

# Investing in Pre-K-12 Students and Foster Care in Tulsa, OK

## American Rescue Plan Community Profile

January 2024 | Children and Youth



### American Rescue Plan Funding

Total Local Fiscal Recovery Funds in Tulsa, OK: \$87.8 million<sup>1</sup>

Amount of Local Fiscal Recovery Funds featured in this profile: Approximately \$1.3 million

### Summary

As part of Tulsa's COVID-19 Recovery Plan, city leaders approved approximately \$6.5 million in relief grants to nonprofit organizations that provide direct services to city residents.<sup>2</sup> Since many local nonprofits identified issues that community members faced during the pandemic, the city wanted to fund targeted projects so that these nonprofits could address those issues.<sup>3</sup> Many nonprofit organizations that participated in the city's COVID-19 Relief Grant Program developed projects to support children and youth in various areas including childhood development, mental health, foster child advocacy, nutrition education, out-of-school time programs, and sports and arts clinics, among others.

Tulsa invested about \$821,977 of Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to implement projects that benefited babies, infants, and students in grades pre-K through 12. Some of the projects include the following:

- \$50,000 for Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank to expand and open two depots in disproportionately impacted areas to make safe, pasteurized donor milk in the Tulsa area readily available. Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank also hired a new staff member, purchased a cargo van for milk deliveries, and provided virtual support groups for Tulsa milk donors.
- \$272,857 for the Tulsa Dream Center to support the center's Literacy Is For Everyone Program.<sup>4</sup> This

child development program seeks to improve education outcomes and increase the social-emotional skills of students in first through fifth grade located in Qualified Census Tracts.

- \$136,428 for the Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance to develop and staff the North Tulsa STEM Hub. This hub, in partnership with the Tulsa Dream Center, provided STEM out-of-school time programming for high school students in North Tulsa, a disproportionately impacted area due to area median income among other reasons.
- \$50,000 for A New Leaf to support services for people with developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. This project includes Autism Works, a prevocational training program where middle and high school students with autism spectrum disorder learn pre-vocational and life skills.
- \$25,000 for New Hope Oklahoma to provide after-school programs for children of incarcerated parents.

Tulsa invested about \$568,671 of Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for projects to support mental and sexual health, foster care, and family support. Some of the projects include the following:

- \$181,905 for the YMCA of Greater Tulsa to hire a full-time mental health professional to provide children ages 5-18, families, and adult caregivers with youth development programming, mentoring, and enrichment activities.
- \$112,784 for Amplify Youth Health Collective to launch a Community Needs Assessment on general wellness, COVID-19 impacts, and access to youth sexual health supports in Tulsa.

- \$68,214 for Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care to provide financial support to foster families. Families were able to purchase essential technology so students could participate in online learning and gain access to tutoring. From July 2021 to December 2022, Circle of Care provided financial support to 10 families.
- \$68,214 for Fostering Connections to improve the lives of abused and neglected children in Tulsa by launching the Our Essential Connections project. This project provided Tulsa's children in the custody of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and their families with essential items and resources. Fostering Connections reached its clients through its foster family resource center, which is a former city bus that was renovated as a large mobile unit, and online resources.

With Tulsa's strong nonprofit community leading projects with American Rescue Plan funds, the city will continue to prioritize its children and youth population. Tulsa's leaders are committed to ensuring that they continue to invest in today's children and youth and future generations to come. "The health of a city is reliant in how kids are doing," says Alisa Dougless, program manager for the City of Tulsa's American Rescue Plan Act and Emergency Rental Assistance Program.<sup>5</sup>

## Age Group Served

Babies and infants, children ages 5-18, and their families

## Funding Stream Used

Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

## Key Partners

- Emergency Infant Services
- Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank
- Tulsa Dream Center
- North Tulsa STEM Hub
- Oklahoma A+ Schools Institute at the University of Central Oklahoma Foundation
- A New Leaf
- Education-Recreation
- One Hope Tulsa
- Global Gardens
- New Hope Oklahoma

- The Pencil Box
- Terence Crutcher Foundation
- YMCA of Greater Tulsa
- Amplify Youth Health Collective
- Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care
- Urban Strategies, Inc.
- Fostering Connections
- Parent Child Center of Tulsa
- Family Hope House

## Local Perspective

When the American Rescue Plan funding became available in 2021, the City of Tulsa received funds directly from the federal government. Collaborative communication between Mayor G.T. Bynum, city council leaders, and community members helped the City of Tulsa quickly determine how best to allocate pandemic relief funds. The very first projects used the funding to support 68 local nonprofit organizations. To receive funding, projects had to support Tulsans' personal and financial health, development, and resilience, allow for the continuation of economic and community activity, and contribute to the creation, stability, and growth of emerging industries and occupations. While over half of these organizations had a direct child or youth impact, all nonprofits using American Rescue Plan funds supported children and youth in some way.<sup>6</sup>

Elected officials in Tulsa have worked hard to understand and advocate for funding choices that support the communities they represent. To further engage residents, the city established a phone number and email address for community members to provide feedback about the direction of American Rescue Plan funding. Opportunities to give feedback were also available during public meetings and town hall discussions. To gather more input, the city implemented a community needs survey about American Rescue Plan funding, including asking questions about how citizens had been most impacted by the pandemic. The demographic makeup of survey respondents tied closely to the demographics of city residents. Survey responses indicated that children and youth services are among the top issues that residents believe Tulsa should address with American Rescue Plan funding.<sup>7</sup>

"The American Rescue Plan Act [funds] have allowed us to be inventive with federal dollars," explains

Dougless.<sup>8</sup> In terms of program evaluation, all nonprofit organizations using State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are required to track “available demographics, unduplicated participants, and areas of service.”<sup>9</sup> Evidence-based practices and measurement tools that were used, along with descriptions of program evaluation and key trends for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund projects, are described in the City of Tulsa’s American Rescue Plan Recovery annual reports.<sup>10</sup>

## Lessons Learned

With Tulsa’s strong nonprofit community and investments from American Rescue Plan funds, the city was able to carry out projects that “lift [Tulsa’s] most vulnerable citizens up,” notes Dougless.<sup>11</sup> The City of Tulsa worked with its nonprofits to demystify the process of receiving, spending, and documenting the use of federal funds. The city held multiple open office hours for nonprofits who received grants with Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and sent these nonprofits weekly check-ins to ensure that they were supported. Tulsa also provided trainings in program evaluation, program outcomes, and on improving quality data to funded nonprofits.<sup>12</sup>

When asked to share advice for other cities who may be using American Rescue Plan funds for children and youth in their communities, Dougless advised others to “listen to your citizens” and that “you have to know your city ... concentrate on what works for your city, [know] what the infrastructure is, and look at the data” to see how to make the biggest impact with the dollars and resources that are available to your community.<sup>13</sup>

## Acknowledgment

Thank you to Alisa Dougless, manager for the City of Tulsa American Rescue Plan Act and Emergency Rental Assistance Program, for contributions to this community profile.

## Community Statistics

### Community Size

Total population (2022): 411,867

### Racial Demographics

- White 62.1%
- Black or African American 14.8%
- American Indian and Alaska Native 4.5%
- Asian 3.5%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander 0.2%
- Two or More Races 10.5%
- Hispanic or Latino 17.1%
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino 53.2%

### Socioeconomic Status

- Median annual household income (2021): \$52,438
- Children living in poverty (2021): 27%

Sources: “QuickFacts: Tulsa City, Oklahoma,” U.S. Census Bureau, accessed October 9, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/tulsacityoklahoma> and “Tulsa, OK,” Census Reporter, accessed October 9, 2023, <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US4075000-tulsa-ok/>.




## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> City of Tulsa, *City of Tulsa 2023 Recovery Plan Performance Report*, (Tulsa, OK: City of Tulsa, 2023), <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/22395/american-rescue-plan-act-city-of-tulsa-recovery-plan-2023-2.pdf>.
- <sup>2</sup> “COVID-19 Relief Grant,” City of Tulsa, accessed October 9, 2023, <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/ARPA>.
- <sup>3</sup> City of Tulsa, *City of Tulsa 2023 Recovery Plan Performance Report*.
- <sup>4</sup> “Our Services - Education,” Tulsa Dream Center (TDC), accessed October 9, 2023, <https://tulsadreamcenter.org/services/education/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Alisa Dougless, manager, City of Tulsa’s American Rescue Plan Act and Emergency Rental Assistance Program, personal communication, September 26, 2023.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> City of Tulsa, *City of Tulsa 2023 Recovery Plan Performance Report*.
- <sup>8</sup> Alisa Dougless, personal communication.
- <sup>9</sup> City of Tulsa, *City of Tulsa 2023 Recovery Plan Performance Report*.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Alisa Dougless, personal communication; City of Tulsa, *City of Tulsa 2023 Recovery Plan Performance Report*.
- <sup>12</sup> City of Tulsa, *City of Tulsa 2023 Recovery Plan Performance Report*.
- <sup>13</sup> Alisa Dougless, personal communication.

Children’s Funding Project is a nonprofit social impact organization that helps communities, states, and Native Nations expand equitable opportunities for children and youth through strategic public financing. [childrensfundingproject.org](https://childrensfundingproject.org)

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