

ARVAC LAKE POINT PROJECT

by Arkansas River Valley Area Council (ARVAC)

Region 6 • Russellville, Arkansas
arvacinc.org



Treatment Center • Mental Health • Homeless • Health

INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

The ARVAC Lake Point Project will create a **unified campus, on the grounds of a former conference center that included on-site lodging, which will serve as a one-stop center for multiple programs and resources.** Existing program offices and facilities, such as LIHEAP, ESG, and the Freedom House Mental Health and Behavioral Health Outpatient and Residential Treatment Center, along with agency administrative offices, will be relocated to the campus.

Some of these programs will be expanded to serve more customers while others will benefit from being available at one location in the most populous county in the ARVAC service area. New programs which will be offered on the campus will include Specialized Women's Services Program, Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) Services Clinic, Women and Children's Homeless Shelter, Medical Detoxification Services, and Tele-Medical Services for individuals outside the county in which the Lake Point Campus will be located.

LOCAL NEED ADDRESSED BY INITIATIVE

During the ARVAC community needs assessment processes, community members identified the need for expanded access to programs and services to reduce barriers to moving towards self-sufficiency, including needs that have been exacerbated by the Coronavirus crisis. Emergent needs included: the need for expansions of existing services and programs; data showing that 40% of area children were in homes where substance abuse occurred and that those children suffered from mental health-related trauma. Head Start Program families expressed a need for



professionally trained, trauma-informed, mental health and behavioral health therapists. The only homeless shelter that served mothers and their children at a single site was closed recently.

This project will allow for emergency shelter for women and their children, along with access to early childhood education programs, counseling, and, when needed, substance abuse treatment, on a single campus. Additionally, the provision of Tele-Medical services will address the need for access to counseling and other mental health and behavioral health services in rural areas served by ARVAC.

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ROLE OF CSBG FUNDS

CSBG has played, and will continue to play, a significant role in the development and implementation of this initiative by supporting ongoing agency operations, use of the ROMA Cycle for agency management by the agency board and staff, and delivery of services. CSBG funds will continue to be used to support program activities, such as CSBG case management services, a financial management program that assists Social Security recipients in maintaining a budget and timely payment of bills, and a garden project for income-eligible residents. Of the almost 42,000 square feet of space on the campus, more than 7,800 square feet will be dedicated to delivering CSBG-funded services.

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

The Lake Point Campus will serve as a starting point for ARVAC participants' pathways out of poverty and movement towards self-sufficiency, wellness, and economic security. The dynamic design of coupling mental health, substance abuse, homeless assistance, and supportive services under "one roof" is innovation in action. By bringing these research-based programs together, ARVAC will be able to better leverage programs and streamline services to provide the bundled care necessary to bring individuals from crisis to stability, and ultimately to thriving. While low-income people are facing additional barriers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project provides a unique opportunity during unprecedented times to create opportunities, programs, and services that will benefit the communities served for generations to come.

EVIDENCE-BASED OUTCOMES

ARVAC programs implement evidence-based services and strategies in several programs. The Freedom House Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment Center maintains CARF accreditation which demonstrates conformance with current, field-driven, evidence-based standards that continuously focus on the improvement of programs and services with a focus on the needs and outcomes of the persons served.

Among the evidence-based approaches are the Matrix Model, which uses eight core concepts or guiding principles and draws on a number of evidence-based treatments for substance abuse, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, contingency management, motivational interviewing, relapse prevention groups, family education groups, and 12-step facilitation therapy. Additionally, ARVAC implements the Head Start Model, which has been developed over 55 years and has been built on evidence-based practices and uses the best available science and teaching techniques to meet the needs of local communities.

EQUITY LENS

For more than fifty years, ARVAC has served the low-income children, communities, and families of Conway, Franklin, Johnson, Logan, Perry, Polk, Pope, Scott, and Yell Counties. ARVAC has a long history in the successful development, operation, management, and administration of social and economic projects mobilizing community, state, and federal funding and resources to address the needs of primarily rural low-income residents who have not traditionally had adequate access to supportive and transformative services and opportunities.

ARVAC is committed to providing thoughtfully designed services to children and families who face the challenges created by that lack of access, thereby increasing equity among an underserved population. By focusing a significant amount of effort on working with people who are experiencing alcohol and substance addictions, ARVAC brings them and their family members out of the shadows and shows them a path towards wellness and recovery. By using a trauma-informed approach to the delivery of services, ARVAC helps the people it serves to overcome the long-lasting effects of poverty and trauma.

CUSTOMER VOICE

ARVAC uses customer satisfaction surveys to gain insight into the quality and effectiveness of its supportive services. In addition, participants in the mental and behavioral health programs,

including alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs, participate in Nostos Seminars™, which uses several instruments to measure the impact and effectiveness of the curriculum among respondents. These instruments include comprehensive surveys measuring well-being and adult outlook. The results of all of these interactions are used by practitioners, program managers, agency management team members, Head Start Advisory Council members, and the governing board to inform and shape strategic plans and program policies and procedures.

At the onset and during the pandemic, ARVAC began to hear increased issues surrounding mental health and behavioral health needs, including substance use disorder issues from customers while performing case management. Although these areas have been an ongoing issue within our communities in the past, and an issue that ARVAC has worked toward providing programs and services for, we were beginning to see a peak in need for mental health and behavioral health services. In 2019, the State of Arkansas reached out to CEO, Stephanie Garner, for her interest in developing a Specialized Women's Center that provides treatment to women with substance use disorders/alcohol while allowing the mother's children under five years of age to stay with her.

This struck ARVAC to conduct a community wide needs assessment to assess barriers to providing services and for moving people to self-sufficiency. While ordering research, we discovered the emergent need for additional services and programs to meet the needs of our families, individuals, and children. During a survey provided to our very own Head Start Centers, our Program Information Report (PIR) identified that over 40% of our children suffered from substance abuse and/or mental health related trauma. Seventy-four percent (74%) of children participating in our Head Start Programs come from single-parent homes and many of these families express a need for professionally trained, trauma-informed, mental health, and behavioral health therapists. Several of these single-parent households are affected by drug addiction including opioid addiction.

ARVAC's approach to treatment and addressing poverty is evidence-based, it works. One client shared his story:

"I knew that I needed help, but I didn't know what to do. Somehow after multiple attempts to get help, ARVAC Freedom House opened their doors and accepted me. I was pretty bad off, and they really aren't a medical detox, but they took great care of me when all I wanted to do was die... Once I got into the groove of things, I was able to open my heart and my mind to new ideas, new techniques, new living, new everything. Life almost had a whole new meaning, or purpose; for once in my life I was happy to be clean and sober, and not for anyone, but for myself. I had 30 days of treatment to conquer, and wouldn't you know? I did it."

By bringing these research-based programs together, we will be able to further leverage programs and services to provide the bundled care necessary to bring individuals from crisis to stability and ultimately to thriving.

Currently our Lake Point Project is still under construction and due to the pandemic, construction projects are moving at a slower pace than anticipated; therefore, and we are not currently providing services to customers at Lake Point; however, we expect the programs at Lake Point to be up and running by late November 2021. We are still providing services at our Freedom House location.

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