

For Immediate Release
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United Way of Southwestern Indiana Awards Empowering Employment Grants Nearly \$1 million awarded to 5 local groups who are addressing barriers to employment.

Evansville, IN – United Way of Southwestern Indiana (UWSWI) today announced distribution of nearly \$1 million in grant funds as part of their Empowering Employment Pathways to Potential initiative.

Data from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) identified multiple census tracts in Evansville and large swaths of bordering counties as “distressed communities” due to the high rate of prime-age workers (25-54 years old) not working. Lack of childcare, lack of transportation, and lack of affordable housing were often cited as barriers which prevent local workers from getting or keeping a good, stable job.

The following grant recipients demonstrated their ability to directly affect and reduce these barriers to employment for people in Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Spencer Counties and create tangible, lasting change for low-income populations and historically marginalized groups.

ARK Crisis Children’s Center is awarded \$332,940 to expand Ark’s Working Parents Program. This program provides childcare based on when a family needs it with prioritization given to those experiencing active crisis, homelessness, and DCFS involvement. Flexible and reliable childcare options allow parents to work consistently and maintain long-term employment while ensuring the safety of their children.

Carver Community Organization is awarded \$231,060 to increase the number of childcare spaces available. Many families who use childcare services at Carver are employed in healthcare, food service, industrial, or retail positions. They struggle to find quality childcare that matches their work hours and the age of their children. Through this grant, Carver Community Organization will gain the ability to provide care for more children 6 weeks to 12-years-old, Monday through Friday, from 2:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Grow Southwest Indiana Workforce Board is awarded \$165,000 to support neighborhood-based employment assistance in Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Spencer Counties through Neighborhood Employment Navigators (NENs). Services such as resume writing, securing government-issued ID, assistance with language and cultural barriers, and navigating job opportunities for those with felony convictions are intended to help clients who do not qualify for government assistance through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) but have significant barriers to employment. This grant funding makes it possible for neighborhood navigators to have designated locations close to their clients’ homes. This place-based strategy is proven to increase enrollment, retention, and follow-through from those needing help.

Missing Pieces Community Development Corporation is awarded \$125,000 to support their worksite transportation program. The program provides free, daily bus/van transportation to more than 70 worksites in the region enabling people to secure and maintain stable employment. Many program participants do not have a personal vehicle, share a vehicle with others, are unable to obtain a driver's license, or need transportation between adjoining counties. Vehicles are accessible to those with mobility limitations.

Legal Aid Society of Evansville is awarded \$11,000 to upgrade software legally required for processing expungements and storing protected client information. The purchase and installation of this software will allow Legal Aid to more quickly address client cases, increase the number of clients served, and improve the process for everyone involved. (Expungement is the legal process where an arrest, charge or conviction is completely removed from your record.)

United Way of Southwestern Indiana's Pathway Grants are intended to address root causes of poverty and are made possible through the generous donations of individuals and businesses in our community. To support this work, please visit unitedwayswi.org/give.

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United Way envisions communities where all individuals and families have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The nonprofit organization serves at the center of a network of partners and programs who are working to improve the upward mobility of low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families in Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Spencer Counties. To learn more about United Way's work, visit unitedwayswi.org.