

💡 THE EQUITY INNOVATION FUND 💡



June and September 2022 Grantee Impact



United Way
of Racine County

▶ June and September 2022 Grantees

Fight to End Exploitation
Project: Bridging the Gap for Human
Trafficking Victim Resources in Racine County



4 projects totaling over **\$179,927**.

BeLEAF Survivors
Project: Project RESPECT



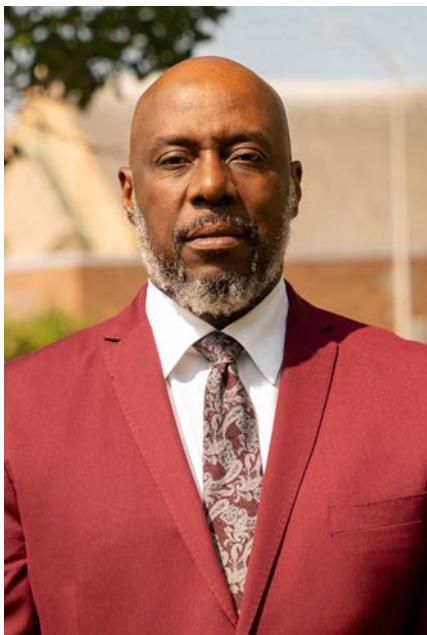
636 individuals have been served.

LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin
Project: Colorful and Connected

Secure Futures
Project: Money Coach



4 projects are directed by BIPOC, women, LGBTQIA+ community members or other marginalized individuals.

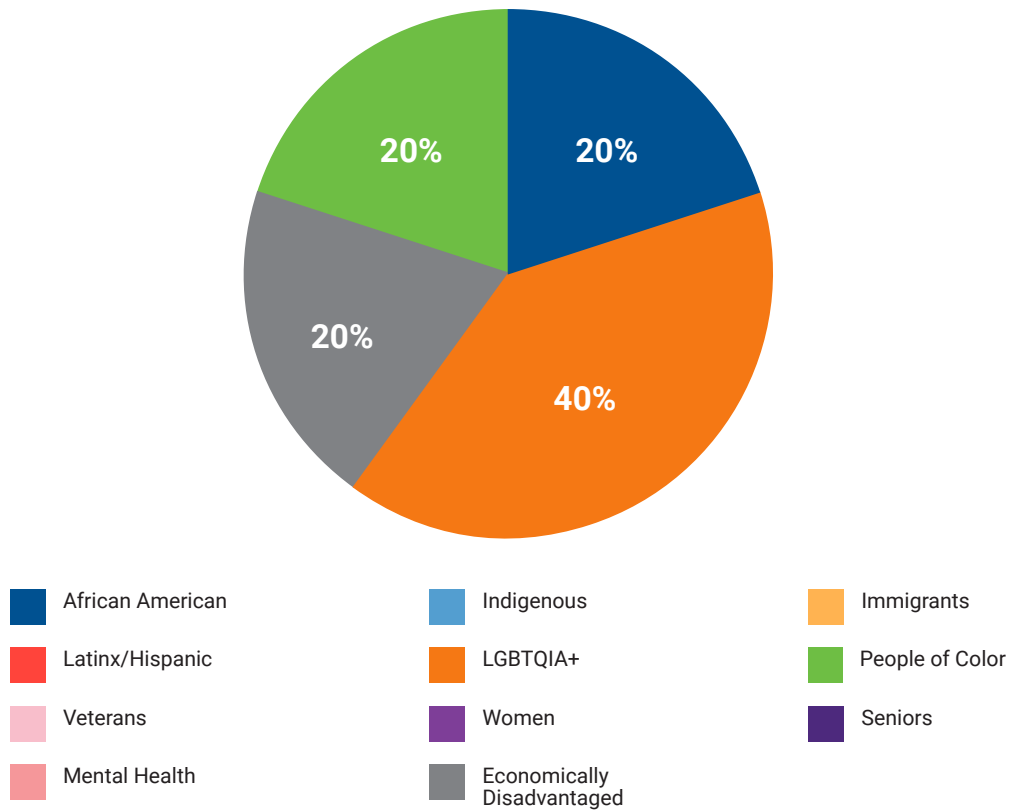


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“It has been an honor participating on the Equity Innovation Fund Grant Committee of the United Way of Racine County! These funds have provided a helping hand along with hope and security to organizations who have chosen to positively impact our community with their work. These funds have allowed the recipients to make tremendous impact in the community in the areas of women, children and youth, art, mentoring, education, and leadership among many other areas of focus. This community has truly and positively benefited from the allocation of these funds.” – Pastor Melvin Hargrove, Equity Innovation Fund Committee member and Diversity Officer for Racine County

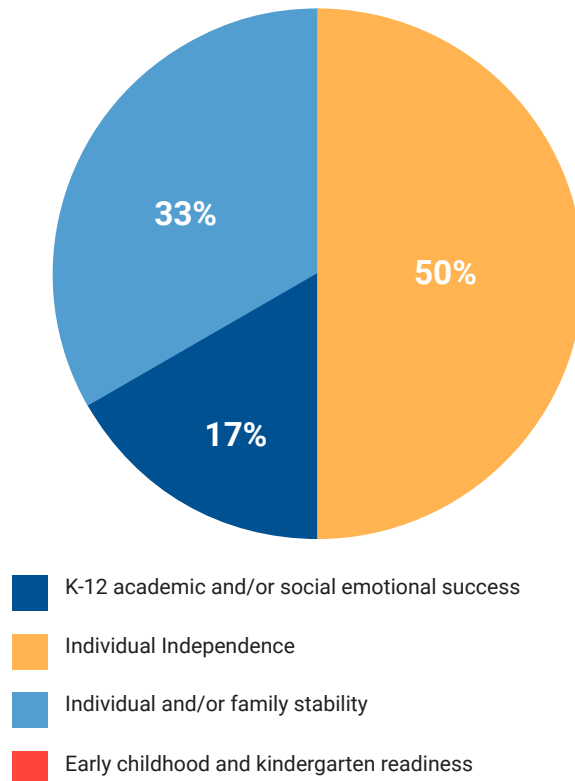
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Marginalized Populations Served by Projects



Grantees indicated in their application which marginalized population their projects will serve. Projects may serve more than one population.

Areas Addressed by Projects



Grantees indicated in their application the focus area addressed by their project.



Fight to End Exploitation **Project: Bridging the Gap for Human Trafficking Victim Resources in Racine County**

Bridging the Gap for Human Trafficking Victim Resources in Racine County works to increase prevention, intervention, and restoration assistance to all marginalized populations. Fight to End Exploitation (FEE) wanted to ensure that everyone in Racine County had access to services critical to victim recovery, with an intentional focus on young Black girls. FEE worked to address the intersections of vulnerability for trafficking, including teen dating violence, runaway risks and exploitation with the creation of a task force, creation and distribution of Teen Resource Guide for teens in distress and a targeted social media awareness campaign. The FEE website averaged nearly 4,500 visitors and 14,500 page views per month, with the Resources and Teen Resources pages being the most visited pages. Teen Resource Guides were distributed to 18 partner organizations. Bridging the Gap received a second Equity Innovation Fund grant in January 2024 to continue this critical work.



By the Numbers

- 3,067 individuals that trafficked youth may encounter – medical and mental health providers, educators, shelter staff, legal advocates, law enforcement, CPS workers and social workers – completed training to be prepared to provide intervention services.
- 36 professionals from 25 organizations that work regularly with youth at risk for being trafficked meet regularly through the newly formed Runaway/Missing Child Task Force.
- 3,000 resource booklets distributed.
- Developed a new resource card for parents and guardians of chronic runaways and missing children. This resource card is being used agency-wide at the Racine Police Department and is being promoted to educators in other communities through the National Criminal Justice Training Center.
- The social media awareness campaign has exceeded 1,000 followers and established connections with partners including the FBI, Homeland Security, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Polaris.



BeLEAF Survivors
Project: Project RESPECT

“*I really enjoy this group. It is a safe place where I can express myself and be heard.*” – Support group participant

Project RESPECT focuses on prevention, intervention and educational strategies to address sexual violence in LGBTQIA+ youth. Four pathways were established: Love is Respect program for seventh-grade students, peer support groups, Safe Zone training and a community read effort. BeLEAF developed the Love is Respect curriculum, received approval from Racine Unified School District, and piloted its delivery at Starbuck Middle School and Jerstad-Agerholm Middle School. RUSD has requested the expansion of the program to additional schools. Project RESPECT partnered with five local organizations to provide information, share resources, and advocate for people who are marginalized based on gender identity, sexual identity, and/or sexual orientation, and those whose lives have been affected by sexual and/or domestic violence.

“*I am glad there is something like this for me. It is somewhere I can go where my peers understand my struggles and I can express the real me.*” – Support group participant

By the Numbers

- 11 BeLEAF volunteer advocates, staff and board members completed Safe Zone training to better equip them to support survivors of abuse that identify as LGBTQIA+.
 - 100% of Safe Zone participants feel better prepared to serve LGBTQIA+ clients
- 508 seventh graders completed the Love is Respect Curriculum
 - 92% increased knowledge of dating violence
 - 95% reported knowing more sources of support for help with dating violence
- Pre- and post-program surveys indicate the number of students who:
 - Could accurately identify dating abuse increased by 39%
 - Could identify how to help a friend in an abusive relationship increased by 36%
 - Knew the best time to set boundaries in a relationship increased by 24%
 - Could identify what constitutes consent increased by 35%



“*I think the curriculum is essential for middle-school students.*”
– Suellen Krahn, 7th grade teacher at Jerstad-Agerholm Middle School



LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin Project: Colorful and Connected

Colorful and Connected (C&C) was created to support and empower individuals that live in the intersectionality of being both a person of color and part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The program created spaces led by and for Queer Black, indigenous, and other people of color as a way to generate joy and build community. During the grant cycle, the LGBT Center hired an equity coordinator to lead the work and began the work of intentionally building relationships and developing trust within the Queer BIPOC community. This included hosting a ball for the Queer BIPOC community, which had 154 attendees. Through virtual and in-person social groups and outings, the program experienced significant growth, with unduplicated members increasing from 1 to 34. Participants have expressed feeling acknowledged and “seen” during discussions about culture, and have exhibited a higher level of confidence during group meetings. Center staff and C&C mentors have supported members in accessing LGBTQIA+-friendly resources to address housing insecurity, legal assistance and harm reduction.

By the Numbers

- 90% of participants felt an improved sense of belonging
- 100% of participants felt that Colorful & Connected sessions were one of the few spaces they could be truly open
- 90% of ball attendees said it is extremely important or very important to be connected to other BIPOC Queer people



“Colorful and Connected has helped me find a safe place to be Black and Queer. I have been able to connect with Black and POC people in southeast Wisconsin. It’s been nice to meet and connect with folk who I otherwise wouldn’t have. C&C has given me the space to learn and build in my community.” – Connie, Colorful and Connected member



SecureFutures

Secure Futures Project: Money Coach



Money Coach aims to enhance financial literacy education for high school students in Racine. The project is an innovative financial mentoring program serving teens from under-resourced communities. Participants were provided with coaching and guidance to develop strong money management habits and long-term financial capability. Each student was matched with a volunteer mentor from the community to learn financial literacy in small groups and one-on-one interactions. Students were also able to earn scholarships as they reached program benchmarks.

Money Coach participants learned skills such as opening a bank account, regularly tracking expenses and utilizing a budget to guide financial decisions. Most of the program participants reported the program made a significant difference in their lives.

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“Money Coach isn’t just a program, it’s a catalyst for transformation. Thanks to the invaluable support from United Way of Racine County, students in the program opened bank accounts, learned to track their expenses, and created budgets. Together we’re giving students the knowledge and skills to empower themselves with financial capability and build a foundation for generational wealth and opportunity that strengthens communities.” – Brenda Campbell, President and CEO, SecureFutures

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“I loved how the coaches taught us things about money that we need to know in our lives and steered us in the right direction. They pushed us to want better for ourselves!” – Aniyah Berryhill, Case High School student

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By the Numbers

- 99 students served
- 46 volunteers
- 94% of participants opened a bank account
- 83% of students began regularly tracking their expenses
- 93% of students report regularly using a budget



From its launch in January 2022 to the completion of the grants included in this report, United Way of Racine County's Equity Innovation Fund has awarded 12 grants to organizations, totaling more than \$481,000. More than 1,550 people have been served by the projects supported through these 12 Equity Innovation Fund grants.

Future Equity Innovation Fund reports will detail the impact of grants that have been awarded in subsequent rounds of funding.

▶ Stay Up to Date

If you have any questions about the Equity Innovation Fund, please contact Special Projects Manager Katie Tuttle at ktuttle@unitedwayracine.org



Learn more, and to see other Equity Innovation Fund reports, scan the QR code or visit: UnitedWayRacine.org/EIF



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of Racine County