



## OZARK OPPORTUNITIES, INC.

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# Agency Progress Report

**Report for June 2020 Board of Directors and Stakeholders**

## I. Chief Executive Officer Update:



←← *OOI Finance Stoplight*; **Green= ALL GOOD!**

- Agency Finances are (still) going well. We have no issues with making payments to vendors on time, and cash flow is not limited due to access to funds.
- We have now turned our attention to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic, and are spending a large amount of time reading correspondence from funding sources on how they expect staff and customers to be treated during this difficult time. Outreach offices remain closed to the public; however, we are assisting people with online, phone and car-side interviews as needed.
- We (still) expect to receive additional funding from the federal Coronavirus Stimulus Bill in the coming months that can directly benefit many of those that are hurting due to lack of work, etc. due to COVID-19. We still don't have concrete guidance on LIHEAP utility assistance and Community Services (CSBG) funds; we will include updates in future issues of this report as we receive further direction.

## II. Child Development

**(ABC Pre-K, Head Start, & Early Head Start):**

### A. Director's Notes:

The Coronavirus Pandemic has affected all of our Child Development Programs, and we are spending lots of time researching the proper way forward this fall, as the pandemic will not be over, and the threat still real. As we receive additional funding and information we will do our best to serve the families that have trusted us with their children in the best way possible (which is extremely difficult considering the myriad of rules, understandings and expectations we now have upon us.)

To that end, we are working on creating a virtual component to our Pre-K Programs, and are researching what others are doing, as well as what is allowable under the new state regulations. As we learn more and develop a concrete plan we will share it with our staff, participants, and stakeholders.

## **B. Arkansas Better Chance Pre-K Program:**

- **Out of School until Aug. 2020\***

## **C. Head Start/Early Head Start:**

### **1. Program Manager/ Education Coordinator- Ryan Clayborn:**

- I have worked with coordinating staff and FSW's to develop their own Google Classroom activities that are designed for their peers to attend. We have a training schedule prepared for all staff during the months of June and July. Each one of these staff members will be required to provide a training to staff during this time period.
- We are in the beginning phase of working on Project ECHO (Educating Children at Home with High Quality Outcomes). This project will be focusing on providing high quality educational services during the Covid-19 Outbreak in the event we are not able to return to school in August. We want to be prepared for the worst and hope for the best!
- I assisted other coordinating staff on two rounds of bag distributions to all locations. The items in the bags included food, books, educational supplies, and art supplies.
- I am in the process of ordering supplies for the upcoming school year. Approximately \$5,000 worth of books were ordered in May.
- We completed teaching staff evaluations for all center staff members.
- I assisted the Licensing Coordinator with maintenance duties.
- Attended multiple online webinars on COVID-19 and other topics.
- I held multiple Zoom meetings with Coordinators in the month of May.
- I am in the process of reviewing staff AMI packets and phone logs with families.
- I have watched over 20 hours of TED Talks that include information on educational and professional material to share with staff. I have developed professional development opportunities from these resources.
- Along with the Mentor Coach, we have prepared an EHS Curriculum Training that will be delivered to EHS staff in June.
- I have remained active in communicating with staff and continue to find ways to strengthen communication in these difficult times for both families and staff.

### **2. Mental Health- Tawnya Akins:**

- Completed all Google Classroom™ Assignments
- Watched Webinars from many different sources
- Talked with EHS Teachers
- Worked on Component Training PowerPoint
- Worked in the office on assigned days (2 days per week).
- Attended all Zoom Calls

**3. Health & Nutrition- Sharon Burnett:**

**HEALTH OUTCOMES: MAY 2020**

<i>Head Start</i>	<i>Early Head Start:</i>	<i>Status</i>
98%	68%	Completed Dental Exams
99%	87%	Completed Lead Testing
97%	87%	Completed Physical Exams (Well Child for EHS)
92%	91%	Completed Immunizations
7	1	Immunization waiver from ADH

**4. ERSEA & Family and Community Partnerships- Terri Beard:**

- **ENROLLMENT UPDATE:** At the end of May we had 251 Head Start children enrolled and 48 Early Head Start Children for a total of 299. We were over enrolled in Head Start at that time (as our new Pre-K # is 232 children, due to the reduction of slots for the new program year- effective March 1<sup>st</sup>).

FSW's are currently recruiting for the 2020-2021 program year. At all areas, safe distancing practices are in place. Applications as well as returned documents can be dropped off in outdoor drop-off locations in all counties.

It should be noted that the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) Licensing Division has come out with a COVID 19 rule of no more than 10 people in a classroom (including teachers). This will complicate opening of centers for our Pre-K programs, as we typically run 16 per classroom. We are meeting to discuss options that will best serve the families and children and hope to have info shared by late July.

**End-of-Month Enrollment Report**

**Summary**

Grant Number	Month	Head Start		Early Head Start		Total		Status
		Reported	Funded	Reported	Funded	Reported	Funded	
06CH010428	Dec 2019	257	261	48	48	305	309	Reported
06CH010428	Jan 2020	254	261	48	48	302	309	Reported
06CH010428	Feb 2020	255	261	48	48	303	309	Reported
06CH010428	Mar 2020	252	232	48	48	300	280	Reported
06CH010428	Apr 2020	251	232	48	48	299	280	Reported
06CH010428	May 2020	251	232	48	48	299	280	Reported
06CH010428	Jun 2020		232		48		280	
06CH010428	Jul 2020		232		48		280	
06CH010428	Aug 2020		232		48		280	
06CH010428	Sep 2020		232		48		280	
06CH010428	Oct 2020		232		48		280	
06CH010428	Nov 2020		232		48		280	

- **HS/EHS ATTENDANCE UPDATE:** There was no Attendance for May to report for either program as all classrooms have been closed since March 16-17th due to COVID-19. Staff are still contacting families weekly and offering support services not only for the children but the family as well. Alternate Methods of Instruction (AMI) packets have been sent home with children/families in order to continue providing educational opportunities and craft items for projects that can be completed at home.

The last day for Head Start was considered May 13<sup>th</sup>, and Early Head Start will be June 12, 2020. EHS children and families are continuing to be served through mid-June with AMI packets and supplies for the children. Referrals and support are continuing to those families with a need.

**5. Patricia Murray- Disabilities & Center Supervisor:**

**Early Head Start:**

Agency Summary - Ozark Opportunities Inc.						
Children	Children with an IEP or IFSP (% of funded enrollment)		Received Services	Primary Disability		
<b>13</b>	Open IEP	1	2.1%	1	Non-categorical/developme	9
	Closed IEP	0	0.0%	0		
Funded:	Open IFSP	12	25.0%	12	Speech or language impair	4
	Closed IFSP	0	0.0%	0		
<b>48</b>	Total Open	13	27.1%	13		
	Total Closed	0	0.0%	0		
				IEP / IFSPs Due		
				Past Due		8
				Next 30 days		2
				More than 30 days		3
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**Head Start:**

Agency Summary - Ozark Opportunities Inc.						
Children	Children with an IEP or IFSP (% of funded enrollment)		Received Services	Primary Disability		
<b>51</b>	Open IEP	51	19.5%	51	Non-categorical/developme	29
	Closed IEP	0	0.0%	0		
Funded:	Open IFSP	0	0.0%	0	Speech or language impair	22
	Closed IFSP	0	0.0%	0		
<b>261</b>	Total Open	51	19.5%	51		
	Total Closed	0	0.0%	0		
				IEP / IFSPs Due		
				Past Due		20
				Next 30 days		4
				More than 30 days		27
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**6. Licensing, Safety & Facilities- Harley Thompson:**

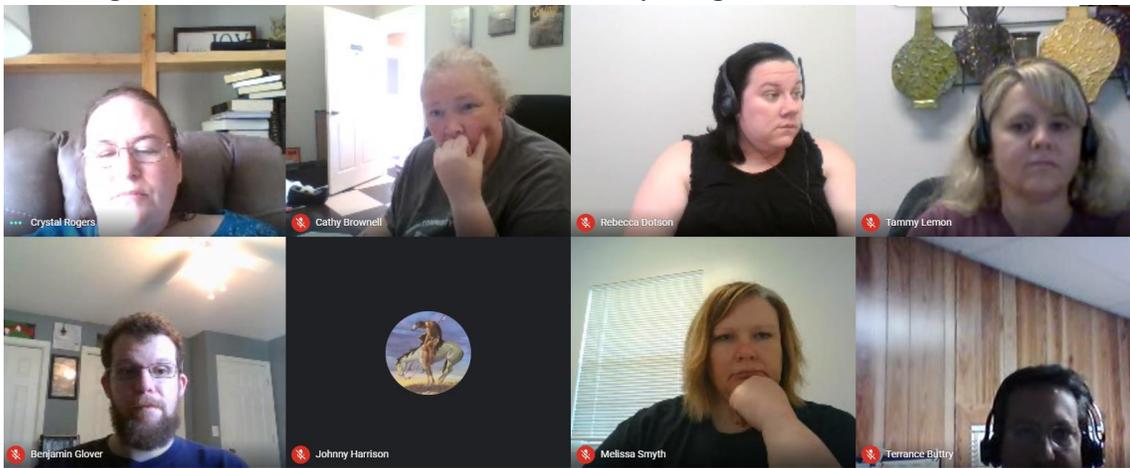
- Began working with sites to survey storage building contents and assist with moving or disposing of unneeded or unserviceable items.
- Mounted drop-boxes at Norfolk HS and Bruno-Pyatt HS to aid with the contactless gathering of registration paperwork.
- Compiled technology and non-technology inventory forms submitted by staff.
- Working on treating playgrounds for weeds and pests.
- Ongoing coordination with Ritter regarding installation of fiber-optic internet at Harrison HS, Mtn. Home HS, and Marshall locations.
- Worked on AMI assignments, online professional development, and webinars relevant to early childhood education and safety.

### III. Community Services

*Rebecca Hanlin; Community Services Manager*

#### 1. COVID-19 Precaution- updates for June, 2020:

- All offices are still closed to the public. We are continuing to limit the number of staff on site and continuing with daily cleaning protocols.
- All services are still available. Applications are available via “take-one” boxes located at each outreach office and the administrative building; by mail; email; fax; online. Applications and support documentation can be returned via fax, mail, drop boxes (located at each outreach location and the administrative building), email, and online. Interviews are conducted via phone or other virtual platforms.
- Staff stay connected using Google Meet™; below our team is discussing and conducting training for the ACHANGE (COVID19) Stability Program.



#### 2. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program:

- Winter Non-Emergency assistance ended Friday, **May 15, 2020** & Emergency Energy Assistance will close to the public on Wednesday, **June 10, 2020**.
- Guidance from AEO is that crisis will remain open until approximately 3 weeks before a new crisis program will be opened with CARES Act funding.
- Emergency Program guidelines have been expanded:
  - Second application for assistance may now be accepted and paid.
  - Maximum emergency benefit increased from a maximum of \$500 to \$1000.
  - No longer must have a disconnect notice. May assist with past due amounts.
- **Summer Non-Emergency and Crisis scheduled to open Monday, July 6, 2020.**

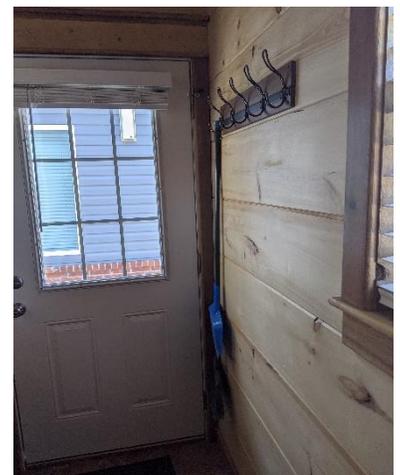
Non-Emergency Assistance (6/5/2020)					
Counties	Received	Approved	\$	Pending	Denied
Baxter	620	536	\$66,453.00	0	84
Boone	679	599	\$75,325.00	5	75
Marion	337	276	\$34,514.00	0	61
Newton	211	201	\$26,779.00	0	10
Searcy	215	190	\$23,915.00	1	24
Van Buren	309	278	\$35,396.00	1	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>\$262,382.00</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>284</b>

Emergency Assistance (6/5/2020)					
Counties	Received	Approved	\$	Pending	Denied
Baxter	96	80	\$20,926.80	3	13
Boone	135	82	\$25,628.30	12	41
Marion	66	48	\$15,142.70	4	14
Newton	38	30	\$7,393.25	2	6
Searcy	19	12	\$3,865.44	3	4
Van Buren	43	32	\$6,481.79	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>\$79,438.28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>83</b>

### 3. Mobile Micro-Shelters:

- Boy Scout Troop 60:** The third MicroShelter was delivered to the *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* offices on Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>. This shelter will be put into service in Boone County and we have already begun reaching out to community partners in an effort to get this unit out there to help individuals in need as quickly as possible.

We are very appreciative for the outstanding work that Boy Scout Troop 60 has put into constructing this shelter and would love to continue to grow this relationship via future programs. (Please check out our two videos where Ben Glover interviews Alec on the building of this micro-shelter and in the second video Alec takes us on a tour ☺)



- **North Arkansas College:** We have no updates since classes for this semester were suspended for North Arkansas College due to the COVID- 19 pandemic. We have remained in contact with teaching staff at North Arkansas College and have revised the due date of this MicroShelter to be September 30, 2020 since classes are expected to resume for the Vocational Training Department on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**4. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG):**

- 2020 Discretionary Grant application has been approved for \$38,942.67. The original request was for \$50,000 to be used in three areas: asset building, media & communications, and training. Grant is from February 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021. A revised budget has been sent to the State for final approval.
- OOI submitted a \$84,000 CSBG/COVID grant May 8, 2020 for June 1 – September 30, 2020 to cover housing related needs; eviction/foreclosure prevention, security and utility deposits, rent, etc.



**5. Vehicle Repair Loan Program- No change from last month:**

- Current balance is \$4,250.91. Current outstanding funds are **\$2,097.67**.
- \$500 maximum loan amount.

**6. Emergency/Stability Program:**

- Activity to date using CSBG (Community Service Block Grant) funds:
  - No change in expenditures since last month; \$6,243.09 to date, remaining balance of \$6.91.
  - Our next anticipated funding allocation of \$3,000 is expected in July for the July 1 – September 30 funding period.
  - OOI has applied for CSBG-COVID funds for June 1-Sept 30 in the amount of \$84,000 which was submitted to the State May 8, 2020.
- OOI has applied for several grants under Emergency/Stability category that focus on housing related needs due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.



One. In addition, we have submitted an additional application for Phase Two.

○ **AVAILABLE NOW! We have received an award for \$21,250 from ACHANGE** to assist

individuals that are at or below 30% of area median income in Baxter and Searcy counties. Funds are used for those directly impacted by COVID-19 and can be used for housing related needs; rent, utilities, deposits, etc.

**7. HOPE Revolving Loan Program:**

*Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* administers an interest-free micro loan program through the Housing Opportunities Partnership Exchange (HOPE 501(c)3) that is intended to assist homeless individuals/families with the upfront costs of obtaining safe and affordable housing such as rent deposits, rent payments and/or utility deposits.

- The HOPE Revolving Loan was re-opened On February 13, 2020, with a balance of \$3,085.09 available.
- Activity from March 1, 2020, to June 1, 2020
  - i. One new loan processed, no payments received
  - ii. Starting collection efforts on loan that is late on payment
  - iii. Revolving loan account current balance is \$1,462.13
- Available to eligible people in Baxter, Boone, Marion and Newton Counties.
- Assists homeless individuals in obtaining permanent housing (it can pay security deposits, rent and utility deposits; i.e. water, gas and electricity).

**8. Family Development & Empowerment:**

- **SUCCESS:** May 31, 2020 we have 54 families enrolled in SUCCESS and 4 pending. 44 Participants are approved for A-16 (LIHEAP Case Mgmt). Baxter: 9; Boone: 19; Marion: 4; Newton: 4; Searcy: 4; Van Buren: 4. CSBG by County is: Baxter: 5; Boone: 2; Marion: 1; Searcy: 0 & Van Buren: 2.

- **Enrollment Breakdown:**

County	SUCCESS	A-16 Activities
Baxter	14	9
Boone	21	19
Marion	5	4
Newton	4	4
Searcy	4	4
Van Buren	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>44</b>

- As we continue to maintain social distancing, online classes will remain the vehicle for seminars for the month of June. Participants learned Energy Conservation information including such topics of Vampire Connections, Caulking around windows, and temperature settings for HVAC systems. 22 participants completed the seminar and survey.



- For many families, schools closing 2 months early impacted their budgets a great deal. June's seminar will cover ***Summer Fun with a Limited Budget***. The seminar will be posted June 12, 2020 to all OOI media devices. The seminar and survey will close at 8:00 am July 1<sup>st</sup>.



➤ **All seminars are free and open to the public and advertised on Facebook and website.**

- **Success with SUCCESS; Follow-Up Edition:** This month we would like to do a final follow-up on Ferrin Carlton. Ferrin is a single mother of 1 child and has a degree from North Arkansas College- she hopes to further her education later this fall. Ferrin is a graduate of the SUCCESS Program and also completed *Getting Ahead in a Getting'-By- World*. When the OOI Community Services Department had an employment opportunity, she jumped on the chance to join the team. While in the SUCCESS Program she began working on her credit issues. Unfortunately, she had her identity stolen making building her credit extremely difficult. 9 months ago, she began the process of homeownership with Northwest Regional Housing. Ferrin's hard work paid off this month when she was able to close on her very own home! Ferrin continues to use all the tools she has learned from the program and to teach those new skills to all that she encounters. Congrats to her and Jamon as their new journey begins!!!

#### **9. Healthy Families Arkansas- May Activity:**

- Total enrollment of 27 families – 17 in Van Buren County and 10 in Searcy County
- Received 1 new referral, enrolled 1 new family in Searcy County & had 1 new baby born(!) We completed 35 virtual home visits (93% completion rate).
- May 31 marked 2.5 months of virtual work. *Healthy Families America* has stated that virtual visits will be the recommended mode of home visiting for the foreseeable future. Arkansas Children's Hospital extended their restrictions on travel, training, and conferences – which includes in-person home visits – through June 30.
- Staff are continuing to use virtual home visiting (via telephone call or video call) with families who have those capabilities. During these visits, we are discussing goals, sharing resources, supporting the family, and completing child development and parental depression assessments.

While we aren't able to complete the Intimate Partner Violence screenings with families in a virtual manner, we are providing all families with education on healthy relationships and offering resources as requested. For the families who aren't participating in virtual visits, we still keep in touch with them on a regular basis via text, share curriculum and resources, and complete assessments if possible.

**10. Community Engagement & Staff Development:**

- On March 18, 2020, Online Microsoft training was obtained for all Outreach and Family Development staff providing training opportunities during COVID adjusted work schedules.

**11. Staffing Updates:**

- Discussions with OOI leadership are underway regarding staffing and potential CARES Act funding opportunities and how that will affect the 2021 program year.
- Marie Knoble, Outreach Worker for Searcy and Van Buren counties is out on extended leave- a plan has been implemented to ensure services continue uninterrupted for those counties.