

Prevention in Kansas

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DCF & Providers: Partnering for children under the age of one

Children under the age of one are the most vulnerable populations. Providing families with services and supports early may help prevent future maltreatment.

Secretary Laura Howard and Deputy Secretary Tanya Keys encourage DCF to refer families with children under the age of one to parent skill-building agencies which include infant-toddler services or home visitation services.

“Science tells us so much about the importance of early brain development. Equipping parents with the necessary skills to care for and nurture their children is one of the most important things we can do as an agency to support families.”

Referrals can be made to Family First partners offering parent skill-building programs or to community provider agencies offering these parent supports.

Kristalle Hedrick, interim director of safety and protection says she sees stronger partnerships created through this practice between DCF and the parent skill building agencies and collaboration around engagement of families.

“Making a referral really isn't enough, we need to collaborate with providers to ensure that they are able to get into the home, engage with the family and ensure the service is meeting the needs of the family in a way that works for them and has the desired impact.”

DCF continues to offer Safe Sleep education to parents, partners, stakeholders and staff as a continued effort to reduce the number of SIDS and other sleep related deaths. Safe Sleep classes are offered virtually. October is SIDS Awareness month and the agency will be posting social media messages to educate followers. "Our providers are welcome to share our social posts this October to further educate caregivers about safe sleeping practice," said Kaleena Erwin, DCF training and curriculum specialist and Safe Sleep program lead.

Contact kaleena.erwin@ks.gov to inquire about Safe Sleep training for your agency. Visit [issue 03](#) for more info about Safe Sleep.

TANF Grant Spotlights: After school programs and in-school services

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, or TANF program, are block grants supplied to states by the Office of Family Assistance, an office of the Administration for Children & Families. Enacted in 1996, these grants are designed to help families achieve self-sufficiency. Within the Kansas Department for Children and Families, TANF grants are managed by the Economic Support Services division.

States are meant to use federal TANF funds with their own state funds to meet the four purposes set out in the 1996 law: “(1) provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; (2) end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job

preparation, work, and marriage; (3) prevent and reduce the incidence of unplanned pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and (4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two parent families.”

The following spotlighted grants represent some of the TANF programs that provide after and/or in-school programming and services on behalf of DCF for State Fiscal Year 2021. Some provide additional services to family members of the school age youth they serve but all the grants serve the at-risk youth population in Kansas. Each is at least partially funded with TANF and address one or more of TANF’s core

purposes. Addressing purpose 3 and 4 of the TANF law, these grants strive to provide the best possible avenue for youth to succeed in each of their lives. Success can be measured in many ways but some of the most prevalent for these seek to improve high school graduation, academic achievement, continuing education readiness and work force skills preparedness. By serving these youth, and in some cases their families, these partners are helping ensure clients will be self-sufficient and better equipped parents, both future and current. By being better equipped, it is anticipated fewer clients will need government services in the future, and more children will stay in their homes with their families.

Boys and Girls Clubs Alliance- serves at-risk school age youth across Kansas. The BGCA offers a variety of programming within three primary curricula categories: Health & Wellness, Good Character & Citizenship, and Academic Success.



The Kansas Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is comprised of 12 Boys & Girls Clubs organizations, with 53 Club sites statewide. The Clubs have over 12,000 registered youth members and serve an average of 3,700 youth ages 5-18 daily.

Through the strong relationship with DCF, Boys & Girls Clubs are able to provide four impactful prevention curricula that help youth make healthy choices and resist negative peer pressure, promote literacy growth, support strong social-emotional development and enable youth to communicate effectively. These curricula also afford youth Club members the opportunity to learn and grow in a structured and positive environment with caring and supportive adults and reinforce the development of their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. During the last state fiscal year, Clubs served more than 7,000 unduplicated youth in the four prevention programs.

As a result of participation in these programs, 95% of youth are better able to understand and manage their behavior, identify strengths and feel good about themselves. 96% have increased their knowledge regarding resistance skills for avoiding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and regarding postponing sexual activity.

Communities In Schools (CIS) of Mid-America is an affiliate of the nation’s largest organization dedicated to helping students succeed in school and achieve in life. The organization annually supports more than 37,000 students located throughout its multi-state region (Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Oklahoma).

“With this grant from the Kansas Department for Children and Families, we can significantly increase the supports that we provide, lightening the load for many families and allowing students to focus on their education,” said Malissa Martin, CIS of Mid-America President and CEO.

The TANF Youth and Family Stability grant funds support CIS of Mid-America in providing in-and-at-risk students and their families with equitable conditions for learning to prepare them for on-time graduation from high school. The program offers both in- and out-of-school services in 35 geographically diverse schools across Kansas, representing 16 counties. The target population includes whole schools (more than 20,000 students and an anticipated 10,000 parents/guardians) and individual, case-managed youth who are typically in-and-at-risk students (at least 1,750) experiencing difficulties with academics, attendance, adverse behaviors, and social-emotional learning.

Program outcomes include building social, emotional, and academic competencies in students K-12; increasing parent connections, family engagement and stability; and increasing youth self-sufficiency through college/career readiness, life skills, and independent living skills in young adults ages 18-24.



(cont.) TANF grant spotlights: After school programs and in-school services

JAG-Kansas- serves at-risk middle and high school age youth across Kansas. JAG provides in and out of school services to at-risk youth to help them graduate on time and prepare them for a successful life after high school.

“JAG-K saved my life.”

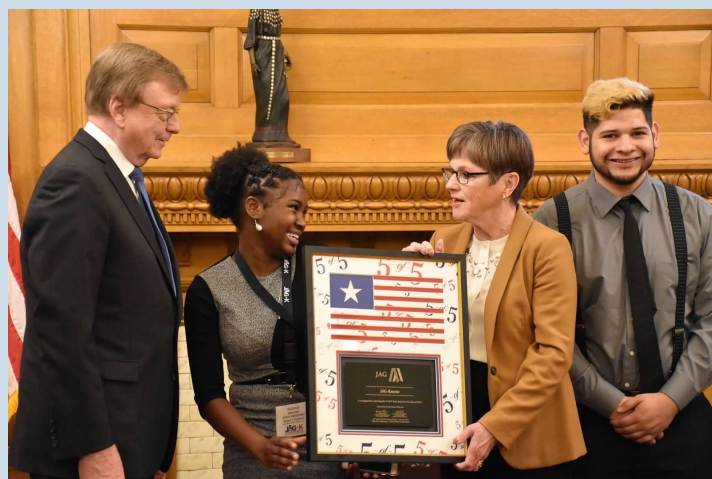
That’s how Concordia High School graduate Zach Roberts described his experience with Jobs for America’s Graduates-Kansas, a 501(c)3 organization primarily funded with a TANF grant from the Kansas Department of Children and Families.

Zach is one of more than 10,000 Kansas students who have benefitted from this in-school program that helps students prepare for successful futures. By his freshman year in high school, Zach was living on his own, trying to support himself and pay for an apartment while going to school. He was connected to JAG-K and, with the support and direction of his Career Specialist, graduated from high school and is now married and serving in the military.

There are 78 JAG-K programs in schools across Kansas, serving more than 4,200 students. JAG-K offers tools to successfully transition students into post-secondary school, the military, or directly into the workforce with marketable skills. Thanks to the TANF grant funds that support JAG-K, Students like Zach are supported during high school and through the first year after graduation. They are prepared for their future and held accountable to apply the lessons learned through the program.

“Thousands of Kansas students have overcome various barriers to get on successful paths because of DCF’s commitment and investment in those students by funding JAG-K,” said JAG-K President and CEO Chuck Knapp.

JAG-K is a state affiliate of the national JAG program network, which operates in 40 different states and territories. In addition to school districts and DCF, JAG-K partners with the Kansas Department of Education. Other JAG-K funding sources include AT&T, Capitol Federal, John Deere, Synchrony Financial and Taco Bell.



Project IMPACT serves over 1200 Kansas students middle and high school age youth and their families across Kansas. The program targets multicultural students and prepares them for continuing education opportunities and a successful transition from high school after graduation.

The Project IMPACT Urban Gardening for a Better Future program is part of the best practice pipeline for at-risk youth. The goal is to teach youth about public health issues, healthy eating habits and self-sustainability in their communities through different types of urban agriculture. Students learn about the college experience from K-State peer mentors and create their own community garden.

The statewide Leadership Conference brings together high school and community college students to further develop leadership, self-efficacy and intention to attend college. Relationship recruiting exposes young people to higher education and promotes K-State through the voices of our multicultural student leaders. Conferences have keynote speaker, educational workshops, and campus provide campus tours. The purpose is with the national trend on changing demographics to continue to build college going intent.

(cont.) TANF grant spotlights: After school programs and in-school services



Urban Scholastic Center- serves at-risk school age youth and their families in the Wyandotte area. The USC offers a variety of programming that focuses on academic achievement, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and overall wellbeing.

The DCF TANF grant supports the Life Enrichment (LE) program, a youth development program serving Wyandotte County students in grades Pre-K through 12th. LE students participate in reading and math enrichment, career exploration, personal development, financial literacy, community service, and more. LE provides a space for students to experience foundational developmental relationships with a web of safe, loving, caring adults. LE students are challenged to grow, provided with spiritual, academic, practical, and social support, given opportunities to make decisions and lead, and inspired to see new possibilities for their future. The engaged LE student will leave the program with the social and academic confidence to lead themselves and others in their community.

“A key part of USC’s mission is to build leaders. Abiding by that mission, the USC’s student-focused and faith-centered programs have been transforming the community for the last 16 years. A USC-DCF partnership means we are poised to continue delivering capacity-building supports to the youth and families of Wyandotte County.” Dr. Wes Parham, Executive Director.

Youthrive is a nonprofit organization located in Olathe that was founded in 2015 with the express purpose of providing much needed support to youth who are aging out of the foster care system. The program started in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, but it has since expanded to include Douglas and Shawnee Counties. Over 100 youth age out of the foster care system every year in these four counties combined.

Youthrive’s commitment to providing community-based support is evident in its mission statement: To broadly engage the community to empower, equip, and support youth as they make the transition from foster care to becoming healthy and contributing adults. This mission is primarily accomplished through youth participation in the MyPath program which focuses on the development of critical life skills that will lead to self-sufficiency and improved outcomes.

Youth in the MyPath program receive direct support from Youthrive Transition Advocates who provide case management support to the youth as they work on their transitional goals. Foundational to the direct support that is provided is that every youth is matched with a Support Family. These Support Families are community volunteers that provide additional coaching, encouragement, and support.

In addition to strengthening the relational support network of the youth, the MyPath program also focuses on developing the financial capabilities that are needed to live independently. Youth attend online financial classes where they learn how to budget, manage money, and save for critical transitional goals. One of the ways the youth put these skills into practice is through Youthrive’s matched savings program that rewards their saving progress with matching funds that can help them purchase a car, secure housing, or cover the costs of other important goals.

Shortly after Youthrive launched its program in 2015, Youthrive received a small grant from DCF that provided much needed funding during its first year of operation. That funding relationship continues today as Youthrive was recently selected as one of the grant recipients of the TANF Youth and Family Stability Program.

“Our funding relationship with DCF during the last 4+ years has been invaluable in helping us to grow and sustain our program in the communities we serve. We have been privileged to be able to provide needed support to nearly 300 young adults over the past five years. That would not have been possible without our partnership with DCF.” Tim Gay, Executive Director

Community Provider Spotlight: Kansas Children's Service League



Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) is a statewide agency with unique services provided to each community. Thirteen office locations serve the immediate community and surrounding areas of Overland Park, Iola, Pittsburg, Independence, Newton, Wichita, Hutchinson, Emporia, Topeka, Great Bend, Garden City, Liberal, and Ulysses.

While there is a focus on programs serving parents with children ages 0-5, there is also support for older children and youth in the Wichita and Topeka locations. Annually approximately 10,000 parents and their children across the state of Kansas are served by KCSL. Additionally, education and training opportunities for caregivers and

professionals are available across the state. These include the annual Governor's Conference on the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect; Mandated Reporter Training, Darkness to Light-an evidence base program on child sexual abuse prevention; and Adverse Childhood Experiences. Over 20,000 people attend trainings annually.

"Through our programs, despite the fact that the children are at higher risk of abuse or neglect because of their parents' risk factors, we are able to safely keep children in their home with their parents 94% of the time," said Gail Cozadd, chief executive officer. "When families come to KCSL, we are observing and assessing how the family functions as a whole. Service planning is geared towards improvement in not only parent child interactions, it also includes ensuring the family is financially stable, has a positive support system, and that in the future if there is a crisis the parent has learned the skills to manage through it."

Most of the programs service delivery is completed in the family's home once a week for the first six months of the program. Some families are able to

"When I discovered I was pregnant, I didn't know where to go. I didn't know how to raise a kid, and I wanted to finish school. Learning about KCSL was the answer to my prayers. My son changed my life, but KCSL changed our lives...for the better. I am so grateful for all the help, advice and support I've received from KCSL. I love them."

-- A mother who participated in the Healthy Families program

continue to receive home visits for up to three years.

Learn about the unique programs in your community at <http://kcsl.org> Additionally, KCSL has a great parenting phone resource, the Parent Helpline; 1-800-CHILDREN, available 24/7-365 days a year. Trained specialists will listen and connect parents to available resources. The new KCSL Parent Helpline mobile app is also a great, free resource for parents and professionals.

See Issue 8 for more info and how to download the Parent Helpline mobile app.

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