

FY25 Children and Youth Commission Innovation Fund Report

Communities In Schools of New Mexico

Successes

- 68 evictions prevented
 - 47 critical utility shut offs prevented
 - 7 families provided with safe temporary housing
- = 122 families with children kept in safe, stable homes**



Challenges

- Demand far exceeded funding; over \$80,000 was raised and distributed to meet needs (CYC provided 25% of the funding; other sources were corporate sponsorships and individuals)
- Vulnerable immigrant families have had to rely more heavily on CIS for this support during the 2024-2025 school year
- Housing and utility costs continue to rise as a result of inflation, placing a burden on working families in Santa Fe

Many Mothers

Successes

- Farm to Families Successes
 - In FY24 (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024):
 - 585 Farm to Families distributions
 - 752 family members reached
 - 14,625 pounds of nutritious food provided
 - In FY23 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023):
 - 79 Farm to Families distributions
 - 210 family members reached
 - 1,975 pounds of nutritious food provided
 - Significant growth since opening of Many Mothers Family Center, which is the only rapid response community center in Northern New Mexico that focuses on the basic and emotional needs of perinatal families (pregnant women, infants/toddlers aged 0-3 years old, and their families)

Challenges

- We submitted the grant past the *initial review period*, and the funds for the entirety of the grant were allocated. Another grantee declined their grant, and luckily, we received a portion.
- Organic meat, vegetables, and fruit are costly to buy in bulk. Would have been useful to receive the larger amount for purchasing.
- We are balancing our inventory management policies; and increased inventory would resolve some issues; further partnership to purchase goods always a plus.

NDI New Mexico

Successes

169 students, grades 4 to 9, participated in a free, advanced, dance based supplemental education program taught by NDI NM for a minimum of three hours per week for nine months during out-of-school time each year during the 2024 – 2025 school year. The after-school program provides a lifeline and a safe space for students to grow, learn, and be inspired. Participants learn discipline and commitment under the supervision of highly trained teaching artists. Students experience joy, rigor and excellence and learn to thrive with improved mental, physical and emotional health while learning the discipline of dance, which requires them to work together as a choreographed group.

90% of students reported increased school engagement, confidence, self-discipline, focus, teamwork and the ability to set and meet challenging goals to improve academic performance and their capacity to achieve on-time high school graduation by the end of the school year.

91% of students in this program reported improved knowledge and attitudes related to nutrition and physical activity and increased physical activity by the end of each school year, as of our most recent evaluation report.

Super Wonderful Advanced Team and Celebration Team students all participated in two weeks of theatrical performances at The Dance Barns in May of 2025.

Challenges

Attendance: Our Friday SWAT team had the best attendance due to the timing of the rehearsal. Fridays is an early release day and we offer free afterschool childcare and transport dancers. The Saturday morning team had the less stable attendance. We address this by adding review time during each rehearsal and giving prizes to students who help others catch up. Next year we will try to have programs offered after school with transportation.

Team Cohesion: As we work with students to build a cohesive team we do have challenges with bringing children together from different schools and on occasion have some bullying or mean behavior happen. We address this by first discussing our expectations with families and dancers during our orientation, and by immediately following up if we hear of any incidents by talking to children and completing a mediation discussion if appropriate and/or taking disciplinary actions by notifying families and setting consequences.

Communication with Families: We communicate with families through in-person meetings, email, text messages, and phone calls, all in both English and Spanish. Despite this approach, we still have challenges ensuring students' families get all of the information needed to support their participation. We will address this by noting when families do not attend in-person meetings and proactively following up with them individually.

New Mexico Immigrant Law Center

Successes

30 immigrant children and youth provided with immigration legal services

5 obtained Social Security Numbers

6 became eligible for Medicaid and other benefits

6 obtained a custody or placement order with a supportive parent or guardian

5 applied for lawful status

5 obtained lawful status

Challenges



Volatility of federal funding



Rapid changes to federal immigration policy

Santa Fe Public Schools

Cesar Chavez, Kearny Elementary
School, Nina Otero, and Amy Biehl

Successes

Cesar Chavez Elementary School: implemented two afterschool programs:

Reading in Spanish and the Sport club.

Through those programs we were able to serve:

40 students once a week for a total of 15 weeks.

Kearny Elementary:

Established an African Drumming after-school Club. This initiative provides a culturally enriched learning opportunity that fosters creativity, community and global awareness for up to 20 students once a week for 10 weeks.

Nina Otero Community School: Created an archery program to serve up to 20 students twice a week for 9 weeks.

Amy Biehl Community School: Created 3 after-school programs that served a total of 47 students

- Yoga - ran for 5 weeks and met twice a week
- Coding - ran for 5 weeks and met twice a week
- Drama - ran for 8 weeks and met twice a week

Challenges

Cesar Chavez Elementary School: This was our first year implementing a Reading in Spanish program and a Sports Club. One challenge we faced was that many students were interested in the Sports Club, which led us to create a waiting list. Unfortunately, we were unable to serve all interested students.

Kearny Elementary School- Although we successfully launched the African Drumming Club at our elementary school with strong participation in its first year, we faced a challenge in maintaining the same level of student interest this second time around. In hindsight, I should have sent out a survey to gather data on what types of clubs would most interest students, which could have helped guide programming and sustain engagement.

Nina Otero Community: This was our first year with the archery club, and the most challenging part was building the routine with students and finding a suitable location that wouldn't disrupt other ongoing after-school activities.

Amy Biehl Community School: Our students were able to attend the after-school programs if they had good attendance. If they had too many absences, they were not able to attend. It was a challenge to keep track of it on my own. We need to figure out a better system to keep track.

Santa Fe Children's Museum (SFCM)

Successes

Successful new collaboration between Children's Museum and Santa Fe Place Mall and Walmart Supercenter on Herrera Drive.

Many families participated in feedback surveys.

A vast majority of participants indicated increased family wellbeing in feedback surveys.

STEAM programming delivered to 1,050 individuals.

25 Free Passes to SFCM & 25 Uber Vouchers distributed

Forged connections with the Teen Center, providing supplemental programming.

Community members were eager for our outreaches in the City.

Challenges

1. Advertising outreaches on social media.
2. Staff turnover at SFCM resulting in reduced capacity to attend outreach efforts - Museum staff persisted and were able to execute outreaches in light of these challenges.
3. Language barriers between Spanish speakers and outreach leads - SFCM does their best to include dual language educators.
4. Low attendance at some outreaches due to new collaborations.

SFPS
Adelante



Successes

Throughout the 2024 – 2025 school year, Adelante served 1,095 children from 521 families.

- **2,200 hygiene items** distributed to students and families
- **2,198 food bags** provided to support students' nutritional needs
- **326 snack bags** as supplemental food directly to students
- **554 backpacks** (with supplies) distributed to students
- **530 new school outfits** distributed (jeans/tops)
- **876 underwear items** and **819 pairs of socks** and distributed
- **357 diaper packs** and **250 baby items** distributed to families with infants and toddlers
- **426 coats** distributed during cold weather seasons
- **286 pairs of shoes** distributed (referrals made for 75 additional shoes)
- **256 seasonal clothing items** (hats/gloves/scarves) distributed
- **24 graduation caps/gowns** provided
- **283 “other items”** distributed as needed (beds, blankets, pillows, other household items)
- **249 holiday meals** provided

Challenges

- **Rising Need:** U.S. homelessness rose 18% in 2024. Children, under the age of 18, experiencing homelessness increased by 33% from 2023 – 2024.
- **Local Impact:** The Adelante Program has seen an increase in need for basic necessities throughout the 2024 - 2025 school year.
- **Warehouse Limitations:**
 - Current space restricts storage capacity and item variety
 - Limits efficiency and equitable distribution
- **The Need:** A larger facility is critical to meet growing demand. Given the ongoing upward trend in homelessness, additional storage space is essential to sustain and scale our response in the years ahead.

The Santa Fe
Symphony
Orchestra &
Chorus
*Youth Education
Programs*



Successes



Our Youth Programs positively impacted 1,900 youth ages 7-19 through free Discovery concerts, in-school mentoring at 9 Santa Fe Public Schools, and weekly after-school music classes for all levels and abilities, with sliding scale tuition.



More than 300 students participated in 15+ weekly after school classes for orchestra, jazz, mariachi, chamber music, and chorus, performing in 30+ youth performances all over the city. Through a robust scholarship program and low-cost instrument rentals, we reached youth who might otherwise never be able to study music or learn an instrument.



In 2024-25, we added two new youth choruses and expanded our scholarship program— helping youth in the city to thrive.

Challenges

Since the merger of the Santa Fe Symphony with Santa Fe Youth Symphony Association in July 2024, our expanded organization now faces several challenges:

- 1) Re-branding ourselves in the community to focus more on Education and youth;
- 2) Revising our Strategic Plan to emphasize our new education department and focus;
- 3) In order to grow and fill the need for our music education programs, we need to increase the number of teaching and administrative staff to run our programs and to offer our staff industry-standard salaries for long-term sustainability.

Solace Sexual Assault Services

Successes

- Two therapists successfully trained in Child and Family Stress Intervention (CFTSI) to aid in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptom reduction.
- Reduced waitlist by 45%
- Reduction of symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression in the majority of clients by an average of 30%.

Challenges

- We continue to carry a waitlist.
- We balance the need of learning new modalities and trainings with client sessions due to a high time commitment for many of the trainings.
- We often face difficulties pertaining to parental time commitment in the Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CFTSI) modality as it is a requirement that a non-offending caregiver be present for most of the sessions.

The Sky
Center/New
Mexico
Suicide
Intervention
Project

Successes

The City of Santa Fe Small Grant Funding enabled The Sky Center/New Mexico Suicide Intervention Project to provide small group counseling through our **Inner and Outer Life Skills** program throughout the school year.

Description of the **Inner and Outer Life Skills** program:

Student participants who are identified by the school principal and/or wellness counselors as needing services join an 8-week responsive curriculum that strengthens both the internal and external resources students need to cope and thrive in today's world.

Results: The funding enabled The Sky Center/NMSIP's counselors to meet with 23 Elementary and Middle School Students in the first half of the 2024-2025 academic year, and 42 Elementary and Middle School Students in the second half of the school year.

Challenges

Two main challenges:

1. Scheduling the group so that the students meet consistently for eight weeks; and
 2. Conducting the group as most students were referred due to concerns about classroom self-regulation. The group participants tend to be rambunctious.
- Sample student feedback at the end of the group counseling session when asked how was counseling helpful to you?
 - To learn to stay calm.
 - To talk and not fight.
 - It helped me with my anger.
 - You have to be respectful to people. Treat people as you want to be treated.

YMCA of Central New Mexico



Successes

- The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) program offered by the YMCA at Acequia Madre has seen significant success, particularly in fostering interest, engagement, and skill development across various STEM fields. Below are some of the key successes of the program:
- **1. Increased Engagement in STEM Subjects**
- Through hands-on activities, workshops, and experiments, the program has helped demystify complex topics, making them more accessible to children. As a result, participants have shown increased enthusiasm for STEM subjects, sparking a long-term interest in pursuing related educational and career paths.
- **2. Skill Development**
- The YMCA STEM programs focus on both hard and soft skills. Children gain practical STEM abilities such as coding, robotics, and scientific inquiry, while also developing critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills. These programs lay the foundation for future success in both academic and career pursuits.
- **3. Learning Beyond the Classroom**
- The program encourages children to apply what they've learned outside of the classroom, promoting teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving. As they were introduced to new vocabulary, the children expanded their language skills and developed new social skills through collaborative activities.
- Children also had the opportunity to take leadership roles in projects and express their individual interests. For example, they created imaginative maps, designing cities complete with people, animals, and buildings, all while thinking through what would be needed to construct them. These activities challenged their creative thinking and reinforced cause-and-effect relationships through science projects.

Challenges



Some of the challenges we faced included being unable to accommodate the high demand for the program, as our capacity is limited to 20 children due to space constraints.



Additionally, many children were reluctant to leave at the end of the day. Despite these challenges, the program was a success and received strong demand.

Breakthrough Santa Fe

Success:

Breakthrough provided at least **275 contact hours** with all 72 middle school students and families across Santa Fe County, from summer academic programming to parent conferences and in-school visits.

Last summer, 60% of students maintained or grew in reading and 50% of students maintained or grew in math learning. This has **mitigated summer slide** and helped students enter middle school with stronger academic standing in reading and math.

In the class of 2025, all 36 students graduated from high school, with 27 matriculating to a 4 year college or higher education program for the upcoming fall.

This year, we have **retained 98% of our 212+ middle and high school students.**

Challenges:

We had a smaller application pool this year than normal, with only a total of 60 student applicants, in part due to difficulties with entering schools and setting up parent presentations. In a normal year, we receive 80 applications.

We have had more difficulty coordinating with counselors and social workers in schools (due to turnover) to better coordinate resources for families. This includes helping students who are chronically absent find resources to get to school, even if we have still retained them in programming.

Many of our 10th grade students were pushed by their schools towards career readiness and into graduating early. This means they are taking less rigorous classes and considering not applying to colleges that will provide significant financial aid and a transformative educational experience.



Las Cumbres
Community Services

Grandparents
raising
Grandchildren



Las Cumbres Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Santa Fe Program Successes – FY25

- **30 Families** received integrated case management, counseling and supplemental services representing **30 GRGs and 53 grandchildren, totaling 83 individuals served**
- **Two new Support Groups** for grandparents were developed and offered:
Breaking Generational Trauma and Social Emotional Awareness
- **New partnerships:**
 - Communities in Schools and Santa Fe Public Schools to coordinate educational supports for grandchildren
 - NM ALTSD and NM Grown to provide fresh, locally grown produce to clients on bi-weekly basis
 - CASA First Abrigo Program to structure youth group model
- **80% of families successfully met program goals** related to food security, improved mental health, access to respite care and tutoring, and community referrals
- **Emergency Discretionary Funds** were distributed to five families to address need for housing and food security
- **Activity Fees** were provided to all 53 youth, ensuring their access to sports, classes and recreational activities.

LCCS GRG Program Challenges

- **Youth group was initially slow to engage** - partnering with CASA First's Abrigo program assisted us to better understand and institute a successful structure for youth engagement
- **Additional resources are needed for adequate child respite and care** during GRG support groups. We are exploring the use of interns in this role, as the needs of children go beyond childcare and require experience to address children's complex needs and provide the opportunity for therapeutic supports.
- **Need for larger meeting space in Santa Fe.** Established LCCS Santa Fe locations are still being utilized, including the agency's newly established Welcome Center, to provide bi-weekly support groups and a one day a week "drop in" hours for individual appointments. Future partnership with Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Church is still being explored.



Thank you

In City fiscal year 2025, the Children and Youth Commission funded \$120,000 to 15 organizations for the projects reported above.

- New Mexico Center for Therapeutic Riding encountered some difficulties during the grant period. The communicated with City staff in a timely manner they would not be able to spend funds.
- Aspen Community School did not bill during the contract period.