

\$5.2 Million in American Rescue Plan Funds Awarded to 44 Grant Recipients in Arkansas

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LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and Arkansas State University's Childhood Services and its sponsored initiative, the Arkansas Out of School Network, have awarded \$5.2 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER III grant funding to 44 afterschool, summer, and extended-year learning programs across the state.

The ESSER III federal relief funding was allocated to mitigate student learning loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and support social and emotional development. Awardees, which include school districts and community-based partnership programs such as public libraries, nonprofit organizations, career and technical programs, faith-based organizations, and institutions of higher learning, will utilize grant awards to address the academic impact of lost instructional time on student learning through evidence-based summer programs and comprehensive afterschool programs.

"Even before the pandemic disrupted all aspects of student life, Arkansas struggled to meet the demand for afterschool and summer learning programs. For every child in an afterschool program in Arkansas, three more are waiting to get in," said Laveta Wills-Hale, network director of the Arkansas Out of School Network.

"The same is true for summer learning programs. In 2019, more than 26,000 additional children would have been enrolled in a program if one were available to them. We will continue working tirelessly to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and to ensure all children have access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs," she added. "This funding is a critical resource to communities and programs across our state, and we are grateful to the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for their partnership.

"There is no doubt the pandemic has impacted student learning, but in order to assist students who have been affected the most, unified efforts of support are essential," Dr. Ivy Pfeffer, DESE deputy commissioner, said. "These federal funds will help us build that support, as key educators, communities, and faith-based organizations will partner to accelerate student learning. Our students deserve the best despite the challenges we have faced, and these programs will reinforce the commitment and dedication to student learning we have seen over the last year and a half. I am excited to see the positive impact of these programs in the future."

The 44 grant awards include the following:

Aaron and Berinda International Ministry, Inc., Pine Bluff, \$149,950

Advocates for Community and Rural Education DBA Rural Community Alliance, Little Rock, \$116,998

Arkansas 4H Camps, Little Rock, \$150,000

Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, Hot Springs, \$26,235

Arkansas STEM Coalition, Little Rock, \$115,390

Arts and Science Center of Southeast Arkansas, Pine Bluff, \$22,357

Bald Knob Schools, Bald Knob, \$150,000

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arkansas, North Little Rock, \$120,000

Brandon House, Little Rock, \$141,242.06

Carter's Crew, North Little Rock, \$148,830

Cathy's Sweet Dumplings Daycare and Preschool, Eudora, \$100,258

Central Arkansas Library System, Little Rock, \$150,000

City of Little Rock: West Central Summer STEAM, Little Rock, \$150,000

Clarendon School District, Clarendon, \$73,244

Danville School District, Danville, \$99,999

Elkins School District, Elkins, \$150,228

Friendship ASPIRE, Little Rock/ Pine Bluff, \$150,000

Greenbrier Public Schools, Greenbrier, \$147,458

Heart2Heart Connections, Wilmot, \$121,830

High Impact Movement, Hot Springs, \$149,999

Hispanic Community Services, Inc. (El Centro Hispano), Jonesboro, \$50,000

House About It Community and Economic Development, Little Rock, \$100,424

Izard County Consolidated, Violet Hill, \$150,003

Joseph Pfeifer Kiwanis Camp, Little Rock, \$114,400

Life Skills for Youth, Little Rock, \$149,999

LISA Academy, Little Rock, \$150,000

Mansfield Middle School, Mansfield, \$154,517

One Community, Inc., Springdale, \$53,710

Our House Shelter, Little Rock, \$124,534.03

Ozark Guidance Arisa Health, Fayetteville, \$135,973

Producing Outstanding People, Inc./Old St. Paul MBC, West Memphis, \$49,875

Pulaski County Youth Services-Afterschool, Little Rock, \$150,000

Rogers Public Schools, Rogers, \$125,000

Second Baptist Church, Little Rock, \$116,578

SOAR NWA, Springdale, \$150,000

Songbird Media, Little Rock, \$66,550

Springdale School District - Har Ber High School, Tyson, Walker, Springdale, \$150,000

Teen Action Support Center, Rogers, \$99,985

Tendaji Community Development Corporation, Little Rock, \$149,494

UA Little Rock Children International, Little Rock, \$149,167

United Family Services, Inc, Pine Bluff, \$150,000

Washington Foundation Lil' Jacob Learning Center, Eudora, \$49,622

We Care of Pulaski County, Little Rock, \$68,851

Whole Youth Services, Inc., Jonesboro, \$149,050

For more information on the ESSER III grant funding program, contact the Arkansas Out of School Network at (501) 660-1012 or visit <https://www.aosn.org>.

The Arkansas Out of School Network, administered by Arkansas State University, is one of the 50 State Afterschool Networks (SANs) working to promote an expansion of school-based and school linked afterschool and summer programs serving children and youth ages 5-19. AOSN's mission is to create safe, healthy and enriching experiences for Arkansas youth during out of school times.

For more information about the afterschool and summer learning initiative contact Laveta Wills-Hale, network coordinator, 501-660-1012 or lwillshale@AState.edu.