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Special Report - Stimulus

Nonprofits using stimulus money to help further fund their missions

Premium content from Wichita Business Journal - by Daniel McCoy

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Numerous area nonprofit organizations have received money through the federal government's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Some got money to retrain displaced workers and others to extend and create programs for people hit hard by the economic downturn. Money also went into housing programs, health clinics and childhood education services.

"The potential impact can be great," says Perry Schuckman, executive director of the Nonprofit Chamber of Services. "These are organizations that serve people and families that most needed (the help)."

The United Way of the Plains got more than \$300,000 to bolster its laid-off workers center.

The Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas got \$2.7 million to create a summer employment program for teens and young adults. The money also helped fund its adult and displaced-workers programs.

Prairie View Inc. in Newton received \$1.66 million in a homelessness prevention grant to help people who'd fallen on hard times keep their situations from getting worse.

Brad Schmidt, director of adult residential services at Prairie View, says the money helped set up a new program that can provide rental and utility assistance, security deposits and credit counseling for people in a 22-county region that includes Wichita.

"It's to prevent people from being evicted," he says.

Schmidt says the program has been drawing down \$40,000 to \$50,000 from the award since November and has assisted 146 households.

Improving health & child care

Community health clinics also are using stimulus money for construction projects and to help extend their services.

The Center for Health & Wellness received several awards, including a \$1.3 million grant to help pay its workers and to help fund its planned \$2.5 million expansion.

GraceMed Health Clinic also got multiple awards totaling more than \$1.1 million. The largest is a \$773,000 grant to help retain workers and add services.

Hunter Health Clinic received more than \$1.6 million, the bulk of it for the clinic's construction of a 3,500-square-foot facility at Ninth Street and Market. The money also is helping the clinic buy new computers and medical equipment.

Hunter Health CEO Susette Schwartz says the money also helped the clinic hire a new doctor and retain staff. Without the stimulus, she says, the clinic would have struggled to keep up with increased usage. Hunter Health saw more than 27,000 patients in 2009.

"We would have been letting (employees) go," Schwartz says.

Child Start Inc. was awarded three stimulus grants to help its work providing parenting education and child care services to low-income households.

Anne Maack, director of public affairs at Child Start, says the funding will allow services to be extended to 60 additional low-income families and to 72 additional toddlers through its Head Start Program.

It also has helped create 31 new jobs, she says.

Nonprofit organizations in the Wichita MSA receiving stimulus funding in 2009

1. Mennonite Housing — \$3,158,090.
2. Work Force Alliance of South Central Kansas — \$2,712,214.
3. Hunter Health Clinic — □\$1,677,137.
4. Prairie View Inc. — \$1,660,000.
5. Center for Health & Wellness — □\$1,650,000.
6. Child Start Inc. — \$1,536,866.
7. GraceMed Health Clinic — □\$1,106,786.
8. Mid-Kansas Community Action Program — □\$734,154.
9. United Way of the Plains — □\$306,534. □

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