



THE EQUITY INNOVATION FUND



Equity Innovation Report 5



UNITED WAY
Racine County



Equity Innovation Report 5 Grantees

Racine Habitat for Humanity
Project: Racine Habitat IDA Program



Loving Kindness Transitional Services Inc.
Project: Individuals in Transition (ITT)



Racine Vocational Ministry
Project: Second Chance Re-entry Program-Focus Women



Wisconsin Panthers
Project: 3PS (3 Percent Safer)



Volunteer Center of Racine County, Inc.
Project: Youth Volunteer Corps Summer Camps



5 projects totaling over \$289,000.

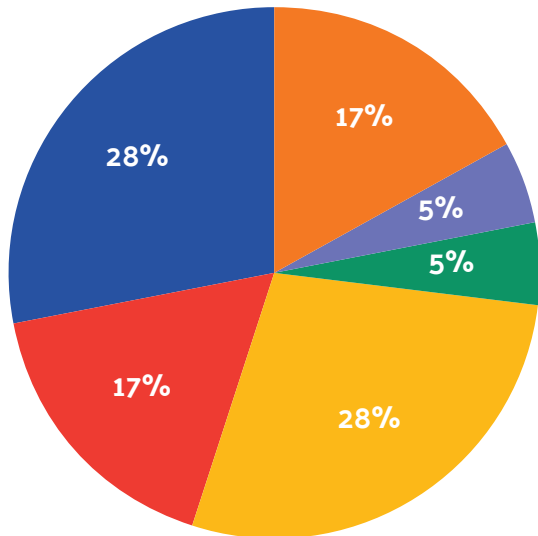


366 individuals served.



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

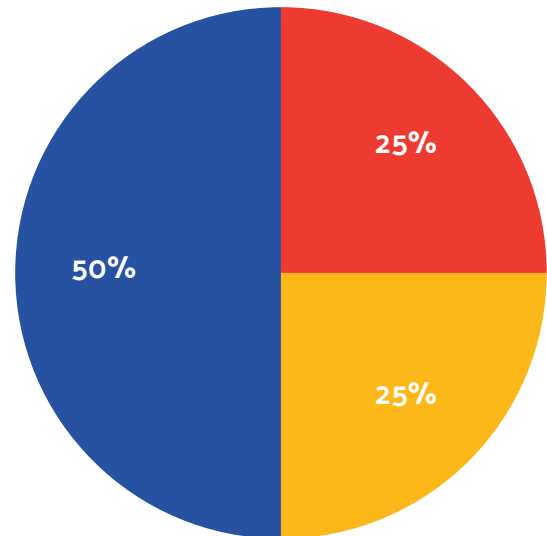
Marginalized Populations Served by Projects



- African American
- People of color
- Latinx/Hispanic
- Individuals with cognitive or physical differences
- At-risk youth
- Women

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

Areas Addressed by Projects



- Individual independence
- Individual and/or family stability
- K-12 academic and/or social emotional success

Grantees indicated in their application the focus area addressed by their project. Projects may address more than one focus area.



Racine Vocational Ministry Project: Second Chance Re-entry Program-Focus Women

Racine Vocational Ministry received a second round of Equity Innovation Fund dollars to continue the success from their initial grant. Second Chance Re-entry Program was targeted to women and BIPOC individuals and offered a holistic, transformational re-entry approach. The program reduced barriers to successful re-entry such as substance abuse, poverty, homelessness, and recidivism through assessment, case management and ongoing support. Participants are taught to adopt a pro-social mindset that supports transformation, not compliance, leading to sustainable positive change.

By the Numbers

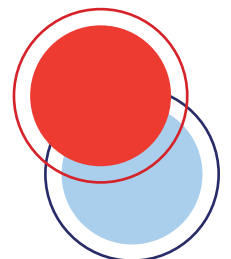
- 19 clients served
- 14 participants secured gainful employment
 - 11 participants acquired gainful employment at an average wage of \$19.76 an hour.
 - 9 individuals are above the county's living wage threshold
- No participants returned to prison or received new charges
- Participants' ORAS scores, which rate a person's risk of recidivism, dropped significantly, with an average reduction in risk of 11.4% and a high of 33%.
- 80% of female participants achieved all three of the following:
 - Recovery from drug and/or alcohol dependence
 - Secure safe and stable housing
 - Increase personal household income

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“The EIF-funded program has been a game changer for the women who have been in our program! Most re-entry programs are for men only. Women, especially single moms, often face re-entry challenges with little or no professional care. Women are a smaller part of the prison population, roughly 10%, and are either forgotten or lumped into programs designed to address issues more specifically faced by men. Women's re-entry issues are significantly different and require a specialized program of care that addresses their children, chronic domestic issues, and controlled substances. I am grateful for funders who understand this and reach out to close the gender gaps in our social service network.”

– Heather Bennett, Program Director,
Second Chance Re-Entry Program,
Racine Vocational Ministry

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Wisconsin Panthers

Project: 3PS (3 Percent Safer)

The Wisconsin Panthers' 3 Percent Safer project promotes youth academic and social-emotional success through sports, mentoring, tutoring, career exploration, and an annual HBCU college tour. The program targeted Black and African-American youth ages 6-17. Participants were grouped by age for certain activities, while at other times, older students worked alongside younger ones, serving as mentors and role models. Students developed discipline, confidence, conflict management skills, and the ability to make positive choices that benefited both themselves and their teammates through sports, mentoring and tutoring. Career exploration included workshops and hands-on experiences, helping students understand the wide range of opportunities available to them. The HBCU tour exposed high school students to college environments where they felt empowered, respected, and represented.

By the Numbers

- 18 students gained practical insights into law enforcement procedures.
- 24 participants attended the junior medical academy session which included CPR training and medical terminology.
- 24 students attended a fire safety seminar and were introduced to firefighting and emergency response.
- 44 students attended the college tour, visiting 10 colleges across 5 states. Several students have been accepted to the colleges visited.



“The funding provided opportunities that greatly expanded our participants’ educational and athletic horizons. Through college tours, career academies, and the AAU track program, our students gained exposure to higher education, explored career options, and developed valuable skills like discipline and teamwork.” – Nicholas Payne, President, Wisconsin Panthers



Racine Habitat for Humanity Project: Racine Habitat IDA Program



A collaboration between Racine Habitat for Humanity, Johnson Financial Group, and Housing Resources Inc., the project created Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for families who worked with Habitat for Humanity to secure homes. Racine Habitat for Humanity provided a 2-to-1 match for every dollar contributed by participants, with a maximum match of \$10,000, enabling homebuyers to accumulate \$15,000 for a down payment. Johnson Bank and Housing Resources, Inc. supported participants with reduced private mortgage insurance (PMI) costs, a down payment requirement of 1-3%, and an additional \$2,500 in grants for closing costs. IDA programs are recognized by Habitat for Humanity International as a best-practice strategy to increase homeownership of people of color. Racine Habitat for Humanity is one of the first Habitat affiliates in the United States to offer the program.

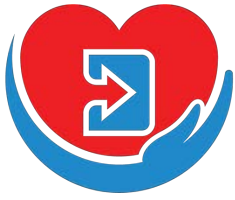
By the Numbers

- 4 families became IDA Savers
- All completed the “Homework for Home Buyers Class”
- 65 hours learning home maintenance skills with Racine Habitat for Humanity
- 100% of participants surveyed reported that upon completing the Housing Resource courses, their mortgage/credit knowledge level was “very improved”
- 100% of participants surveyed reported that their confidence in buying their first home is growing

“I started out a young single mother who strived to not become a statistic in my urban surroundings. I went to trade school to obtain a career to support myself and my daughter and not become dependent on government assistance long-term. Although I consider myself financially stable, I did not have any education on credit/money management, so I am currently working to repair my credit and work towards becoming a first-time homeowner. I believe that partnering with Habitat would be the stepping stone I need to achieve my goal of becoming a homeowner in my community and seeing an example of hard work and perseverance for my daughter.” – Lesile J., program participant



“I began the IDA program with no knowledge of the home buying process, or how to start on my own. The IDA has been a great fit for me in providing step-by-step guidance.” – Maurice J., program participant



Loving Kindness Transitional Services Inc. Project: Individuals in Transition (ITT)

This project aimed to support individuals and families transitioning from homelessness to housing by providing financial support, case management, and coaching. Loving Kindness Transitional Services is led by a BIPOC woman with lived experience with homelessness and transitioning to housing. Services were individualized and particularly helpful to individuals who are part of the ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) population, which means they do not qualify for government assistance and, despite being employed, do not have an income that supports their household survival needs. The organization established various partnerships to ensure participants were fully supported throughout the process. Participants had the opportunity to work with staff to secure housing and employment, and then shift focus to sustaining those accomplishments.

“I would just love to say how awesome they have been, and their kindness is above and beyond anything I have seen. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to be part of this journey. Your kindness will continue to never go unnoticed. Stay blessed.” – Brenda, program participant



By the Numbers

- 54 clients obtained and remained in housing, exceeding the project's anticipated goal.
- 10 clients attended an employment workshop
- 12 clients received transportation assistance
- 20 clients received counseling
- Dollar value of services received by clients
 - Housing assistance: \$54,000
 - Transportation assistance: \$650



Volunteer Center
of Racine County

Volunteer Center of Racine County, Inc. Project: Youth Volunteer Corps Summer Camps

This project offered opportunities for youth ages 11-18 to gain volunteer work experience, build skills and support community organizations on a variety of projects. The goal of the VCRC was to serve youth with a range of abilities and backgrounds and provide them with experiences they may not otherwise have access to. The summer camp facilitated a wide range of opportunities such as financial literacy, CPR/First aid, dragon boat racing, skilled trades, boat building, Root River education and conservation, junior police academy and more.

“This summer program was very informative. The administrators did a great job!” – Program participant



By the Numbers

- 151 young people engaged in the summer program
- 87% of participants felt more confident in their ability to adapt to diverse situations, crediting the summer camp for enhancing their resilience.
- 83% of participants shared that, upon completing the camp, they felt empowered to make a positive impact in their community.
- A total of 15 summer camps were provided, offering a wide range of activities and learning opportunities.
- 36 organizations and community partners collaborated in facilitation of the summer camp program.



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“It has been amazing to see the innovative ideas from the community come to life in meaningful ways. These local initiatives have had a real impact on members of the Racine community that might not have otherwise been possible.”
- Abigail Hanna, Equity Innovation Fund Committee member

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▶ Grantee Gathering

On May 29, United Way of Racine County hosted its second Equity Innovation Fund Grantee Gathering. This event was designed to provide a valuable networking opportunity for participating organizations and to facilitate the sharing of best practices in grant management and program implementation. A total of 11 organizations attended the gathering, reflecting a strong commitment to advancing equity and innovation within the community.

A special acknowledgment goes to panel members Nicholas Payne, Dr. Kimberly Payne, Jim Schatzman, Karri Hemming and Jason Love, who generously shared their expertise in key areas such as data collection and reporting, community engagement, and securing additional funding sources. Their insights provided attendees with valuable guidance on improving program outcomes and sustainability.

The gathering fostered a collaborative environment where participants could engage with one another, exchange knowledge, and learn strategies to enhance their impact on the community. Events like these are critical in supporting the continued growth and success of initiatives aimed at creating equitable solutions.

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 25 grants to organizations, totaling more than \$1,214,000. More than 3,400 people have been served by the projects supported through these 25 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



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

