

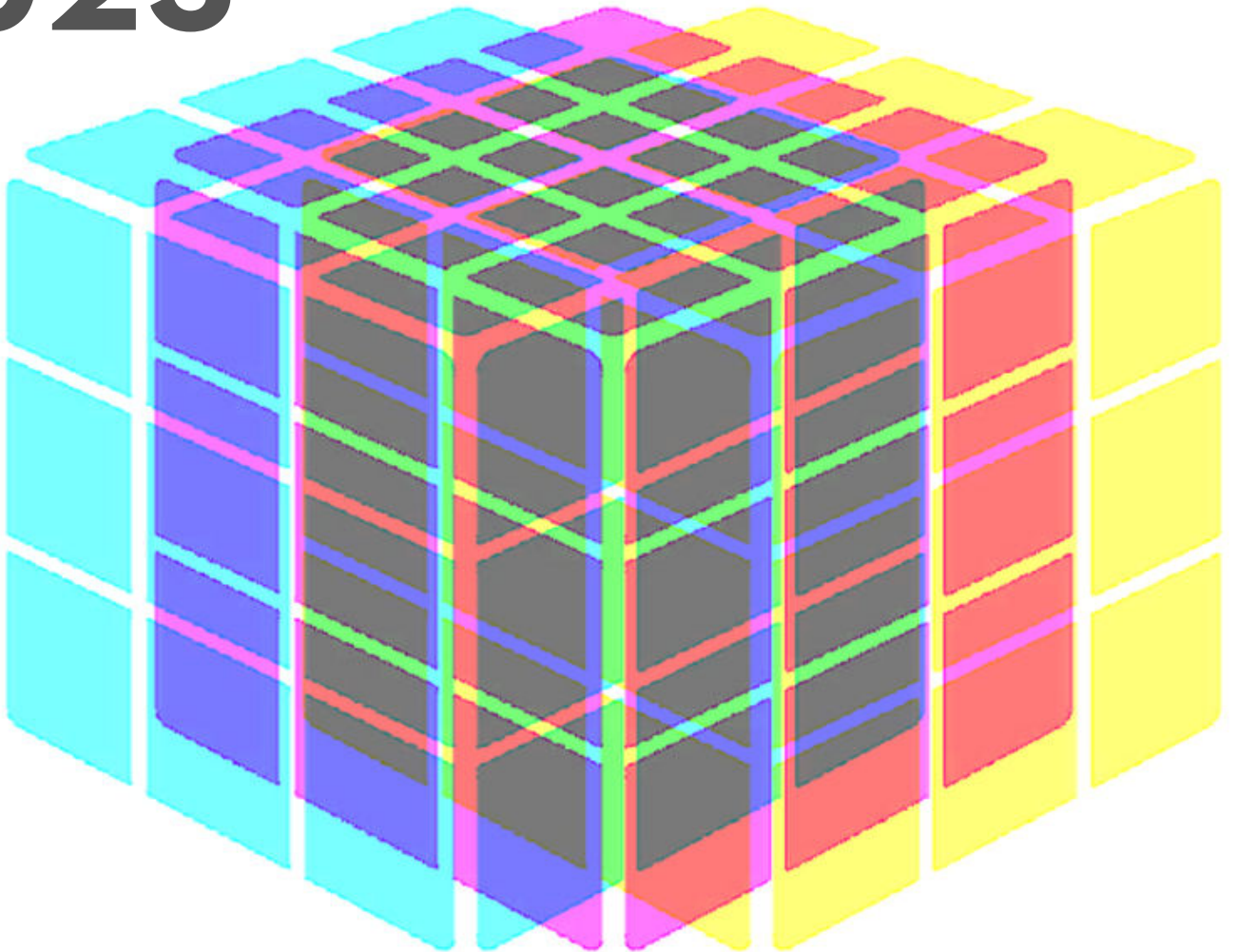


# BRAD

BLACK RIVER AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

# Annual Report

## 2023



# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am honored to present BRAD's Annual Report for 2023.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed Board of Directors for their invaluable guidance and unwavering support. Their leadership plays a pivotal role in our ability to deliver exceptional services to individuals and families across our communities. In 2023, we made significant strides in our efforts to overcome the workforce challenges. Along with exploring our cognizant agencies, we continue to explore ways to support staff, believing that in doing so, the services that we provide to our clients will be improved. We remain vigilant in case-managing our most vulnerable populations. Now, more than ever, we are committed to tackling persistent poverty and transforming lives. We envision a future where every individual in Clay, Randolph, and Lawrence Counties can aspire to a brighter tomorrow. As outlined in this report, all BRAD programs have achieved notable success in meeting objectives and providing top-tier services. Looking ahead to 2024, we are dedicated to sustaining our path of continuous improvement. Upon reviewing this report, you will understand why I am immensely proud and privileged to serve as Executive Director alongside a team of compassionate and dedicated employees committed to excellence in service delivery.

Sincerely,



Rhonda Ahrent

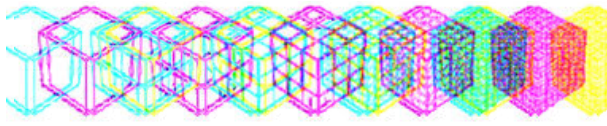
Executive Director



**THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION**  
**Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.**



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# AGENCY OVERVIEW

## Mission

BRAD EMPOWERS INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS, ENHANCE LIVES, AND BUILD SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS AND STRONG COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.

## Vision

COMMUNITIES WHERE PEOPLE HAVE A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

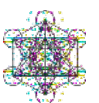
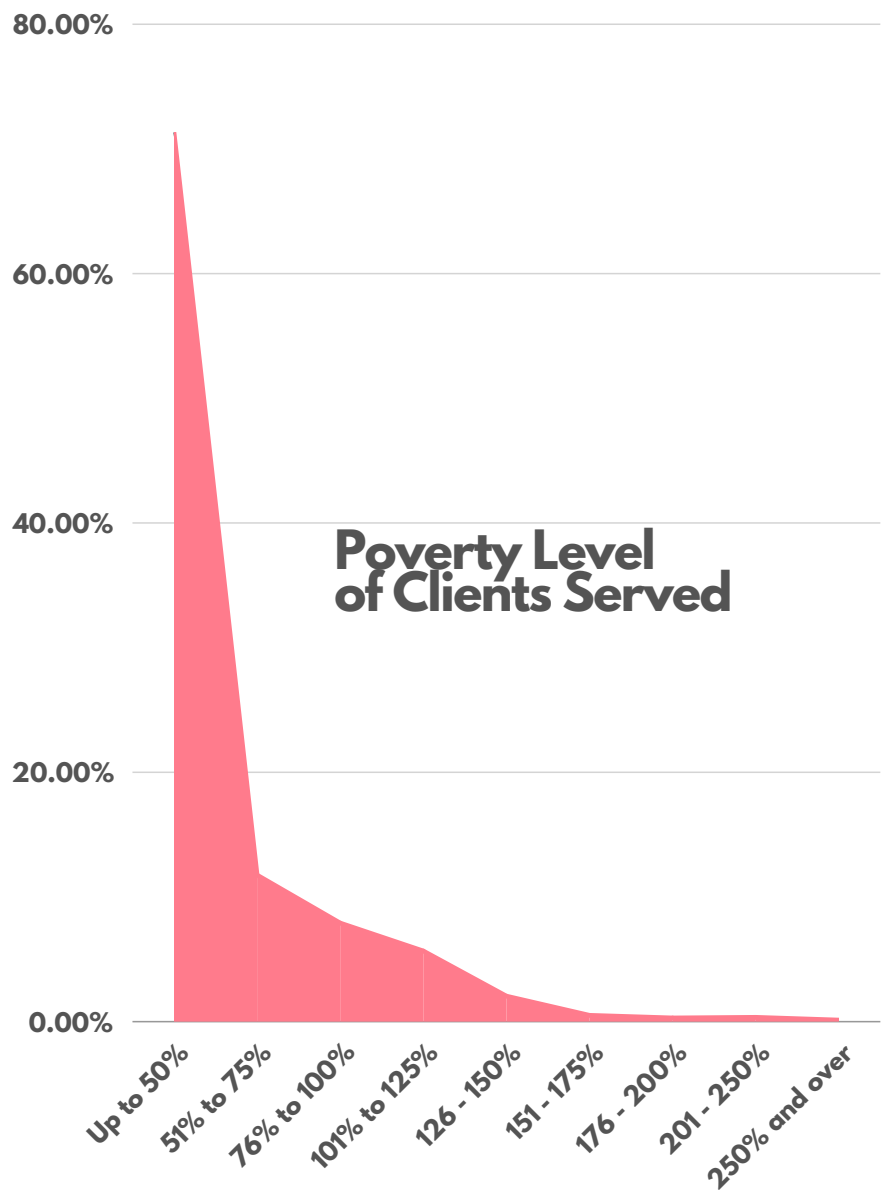
**5,962**  
Unique individuals served

**21,358**  
Total services delivered

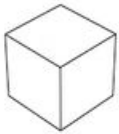
**1,178**  
Disabled clients  
receiving services

**1,099**  
Senior citizen clients  
receiving services

**2,271**  
Children as part of  
households  
receiving services

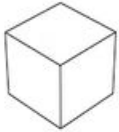


# PROGRAMS



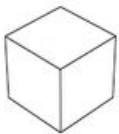
## **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) / Plan2Succeed**

BRAD Corporation provides comprehensive, holistic case management and services intended to transition families and clients out of poverty. This program offers stability and methods of gaining self-sufficiency for families and clients facing the barriers of poverty. Assistance is provided for basic and emergency needs, as well as the necessary steps needed for goal oriented short and long term projected achievements.



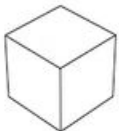
## **Child Development Programs**

BRAD Child Development Programs include Head Start, Early Head Start, Arkansas Better Chance, and State Pre-K(CCDF). The Child Development Programs serve 248 preschool children and 184 infants/toddlers. Centers are located in Corning, Piggott, Rector, Pocahontas, and Walnut Ridge.



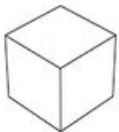
## **Low - Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**

The LIHEAP Program provides utility assistance to low income households, working to lower the energy burden to households by helping with home energy bills - heating costs during the winter and cooling costs during the summer to those who qualify.



## **Housing Programs (HUD / Section 8 / LIHTC)**

BRAD works with eligible clients to access housing assistance through HUD Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Tenant-Based Rental Assistance, HUD 202 for the very low-income elderly, and Section 811 for persons with disabilities. We partner with the Doni Martin Center to provide Group Home living and Independent Living for persons with developmental disabilities. BRAD is the managing partner for BRAD Black River Housing, a Low Income Tax Credit property.



## **Senior Citizens Program**

BRAD operates four senior wellness centers with an emphasis on health and wellness. Senior Centers make available congregate meals, homebound meals, transportation, and social and recreational activities. Funding is provided through the Area On Aging and Medicaid.



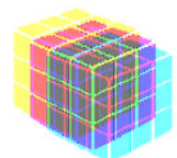
## **Weatherization**

The Arkansas Weatherization Program (AWP) was developed to help reduce energy usage in homes that are energy inefficient. The program helps customers find ways to reduce their daily energy usage. Advanced diagnostic technology is used to determine the energy conservation needs of a home.



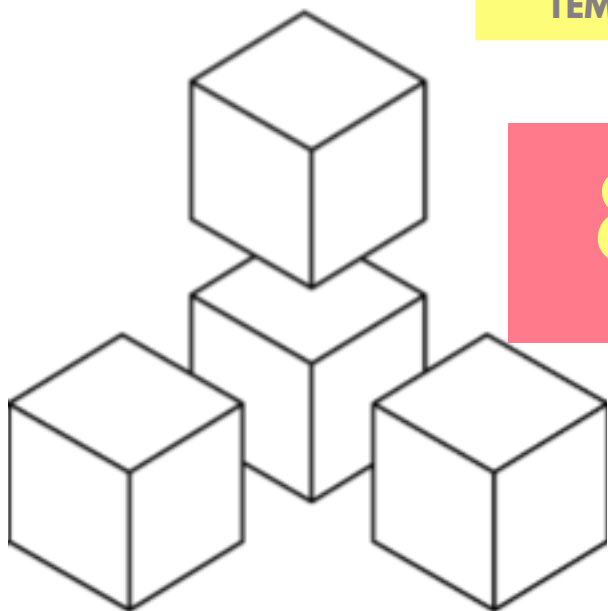
## **Transportation**

BRAD Public Transit runs on weekdays within the city limits of Pocahontas, Walnut Ridge, Hoxie and Corning. Funding is provided through Arkansas Department of Transportation.



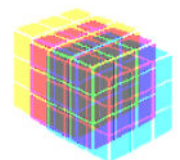
# COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG) PLAN2SUCCEED . CASE MANAGEMENT

<b>EDUCATION</b>	CLIENTS AWARDED CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE SCHOLARSHIPS TO FURTHER THEIR CHANCES OF GAINING EMPLOYMENT IN CHILD CARE	<b>8</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>JOB REFERRALS / JOB COACHING</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>JOB PLACEMENTS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>FINANCIAL LITERACY</b>	CLIENTS PARTICIPATING IN FINANCIAL SKILLS TRAINING	<b>24</b>
	HEALTH INSURANCE / CHILD SUPPORT / SOCIAL SECURITY / VA / SNAP BENEFIT COORDINATION AND NAVIGATION	<b>94</b>
<b>FOOD AND NUTRITION</b>	<b>FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>1359</b>
	<b>FOOD VOUCHERS DISTRIBUTED WITH NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE</b>	<b>492</b>
<b>HOUSING</b>	<b>HOUSING REFERRALS</b>	<b>59</b>
	<b>PERMANENT HOUSING PLACEMENTS</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>EVICTON PREVENTION</b>	<b>23</b>
	<b>HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND TEMPORARY SHELTER PROVISIONS</b>	<b>32</b>



**8**

**NUMBER OF CLIENTS  
TRANSITIONING TO SELF  
SUFFICIENCY**

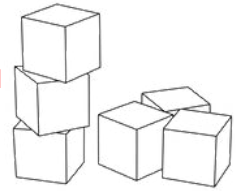


# CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

## PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

<p>IMPLEMENT HIGH-QUALITY AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SUCCESS IN KINDERGARTEN AND BEYOND.</p>	<p>ENGAGE AND INSPIRE FAMILIES TO ACHIEVE GOALS THAT LEAD TO IMPROVED FAMILY WELL-BEING.</p>	<p>EMPLOY A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUPPORT THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND STAFF.</p>
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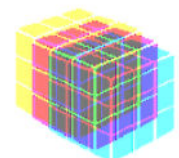
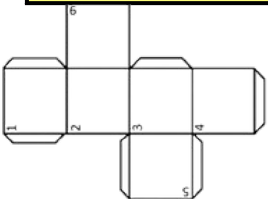
ALONG WITH THE PROGRAM GOALS, BRAD CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS HAS DEVELOPED SCHOOL READINESS GOALS THAT ALIGN WITH THE **HEAD START CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING FRAMEWORK** AND THE **ARKANSAS CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS: BIRTH THROUGH 60 MONTHS**. THESE GOALS ARE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM AND OUTCOMES ARE BASED ON ONGOING CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS.



## GROWTH SUMMARY

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT	NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED ATTENDING KINDERGARTEN FALL OF 2023	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN MEETING/EXCEEDING SCHOOL READINESS GOALS SPRING 2023	PERCENTAGE OF GROWTH FROM FALL 2022 TO SPRING 2023
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL	70	75%	12.4%
PHYSICAL	70	90.3%	7.6%
LANGUAGE	70	87.5%	10.2%
COGNITIVE	70	84.8%	11.4%
LITERACY	70	76.4%	26.4%
MATHEMATICS	70	70.8%	20.1%

DURING THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR, CHILDREN IN ALL AGE GROUPS SHOWED GROWTH IN ALL AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT BEING IN THE AREAS OF LITERACY AND MATH FOR THOSE CHILDREN TRANSITIONING TO KINDERGARTEN.

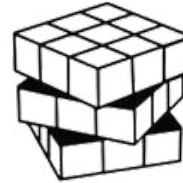


# CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

FUNDED ENROLLMENT	
HEAD START	172
EARLY HEAD START	96
EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION	88
CHILDREN SERVED	
HEAD START	185
EARLY HEAD START	143
EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION	123
FAMILIES SERVED	
HEAD START	164
EARLY HEAD START	124
EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION	108
AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT	
HEAD START	172
EARLY HEAD START	96
EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION	123
CHILDREN UP-TO-DATE ON A SCHEDULE OF PRIMARY AND PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE	
HEAD START	141
EARLY HEAD START	96
EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION	61
CHILDREN COMPLETING DENTAL EXAMS AND ORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS	
HEAD START	146
EARLY HEAD START	80
EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION	132
CHILDREN UP-TO-DATE ON IMMUNIZATIONS	
HEAD START	185
EARLY HEAD START	140
EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION	122
CHILDREN ENROLLED WITH A DISABILITY	
HEAD START	20
EARLY HEAD START	12
EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION	19
MEALS SERVED	
BREAKFAST	59,074
LUNCH	59,184
SNACKS	56,180

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

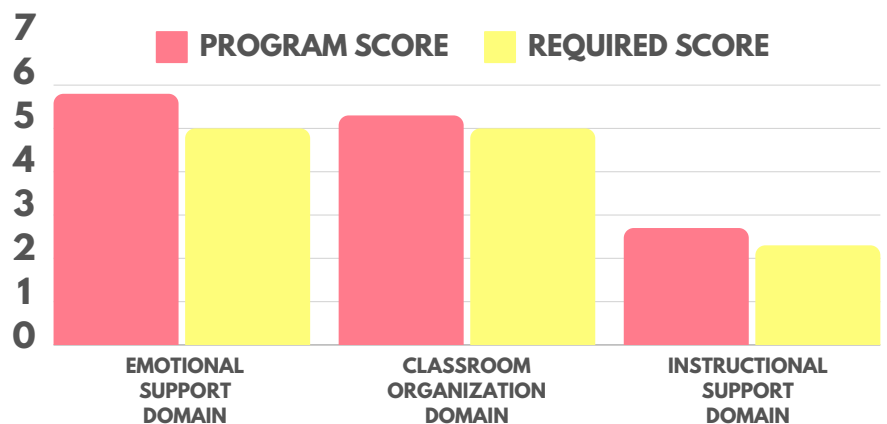
Family engagement is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which early childhood professionals, families, and children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. It is a shared responsibility of families and staff at all levels that requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer. Family engagement focuses on culturally and linguistically responsive relationship-building with key family members in a child's life. These people include pregnant women and expectant families, mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other adult caregivers. It requires making a commitment to creating and sustaining an ongoing partnership that supports family well-being. It also honors and supports the parent-child relationships that are central to a child's healthy development, school readiness, and well-being.



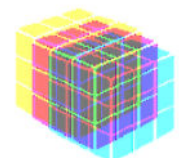
## PROGRAM NOTES

The Office of Head Start performed a Focus Area 2 (FA2) review January 29-February 3, 2023. Based on the information gathered during the review, it was determined that the program met the requirements of all applicable HSPPS, laws, regulations, and policy requirements.

As part of the Focus Area 2 monitoring review, observations were conducted in preschool center-based classrooms by the Office of Head Start CLASS® Video Pilot review from 11/16/2022 to 01/14/2023 using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®). The CLASS® tool looks at three domains of teacher-child interactions and measures those observed interactions on a seven-point scale. Our program-wide average scores were above the competitive threshold scores required by the Office of Head Start in each of the three domains of the tool.



**BRAD CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO REMAIN FOCUSED ON THE MISSION TO CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BY FOCUSING ON POSITIVE CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES RESULTING IN A BETTER FUTURE FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES.**



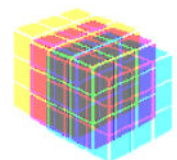
# CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

## FY 2023 AUDIT

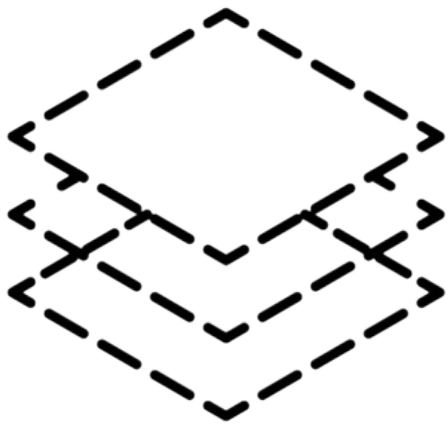
Following the 2023 BRAD Audit, Welch, Couch, and Associates, PA, issued an unmodified opinion with no significant deficiencies identified.

HEAD START / EARLY HEAD START		
YEAR-END APRIL 30, 2023		
	BUDGET/ ALLOCATION	ACTUAL EXPENSE
PERSONNEL	2,039,883	1,827,580
FRINGE	364,449	307,143
OUT OF AREA TRAVEL	7,000	9,812
INDIRECT	170,942	175,448
SUPPLIES	215,000	344,952
CONTRACTUAL	15,017	5,640
OTHER	515,982	581,934
T&TA	54,732	130,496
	3,383,005	3,383,005

EARLY HEAD START EXPANSION		
YEAR-END APRIL 30, 2023		
	BUDGET/ ALLOCATION	ACTUAL EXPENSE
PERSONNEL	1,258,951	1,043,568
FRINGE	231,139	164,514
INDIRECT	105,501	100,196
SUPPLIES	57,000	159,503
CONTRACTUAL	277,613	430,353
OTHER	5,450	3,878
T&TA	42,370	76,012
	1,978,024	1,978,024



# ENERGY

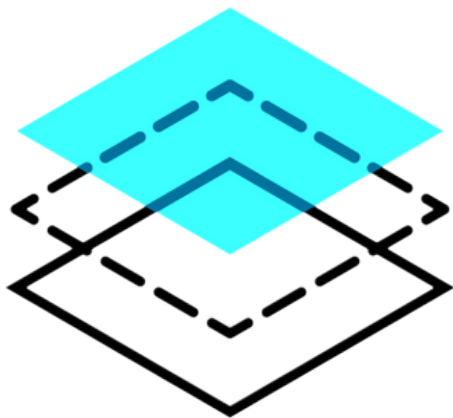


3,620

## UTILITY PAYMENTS DISPERSED

- LIHEAP (LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE)
- CSBG (COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT)
- ENERGY UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

(INCLUDES PAYMENTS MADE IN TANDEM WITH PREVENTING LOSS OF ENERGY OR EVICTION PREVENTIONS)



22

## UTILITY DEPOSITS RENDERED

- CSBG (COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT)
- ENERGY UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

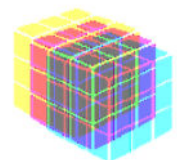
(DEPOSITS MADE IN TANDEM WITH OBTAINING SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING)



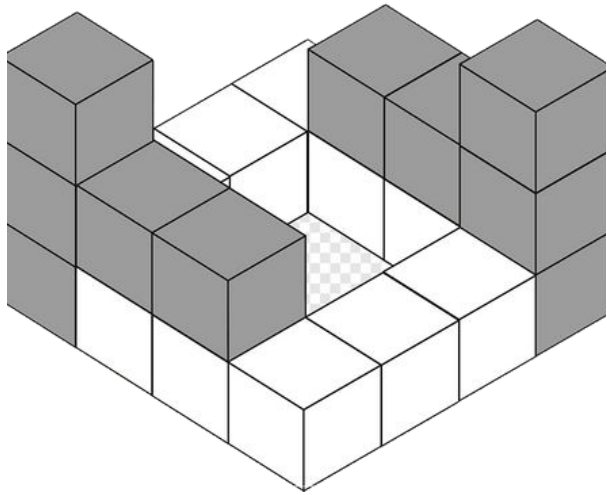
49

## HOMES WEATHERIZED WEATHERIZATION

(CLIENTS BENEFITTING FROM REDUCTION IN ENERGY BURDEN)  
AVERAGE COST PER UNIT \$6,630.04



# HOUSING



## NEW HOUSING PLACEMENTS

**-SECTION 8**  
(HOUSING CHOICE  
VOUCHER)  
**-LIHTC**  
(LOW INCOME  
HOUSING TAX CREDIT)

**49**

**-HUD 202**  
(ELDERLY/DISABLED)  
**-HUD 811**  
(DISABLED)  
**-GROUP HOME**  
(DISABLED)  
**-INDEPENDENT LIVING  
CENTER**  
(DISABLED)

**19**

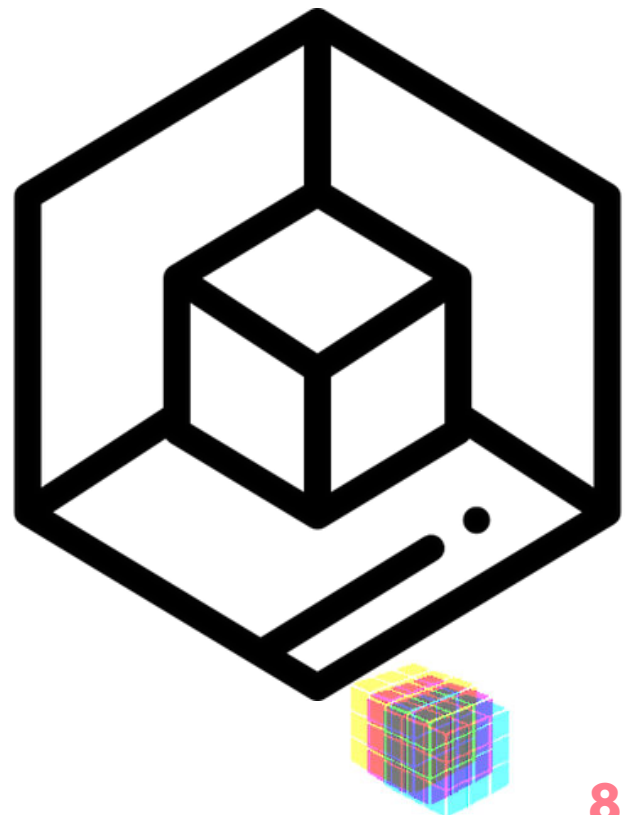
## TOTAL HOUSING UNITS LEASED

**-SECTION 8**  
(HOUSING CHOICE  
VOUCHER)  
**-LIHTC**  
(LOW INCOME  
HOUSING TAX CREDIT)

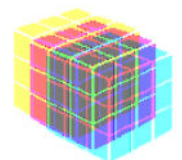
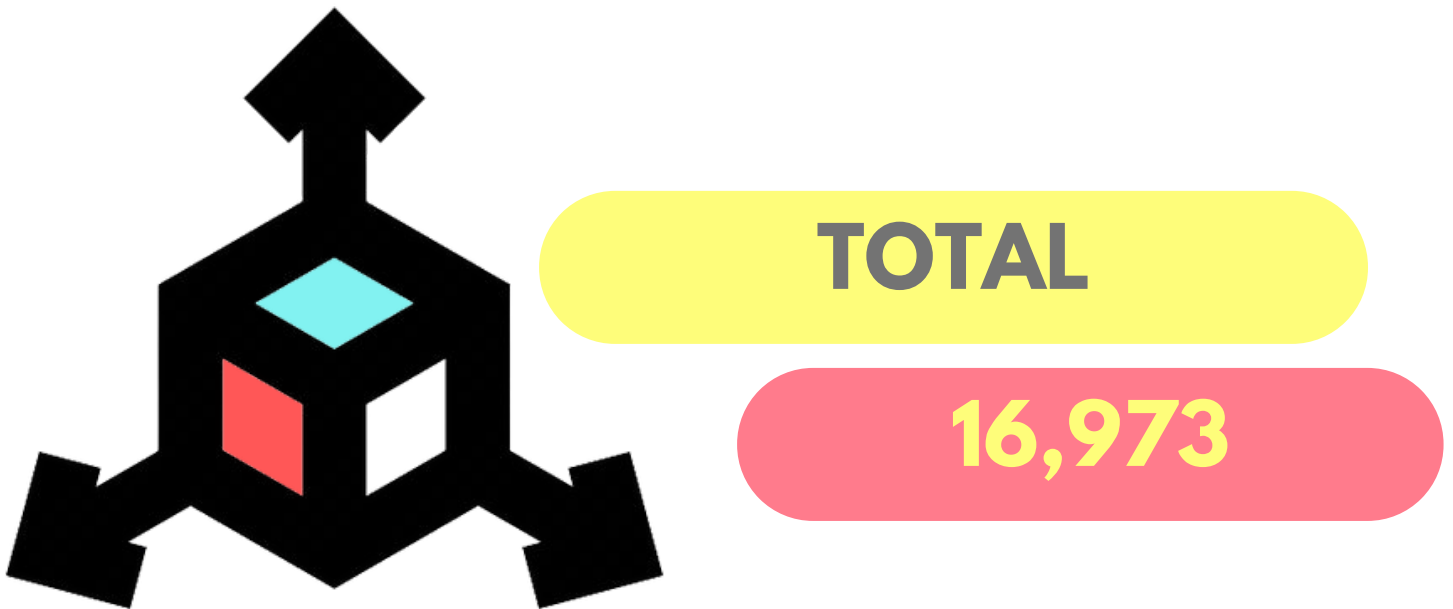
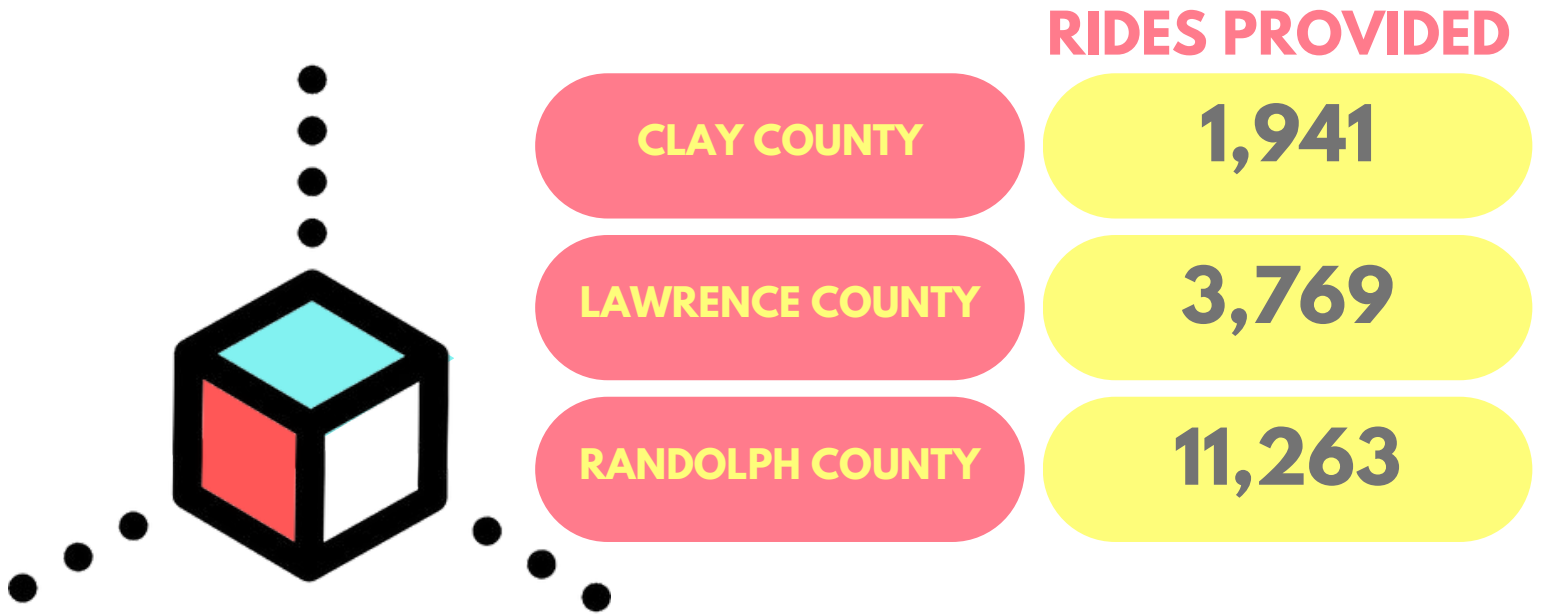
**120**

**-HUD 202**  
(ELDERLY/DISABLED)  
**-HUD 811**  
(DISABLED)  
**-GROUP HOME**  
(DISABLED)  
**-INDEPENDENT LIVING  
CENTER**  
(DISABLED)

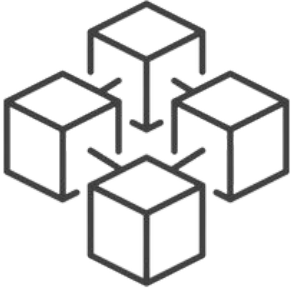
**99**



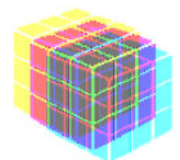
# TRANSPORTATION



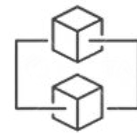
# SENIOR CITIZENS



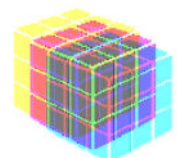
	CONGREGATE MEALS	HOME DELIVERED MEALS	SOCIALIZATION	TRANSPORTATION
CORNING	5,217	6,441	5,147	1,141
PIGGOTT	4,287	4,762		1,232
POCAHONTAS	5,510	10,027	5,242	1,623
RECTOR		2,875		
WALNUT RIDGE	3,508	7,295	3,373	468
TOTALS	18,522	31,400	13,762	4,464



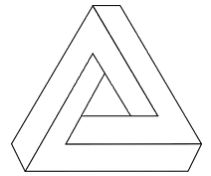
# FUNDING ANALYSIS



FUNDING SOURCE	PROGRAM	FYE 04/30/2023 AUDITED
US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEAD START</li> <li>• EARLY HEAD START</li> <li>• EXPANSION &amp; EXPANSION CARES</li> <li>• HEAD START ARP</li> <li>• HEAD START CRRSA</li> </ul>	\$ 1,597,239.00 \$ 1,785,766.00 \$ 2,092,197.00 \$ 400,854.00 \$ 20,175.00
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCDF - CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT</li> <li>• ARPA OPERATIONAL AND QUALITY</li> <li>• COMMUNITY SERVICE BLOCK GRANT</li> <li>• SENIOR CITIZEN MEDICAID - HOME DELIVERED MEALS</li> </ul>	\$ 974,590.00 \$ 346,450.00 \$ 387,466.00 \$ 77,282.00
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE</li> </ul>	\$338,573.00
US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHILD AND ADULT FOOD PROGRAM</li> </ul>	\$467,670.00
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WEATHERIZATION - LIHEAP</li> <li>• HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE</li> </ul>	\$430,414.00 \$990,212.00
US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HUD SECTION 8</li> </ul>	\$521,659.00
ARKANSAS DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TENANT BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE</li> </ul>	\$13,915.00
EAST ARKANSAS AREA AGENCY ON AGING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENIOR CITIZENS - CONGREGATE AND HOME DELIVERED MEALS</li> </ul>	\$444,522.00
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WEATHERIZATION - DOE</li> </ul>	\$199,910.00
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ARDOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SECTION 5311 - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION</li> </ul>	\$331,055.00
<b>TOTAL GRANT FUNDING:</b>		<b>\$11,419,899.00</b>



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**KIM  
ANDREWS**  
LAWRENCE COUNTY

**GARY  
BARNHILL**  
LAWRENCE COUNTY

**BRITTANY  
BRADSHAW**  
CLAY COUNTY

**PAIGE  
CATT**  
CLAY COUNTY

**DIANA  
DALTON  
(BOARD CHAIR)**  
RANDOLPH COUNTY

**MANDY  
DURHAM**  
LAWRENCE COUNTY

**DEBI  
HART**  
LAWRENCE COUNTY

**PAT  
JOHNSON**  
RANDOLPH COUNTY

**HALEY  
KEENEY**  
RANDOLPH COUNTY

**DONI  
MARTIN  
(VICE CHAIR)**  
CLAY COUNTY

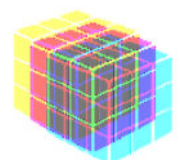
**VICKIE  
MITCHELL**  
LAWRENCE COUNTY

**MIKE  
PATTERSON**  
CLAY COUNTY

**JOEY  
RADCLIFF**  
CLAY COUNTY

**DON  
SETTLES**  
CLAY COUNTY

**BEN  
WICKER**  
RANDOLPH COUNTY





**BLACK RIVER AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
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