

ENCOURAGING NEW IDEAS



In June 2020, a Request for Ideas (RFI) process was launched to surface collaborative solutions from nonprofit leaders to address challenges our community is facing. The response exceeded all expectations and 14 grants were awarded encompassing 300 partners to plan and/or implement these solutions in a wide array of sectors.

RFI GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents in Buffalo/WNY

Police officers are in a unique position to reduce the potential trauma to children who are present during an arrest – a life-altering experience that may well be the worst day of their lives. The Osborne Association worked with community stakeholders, government agencies, area nonprofits and local law enforcement to assess community needs and develop child sensitive arrest policies. Osborne and the Buffalo Police Department are now working to train and support more than 750 officers and staff in these child-sensitive protocols. The project will also document the development and implementation of these trainings as a tool for ongoing technical assistance and to provide a model for other law enforcement agencies.



RFI GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: WNY Refugee and Asylee Consortium Strategic Plan

When the Moving Forward Together grant was awarded to the five agencies that comprise the Western New York Refugee and Asylee Consortium (WNYRAC) including: Catholic Charities of Buffalo; International Institute of Buffalo; Jericho Road Community Health Center; Jewish Family Services of Western New York; and Journey's End Refugee Services, it reinvigorated a collaborative effort that was then prepared to respond together to receiving an anticipated 300 Afghan evacuees. Using the grant, the agencies are looking at service duplication, individual agency strengths, the creation of lead roles in specific programming, and agency sustainability to create a clearer and more sustainable set of services for the foreign born.

RFI GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: Orleans Digital Literacy Educational Initiative

In 2020, the Orleans United Way formed the Orleans Digital Literacy Initiative to study community needs resulting from the lack of reliable, high-speed broadband internet service options in the county with funding from the WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund. They learned that there were large gaps in internet availability, significant internet unreliability, economic barriers and general lack of technical skills across 10 towns and four villages.

The Orleans United Way conducted focus groups to evaluate and prioritize solutions designed to largely improve digital literacy. A Community Mentors program was the first of 14 solutions developed to facilitate internet access and digital learning, providing more equitable programs and services within reach across the county. The Moving Forward Together grant is enabling the Orleans United Way to embed tech coaches and basic internet education programs into local nonprofit groups, libraries and community organizations.