



Blue & You
FOUNDATION
FOR A HEALTHIER ARKANSAS
An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blue & You Foundation awards first Rapid-Response COVID-19 Relief Program grants; still taking applications

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (April 24, 2020) – The Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas has awarded the first 10 grants in its Rapid-Response COVID-19 Relief program, which will provide up to \$1.7 million in grants to organizations in Arkansas working to prevent the spread of the virus or helping communities deal with its consequences.

Rapid-Response COVID-19 Relief grants were awarded to:

- **University of Arkansas Foundation, Inc. (UAMS), Little Rock (\$150,000)** – to help secure personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves, gowns and masks, as well as thermometers; to dispatch mobile screening, testing and population monitoring to rural communities; and to provide timely, accurate education and information to employees, patients and the public.
- **Jefferson Hospital Association, Pine Bluff (\$122,093)** – to help Jefferson Regional Medical Center provide rapid COVID-19 testing to 1,500 at-risk individuals and provide 94 pulse oximeters for patients testing positive in the southeastern counties of the state.
- **Northeast Arkansas Children's Advocacy Center, Jonesboro (\$20,000)** – to provide emergency relief to victims of physical or sexual abuse through the purchase of PPE supplies; mental health therapist salaries; cleaning supplies; food; clothing and blankets for children; and gas cards for families traveling to the center for help.
- **Oasis of Northwest Arkansas, Bella Vista (\$15,000)** – to expand transitional living services to meet the increased demand in the state for housing and job training for the vulnerable in recovery from substance abuse or domestic violence.

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- **Ronald McDonald House Charities of Arkansas, Little Rock (\$15,000)** – to help pay for meal bags and hygiene items to be delivered daily to families of children in Neonatal Intensive Care Units in local hospitals.
- **Boys & Girls Club of the Arkansas River Valley, Russellville (\$10,000)** – to provide health, hygiene and educational materials to low-income, at-risk youth by distributing packets to community residents.
- **Paragould School District, Paragould (\$9,000)** – to provide nutritious food backpacks to students weekly and supply at-risk students with needed school supplies as they continue learning using alternate methods of instruction.
- **Family Violence Prevention, Batesville (\$5,000)** – to purchase emergency essentials such as cleaning supplies, gloves, masks, storage bags, food, thermometers and baby wipes to provide safe services to domestic violence victims during the pandemic.
- **Fort Smith Children’s Emergency Shelter, Fort Smith (\$5,000)** – to assist with the budget for food, cleaning supplies and health-related needs of the children served by the shelter.
- **Great River Charitable Clinic, Blytheville (\$5,000)** – to expand primary care and prescription coverage by telemedicine for patients of the clinic in Mississippi County.

Any 501(c)(3) public charity, public school, governmental agency (city, county, state), nonprofit hospital or church in Arkansas is eligible to apply. Grants are not made to individuals. Applications must be submitted online at www.BlueAndYouFoundationArkansas.org. Applying organizations may request a grant ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000. The Foundation will review applications and make funding decisions weekly. Grants not approved immediately each week will be held for consideration for funding in later weeks.

The Blue & You Foundation also recently donated a total of \$500,000 to three food distribution hubs and 17 United Way organizations to address food insecurity statewide, as well as \$150,000 to the Arkansas Community Foundation for its COVID-19 relief fund.

“The Blue & You Foundation recognizes the tremendous health, economic and social needs created by the coronavirus pandemic, and we want to help eligible organizations lessen the consequences of the virus on the individuals, families and communities they serve,” said Patrick O’Sullivan, executive director of the Blue & You Foundation.

“Whether from our own personal experiences or from what we see and hear in the news each day, it’s clear that the coronavirus pandemic has become not just a public health crisis

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but also an economic and social crisis that's impacting every part of our lives," said Curtis Barnett, Arkansas Blue Cross president and CEO. "As we have for more than 70 years, we're here for Arkansans, providing critical funds for our communities. We are working closely with our customers and state agencies to monitor needs and respond."

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The Blue & You Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, serves the state of Arkansas and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. In its 19 years of operation, the Blue & You Foundation has awarded more than \$36 million to more than 1,900 health-improvement programs in Arkansas. Founded in 1948, Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, is the largest health insurer in Arkansas. Arkansas Blue Cross and its affiliates have more than 3,000 employees. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association is comprised of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans that collectively provide healthcare coverage for nearly 106 million members – one in three Americans.