

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**News Release  
July 29, 2024**

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**UAMS-based Commission Gives \$630,000  
to 11 Groups for Child Abuse Prevention Programs**

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence (ACCARDV), a statewide organization based at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), recently awarded more than \$630,000 to 11 organizations for projects aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect.

The Child Abuse & Neglect grants provide up to \$100,000 a year, for two years, to help the groups operate or develop programs aimed at preventing abuse and neglect. The programs must focus on specific populations: children, parents and potential parents, or professionals.

“This is our third year to put out a request for proposals for our Child Abuse & Neglect grants,” said Laura A. Robertson, executive director of the commission, headquartered in the UAMS Division of Academic Affairs. “Although this is the largest amount of funds we have awarded, it was also the most competitive application process to date with some very promising programs that we were unable to fund this cycle.”

The state Legislature created the commission 30 years ago to enhance the investigation, prosecution, treatment, support and prevention of child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence through educational programs and services in Arkansas. The commission also collaborates with professionals working to address human trafficking as it pertains to child abuse, sexual abuse and domestic violence.

Applications for the grants, supported by state and federal funds, opened in late January. Robertson said that by the March 22 deadline, the commission received 23 applications for various amounts of funding up to the annual \$100,000 cap. An external review team then chose 11 of the projects to receive all or part of their funding requests, in amounts ranging from \$15,000 to \$100,000 each year, with initial funding beginning July 1.

The recipients and amounts are listed below.

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- **The Arkansas Building Effective Services for Trauma (ARBEST) program**, which operates under the auspices of the UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute, received \$98,942 to support a novel collaboration between it and statewide Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs, to develop a comprehensive training and support system to help CASA volunteers combat secondary traumatic stress and burnout. The volunteers work directly with children who are in foster care and are at increased risk of abuse and neglect.
- **Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence** received \$100,000 to establish the Parent and Child Legal Aid Program in two divisions of Pulaski County Circuit Court. The program will provide free legal representation and expert testimony to help domestic violence victims and their children obtain orders of protection.
- **Grandma's House Children's Advocacy Center**, which provides a safe place for child abuse victims and their families in Baxter, Boone, Carroll, Madison, Marion, Newton and Searcy counties, received \$23,496 to partner with others in the community to provide prevention education to children, families and those who work with children.
- **Community Connections**, a nonprofit group that offers free extracurricular activities for children and young adults with disabilities and their families, received \$93,651 to add a full-time family and child abuse prevention coordinator and to expand services and events.
- **Carter's Crew**, a nonprofit serving youths ages 12-17 and their parents in central Arkansas, received \$97,330 to add parenting classes, support groups, family nights, career readiness workshops, reading and financial literacy programs, intensive case management and access to food and clothing pantries.
- **White County Domestic Violence Prevention**, which helps victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault, received \$30,599 to expand services for at-risk children and families in the community. The services include parenting classes for people facing custody issues or domestic violence charges or otherwise needing help rebuilding their families.
- **Arkansas Children's** received \$15,565 for an initiative to support admitted patients who are victims of physical or sexual abuse or other forms of maltreatment, and provide education, support and referrals for other families with long-term admissions. It will also educate parents about infant health, safe sleep practices, shaken baby syndrome, home safety and hot car dangers, and hopes to expand to the hospital's northwest Arkansas campus in its second year.
- **Center for Arkansas Legal Services** received \$50,000 to continue a program that assesses helpline callers so the group can provide more legal representation to families at risk for child abuse. The money will also provide monthly community help desks.
- **White River Women's Shelter** received \$50,000 to continue programs in crisis counseling, personal advocacy and case management for at-risk clients, provide classes in child abuse prevention, parenting skills, the impact of domestic violence on children and healthy family dynamics, and offer community awareness events.

- **Hannah Pregnancy Resource Center** in El Dorado received \$50,000 to help it provide a parenting and life-skills program, a re-entry program for incarcerated parents, and a home visitation program for parents.
- **Cooper-Anthony Mercy Children’s Advocacy Center** in Hot Springs and Benton, which provides essential services to abused children, received \$50,000 to continue an elementary school program in Saline, Garland, Grant and Montgomery counties. The program uses the Monique Barr Foundation curriculum, which is designed to protect children from bullying, child abuse and exploitation.

Robertson said that in deciding which projects to fund, the review committee considered each organization’s project and its reach to ensure that the funds benefit children statewide and do not duplicate existing services.

“The grants were awarded to organizations all over the state, from Union County to Baxter County,” she said. “Many of the organizations have a statewide reach, such as ARBEST, the Arkansas Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Arkansas Children’s.”

“We hope these grants expand prevention efforts across Arkansas and promote healthy and safe families,” she added.

The governor appoints the 25 members of the commission, which includes representatives of victim service agencies and service providers in the fields of law enforcement, medicine and mental health.

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](http://www.uams.edu) or [www.uamshealth.com](http://www.uamshealth.com). Find us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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