



Fact Sheet — 2025-2026 Grantees

What Is a Sheltering Arms Foundation Grantee?

In fiscal year 2025-2026, 57 nonprofit organizations across the state of Minnesota will use a total of \$546,000 in grant money awarded by the Sheltering Arms Foundation (SAF) for programs benefiting children and their families in Minnesota who are most vulnerable, have least access to resources, and are least likely to have a wide array of choices about their future. Funding priority areas are early childhood, youth development, and advocacy. For more, visit <https://sheltering-arms.org/>.

Counties Served by Sheltering Arms Grantees

Aitkin	Hennepin	Rice	* 7 grantees work on projects benefiting every county in MN * 1 grantee works in 32 counties in MN
Anoka	Isanti	Scott	
Carlton	Itasca	Sherburne	
Carver	Koochiching	St. Louis	
Chisago	Lake	Washington	
Cook	Lake of the Woods	Winona	
Dakota	Ramsey	Wright	

Towns/Reservation Headquartering or Served by Sheltering Arms Grantees

Aurora	Edina	Maplewood	Shoreview
Babbitt	Eveleth	Minneapolis	St. Cloud
Brooklyn Center	Golden Valley	Minnetonka	St. Louis Park
Brooklyn Park	Grand Rapids	Moorhead	St. Paul
Chisholm	Greenway	Mountain Iron	Stillwater
Cimarron	International Falls	Nashwauk	Virginia
Deer River	Keewatin	Northfield	Winona
Duluth	Landfall	Richfield	

The grantees and the programs supported by SAF

826 MSP (<http://www.826msp.org>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Minneapolis. Founded in 2009, 826 MSP helps underserved K-12 youth think creatively, write effectively, and succeed academically with help from volunteer coaches. It offers 5 free writing programs: after-school writing lab, storytelling and bookmaking field trips for 2nd-4th graders, the Writers' Room satellite space at South High School, annual Young Authors' Book Project resulting in a professionally published anthology, and creative writing workshops on weekends and in summer.
- Grant supports the After-School Writing Lab, which provides homework help, writing sessions, and guest artist presentations and produces a semester-end publication. It will include age-specific cohorts and a focus on writing as a community-building tool. Students practice collaboration via peer editing, explore different kinds of relationships through character development, and learn to plan and manage a larger project by focusing on a larger piece of writing rather than disconnected daily prompts.

(more)

A Chance To Grow (www.actg.org)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves 11-county metro region. Established in 1983, ACTG provides brain-centered programs and services that help children and adults, from those with developmental and learning difficulties to those who experience common learning struggles, reach their highest potential.
- Grant supports expanding SMART Steps, a version of ACTG's SMART program, a child-centered, trauma-informed wrap-around environment, currently being used in hundreds of schools throughout the Twin Cities and beyond. It is an innovative learning readiness program, and the training for it is a self-paced virtual system that teaches providers about brain development and how to integrate SMART Steps activities into their daily routines. This year, ACTG is bringing SMART Steps training to Early Head Start programs.

ACES (<https://aces4kids.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves statewide. Founded in 1994, ACES (Athletes Committed to Educating Students) has been working to reduce Minnesota's academic opportunity gap and improve the chance of success for students in underserved communities by providing exceptional math and social-emotional education through the lens of sports. More than 10,000 4th-8th graders have participated in ACES programming at schools and community centers across the state. It has the direct support of every major Minnesota professional sports team, as well as the U of MN's Athletic Department.
- Grant supports two ACES sites, Northeast College Prep and Hennepin Schools, serving 100 4th-6th grade students throughout the school year. Programming takes place onsite at these 2 partner schools, after school for 2 hours per day, 4 days per week. Sports content is woven throughout programming as a hook to inspire student interest and as a valuable basis for subject and concept learning. Over the school year, these students will receive more than 200 hours of additional academic instruction, reinforcing key math, science, and social-emotional skills beyond their regular school day.

Banyan Community (<https://www.banyancommunity.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in the Phillips neighborhood of south Minneapolis. Banyan is a faith-centered youth serving agency that works to strengthen Phillips by offering programs focused on developing youth, strengthening families, and creating community. It operates a successful out-of-school-time program that serves 150 children in grades k-college. Banyan makes a deep commitment to its families, supporting their children from kindergarten through college. In addition to its core programming, it also provides home visits and planning to get its children into quality schools, and then supports their application to college and continues to provide support to college students who attend local colleges.
- Grant supports expansion of Banyan's Seedlings program, an early childhood and family education program that serves children ages 0 to 5 from the Phillips neighborhood and uses evidence-based practices to prepare children for academic success, to break cycles of poverty. Parents and their children attend the program twice a week, in two-hour sessions with one hour together and one hour separate. Expansion will allow Seedlings to go beyond the traditional school calendar, so it can operate year-round and grow enrollment.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities (<http://www.bigstwincities.org>)—\$9,000 grant (youth devel.)

- Based in St. Paul, serves the Twin Cities area. BBBS matches youth facing adversity with positive volunteer mentors to positively impact the youths' lives. After Free Arts MN dissolved in 2017, BBBS adopted its curriculum and hired three of its staff. Free Arts of BBBS uses arts as a tool to support social-emotional development, providing arts education and mentoring for youth facing homelessness, mental health treatment, and therapy for abuse and extreme poverty.
- Grant supports implementing the Free Arts program with more than 18 partner organizations serving more than 850 children ages 3-12, and recruiting and training more than 100 volunteer mentors. The program will have 3 sessions per year, each lasting 12 weeks, often with multiple programs at each site serving different age groups. High-quality teaching artists and disciplines will be identified that reflect the interests of youth and partner sites.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities (<https://boysandgirls.org/>)—\$8,000 grant (youth devel.)

- Based in St. Paul, serves Twin Cities metro. With 13 metro locations serving kids ages 5-18, BGCTC works in under-resourced communities in the Twin Cities to provide kids and teens with out-of-school time academic, career-focused, and life skills programming. They provide a K-5 literacy program that takes a holistic approach incorporating positive youth development and social-emotional methods with literacy instruction.
- Grant supports BGCTC's K-5 Literacy Program for the Little Earth community in Minneapolis. All kindergarten through grade 5 children attending the Little Earth Club will participate in hands-on, multi-sensory literacy enrichment activities.

Centro Tyrone Guzman (<http://www.centromn.org>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in south Minneapolis. Begun in 1974, Centro is the oldest and largest multi-service Latine organization in Minneapolis and provides services to low-income Latine families in the Twin Cities. Centro's services include health, wellness, and education, including Siembra, a dual-language 4-Star Parent Aware-rated Montessori early childhood program serving children ages 3-6 that incorporates elements of Latine culture. Siembra Montessori has achieved a 100% kindergarten readiness rate since 2012.
- Grant supports a new series of monthly parent education workshops, intended to support the current student population, which is experiencing an increased presence of developmental delays. The workshops will address the additional challenges that children ages 1-3 faced during the pandemic and provide support to help address any developmental delays that may arise.

Change, Inc. (<https://www.thechangeinc.org/>)—\$7,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves the Twin Cities area and southern Minnesota. Change Inc is the product of a merger in 2019 of two community-based organizations that had been collaborating for more than a decade: Guadalupe Alternative Programs and Change Inc., both originally founded to serve underserved individuals and address systemic challenges that prevent Twin Cities families from achieving their full potential. More than 60% of Change's staff come from many different cultures and speak more than 10 languages.
- Grant supports expanding into southern Minnesota Change Inc's newest initiative, Alianza, the Family, Friends, and Neighbor (FFN) program that provides training and support for Latine providers of home-based childcare and parents of children in FFN childcare. This will strengthen economic stability as it will result in more women from Latine communities being able to work to support their families, both by removing the barrier of childcare for women and their families and by supporting women whose income comes from providing home-based childcare.

Child Care Aware of MN (<http://www.childcareawaremn.org>)—\$10,000 grant (advocacy)

- Based in St. Paul, serves statewide. Established in 1992 to raise the standards in care for children and childcare providers, Child Care Aware provides technical assistance to 14 childcare resource and referral agencies around Minnesota, collects data regarding the supply and demand for childcare, and creates and manages statewide projects. It has been integral in the piloting and expansion of Parent Aware, the state's quality improvement framework for early care and education programs.
- Grant supports advocacy efforts that support the goals of the Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce project, which primarily focuses on creating a qualified, supported, and equitably compensated early childhood work force that can support the economy and build future academic and life success for Minnesota's youngest children. While other organizations are focused on improving access to high-quality care for families, TMECW is the only collaborative in Minnesota focused on the early childhood workforce itself.

Children's Theatre Company (<http://www.childrenstheatre.org/>)—\$8,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in south Minneapolis. CTC is the nation's largest and most acclaimed theatre for young people and serving nearly 275,000 attendees annually. CTC's engagement and learning programs annually serve more than 85,000 young people and their communities through Theatre Arts Training, student matinees, Neighborhood Bridges, and early childhood arts education programs.
- Grant supports CTC's Creative Play program at the Rainbow Child Development Center in St. Paul, supporting 47 young children. The program focuses on children ages 0-5 through a trauma-informed theater arts approach focused on social-emotional development. It uses a two-generation approach, working with both teachers and parents as well as young children. The collaboration with Rainbow will provide a 30-week Creative Play residency for 1 infant, 1 toddler, and 2 preschool classrooms, from November 2025 to May 2026. CTC will also provide professional development for Rainbow staff and teachers, a family night event, and complimentary theater tickets for participating families.

CHUM (<http://www.chumduluth.org>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in Duluth. CHUM is a coalition of 40 congregations that offers emergency food, shelter, advocacy, support, and outreach throughout Duluth to those who are homeless or very low income. CHUM is a service provider for the Steve O'Neil Apartments, which offers permanent supportive housing for families with children who were previously unhoused.
- Grant supports the Steve O'Neil Apartments' licensed Early Childhood program, which provides extra support to children ages 0-4 to promote social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Their services are unique in that they incorporate intensive case management and therapeutic early childhood programming, making their model a leader in permanent supportive housing practices. Funding will help implement Circles of Securities and ECFE in their parenting program.

CommonBond Communities (<http://www.commonbond.org>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in St. Paul, serves 52 cities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Established in 1971, CommonBond is the Midwest's largest nonprofit provider of affordable housing with services. More than 10,000 people live in CommonBond housing, more than 2,800 of whom are children.
- Grant supports the Study Buddies program, a free, out-of-school-time mentorship program serving youth in grades K-5 in Commonbond's affordable housing communities in the Twin Cities metro area (2 locations in Minneapolis, 2 in St. Paul, and 1 in Edina). Youth are paired with volunteer mentors who meet weekly during the school year to develop reading, literacy, and social emotional skills. The goals are that youth improve their reading skills, are positively engaged in their learning, and build trusting relationships with caring adults.

ComMUSICation (<https://www.commusicationmn.org/>)—\$8,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in St. Paul. ComMUSICation is an intensive afterschool choral-based program inspired by the Venezuelan El Sistema program that uses music to inspire and motivate at-risk youth. Founded in 2013 and located in the Frogtown neighborhood, it serves families in a low-income area where few students are able to afford a high-quality music education. The program has two choirs and includes field trips to music community partners, mentorships for students with practicing musicians, and homework help.
- Grant supports the newly launched RISE Choir program, a free music education initiative for low-income children in grades 3-5. RISE Choir was created as an extension of the original performance choir to better support young musicians, allowing for more tailored, age-appropriate experiences. Through a curriculum focused on musical literacy, vocal technique, social-emotional learning, and leadership, the children will build artistic skills, self-confidence, and a deeper understanding of self. Grant funds will support staffing and transportation for children, two of the most significant expenses with the RISE Choir program.

COMPAS, Inc (<http://www.compas.org>)—\$8,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in St. Paul, serves statewide. Incorporated in 1974, COMPAS (Community Programs in the Arts) brings a variety of arts into schools: poetry, theatre, music, drama, visual art, spoken word among others. The program has become a model for teaching artist residencies nationwide. COMPAS's professional teaching artists come from more than 40 countries and have extensive experience reaching students of all ages and abilities.
- Grant supports an arts residency program for 20-30 youth ages 5-12 in the family intensive outpatient program at Avivo, a supportive housing program in south Minneapolis for families dealing with homelessness and addiction. The 30 families served remain in Avivo for a year, during which the mothers receive treatment services while the youth, most of whom have experience extreme trauma, are supported with various programs. Youth programming is twice a week, and the grant will support four 5-week arts residencies that will be woven into the existing programming. Both COMPAS and Avivo staff are trained in trauma issues, and the curriculum for the youth group is specifically for families in recovery.

Domestic Abuse Project (<http://www.domesticabuseproject.com/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in Minneapolis. DAP provides programming to end the inter-generational cycle of domestic violence, working with all affected members of the family to stop domestic violence as it occurs and prevent it in the future. It is the only agency in the Twin Cities that offers trauma-informed therapy for all family members affected by family violence.
- Grant supports expanding access and improving DAP's Early Childhood Program by funding staff training in Early Childhood Therapy and Emotion-Focused Therapy for Kids to better support young children affected by domestic violence. Staff will dedicate time to implementing these practices through direct sessions, parent engagement, and ongoing program evaluation to ensure comprehensive mental health support.

East Side Neighborhood Service, Inc. (<https://www.esns.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Minneapolis. ESNS has been providing youth programming in Northeast and Southeast Minneapolis for 100 years and is a hub in those communities for a wide range of services to children and families. The goal of ESNS's Youth Department is creating places that educate and empower all youth to thrive. ESNS provides out-of-school time programming at 2 community-based sites in NE and SE Minneapolis – Mulberry Junction and Luxton Learners.
- Grant supports out-of-school-time programming at ESNS's Luxton location, which primarily serves K-5th grade children from Glendale Townhomes, a low-income public housing complex located adjacent to Luxton. The program focuses on fostering personal agency and interdependence, academic and emotional support, and activities that reflect the culture of the youth in the program, such as gardening, cooking, and celebrating with time-honored recipes and rituals.

Ellison Center (<http://www.ellisoncenter.org>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in St. Cloud. Ellison Center was founded in response to the lack of appropriate services and resources for early childhood mental health in the area, and developed out of a dream of what could be. Ellison's mission is, when young children and their families are facing challenges, to nurture hope and joy and provide support to strengthen families, while enriching the surrounding communities through responsive and innovative programs in a safe and secure environment.
- Grant supports expanding Ellison's early childhood mental health program by training staff in two evidence-based models that support mental health services for young children and families: Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC) and Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP). This initiative focuses on relationship-based, trauma-informed care that is grounded in research and cultural relevance and includes targeted professional development to build staff expertise. Together, these models offer a continuum of care that promotes healing and resilience in young children and their families.

Emma Norton Services (<http://www.emmanorton.org>)—\$8,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in St. Paul, serves St. Paul and Maplewood. ENS supports women and their families who are recovering from homelessness and experiencing the challenges of mental and/or chemical disabilities at two housing facilities: Emma's Place in Maplewood, and the new Restoring Waters in the Highland Bridge neighborhood of St. Paul. Most of the clients at Emma's Place are women with large families in which at least one member has some kind of disability.
- Grant supports expanding early childhood education and parent support/education at its supportive housing sites: Emma's Place, which serves up to 13 large families at any given time, and the new Restoring Waters, which can serve 60 women and some small families and is Minnesota's first trauma-informed supportive housing development. Emma Norton Services will hire a consultant to develop the new programming for both sites.

The Family Partnership (<http://www.thefamilypartnership.org>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in Minneapolis. Founded in 1878, TFP is a multi-service agency that works to close opportunity and achievement gaps for children and families living in deep poverty and experiencing high levels of trauma by providing counseling, education, and advocacy programs and services.
- Grant supports Four Directions, an NAEYC-accredited, 4-Star Parent Aware-rated therapeutic preschool previously located across from Little Earth and now located inside TFP's new headquarters in south Minneapolis. The preschool offers year-round, full-day early education, including Dakota and Ojibwe immersion services to meet the needs of the mostly Native families who are served, along with parent support services, basic needs assistance, developmental assessments, and therapeutic education and care—all designed to break cycles of poverty and trauma. Far surpassing state averages, 100% of the program's 2024 graduates tested kindergarten ready.

FamilyMeans (<https://www.familymeans.org/>)—\$7,500 grant (youth development)

- Based in Stillwater, serves the Twin Cities metro area, southeastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin. FamilyMeans provides the only out-of-school-time opportunities for a high-poverty group of children in the two mobile home communities that it serves in St. Croix County, Landfall and Cimarron.
- Grant supports daily programming at both the Cimarron and Landfall locations, giving underserved youth access to academic support, health and wellness education and activities, and social-emotional support. This programming will help prepare youth between the ages of 5-11 for success in their middle and high school years.

FamilyWise (<https://familywiseservices.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (advocacy)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves statewide. Begun in 1976 as Genesis II for Families, the organization merged with Minnesota Communities Caring for Children in 2020, adding a statewide focus for its services supporting families through culturally competent services. FamilyWise is now developing an advocacy initiative to its direct service programs, drawing on the experiences of parents and helping them to find their advocacy voice on issues that reflect their lived experience.
- Grant supports expanding the reach and impact of the Parent Leadership Program, a program that empowers parents and caregivers to develop advocacy skills, share their stories in public settings, and positively influence policy and system decisions that affect their families. FamilyWise is creating a statewide network of parent leaders and hosting a convening of the network in February 2026. These efforts will help engage and empower leaders at local and state levels, provide resources to parent leaders, connect organizations and agencies in dialogue about the importance of parent voices, parent mentorship, and parent leadership in communities, and more.

Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center (<http://www.fwttec.org>)—\$8,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in St. Paul, serves Twin Cities. Opened in 2002, dedicated to making tennis more accessible to everyone in the community, especially youth from under-resourced communities. The center provides affordable courts, junior and adult tennis programs, and youth outreach programs. TennisWorks is their primary outreach program, pairing youth in grades 3-8 with tennis instruction, life-skills education, and academic support. Staff receive trauma-informed coaching and have access to mental health resources for youth who have experienced trauma. It has been recognized by the Aspen Institute for the work it is doing to break down barriers in sports.
- Grant supports the TennisWorks Youth Development program, a free, trauma-informed program for children in grades 3-8 primarily along the Lake Street corridor in Minneapolis, from neighborhood schools in areas of concentrated poverty. To meet growing participant numbers and maintain a high level of program quality, TennisWorks will be adding staff and increasing its after-school partnerships. Grant funds will support the expansion to two new schools this coming year.

Friends of the Children Fargo-Moorhead (<https://friendsfm.org/>)—\$7,500 grant (youth develop.)

- Based in Fargo, serves the Fargo-Moorhead region. Friends of the Children is a national organization that is the country's first and only long-term professional mentoring program, working with children from as early as age 4 to high school graduation. Their work is grounded in evidence-based research on child development and mitigating the impacts of toxic stress on a child's brain development. The professional mentors at Friends are often former teachers, social workers, and youth leaders, with vast experience with youth and families facing the challenges of intergenerational poverty.
- Grant supports professional mentoring for youth in Moorhead, Minnesota, with high-quality youth development activities. The Friends' model works within each child's home, school, and community, applying trauma-informed, culturally aligned practices to allow their youth to cultivate the resilience needed to overcome barriers.

Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (<https://gmcc.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Minneapolis, serves metro area. Founded in 1905, GMCC is an interfaith and intercultural organization that provides programs and services, including advocacy and education around equity and poverty, volunteerism and service learning, mentoring and youth development, and food security.
- Grant supports GMCC's LakeStreet Youth Labs Summer Camp, a STEAM-focused academic and recreational program for underserved children ages 6-12 in the Phillips neighborhood of south Minneapolis. It is a 5-week, full-day (9 am to 5 pm) summer program that supports school readiness, well-being, and academic enrichment to curb summer learning loss and decrease educational disparities. Daily breakfast and lunch are served.

Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies (<http://www.gtcys.org>)—\$10,000 grant (youth develop.)

- Located in St. Paul. Founded in 1972, GTCYS is a youth orchestra serving over 1,000 students in the Twin Cities. In 2016, in response to a request from parents in St. Paul's West Side, GTCYS launched the Harmony program to serve youth with music opportunities not otherwise available to them. Harmony is offered as a before-school program in partnership with Riverview Spanish-English Dual Immersion School.
- Grant supports expansion of the Harmony program, which offers high quality violin and cello instruction for 65 2nd-5th graders. During the school year, students meet 3 days a week before school, learning with talented teaching artists in small and large groups. They perform in various concerts throughout the year, including at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis and in collaboration with GTCYS' orchestras. The program is expanding to a new program site at L'Etoile du Nord school. The grant also supports a week-long Harmony orchestra camp and a week-long Mariachi camp for all Harmony students.

Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul (<https://interfaithaction.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth devel.)

- Located in St. Paul. Interfaith Action uses an interfaith, multiracial, inter-generational approach to relieve the effects of poverty, address its causes, and build a more just, safe, and livable East Metro for all. With thousands of volunteers from faith communities, it focuses on increasing economic mobility in the East Metro, activating and educating members of faith communities, and equipping faith communities with pathways for their congregants to engage in effective action.
- Grant supports the American Indian Youth Enrichment program, the only year-round program serving Indigenous youth in St. Paul. Designed for children in grades 1-5, it consists of an afterschool program and a summer program. The grant supports hands-on reading and literacy skills as part of a holistic and culturally specific program developed and taught by Indigenous educators; learning and engaging in cultural lessons and activities that explore Indigenous history, language, ceremonies, arts, drumming, dance, and humor; and, participating in activities that increase cultural awareness, social-emotional learning skills, and self-esteem.

Itasca Area Schools Collaborative (<https://www.iasc.k12.mn.us/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Grand Rapids, serves the 7 area school districts plus Itasca Community College. The Itasca Area Schools Collaborative was formed in August 2005 to bring new focus to a partnership of area school districts seeking increased educational opportunities for students.
- Grant supports the Early Edge (formerly known as Invest Early) collaborative early childhood education program, which was created in partnership with IASC, District Special Education, Kootasca Head Start, and Minnesota North-Itasca College. With locations in Grand Rapids, Nashwauk-Keewatin, Greenway, and Deer River, the program serves children ages 3-5 who are at risk of entering kindergarten without the necessary skills for success. Early Edge requires all education staff to have Conscious Discipline training (a trauma-informed approach to social-emotional learning and classroom management) in order to implement the methodology system-wide effectively. Grant funding will support providing this training to staff.

Jewish Family and Children's Service of Mpls (<https://jfcsmpls.org/>)—\$8,000 grant (early child.)

- Based in Golden Valley, serving statewide. Established in 1910, JFCS provides a wide array of services to the Jewish and broader community. Each year, JFCS serves thousands in the community in the areas of aging services, career services, children and family services, community engagement, and counseling and mental health support services. Recognizing a need for a high-quality home visiting service, JFCS connected to a national model called ParentChild+, which provides intensive home visiting for families with children ages 2-4 that supports school readiness, parenting skills, and child development, and it is provided at no charge to participants.
- Grant supports expanding JFCS' ParentChild+ program serving children across English-, Somali-, and Spanish-speaking families in the metro area. The program provides twice-weekly home visits over 2 years. For the coming program year, JFCS will deliver ParentChild+ traditionally in person, with a virtual option available based on family preference.

Keystone Community Services (<https://keystoneservices.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in St. Paul. Founded in 1939, Keystone provides services for youth and families, seniors, and those needing food services or crisis support. Programming and services are delivered out of their West 7th Community Center, three food shelves, and Youth Express sites. Keystone provides year-round programming for youth ages 5-12 at both its McDonough and West 7th sites, offering tutoring in math, reading, and SEL skills, as well as culturally based programming.
- Grant supports expanding opportunities for family engagement in its Community Kids program at the West 7th site and the Teen Tutor program at the McDonough site. They will establish a quarterly Parent Advisory Council at Teen Tutor, plan and implement quarterly family engagement activities at each site, and provide individual consultations to help families advocate for their children both within Keystone programs and at school. Additional hours of interpreter services will also help facilitate family engagement.

Mentor North (<http://mentornorth.org/>)—\$13,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Duluth. Mentor North was established in 2019 when it took over from a now-ended YWCA youth-based mentoring program. Mentor North offers one-on-one mentorship and community engagement. Mentor North is based in the Damiano Center, a full-service social service center in a low-income neighborhood of Duluth, and Damiano helps provide wrap-around services for the youth if they need it. It works closely with 2 area schools and has relationships with school counselors who help provide support to the youth.
- Grant supports Mentor Duluth, a program that pairs children primarily ages 7-12 with caring adult mentors in safe, supportive one-on-one relationships that emphasize well-being and are intended to last at least one year. The program ensures children are paired with mentors who reflect their interests, needs, and identities. Intentional partnerships with local organizations offer enriching activities like art therapy, sports, outdoor recreation, and cultural experiences.

Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting (<https://www.mnfamilyhomevisiting.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (advocacy)

- Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting represents a statewide group of practitioners and leaders of targeted home visiting programs, services, and systems. It advocates to secure statewide funding for targeted, intensive home visiting, increase political support for home visiting as a core early childhood service, and collaborate to improve the quality of home visiting services. St. David's, based in Minnetonka and serving the Twin Cities metro area, is the fiscal sponsor for MCFHV; it is a long-established children's mental health organization serving more than 2,500 children, adults, and families each year.
- Grant supports advocacy work for the upcoming 2025-26 legislative session, prioritizing 2 issues based on impact to families: 1) defending state and federal funding for family home visiting services, and 2) defending Medicaid coverage and continuous eligibility coverage for children up to age 6.

Montessori American Indian Childcare Center (<http://www.americanindianmontessori.net/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in St. Paul. Opened in 2014, MAICC offers Ojibwe and Lakota specific programming to the children of Native families on St. Paul's east side. MAICC has earned a 4-star Parent Aware rating. MAICC is recognized nationally for its grow-your-own educator training model, employing community members to teach and lead. They are currently co-located with Knox Presbyterian Church.
- Grant supports opening a second Children's House and doubling the number of children served. MAICC's Children's House program is an indigenized Montessori early learning environment for children ages 3-6 that integrates Association Montessori International (AMI) standards with Ojibwe and D/Lakota culture and language for cultural relevance and is led by American Indian Montessori-trained teachers. Children's House operates year-round with a full-day schedule and supports early childhood development through a range of intentional, culturally grounded practices.

Morning Glory Montessori (<https://morningglory.org/>)—\$7,500 grant (early childhood)

- Located in Minneapolis. Morning Glory Montessori is an all-boys, Afrocentric, Christian, Montessori school for age 3 to 3rd grade. MGM provides a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment that affirms, inspires, and supports boys to develop freely, excel academically, and become who God designed them to be. MGM opened its doors in late summer 2024.
- Grant supports mentorship for the founding staff and development of an intergenerational elders volunteer program. A former attorney and long-term Minneapolis Public Schools substitute teacher will serve as MGM's Founding Guide/Trained Assistant and the coordinator of the Mzee (Elders) Circle program. She will play a crucial role in developing a sustainable program to recruit community elders to volunteer at MGM and support the boys' academic and social-emotional development.

Northeast Youth and Family Services (www.nyfs.org)—\$12,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Shoreview, serves northeastern metro area. NYFS is a nonprofit, community-based and trauma-informed mental health and community services organization serving the northeastern St. Paul suburbs since 1976. NYFS partners with 16 municipalities and 4 school districts to provide comprehensive and cost-effective support to clients at all ages and stages of life. Support from municipal partners and donations from community stakeholders allows NYFS to remove financial barriers and provide services to many who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford this help.
- Grant supports building NYFS's capacity to offer early childhood mental health services at their clinic sites. Early childhood mental health services at NYFS will be based on evidence-based practices – Circle of Security Parenting and Child/Parent Psychotherapy. These interventions, grounded in attachment theory, support the mental health of 0-5-year-olds and their caregivers. The program aims to address the urgent mental health needs of young children in Ramsey County, a region where services for this age group are scarce.

Northfield Healthy Community Initiative (<http://northfieldhci.org>)—\$10,000 grant (early child.)

- Located in Northfield. Established in 1992, HCI builds partnerships and encourages community collaborations that support children, youth, and families in Northfield and the broader Rice County. HCI provides behind-the-scenes support to more than 30 initiatives in Rice County, helping them further leverage resources for programs that benefit youth and families.
- Grant supports HCI's early childhood programs Growing Up Healthy and Early Childhood Navigators. Growing Up Healthy supports Latine families with programs such as early childhood navigation, home visiting, family engagement, and caregiver organizing. Early childhood navigators connects Rice County families who have preschool children to early learning experiences, preschool, FFN care, ParentChild+ home visiting, and early childhood screenings. Navigators are Latine women who are longtime residents in the communities they serve, and all are bilingual. They receive training through HCI, and their lived experiences are invaluable assets to their work.

Northland Foundation (<http://www.northlandfdn.org>)—\$12,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Duluth, serves northeastern Minnesota. Northland is the Minnesota Initiative Fund serving the northeast corner of the state – it is a funder but also runs its own programs. Northland launched the Parent Aware Pathways Initiative to increase the number of Parent-Aware-rated childcare providers serving the counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis.
- Grant supports their trauma-informed care project, a program that serves children ages 0-5, reaching more than 150 providers and impacts an estimated 1,000+ children. This program increases access across the region to high-quality trainings that support the healthy social-emotional health of young children, using a trauma-informed, healing-centered lens. It also helps develop community networks to support early childhood mental health, including supports for family, friend, and neighbor providers.

Northside Achievement Zone (<https://www.northsideachievement.org/>)—\$7,500 grant (early child.)

- Located in north Minneapolis. NAZ is a collaboration of organizations and schools partnering with families in north Minneapolis to prepare children to graduate from high school ready for college and to end multigenerational poverty. Each enrolled family moves through a cradle to career system that provides comprehensive support at each stage.
- Grant supports NAZ's Home Visiting Program, which pairs enrolled NAZ families that have children pre-birth through age 5 (and in some cases, children up to age eight) with certified Home Visitors. These home visitors build trusting relationships with parents and children while guiding parents to prioritize personal well-being goals, increase their knowledge of parenting and child development, and support their child's healthy social-emotional development and literacy skills. NAZ has been a highly successful effort for families in north Minneapolis because of the combination of incorporating local residents as staff to build trust with families.

Nurse-Family Partnership (<https://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/>)—\$7,500 grant (early child.)

- Based in Denver, CO, serves nationwide; in Minnesota serves in 32 counties and 2 tribal nations. NFP is a national community health program that works with first-time families who face major barriers to accessing the resources and supports needed to achieve the greatest health and wellness outcomes. Its home-visiting curriculum is evidence based and is a valuable part of many states' early childhood systems. Using specially trained nurses as home visitors, it serves first-time mothers and their children affected by social and economic inequality, beginning early in pregnancy and continuing until the child is 2.
- Grant supports expanding the program in a new initiative to now enroll mothers who have had one or more births and enroll clients after their 28th week of pregnancy. This request will also continue to offer ongoing specialized nurse education, including the “Nursing Care Pathway on Cultural Consciousness” and “Facilitating Attuned Interactions.”

The Park Place (www.theparkplace-mn.org)—\$8,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Minneapolis. Founded in 2021, The Park Place exists to close the opportunity gap for Latine youth, families, and community members in Minneapolis through fair access to leadership, education, advocacy, and preservation. TPP believes that gaps in education are not an achievement issue, but an opportunity issue. TPP wants all youth and families in the community thrive when given the support and resources that are often difficult to access for Latine individuals.
- Grant supports staffing and program development of the EDUCACIÓN after-school program, which serves Latine children from kindergarten through middle school with twice-weekly sessions focused on social-emotional learning, academic support, and creative activities. Youth come from from nearby neighborhoods such as Richfield, Powderhorn, and Bancroft. With support from partners like createMPLS, CenterPoint Energy Foundation, and local community organizations, the program has expanded its STEM and arts offerings while deepening family connections.

Pillsbury United Communities (<https://pillsburyhouseandtheatre.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (early child.)

- Located in Minneapolis. Established in 1879, PUC operates 4 neighborhood centers, including Pillsbury House in the Powderhorn neighborhood, which includes a childcare program (the oldest in Minneapolis) and a theater program. Pillsbury House operates in south Minneapolis only blocks from George Floyd Square. Pillsbury House believes that the arts are an important antidote to trauma for the children and families it serves. All Pillsbury House employees, including the early learning teachers and teaching artists, receive trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) training.
- Grant supports Pillsbury House + Theatre Early Education Arts Integration Program, which serves children ages 16 months to 6 years. The program engages 32 children and 70 parents, caregivers, or grandparents through weekly arts classes led by five resident artists. It focuses on visual art, movement, storytelling, yoga, and music, with intergenerational events and a goal of increasing access, attachment, and agency for participants.

Plymouth Christian Youth Center (<http://www.pcy-cmpls.org>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in north Minneapolis. Founded in 1954, PCYC runs a youth program, charter school, and the Capri Theater in north Minneapolis. Its after-school program serves 70 mostly African American youth ages 5-12. It is a key partner in the Northside Achievement Zone and has been very focused on helping children achieve academic goals in alignment with NAZ concerns about academic outcomes.
- Grant supports PCYC's Bright Futures Freedom Schools, a free and culturally relevant summer program for 40 students in grades 1-5. The program uses the Integrated Reading Curriculum to prevent summer learning loss, while promoting literacy, self-awareness, civic engagement, and decision-making through activities such as journaling, group discussions, and role-playing. They also offer daily enrichment activities including arts, STEM, social-emotional learning, nutritious meals, and field trips, all supported by trained staff and interns. Caregiver engagement is central to the model, with families participating in weekly Parent Empowerment Nights, volunteering, and building strong connections with staff.

Project FINE (<http://www.projectfine.org>)—\$12,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Winona, serves Winona and surrounding area. Established in 1990, Project FINE serves families new to this country, with a focus of helping the newcomers overcome barriers so they can begin building a new life and easing the integration of these families into the local community. Its mission is achieved through a series of language and acculturation services, as well as referrals to existing services in the community.
- Grant supports the Early Learning Program, a weekly home visiting model for newcomer families with children aged 0-5. It focuses on cognitive and social-emotional learning, mental health, and parent engagement, and it provides home-based support to address barriers like language and educational engagement. The program supports child development, improves parental skills, and transitions children to preschool through a multi-method evaluation approach.

Project for Pride in Living (<http://www.ppl-inc.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves inner-city neighborhoods of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and first-ring suburbs. PPL is a large social service agency working with low-income people in 4 core areas: affordable housing, employment and job training, family support services, and youth development and education.
- Grant supports continuing the afterschool tutor and mentor program with the addition of family support strategies, deepening the academic and social emotional learning of children ages 5-12 who face multiple barriers to achieving key academic and developmental milestones. Art therapy is a part of the social-emotional learning portion of programming and has proven effective at helping children and families process trauma and build towards recovery. New this year, the program will focus on parenting support, family days, and community events through a two-generation approach and trauma-informed services.

Relentless Academy (<https://www.relentlessacademy.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Brooklyn Center. Founded in 2019, Relentless Academy provides affordable and accessible S.M.A.R.T. (Science, Math, Art, Reading, Technology) programming that includes music and financial literacy instruction for youth. Their mission is to close the academic achievement and wealth gap among families in underserved communities.
- Grant supports the SMART summer program, which launched in 2021 with 25 kids and this year will serve 85 students in grades K-4, with a waitlist. The program runs five days a week, 8 am to 5 pm, for 10 weeks from June to August, and takes place at Brookdale Covenant Church in Brooklyn Center. This program is designed to curb the learning loss that happens over the summer break. It uses a holistic, engaging, and student-centered approach, incorporating academic support, social-emotional development, opportunities for creative expression, STEM and technology lessons, and culturally relevant student experiences.

Rise Early Learning Center (<https://www.riseearlylearningcenter.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (early child.)

- Located in St. Louis Park. Rise Early is an innovative high-quality childcare center in the Rise on 7 affordable housing development in St. Louis Park, which was built by CommonBond Communities. Rise Early has joined with CommonBond and Way to Grow to support child development and provide housing, wellness, and education resources for the families served. Scholarships and childcare slots are prioritized for children from families with fewer resources and who are residents.
- Grant supports the Rise Early childhood program, which aims to provide holistic support to young children from families of varying incomes, religions, and cultures. Rise Early has developed a robust professional development program for its staff, with the goal of reducing staff turnover through ongoing coaching and training opportunities. Rise Early actively supports its staff in pursuing ongoing education through certifications, degrees, and licensure, leveraging a variety of funding to make these opportunities accessible.

Simpson Housing Services (<http://www.simpsonhousing.org>)—\$12,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves the metro area. Simpson Housing Services houses, supports, and advocates for youth, single adults, and families experiencing homelessness. It operates under the Housing First model that moves families into housing first and then provides services.
- Grant supports the Family Spirit Home Visiting program, an evidence-based, culturally tailored home visiting initiative designed to support families with children from prenatal to 5 years old. The program serves about 200 children and 155 parents/caregivers annually, focusing on promoting child development, reducing parental stress, and preparing children for kindergarten. The approach is strengths-based and aims to break generational cycles of homelessness and poverty.

Southside Family Nurturing Center (<http://www.ssfnc.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in the Phillips neighborhood of south Minneapolis. SFNC has been providing services to families in south Minneapolis experiencing trauma for the past 45 years. It offers therapeutic early childhood education, including play therapy and music therapy, home visiting services and family support services. In 2018, it identified a need for a culturally relevant home visiting program and identified the Family Spirit model as appropriate.
- Grant supports the Therapeutic Early Childhood Music Therapy program, serving 29 children ages 15 months to 5 years. The grant will ensure that the children in the early childhood education program receive weekly group music therapy in their classrooms. The center currently has three classrooms for preschool, toddler, and pre-K age groupings. Additionally, 5-10 children with a specific identified developmental concern receive individual music therapy. Music therapy has been found to be incredibly beneficial for children's psychological, social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development and can make a significant difference in their lives.

Think Small (<http://www.thinksmall.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (advocacy)

- Based in St. Paul, serves statewide. Think Small is a leading early education organization that supports families in accessing quality care and education, helps to build quality within the field, and improves the early learning system. It operates the Small Talk series, educating community and professionals about early childhood policy issues.
- Grant supports the building of a new statewide coalition, conducting education campaigns, performing family voice surveys, and advocating for statewide change. Think Small will lead a new approach to early care and education regulation and quality assurance in Minnesota. The goal is to stop tinkering with the current system and start transforming it to take the burden from families and appropriately support early childhood educators in their quality care journeys. The coalition will include parents, educators, local and statewide early childhood coalitions and nonprofits, state agencies, and elected officials.

United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (<https://www.unitedwaynemn.org/>)—\$7,500 grant (youth)

- Based in Chisholm, serves the Iron Range, Koochiching County, and Lake of the Woods County. Established in 1966, UWNEMN is a volunteer-based organization serving individuals and families in the northeastern region of Minnesota. The organization supports more than 30 nonprofit partner agencies as well as its own initiatives.
- Grant supports the Lunch Buddies mentoring program, a trauma-informed youth program that matches local elementary school children who need additional positive adult role models with screened, trained, caring adults from the community. They meet one-on-one once a week during lunch throughout the school year. The program was designed with guidance from MENTOR Minnesota to ensure a culturally sensitive and responsive program, and staff and mentors receive regular training. The program is now operating in 11 schools in Mountain Iron, Babbitt, Aurora, Eveleth, Virginia, Chisholm, and International Falls.

Urban Strategies, Inc. (<http://www.urbanstrategiesinc.org/>)—\$9,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in St. Louis, MO, serving the Heritage Park affordable housing in north Minneapolis. Urban Strategies Inc, a national community development organization, supports a local youth program in the Heritage Park neighborhood in north Minneapolis. Under the umbrella of the Heritage Park Eco-STEM Youth Incubator, it engages 5-12-year-olds in hands-on, experiential learning around environmental science, technology, engineering, and math through urban agriculture, culinary arts, entrepreneurship, and design activities.
- Grant supports the Green Garden Bakery program, a multi-level program emphasizing developing entrepreneurial skills. Grant support will focus on youth mental health and social-emotional well-being, emphasizing the outdoors at the special request of the youth participants. USI provides all-season cultural activities, such as mountain biking, swimming, canoeing, snowboarding, and time spent in nearby Theodore Wirth Park. The youth served have experienced considerable trauma, and time outdoors is a proven way to counter the impact of trauma and support mental health.

Urban Ventures Leadership Foundation (<https://urbanventures.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (early child.)

- Located in South Minneapolis. Established in 1993, UV addresses opportunity gaps in academics, nutrition, physical activity, parenting resources, and more—all with the overarching goal to prepare and send every youth in their neighborhood to college or postsecondary education. It operates a youth center south of Lake Street with opportunities in STEM and music production as well as parenting and family support programs. In 2021, UV established the Cornwell Early Learning Center (CELC) early learning program to give a strong start to children from the Phillips and Central neighborhoods. CELC received a 4-star Parent Aware rating in 2022. The children served are primarily Spanish speaking and the CELC staff reflects this community.
- Grant supports CELC's new literacy program, which provides literacy tutoring for children within the CELC and reading readiness for parents with children in the CELC.

Washburn Center for Children (<http://www.washburn.org/>)—\$12,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves Twin Cities metro area. Washburn Center for Children provides mental health services to children and their families at three locations throughout the metro area, including a new facility in north Minneapolis. It focuses on treating severely traumatized children using the model of Child Parent Psychotherapy, a therapeutic intervention for children from birth to age five who have experienced at least one traumatic event and as a result are experiencing behavior, attachment and/or mental health problems.
- Grant supports the Family Focused program, serving children ages 0 to kindergarten with social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties. It offers intensive in-home family therapy in addition to a therapeutic preschool classroom focused on repairing a child's sense of safety and attachment. Home visiting support is provided, and a new classroom opened in December 2024. Early intervention for children who have experienced trauma is critical to attaining developmental milestones.

Watercourse Counseling (<http://www.watercoursecounseling.org/>)—\$10,800 grant (youth develop.)

- Located in south Minneapolis. Founded in 1999, Watercourse is a nonprofit organization serving the mental health needs of people of all ages from communities in Minneapolis. Watercourse is committed to ensuring the staff, agency leaders, and board reflect the community, ensuring that no school-based clients are turned away from receiving services, and ensuring their training focus will include that from professionals who understand and acknowledge the systems of oppression that impact Watercourse's clients.
- Grant supports expansion of the CIRCLE, a program dedicated to healing from trauma and resettlement stress among children and their families in Minneapolis who have moved here from other countries. It is carried out in partnership with 6 Minneapolis public schools with the help of "cultural brokers" who assist with family engagement, promote self-advocacy, and help improve understanding of the family's specific situation, needs, cultural factors, and societal pressures.

Way to Grow (<http://www.waytogrow.org>)—\$9,500 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves Twin Cities metro area. Way to Grow is a collaborative home-visiting-based program whose goal is to help very vulnerable families get their children ready for school. Working closely with parents and communities, Way to Grow ensures that children within the most isolated families are born healthy, stay healthy, and are prepared for school.
- Grant supports multi-generational family engagement programs for families with children ages 0-8 in Bloomington, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Hopkins, Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Richfield, and other Twin Cities communities. The programs promote healthy child development, strengthen parent-child social-emotional bonds, improve cognitive development, build school readiness skills, enhance parenting skills, and develop parent advocacy.

Wilder Foundation (<http://www.wilder.org>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in St. Paul, serves the east metro. Founded in 1906, Wilder helps children, families and older adults through direct service programs, research, leadership development and community building. It operates a 4-star Parent Aware certified childcare program that takes a whole-family approach to the families it serves. Wilder is part of the Promise Neighborhood, an educational partnership focused on the Frogtown, Rondo, and Summit-University neighborhoods that works to facilitate a long-term cradle-to-career initiative supporting a child's life and family in meaningful, measurable ways.
- Grant supports Thrive by Five, an initiative that aims to improve early childhood development and kindergarten readiness outcomes for children. It helps parents and caregivers through one-on-one coaching, home visits, navigating early childhood education options and resources, and building social capital through group connections with other parents and caregivers. Grant funds will support the child-centered activities that directly engage parents and caregivers and their children through the Parents as Teachers home visiting model.

YMCA of the North (<https://www.ymcanorth.org/>)—\$8,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves Twin Cities metro area. The YMCA Beacons after-school program engages youth as leaders and learners transforming schools into active youth centers after school and in the summer, providing free educational, recreational and leadership activities for youth and their families. The Beacons network is a public-private partnership that includes the YMCA, YWCA, Boys & Girls Club, and Minneapolis Community Education.
- Grant supports Beacons' Culinary Arts Initiative, a program focusing on culinary arts and nutrition at Nellie Stone Johnson Elementary in north Minneapolis and at Sullivan STEAM School in south Minneapolis. Both programs are paired with nearby high schools, allowing older students to mentor the elementary students. Older mentors are paid. As with all of Beacons' expansions, this one was driven by youth interest. This program embeds STEM learning within a fun, culturally relevant cooking program. Beacons is very conscious of the need for trauma-informed training for all its youth workers, who receive continuous training through the YMCA. The program also makes use of the school social workers in the schools, when needed, in which the programs are located.

YWCA of Minneapolis (www.ywcamppls.org)—\$9,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Minneapolis. A leader in early childhood advocacy, the YWCA of Minneapolis helps develop early childhood educators and the parents/caregivers of young children into advocates. The Y also does public policy work in the area of youth development. The Y offers the Beacons afterschool program for youth, transforming schools into active youth centers after school and in the summer, providing free educational, recreational, and leadership activities for youth and their families.
- Grant supports the social-emotional elements of the Beacons program offered at the Hmong International Academy in north Minneapolis. Families are attracted to the tight community spirit and high academic standards, and the program honors other cultural experiences as well. The staff is trained in SEL and trauma-informed learning and teaching practices, and they develop long-term relationships with the youth, who stay in the program for a long time, progressing through the elementary programming to become teen leaders.