



First Quarter | Fiscal Year 2022

Quarterly Connection

Volume 4, Issue 1

Our Mission

We overcome poverty by meeting basic needs, helping people to grow, and collaborating in our communities.

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THANK YOU!

As Blue Valley Community Action Partnership enters a new calendar year and completes its first quarter of our new fiscal year, I would like to take a moment to thank those who have so generously supported us.

Every box of food collected, every dollar donated, and each hour volunteered directly helps us help families and individuals in need in the communities which BVCA serves. We could not provide the many services and assistance to those in need without the countless contributions from you.

I am extremely grateful for your continued support of our mission. Again, thank you for "Helping People and Changing Lives."

NUTRITIOUS FOOD AVAILABLE FOR SENIORS AGED 60+

Do you know a senior who could benefit from receiving nutritious food packages each month? If so, our Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) may be able to help!

CSFP works to improve the health of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods. To qualify, individuals must be under 130% of the Federal Poverty Level. This means their income must be at or less than \$16,744 annually/\$1,395 monthly for a single person; or \$22,646 annually/\$1,886 monthly for a household of two.

BVCA is currently accepting applications for individuals residing in our service area, which includes Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer and York Counties in Nebraska. For more information or to apply, please contact Caleb Epp at (402) 587-0529.



COLD HOUSE? HIGH UTILITY BILL?

When the temperatures drop, the heating bill goes up. That's a fact of life most households must contend with every year. What some of those households may not know, however, is that there is a program available in their area that can dramatically reduce their heating bill at no cost to them.

Whether you own or rent, Blue Valley Community Action's Weatherization Program can make your home safer, healthier, and more comfortable while saving you thousands of dollars in heating and cooling bills over ten years. BVCA is currently accepting applications for individuals residing in our service area, which includes Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer and York Counties in Nebraska. For more information or to find out if you qualify, call Brandon Bonar or Kayla Leighton at (402) 729-2278.

A HEAD START ON STEM INSTRUCTION

The University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) recently received an \$86,375 grant from Women Investing in Nebraska (WIN) to promote science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education in Head Start preschool programs. This is the first WIN grant awarded to UNK in the WIN program's 10-year history.



"The UNK Head Start on STEM project is designed to increase Head Start educators' knowledge, skills and dispositions for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate STEM activities for preschool-age children. We are so grateful to have this opportunity to collaborate with these educators who serve our nation's youngest and most vulnerable population," said the program's leader, Paula Thompson, an assistant professor of teacher education at UNK.

The grant funding will provide four tuition-free, graduate-level courses for up to fifteen Head Start educators along with individually designed support for increased participant retention and success. These educators have the potential to directly impact hundreds of Nebraska children and their families each year.

Drs. Paula Thompson, Dena Harshbarger and Jane Strawhecker, in collaboration with the Nebraska Head Start Association (NeHSA), shared information about the project with Head Start programs to identify teachers and/or instructional coaches interested in increasing their skills and knowledge for supporting STEM learning. Participants were selected from across the state, targeting rural programs often lacking access to graduate programming and resources.

UNK and Blue Valley Community Action are excited to announce that Kaitlyn Shepardson have been selected for participation in the Head Start on STEM Instruction project. They will begin taking courses in January 2022.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE QUICKLY APPROACHING

The March 1 application deadline is quickly approaching for BVCA Partnership's 2021-2022 scholarship opportunities. Scholarships will be in the amount of \$1,000 and can be used for tuition, books and fees associated with enrollment. Three scholarships will be awarded. BVCA Partnership will offer the following scholarships this year:

- The "BVCA Partnership Scholarship" will be awarded to an individual planning to attend or currently attending a 4-year college.
- The "BVCA Partnership Vocational Scholarship" will be awarded to an individual planning to attend or currently attending a 2-year or less program at a vocational college.
- The "BVCA Partnership Southeast Community College Scholarship" will be awarded to an individual planning to attend or currently attending Southeast Community College.



Applicants must reside in BVCA Partnership's service area, which includes Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer and York Counties in Nebraska. Scholarship applications, guidelines and a listing of eligibility requirements may be obtained from area high school administrative or guidance counselor offices, or by contacting the BVCA Partnership Center in your area. Applications can also be downloaded from our website: www.bvca.net. For more information, contact Heather Lytle, BVCA's Administrative Director, at (402) 729-2278 ext. 122. All applications must be received or postmarked on or before March 1, 2022.

SALINE COUNTY OPERATION LOCATION CHANGES

All BVCA Saline County early childhood education staff are now located at the Blue River Family Center located at 325 East 9th Street in Crete. All other BVCA Saline County Services (Emergency Services, Food Pantry, Supportive Services for Veteran Families, Head Start Management Office, Early Head Start Socializations, Immunizations, and WIC) have been relocated to the former Early Learning Center located at 1122 Main Street in Crete.

Blue Valley Community Action Partnership's 1st Quarter Outreach

Childcare Services	21 Individuals
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	353 Individuals
Compassionate Projects	947 Individuals
Early Head Start Home Based Services	88 Individuals
Early Head Start Child Care Partnership	47 Individuals
Early Head Start & Head Start Childcare Food Program	11,691 Meals & Snacks
Emergency Assistance	182 Households
Family & Youth Involvement Center (CASTLE)	64 Individuals
Financial Coaching	63 Individuals
Friends of Blue Valley Volunteer Program	304 Individuals
Food Rescue/Security	490 Households
Foster Grandparent Program	35 Individuals
Head Start	225 Individuals
Homeownership Opportunity Program	2 Households
Housing Counseling	63 Individuals
Infant Quality Initiative Program	13 Individuals
Immunization Program	350 Shots
Lease to Own	57 Households
Mortgage Assistance	18 Households
Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program	38 Households
Opportunity Passport	67 Individuals
Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation	3 Households
Project First TH/RRH (Families In Residence with Support in Transition/Rapid Re-Housing)	6 Households
Project FYRES (Focused Youth on Rehousing, Empowerment & Stability)	19 Households
Rental Apartments/Duplexes	97 Households
Rental Elderly Apartments	27 Households
Rural Southeast Nebraska Connected Youth Initiative (RSNCYI)	42 Individuals
SNAP Outreach (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)	12 Applications
SSI-SSDI Outreach, Access & Recovery (SOAR)	6 Individuals
Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)	84 Individuals
Thrift Stores	750 Individuals
Transportation	420 Rides
Weatherization	14 Households
WIC Peer Counseling	34 Individuals
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	905 Individuals
Case Management	237 Individuals
COVID-19 Vaccines	80 Vaccinations
BVCA Partnership Scholarships	0 Individuals



JOIN OUR TEAM | BVCA HAS SEVERAL POSITIONS AVAILABLE!

Visit <https://bvca.hireclick.com/jobboard> to view our career opportunities and to apply.