



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Blue & You Foundation awards new Rapid-Response COVID-19 Relief grants**

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (April 29, 2020)** – The Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas has awarded nine additional 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 coronavirus or helping communities deal with its effects.

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

- **Arkansas Hospice, Inc., Little Rock (\$148,715)** – to provide safe delivery of healthcare-related services to hospice and palliative care patients and families and support social distancing for remote workers by using a new IT platform for telehealth. This solution also builds a new, long-term, sustainable model for patients and families in a 43-county service area in Arkansas.
- **Mercy Health Foundation Northwest Arkansas, Rogers (\$147,860)** – to convert 29 rooms to airborne infection isolation rooms that will create a crucial barrier to help protect patients, healthcare workers and the community from the spread of the coronavirus.
- **Arkansas Rural Health Partnership, Lake Village (\$136,400)** – to enable member hospitals to provide quality and specialty care via telehealth to COVID-19 patients throughout south Arkansas. Funding will be used to purchase telehealth equipment and supplies for all participating sites.
- **St. Bernards Development Foundation, Jonesboro (\$126,705)** – to convert emergency department treatment rooms into “negative-pressure” rooms for improved infection control and respiratory treatment and to purchase testing equipment for faster diagnosis and treatment of patients who have COVID-19 symptoms.
- **White River Health System, Batesville (\$112,000)** – to expand telehealth services to COVID-19 patients and high-risk patients who have chronic diseases by implementing remote patient monitoring in north central Arkansas.

- **University of Arkansas Foundation (UAMS), Little Rock (\$60,848)** – to support the UAMS COVID-19 Mobile Triage project to expand access to COVID-19 screening/testing, particularly in underserved Arkansas communities and rural areas that lack adequate testing resources. Funding will be used to purchase a van to support a permanent mobile triage unit, allowing a continuous deployment schedule to reach more Arkansans.
- **The CALL, Little Rock (\$8,000)** – to purchase technology to establish online training and support groups during the pandemic for foster families and prospects, and to ensure continued communication among all participants in the foster care system.
- **Boys & Girls Club of Benton County, Bentonville (\$5,152)** – to purchase personal protective equipment and implement more robust cleaning and sanitizing procedures to keep its member children and staff safe.
- **Holy Sews, Inc. Little Rock (\$5,000)** – to produce 2,500 protective cloth masks for distribution to healthcare workers, police officers, grocery store workers and nursing home employees.

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 [BlueAndYouFoundationArkansas.org](http://BlueAndYouFoundationArkansas.org). Applicants may request a grant ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000. The Foundation will review applications and make funding decisions weekly. Pending grant requests will be held for consideration until final decisions are made.

“The first phase of our crisis funding was to help Arkansans suffering from food insecurity, by providing \$500,000 to three large food distributions hubs and the 17 United Way organizations in the state, as well as \$150,000 to the Arkansas Community Foundation for its COVID-19 relief fund,” said Patrick O’Sullivan, executive director of the Blue & You Foundation. “We now are focusing our grants program on organizations working to help with prevention, testing and treatment of the coronavirus.”

“As we have for more than 70 years, we’re here for Arkansans, providing critical funds for our communities,” said Curtis Barnett, Arkansas Blue Cross president and chief executive officer. “We are working closely with our customers and state agencies to monitor needs and respond.”