



Fact Sheet — 2026-27 Grantees

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 and Family, Friend, and Neighbor care.

Arts Us (www.arts-us.org)—\$10,000 grant (youth devel.)

- Based in St. Paul, located within the St. Paul Promise Neighborhood, ARTS-US is a community-based nonprofit organization founded in 1992 by a group of African American artists and multicultural educators. Its mission is to develop young leaders through the arts, culture, and sciences of the African Diaspora.
- Grant supports the Black eSTEAM Series, which weaves West African arts, intergenerational mentoring, and hands-on STEM exploration into a unified learning experience for 25 youth in grades 1–4 within the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood. Seven professional Teaching Artists guide students through Visual Art and STEM workshops in which clay, paint, and percussion become tools for understanding scientific concepts, culminating in an Exhibit and Presentation Night where students demonstrate their learning to the community.

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, serving 100 4th-6th grade students throughout the school year. Programming takes place on-site at these 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.

(more)

Baby's Space (<http://www.babyspace.org>)—\$15,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in Minneapolis. Baby's Space is a nationally accredited, 4-Star Parent Aware-rated child development center for families living in poverty. Founded in 2000 as an age 0-3 childcare facility for families in the Little Earth of United Tribes development and surrounding Phillips neighborhood of south Minneapolis. The majority of staff are Native American, and the program is highly culturally responsive. It offers child and family services from pregnancy to 3rd grade, including year-round, full-day childcare and public K-3 education through Tatanka Academy.
- Grant supports the program Building Parent and Caregiver Capacity, which builds parents' capacity to recognize the traumatic impact of persistent community violence and poverty on their child's brain development, social-emotional growth, and academic achievement, as well as their emotional awareness of historical trauma. Through intensive practice, parents learn specific skills for how to take care of themselves emotionally, which enables them to parent differently than the way they may have been parented.

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 and 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>)—\$10,000 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 Club of Rochester (<http://www.bgclubroch.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Rochester. BGCR serves youth ages 5-18 at two locations, one in the southeast of Rochester and a smaller one in the nearby community of Blooming Prairie. It also operates outreach programs at a middle school and at a local mobile home community.
- Grant supports continuing BGCR's Healthy Lifestyles curriculum called Triple Play: A Game Plan for Mind, Body and Soul. The program includes: Healthy Habits (mind) that addresses how health behaviors are influenced by personal beliefs; Daily Challenges (body) focused on physical literacy in the areas of ability, confidence, and motivation; and Social Recreation (soul) that emphasizes social-emotional development. The program also includes a healthy eating component, and it engages youth with master gardeners in the Club garden, where youth will grow vegetables and learn about nutrition.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities (<https://boysandgirls.org/>)—\$10,000 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.

Catholic Charities (www.cctwincities.org)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves Twin Cities metro. Northside Child Development Center (NCDC), a program of Catholic Charities Twin Cities, offers early childhood education, early intervention, family support, and out-of-school programs, using evidence-based practices to promote child development and family well-being.
- Grant supports its summer out-of-school time program, providing access to professional-quality arts education delivered through a culturally resonant model that honors who they are while building the skills they need. This year, the program will incorporate the Summer Performing Arts Program, which engages 50 youth ages 5–12 in North Minneapolis in the full production of The Wiz.

Centro Tyrone Guzman (<http://www.centromn.org>)—\$12,500 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/>)—\$10,800 grant (youth development)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves the Twin Cities area and southern Minnesota. Change Inc. is the product of a 2019 merger of two community-based organizations that had collaborated 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 the CIRCLE (Collaborative for Immigrant & Refugee Children's Leadership & Experience), a program dedicated to healing from cultural trauma and resettlement stress among East African and Latine children and their families in Minneapolis. 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, societal pressures, and injustices. With increased Latine students in the community, the program is adding another full-time Spanish-speaking cultural broker to its team.

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 Defense Fund (<http://www.cdf-mn.org>)—\$5,000 grant (advocacy)

- Based in St. Paul, serves statewide. Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota is the Minnesota branch of the national organization founded in 1973 by Marian Wright Edelman. CDF-MN is dedicated to equity and is home to the Voices and Choices Coalition for Children, which focuses on young BIPOC children and their families. It publishes the Minnesota edition of Kids Count, an annual collection of data about Minnesota children.
- Grant supports raising the presence and power of voices of Black, Indigenous, and families of color in early childhood care and education advocacy. CDF-MN will build on its engagement work with families from low-income households and BIPOC communities across the state to ensure community voices actively inform coalitions that impact early childhood policy.

Children's Theatre Company (<http://www.childrenstheatre.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in south Minneapolis. CTC is the nation's largest and most acclaimed theatre for young people and serves 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>)—\$8,000 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 for youth to improve their reading skills, stay positively engaged in their learning, and build trusting relationships with caring adults.

ComMUSICation (<https://www.commusicationmn.org/>)—\$10,000 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.

Divine Konnections, Inc. (<https://www.divinekonnections.org/>)—\$11,200 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Duluth, Divine Konnections Inc. (DKI) is led by a BIPOC woman who is committed to transforming lives and creating divine connections, specifically targeting BIPOC young mothers and families. Their approach involves partnering with families to help them overcome barriers, identify strengths and goals, and ultimately foster independence within a supportive community.
- Grant supports preparing educators at Heather's Happy Days Daycare, located in the Diver Morning Sky Hope & Healing Center. Funds will directly support addressing behavioral needs through staff development and parent-child programming, focusing on infants and toddlers who experience significant social-emotional challenges rooted in trauma, poverty, and chronic stress.

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

- Located in Minneapolis. DAP provides programming to end the intergenerational 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.

Ed Allies (edalliesmn.org)—\$10,000 grant (advocacy)

- Located in Minneapolis. EdAllies operates from the belief that equitable early childhood education requires attention to two connected realities: children must be able to get in the door, and once inside, they must be safe and supported.
- Grant supports advocacy and communication efforts to bring EdAllies' combination of policy expertise, community voice, research capacity, and communications reach to early childhood advocacy.

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>)—\$10,000 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/>)—\$10,000 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. Collaborations with 4-H and other community partners further expand opportunities in areas like gardening, crafts, and cultural arts. New this year will be a partnership with Zephyr Theatre for drama/storytelling programming.

First Children's Finance (<https://www.firstchildrensfinance.org>)—\$12,500 grant (advocacy)

- Located in Minneapolis, serves statewide. FCF is a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that lends capital exclusively to childcare businesses. With their national headquarters in Minnesota, they work on initiatives and projects across the country. They provide financial and business assistance to high-quality childcare businesses serving low- and moderate-income families.
- Grant supports continuing an initiative to provide advocacy training to Black, Indigenous, and providers of color in the state. FCF's long-term goal is to ensure BIPOC childcare providers are

heard by policymakers regarding systemic barriers to successful business ownership. The program includes in-depth trainings on policy, legislative tracking, and messaging; a “Day on the Hill” with facilitated meetings with elected officials; and a follow-up workshop to discuss post-legislative-session communication.

Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center (<http://www.fwtec.org>)—\$10,000 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/>)—\$8,000 grant (youth development)

- 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/>)—\$15,000 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 Minneapolis Crisis Nursery (www.crisisnursery.org)—\$15,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Minneapolis, serving families in crisis since 1983. Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery believes that consistent, trusted relationships are the most powerful tool available for disrupting cycles of poverty and adversity in a child's earliest years. That conviction is the foundation of its Targeted Home Visiting program.
- Grant supports the delivery of the Targeted Home Visiting program, serving over 60 families and 76 children in Hennepin County. Educators deliver home visits using Parent as Teachers and Mothers and Babies curricula focusing on parent-child interaction, child development coaching, developmental screening, and connection to resources.

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

- 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.

Hispanic Outreach of Goodhue County (www.hispanicoutreach.org)—\$15,000 grant (youth devel.)

- Based in Red Wing, serves Goodhue County. Created in 2006 to target the needs of the county's rapidly growing Hispanic population, HOGC serves the Latinx community through support services including mental health, advocacy, and education to ease their integration into the community while preserving their culture. HOGC operates the Youth and Family Services after-school and mentoring program at two Red Wing schools for Latinx students in grades 5-12. HOGC is the only organization serving the Latinx population in this part of the state.
- Grant supports HOGC's Youth & Family Program for grades 5-7, an after-school program for Hispanic students at Twin Bluff Middle School in Red Wing. The program offers individual and group mentoring for social, emotional, and academic development. It serves as an intervention and development tool for the students, helping them acquire and utilize the necessary skills and strategies to reach their full potential.

Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul (<https://interfaithaction.org/>)—\$12,500 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.

Jeremiah Program (<https://jeremiahprogram.org/campuses/rochester-southeast-mn/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Located in Rochester. The Jeremiah Program was founded in Minneapolis in 1993, and in recent years has expanded nationally; in 2020, JP established the Rochester campus to serve Rochester and southeastern Minnesota. JP's mission is to disrupt the cycle of poverty for single mothers and their children, two generations at a time. The organization believes that no mother should have to make the untenable choice between investing in herself or supporting her children, so JP provides the necessary support for moms in pursuit of economic mobility, including providing transitional housing for those who need it on 9 campuses nationwide. The Rochester program serves 40 single mothers and their children. The campus includes an on-site childcare center operated by Head Start with a capacity to serve 68 children.
- Grant supports expansion of its on-site mental health services through two partnerships: Fernbrook, which would embed clinicians directly in classrooms two to three times per week for observation, assessment, and individualized therapeutic support; and Coping Copilots, providing child life services as an immediate bridge for children experiencing acute trauma while awaiting longer-term care.

Liberty Community Church (<https://libertychurchmpls.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in north Minneapolis. Liberty (formerly Kwanzaa Community Church) opened as the first African American led Presbyterian congregation in Minnesota in 2002. Its mission promotes community, justice, social change, and empowerment for the children and families of north Minneapolis. The church operates the 21st Century Academy, a year-round afterschool program for grades K-12. In 2019, Liberty created a structured program for the younger children, ages 5-12, with a new program element called Shared Experiences, which focuses on relationships between youth participants and caring adults.
- Grant supports continuing to expand Liberty's program for the younger children, using a math curriculum called Prodigy Math Game. The curriculum is aligned with Minnesota Academic Standards in Mathematics. The staff of 21st Century Academy is trained in the curriculum and reinforces math concepts through experiential and culturally appropriate learning. Other quality core programming in the 21st Century includes STEM, arts, mindfulness, and community service.

Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota (<https://lssmn.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in St. Paul, serves statewide. Begun in 1865, LSS is one of Minnesota's largest nonprofit social service organizations, providing a comprehensive range of innovative services in all 87 counties. This grant will serve its Early Learning Center (ELC) in St. Paul.
- Grant supports weekly music enrichment delivered by an instructor from Walker West Music Academy, a St. Paul institution rooted in African American cultural experience. The ELCs serve a population that is 93% BIPOC, with many children navigating trauma and chronic stress at the

earliest stages of development. The program's trauma-informed approach integrates therapeutic support from mental health, occupational, and speech therapists alongside classroom instruction. Music enrichment is a current programming gap and represents an accessible, developmentally appropriate tool for building regulation, communication, and connection.

Mentor North (<http://mentornorth.org/>)—\$10,000 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 Prenatal to Three Coalition —\$7,500 grant (advocacy)

(<https://www.childrensdefense.org/cdf-in-the-states/minnesota/minnesota-prenatal-to-three-pn-3-coalition/>)

- The Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition is built on the conviction that children facing racial, geographic, and economic inequities are the right starting point for policy, and that centering their needs is the path to better outcomes for all Minnesota children. As the state's lead cross-sector advocacy coalition for infants, toddlers, and families, the Coalition advances this vision through relationship-based advocacy at the state and federal levels and by educating policymakers about programs that give children a strong foundation in their earliest years.
- Grant supports two primary activities: sponsoring a 2027 Legislators Academy for newly elected and returning lawmakers, and advocating to defend and expand funding across three domains: health and early childhood mental health, early care and learning, and family strengths and economics.

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.

Northeast Youth and Family Services (www.nyfs.org)—\$15,000 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.

Plymouth Christian Youth Center (<http://www.pcy-mpls.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 Friendship (<http://www.projectfriendshipmentoring.org/>)—\$8,000 grant (youth development)

- Located in Northfield. Originating in 1965, PF provides mentoring relationships with college students from St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges, serving children in 2nd-7th grade from the Northfield School District identified as needing a mentor. Half the children served are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and 15% are Latino or African American in a community where the total population is 3.8% Latino and .8% African American. Youth are matched with mentors from similar backgrounds or with similar interests, with a focus on building confidence, inspiring character, and creating connections.
- Grant supports continuation of a new CARES (promoting Compassion, Awareness, Respect, Empowerment, and Support) team to help create a bridge to post-Covid functioning. A key focus of this effort is the emotional wellness of both mentees and mentors including additional trauma-informed training for mentors. The program enlists the aid of school social workers at the middle schools attended by many of the youth. Families will also be engaged through group activities.

Relentless Academy (<https://www.relentlessacademy.org/>)—\$12,500 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.

Saint Paul Urban Tennis (<https://www.stpaulurbantennis.org/>)—\$7,500 grant (youth development)

- Located in the diverse East side of St. Paul, established in 1991, Saint Paul Urban Tennis was established in 1991 by a group of tennis enthusiasts and community leaders with a shared vision to transform underserved youth in their community. The program has served over 3,000 participants and has grown to be a year-round youth development program.
- Grant supports the Summer Enrichment Series, serving over 180 youth, pairing weekly tennis instruction with distinct enrichment themes, including cooking, visual art, wildlife education, Muay Thai, leadership development, STEM, and basketball, creating an integrated learning experience that builds skill, identity, and connection simultaneously. Central to the model is a team of teen and young adult Youth Coaches, 70% of whom are former Saint Paul Urban Tennis participants themselves. These coaches are not just instructors; they are neighborhood role models whose presence communicates to younger youth that belonging and leadership are possible for them, too. All programming is anchored by the organization's SPIRIT framework: service, perseverance, integrity, responsibility, imagination, and teamwork.

ServeMinnesota (<http://www.serveminnesota.org>)—\$12,500 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Minneapolis, serves statewide. Launched in 1994 as the Minnesota Commission on National and Community service, ServeMinnesota oversees Minnesota's AmeriCorps programs and is involved in several initiatives focused on closing the achievement gap in Minneapolis and St. Paul. ServeMN was the first in the nation to develop the Reading Corps program, which has since expanded to 13 other states. Its Early Learning Corps provides high-quality Pre-K education and literacy- and math-rich learning environments to young children who otherwise couldn't access it.
- Grant supports expanding support for children from birth to 5 in rural counties within the West Central region of Minnesota. Reading Corps uses a curriculum called "Talk, Read, Write, Count," which includes a strategy to engage families by sending home a bag filled with supplies to implement the curriculum. Materials are specific to a child's age, and childcare programs also take a family's interests into account. The tutors receive training in both social-emotional learning (SEL) and trauma-informed practices.

Simpson Housing Services (<http://www.simpsonhousing.org>)—\$12,500 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.

St. David's Center (<http://www.stdavidscenter.org/>)—\$12,500 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Minnetonka, serves the Twin Cities metro area. St. David's is a long-established children's mental health organization serving more than 2,500 children, adults, and families each year. Several years ago, St. David's launched the Family Place program in St. David's Harmon Center in downtown Minneapolis. The center especially reaches out to East African families as an expansion of work around autism in that community. The Family Place works in both classroom and home settings with children who either have a mental health diagnosis or are in a high stress environment to help cultivate critical skills that are the foundation of early learning and kindergarten success.
- Grant supports improving child readiness by bookending the day treatment classroom and home-based interventions with pre- and post-family engagement. Afterward, it will provide weekly skill development or outpatient psychotherapy as children transition out of the classroom and into kindergarten. Providers in this program are culturally diverse and are part of the different cultural communities that they serve.

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.

This Is Me (www.idoexist.org)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)

- Based in Northfield, serves the 32 counties covering southern Minnesota. This is Me believes every young person within the foster care system deserves to see themselves reflected in a world full of possibilities. They are on a mission to empower youth through mentorship, creative expression, and community connection..
- Grant supports one-to-one trauma-informed mentoring for 130 foster youth ages 7–12 across 32 counties in Southern Minnesota, matching youth and mentors not by availability but by shared interests, personality, and lived experience. This Is Me's rural reach, intentional matching model, and partnerships with county child protection systems give it access to youth who rarely appear in philanthropic pipelines. SAF's investment will be matched through Minnesota Youth Intervention Program funding, doubling the impact.

United Way of Northeastern Minnesota (<https://www.unitedwaynemn.org/>)—\$10,000 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.

Walker West Music Academy (<http://www.walkerwest.org/>)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in St. Paul, serves St. Paul and Minneapolis. Established in 1988, Walker West may be the oldest community music school in the nation founded by African American musicians. It is an out-of-school-time, nonprofit music school based in the African American community in St. Paul that teaches instrumental and vocal music to students ages 5 to adult. It teaches all styles of music, but is especially well-known for jazz, gospel, and other styles of improvisational music. It provides affordable, quality music instruction inspired by the African American cultural experience. Many of its students have gone on to study at top music conservatories and perform professionally.
- Grant supports an Afrocentric early childhood music program, created by Walker West, to Phyllis Wheatley Community Center in Minneapolis and St. Peter Claver Catholic School in St. Paul. Through songs, playing instruments, creative movement, visual arts, and literature, children learn about musical concepts and boost their social-emotional development. The curriculum is trauma-informed. Classes are 30 minutes weekly and held in 5 classrooms between the 2 schools.

Way to Grow (<http://www.waytogrow.org/>)—\$10,000 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.

West Central Initiative (<https://www.wcif.org>)—\$12,000 grant (early childhood)

- Based in Fergus Falls, West Central Initiative has served 9 counties (Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse and Wilkin) as well as White Earth Nation to shape a stronger region. As a regional community foundation and economic development district, WCI invests in people, communities, and systems that make west central Minnesota vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable.
- Grant supports training events and implementation of the Conscious Discipline model. Conscious Discipline is a research-based social-emotional learning framework built on caregivers learning to recognize and regulate their own emotional state first, creating the conditions for children to build executive functioning, empathy, and healthy relationships. Over three years, WCI has embedded this framework across its nine-county rural region through training events, a 12-member Action Team, and a statewide network of 50 Endorsed Facilitators authorized to train within their own organizations.

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.