



**Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
Investment Connection Proposal**

Proposal title	Imagination Library for Osceola, Arkansas
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Organization name/address	United Way of Northeast Arkansas Nanette Heard 407 Union Street Jonesboro, AR 72401
Mission statement	United Way of Northeast Arkansas is dedicated to helping people. This is accomplished by volunteers and staff that assess community needs, raise funds, allocate resources and encourage collaborative efforts to build a stronger and healthier community.
History of organization	<p>United Way began in Jonesboro, AR in 1955 as the United Fund. Our name was changed to United Way of Jonesboro in 1972, later becoming United Way of Greater Jonesboro in 1973. We became United Way of Northeast Arkansas (UWNEA) in 2006, providing coverage for 8 counties: Clay, Craighead, Cross, Greene, Jackson, Lawrence, Poinsett & Randolph. In late May of 2019, we were approached about providing coverage for South Mississippi County, after their local United Way Office closed.</p> <p>We served in a fiduciary role during the Westside Middle School Crisis and Hurricane Katrina and are currently acting as fiduciary for the Randolph County Recovery Committee. This committee was originally formed to assist with disaster coordination and assist with available resources for unmet needs from disasters after widespread flooding and has remained active to assist with any disaster such as house fires.</p>
Organization’s current programs and activities	UWNEA funds programs working with education, financial stability and health that are moving toward reducing the cycle of poverty. Within the last year, 919 children were given individualized access to education; 1,541 individuals were provided programs and housing

	ensuring safety and shelter; 2,681 children and adults were provided food and access to healthcare; 460 were provided free tax services; 32,476 school supply items were donated to local schools during Stuff the Bus and approximately 800 pre-schoolers received books delivered to their homes.
Website	www.uwnea.org
Support request	Grant
Requested dollar amount	\$20,000
Proposal summary	<p>United Way of Northeast Arkansas has been the affiliate partner for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in the 8 counties we have covered since 2005. We have recently been selected by United Way Worldwide for coverage for South Mississippi County and are in the process of becoming the affiliate for Imagination Library for the zip codes included in that area.</p> <p>As the affiliate, we pay \$25 per registered child per year. The program is for children from birth to age 5. Each enrolled child receives a new book each month which is mailed to them.</p> <p>We are applying for this grant so that we can provide Imagination Library to every child in Osceola so they will be kindergarten ready. Current census data shows there are 338 children under age 5.</p> <p>We are projecting the cost for 338 children as: $338 \times \\$25 = \\8450 $\\$8450 \times 2.5 \text{ years} = \\$21,125$ *We use 2.5 as the base amount of time a child will be enrolled.</p>
Issues addressed	Community facilities/services
Target population/geography	United Way of Northeast Arkansas has covered Clay, Craighead, Cross, Greene, Jackson, Lawrence, Poinsett and Randolph Counties since 2005. We have recently added South Mississippi County which includes the cities of Osceola, Wilson, Luxora, Keiser, Joiner, Frenchman's Bayou, Dyess, Driver and Bassett.
Population served including income	<p>The latest census data for Osceola shows the current population for children under age 5 to be 338. We would like to provide the program for all children within the city limits which will include the LMI population. Per Stefanie Smithey, principal of Carroll Smith Elementary, 100% of the kids in Osceola, from Pre-K - 12th grade qualify for free or reduced lunch.</p> <p>Stefanie also said children in Osceola have very limited access to age-appropriate books. Children's books are limited at the county library and are not well stocked at area stores.</p>

Anticipated outcomes/impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enroll every child in Osceola in Imagination Library 2. Children enrolled in Imagination Library begin kindergarten better prepared and ready to learn 3. Children previously enrolled in Imagination Library continue to progress through school with higher scores in reading development including vocabulary and reading comprehension
How will the program be evaluated	<p>Evaluation will be marked by the number of children enrolled that live in Osceola. Our goal is 100% enrolled in Imagination Library.</p> <p>We expect to see improvement in scores for school readiness in reading in subsequent years through the Arkansas Department of Education. Future years should also show improved scores in higher grades in english, math and science.</p>
Project time frame	01/01/20 through 12/31/20
Other significant partners in the proposal	<p>Current partnerships exist with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) and the Arkansas Imagination Library (ARIL) for the state of Arkansas. While DPIL provides the books at a very nominal cost per child, the funding is left to each affiliate. ARIL provides the opportunity to network with other affiliates across the state to learn best practices and other possible grant funding sources.</p>
Other funding secured or potential funding	<p>United Way at present has no funds budgeted for Imagination Library in Osceola for 2019. We plan to budget \$1125 from United Way funds for Osceola in 2020 & will begin looking for other grants so Imagination Library can be offered in other towns in Southern Mississippi County.</p>
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