

## Focus Grant 2022 – Options for WRWF Investment

### **Bolstering Mental Health Assistance and Addiction Prevention Programs**

#### **Community need:**

Suicides, suicide attempts, rates of drug and alcohol abuse, and family relationship crises and domestic abuse due to stress and isolation are among our community's most pressing problems according to the St. Luke's Community Health Needs Survey. These problems and stress areas have been greatly exacerbated by the pandemic. Frontline services have been overwhelmed by calls for help, but also say that much more can be done to reduce the need for crisis intervention.

#### **Possible goals of grant support:**

Invest in services and programs that reduce the need for crisis intervention services and increase availability, access to, and integration of psychological, emotional, social, and health-related supports for individuals and families in our community.

### **Closing the Opportunity Gap in Education**

#### **Community Need:**

Our Hispanic/Latinx population comprises 43% of enrollment in Blaine County schools. These students score significantly lower than their mainstream peers on achievement measures, beginning with kindergarten entry; drop out of school more often; and attend college at much lower rates. Many students, from all student populations, have been negatively impacted by the COVID crisis and the challenges of remote, technology-driven learning. Many have basically lost a year of schooling that will affect them for years to come. Community educators say that the need for funding for compensatory services will be enormous for several years to get our students back on track.

#### **Possible goals of grant support:**

Invest in services that reduce the achievement gaps between subgroups of students, beginning as early as possible, and that improve attendance, graduation rates, and college or career access for minority students and all students at risk for poor outcomes. Provide instruction and support to all students who have experienced COVID learning loss.

### **Building an Inclusive and Equitable Community**

#### **Community Need:**

Our valley has long been divided by economic, cultural, and racial disparities. We have subgroups in Blaine County that have little contact with others. Individuals from one part of our community have been under-represented in leadership and are invisible in the majority's community life. Although this social, cultural, and economic divide is long-standing, the jobs, housing, family life, and health of marginalized groups have suffered disproportionately in the pandemic. Community leaders say much more can be done to improve communication, collaboration, and coordination of services across these long-standing divides.

#### **Possible goals of grant support:**

Invest in services and programs that build understanding and inclusion of underrepresented groups in the economic, cultural, social and recreational aspects of our community. Increase participation of underrepresented groups in decision-making and leadership in governance, education, economic forums, community organizations, and family support services. Build advocacy skills and improve cross-cultural engagement and celebration, inclusiveness for all abilities, and sharing and understanding across groups.