- Family Foundations and United Way

Social Media:

- Platforms used for outreach and communication

University Partners:

- Types of support: Financial aid, Event collaboration, Volunteer participation, Offering classes

Libraries:

- Examples: Providing STEM projects, Conducting storytime sessions

Activities

Facilitate Adult Storytime:

- Organize storytelling sessions aimed at adults in the community.

Career Exploration:

- Provide programs or workshops to help individuals explore various career options.

College Tours:

- Arrange visits to colleges/universities to familiarize students with higher education opportunities.

Co-develop Literacy Programs:

- Collaborate with partners to create and implement literacy programs for all ages.

Teacher/Parent/Student Training:

- Offer training sessions for teachers, parents, and students on various educational topics or skills.

1:1 Tutoring at Schools / Through Virtual Platforms:

- Provide individualized tutoring sessions either in school settings or through virtual platforms to support students' academic needs.

Outputs

of people in adult storytimes

of people who complete career program workshops

of college tours arranged

of students who enroll in college after a tour

of students enrolled in literacy programs

of teacher/parent/student trainings

of tutoring sessions

Outcome/Impacts

Every Student Achieves Grade-Level Literacy (K-5, MS, HS, Adult):

- Assess and ensure that every student, regardless of age, achieves literacy skills appropriate for their grade level.

Every Student Finds Fun in Learning & Moving:

- Measure the engagement and enjoyment of students in learning activities, including physical activities.

High-Quality Programs Become Available/Accessible/Affordable:

- Ensure that educational programs meet high standards of quality and are accessible and affordable to all students.

High Quality of Representation:

- Ensure that underrepresented groups are represented equitably in educational programs and activities.

No Educational Disparities/Inequities:

- Eliminate disparities and inequities in educational outcomes across different demographic groups.

Reliable School Transportation for All Students:

- Ensure that all students have reliable transportation to and from school



Addressing Educational Disparities Future Logic Model

Inputs/Resources

Organizations

- Foundations Preschool
- Community Family Life Center
- Family Empowerment Program
- Bottles and Backpacks
- Family Learning Institute
- Children's Literacy Network
- Hope Network
- Hutan for World Health
- Growing Hope
- Our Community Reads
- Washtenaw Community College Foundation
- Childcare Network

Mental health support

- For staff and clients/stakeholders

Greater parental engagement/Support

- More parent involvement in activities and support from outside organizations

Funding

- Additional funding from the county, grants, or other sources to be able to continue with projects

Data infrastructure

- A standardized system to track and store data

Activities

Increase Awareness (Sharing Information / Market Programs):

- Social media campaigns
- Community events
- Partnerships with local media outlets

Advocacy Toward Addressing Educational Disparities:

- Lobbying policymakers
- Organizing community forums
- Collaborating with other advocacy organizations

Bring Donors Together (Events):

- Fundraising events
- Donor appreciation events
- Networking opportunities

Make Transportation Available (e.g., Bus Sharing):

- Coordinating bus sharing programs
- Partnering with transportation providers
- Advocating for improved transportation infrastructure

Track Participation and Progress:

- Tracking attendance
- Monitoring academic performance
- Collecting feedback to assess program effectiveness and make data-driven decisions.

Outputs

Measure overall wellness (cognitive, emotional social)

of teaching assessments

of needs assessments

Student progress and literacy skills

- Gathered through assessments

Data on who's participating in activities

Outcome/Impacts

Every Student Achieves Grade-Level Literacy (K-5, MS, HS, Adult):

- Assess and ensure that every student, regardless of age, achieves literacy skills appropriate for their grade level.

Every Student Finds Fun in Learning & Moving:

- Measure the engagement and enjoyment of students in learning activities, including physical activities.

High-Quality Programs Become Available/Accessible/Affordable:

- Ensure that educational programs meet high standards of quality and are accessible and affordable to all students.

High Quality of Representation:

- Ensure that underrepresented groups are represented equitably in educational programs and activities.

No Educational Disparities/Inequities:

- Eliminate disparities and inequities in educational outcomes across different demographic groups.

Reliable School Transportation for All Students:

- Ensure that all students have reliable transportation to and from school

NOW!

Direct Assistance Present Logic Model

Inputs/Resources

ARPA Funding

- Women & Men Working For Change
- Buenos Vecinos
- EMU Swoops
- Northfield Human Services
- WISD
- Foundations Preschool
- Child Care Network

People and Groups

- Staff of organizations
- Community members
- Evaluators
- # of partnerships

Location

- Geographic location
- Zip Codes:

Other funding

- Federal
- State
- County
- City
- Foundation
- Private Donors

Activities

Financial Assistance and Basic Needs Support:

- Rent and utility assistance programs
- Food pantries where people can access food, clothing, and other necessities
- Offer childcare subsidies, scholarships, sliding scale tuition models

Peer Support and Community Engagement:

- Peer support groups (e.g., parent groups, workforce development)
- Refer families to relevant social and financial support programs

Transportation and Accessibility:

- Transportation assistance
- Meals served throughout the day (related to transportation access)

Health and Wellness Services:

- Health services and programming

Education and Academic Support:

- Educational supports such as backpacks, supplies, and educational resources
- Totes for teachers
- Language justice (interpretation/translation) to facilitate access to educational resources and services

Systems Level Advocacy:

- Advocacy efforts aimed at addressing systemic issues affecting households in need

Outputs

received rent and utility assistance

gift cards for food

received lbs food, clothing, other necessities

received peer support

children/families who received scholarship, discounts, or subsidies

families referred to ABC programs

of bus tokens distributed

\$ for uber, car repairs, etc

Outcome/Impacts

Current

1. Improved Quality of Life:

- Increased access to quality care
- Increased health & wellness
- Increased socialization

2. Financial Stability:

- Increased affordable housing
- Job retention
- Financial assistance and stability provided through various programs

3. Access and Basic Needs:

- Food security
- Increased school attendance
- Increased mobilization (ability to connect with services due to transportation access)
- Services provided in numerous languages

4. Protection and Empowerment:

- Protection and increased understanding around intimate partner violence (IPV)

Future – Ideal state of what you want to see (ultimate results we would like to see in the field 5-10 years)

– Eradication of homelessness

– Safe and affordable housing

– Providing long-term services for survivors of DV – Financial, legal,

FUTURE

Direct Assistance Future Logic Model



Inputs/Resources

Financial Resources and Funding Mechanisms:

- Direct funding for grassroots organizations serving BIPOC – leveraging existing structures to distribute funding
- Unrestricted funds
- Taskforce
- Bottom-up approach instead of top-down with finances
- Coalitions (e.g., LatinX state-wide, MI League for Public Policy)
- Universities (partnerships for resources and support)

Community Engagement and Empowerment:

- Community-driven – Systems accountable to the community
- Taskforce and coalition involvement to ensure community representation and input

Policy and Advocacy Support:

- Legislative support and advocacy efforts at federal, state, and county levels

Activities

Collaborative Engagement and Partnership Building:

- Bridge organizations together – collaborate work
- Bringing Executive Directors (EDs) together to discuss visions and how to work together
- Coalitions formed to address common goals and issues

Systemic Approaches and Equity Focus:

- Creating systems of care across organizations
- Results by race – acknowledging or recognizing the racial disparities
- Systems that work with whole populations

Holistic Support and Cultural Engagement:

- Holistic assessments of children in families over time
- Care campaigns or cultural engagement activities – raising awareness and fostering empathy
- Rest, joy, parties – How we heal and create retention
- Celebrate each other

Organizational Support and Well-Being

- Sabbaticals for EDs and regular employees
- Leadership development opportunities for succession support and pipelines (non oil)
- Starting with CPF grantees
- True retreats – with healing spaces

Outputs

of EDs convenings – collaborative (fun & engaging) (informal)

- quarterly meetings

of affordable housing units added

of families receiving childcare scholarships

Informal evidence

- Story telling
- Poetry
- Arts

Photovoice

Outcome/Impacts

Housing and Homelessness:

- Eradication of homelessness
- Safe and affordable housing
- Updated legal protections for low-income tenants with private landlords
- Cap on housing (cost of rent, mortgage)
- More public and alternative housing options

Support Services and Systems of Care:

- Providing long-term services for survivors of domestic violence – financial, legal
- System of care with multiple on and off ramps
- Comprehensive approach to universal childcare – birth through pre-K (wider reach)
- Equitable access to affordable childcare
- Financial education
- Path to citizenship
- Money that goes directly to individuals

Political and Systemic Change:

- Decriminalization of poverty
- Racial equity across this work
- Anti-racism as a focal point
- Updating/improving opportunity index
- Immigration reform (scrap it and start over)
- Universal basic income
- All forms must be bilingual for all languages

More Information About Us



The Center for Equitable Family and Community Well-Being was established in 2020 at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. The mission of the Center is to utilize collaborative relationships and innovative practice to foster a more equitable distribution of power and resources.

For more information about our Center



Contact Us :



Email Address
equity-for-all@umich.edu



Office Address
**1080 S. University Ave, Suite 4729
Ann Arbor, MI 48109**