

UAMS News Bureau

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**UAMS ‘Community of Practice’ Collaboration Receives \$750,000
Grant from Walmart Foundation to Battle Hunger in NWA**

FAYETTEVILLE — Thanks to a \$750,000 award from the Walmart Foundation, the Northwest Arkansas Food Insecurity Community of Practice will continue to develop strategies to reduce hunger in Northwest Arkansas over the next 18 months. The Community of Practice is a collaboration between the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and more than 20 regional organizations.

By sharing skills and experiences, the members of the Northwest Arkansas Food Insecurity Community of Practice work together to cultivate new strategies to address recurring problems related to food insecurity in Northwest Arkansas. Since its launch in 2020, the community of practice has worked to increase access to nutrition programs and has focused on improving equitable and inclusive healthy food access. This has included installing food lockers at a partner pantry, training and building capacity at community-based organizations to boost outreach for nutrition programs, creating a Cultural Food Preference Toolkit and encouraging the sharing of information and resources among local organizations.

Over the next 18 months, the community of practice will add members from the education and health care sectors, develop two new pilot projects focused on increasing access to nutrition programs and creating new, innovative approaches for food distribution.

“Thanks to the generosity of the Walmart Foundation and the commitment of individuals and organizations across Northwest Arkansas, we will continue to address food insecurity and ensure every person has access to healthy food,” said Bonnie Faitak, associate director of community programs at the UAMS Institute for Community Health Innovation (formerly the UAMS Office of Community Health & Research).

Food insecurity is a lack of consistent access to safe, adequate, culturally appropriate and nutritious food. It can be a temporary or long-lasting situation for a household. Last year, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report found that Arkansas has the highest level of food insecurity in the country, with an estimated 16.6% of Arkansas households struggling to put healthy food on the table.

“The Community of Practice has had an enormous impact on filling gaps in healthy food access in Northwest Arkansas during their first three years of operation,” said Angela Oxford, senior manager of NWA Giving on the Walmart.org team. “The Walmart Foundation’s continued investment will allow the Community of Practice to grow its leadership and work collaboratively to meet community needs to address food insecurity.”

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart.org represents the philanthropic efforts of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation. By focusing where the business has unique strengths, Walmart.org works to tackle key social and environmental issues and collaborate with others to spark long-lasting systemic change. Walmart has stores in 19 countries, employs more than 2 million associates and does business with thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people. Walmart.org is helping people live better by supporting programs to accelerate upward job mobility for frontline workers, advance equity, address hunger, build inclusive economic opportunity for people in supply chains, protect and restore nature, reduce waste and emissions, and build strong communities where Walmart operates. To learn more, visit www.walmart.org or connect on Twitter @Walmartorg.

About UAMS

UAMS is the state’s only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and eight institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute, Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the Institute for Community Health Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS’ clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,275 students, 890 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state’s largest public employer with more than 12,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children’s, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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