



Arizona **TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION GRANTS**

AWARDEE SNAPSHOT

November 2021



ARIZONA AUTISM CHARTER SCHOOLS

ARIZONA'S FIRST AND ONLY AUTISM-FOCUSED CHARTER SCHOOL

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Arizona's first and only autism-focused charter school primarily serves students on the autism spectrum or students with other special needs. The school also offers an Early Learning Center with small learning communities. Arizona Autism Charter School (AZACS)'s unique model draws families from as far east as Queen Creek, as far west as Buckeye, and from Anthem to Ahwatukee. The demand for this model is high and AZACS has a long waiting list representing families from all reaches of the Valley.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

AZACS parents travel as far as 50 miles each way each day to get their child with special needs to this specialized program - and making all the sacrifices that demands - and more families are wanting to come but unable to due to transportation needs. AZACS does not have transportation services due to the exorbitant start-up costs of such a program and the wide range of locations and distances their students travel from. Further, since AZACS primarily serves students with autism and other special needs, they have not felt comfortable partnering with a mainstream transportation service that may not be equipped to meet the unique needs of their exceptional population.

Grant Award
\$2,000,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- A Title 1 school, with approximately 76% of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch
- Primarily serves students on the autism spectrum and students with related developmental conditions
- Approximately 51% of students identifying as Hispanic, 31% identifying as White, 7% identifying as Black and 11% identifying as Other

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

AZACS aims to improve student attendance and student retention, increase the number of families who have access to this critical program, and to reduce transit burdens on families. AZACS will interview parents to capture the life-changing impact of a quality transportation system built with the unique needs of their children in mind.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

AZACS is launching a transportation program aligned to the unique needs of their students. AZACS, in partnership with Kid Commute, an organization dedicated to transporting students with special needs, will launch a transportation system that serves high needs students traveling from all parts of the Valley. This partnership will enable AZACS to customize school transportation to their student population and to embed their current behavioral supports and specialty staff to support students during the commute.

A SUBURBAN DISTRICT LOCATED WEST OF PHOENIX

AVONDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFERING ROBUST OPEN ENROLLMENT, SPECIALIZED CAMPUSES & ENRICHMENT

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Serving Avondale and Goodyear, Avondale Elementary School District (AESD) is a suburban district located west of Phoenix with a very robust open enrollment program, several specialized campuses, and roughly 40 after school programs and clubs offering student enrichment in everything from photography to ballet.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

AESD seeks to address inequity in student participation in enrichment programs across campuses. Transportation is a significant barrier for many families wanting off-campus enrichment or needing community after school supports for their kids.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Restructuring AESD's transportation program will ensure more students have access to enrichment, with meaningful enhancements to safety measures and tools. Studies show a connection between after-school enrichment and learning outcomes including social-emotional learning. With Avondale's vast offerings in high-quality enrichment, it is critical to ensure access for more underserved students.

Grant Award
\$150,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Students served identify as 67% Hispanic, 18% White, 11% African American, 1.5% Multi-Race, 1.5% Asian 1% Native American, and less than 1% Pacific Islander
- 74% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch, as well as students who identify as Foster youth and Homeless
- AESD serves 11.5% Exceptional Students, 11.8% English Language Learners, and 2% Gifted Students

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Avondale's "#hopeonthemove" transportation initiative is leveraging technology and community partnerships to get more students, for whom transportation is a barrier, to enrichment and after school learning opportunities. Making sure students are getting on the right bus and arriving safely to their destination is critical to multi-tasking a district's transportation vehicles to multiple sites. AESD will collect safety and arrival data for #hopeonthemove after school enrichment students and those utilizing school transportation to and from bus stops. AESD hopes to see improvements in academic proficiency, social-emotional learning, and family and student satisfaction with the enrichment offerings.



ARIZONA TRANSPORTATION
MODERNIZATION GRANTS

BLACK MOTHERS FORUM

CREATING SAFE & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Black Mothers Forum (BMF) and Prenda have collaborated on an extended-day tuition-free public microschool model for K-8 students. With a proven mastery-focused, project-based learning model, students are excelling academically, learning critical social-emotional skills, and developing a love for learning.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

There is a lack of affordable and safe transportation options for families accessing public microschools and small learning community models like BMF Microschools. This serves as a roadblock for families to exercise their right to enroll their child in a more safe and supportive learning environment.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

A true pioneer in meeting the needs of every student in their community, BMF proposes a system of community carpools to support families wanting their Microschool opportunity. With a rapidly growing network, BMF in collaboration with a local tech advisory council will first develop the technology needed to support a low-cost carpool app to get in-need students to this unique program from across the Valley. Ultimately, this tech will be available for other schools and community providers.

Grant Award
\$100,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Serving Kindergarten-8th grade students, predominately Black males due to a current lack of unsafe and supportive learning environments in traditional learning communities
- Many of the students served require exceptional student services due to behavioral health traumas, delayed speech, speech impediments, and delayed learning needs

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

The SAFE (Sharing with All Families access to Education) Driver App would be made available to families and various partner schools who opt into the parent driving program. Parents can sign up to be SAFE Drivers and/or register to have their child participate in the program and be picked up at their home or afterschool care and enrichment. The SAFE Driver Program will reduce the risk of children being hurt on the way to and from the bus stop, give families access to schools they would otherwise not have been able to attend due to a lack of transportation, and reduce the need for bus drivers - which are in short supply.

BOWIE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

SERVING K-12 STUDENTS FROM THE BOWIE AND WILLCOX COMMUNITIES

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

A small, rural, majority-minority school district in Cochise County serving students in Kindergarten through 12th grade from the Bowie and Willcox communities. Despite operating in a rural community, roughly half of Bowie Unified School District (BUSD)'s student population open enrolls from other neighboring towns to attend.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Bowie Unified School District (BUSD)'s only bus is at the end of its useable life and has been for awhile. This leads to breakdowns, costly repairs and interruptions for half the student population that relies on the district for long commutes to and from school.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

BUSD proposes the purchase of an electric bus with Wi-Fi and the necessary charging supports to dramatically increase efficiency, reduce gas and maintenance costs, and to safely transport their kids long distances. The addition of Wi-Fi will enable students to utilize time in transit to complete homework or engage in enrichment lessons. Without this bus, many kids in this rural area of the state would not be able to get to school or in a reliably safe manner. BUSD also has ambitious open enrollment goals to serve more students and an efficient, low-maintenance electric bus will help them get there.

Grant Award
\$550,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Over 70% of students live in poverty and receive free or reduced-price lunches
- 21% of students served are Exceptional Students & 32% are English Language Learners
- Most students will be first generation college attendees

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

BUSD's modern solution for meeting intense transportation needs will get kids reliably to and from school, improve homework completion rates, support requests for open enrollment from a neighboring community, and make it possible to use the bus during downtimes to get food and clothing to needy families.



**A MODERN
SOLUTION TO
RELIABLY GET
KIDS TO AND
FROM SCHOOL**

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF BISBEE

DEDICATED TO SERVING THE NACO AND BISBEE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

The Boys & Girls Club of Bisbee (Club) believes no child should be denied services or lose out on opportunities for social growth due to transportation barriers. The Club is dedicated to serving the Naco and Bisbee school districts and brings these rural communities together for youth services and family assistance.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

The children and families the Club serves have limited access to after-school, summer and community resources due to the lack of transportation in this rural region of southeastern Arizona. Some students also struggle to get to school as the surrounding schools try to manage unreliable fleets and a lack of bus drivers.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Upgrading Club vans and using more efficient vans rather than buses allows more customized transportation solutions at a lower cost point and helps manage access to qualified drivers. Without the Club's assistance, most families are locked out of after school enrichment, wrap-around services, or even ensuring students get to school.

Grant Award
\$200,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 86% or higher of families are on the National School Lunch Program for free and reduced meals
- This after school center serves at-risk youth

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

By coordinating with Bisbee Unified School District #2, Naco School District No. 23, and the local Montessori school, the Club can ensure students are getting to school, receiving after school support and enrichment, and have access to services such as the food pantry. Academic and non-academic data will be collected through school progress/report cards, teacher input, activity participation and social skill growth.



CHALLENGE CHARTER SCHOOL

MEETING THE COMMUNITY'S NEED FOR OPTIONS FOR DECADES

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Challenge Charter School (Challenge) is a public charter school currently serving over 400 elementary students in Glendale, Arizona. Run by a dedicated team with consistent leadership, Challenge has met the need for options in their community for decades.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

An acute and worsening shortage of bus drivers makes the current Challenge transportation system unreliable for students. This means getting to and from school is a daily challenge and field trips are off the table. Additionally, there are ongoing student safety issues faced by all transportation systems that technology updates can help prevent and manage.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Challenge wants to grow their transportation capacity to serve more kids and get those who are already enrolled there reliably by making a temporary solution to staffing permanent by extending their partnership with a community partner, EventSource Transportation and Ministries. Roughly 10% of all bullying happens on the school bus but bullied kids seldom report it. Cameras, adding behavior aides and integrating updated GPS technology will help reduce bullying and help the Challenge team keep routes as short as possible for students and drivers.

Grant Award
\$85,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 100% of students are receiving free meals through an extended USDA Summer Food Service Program grant
- A targeted-assistance Title I school with approximately 20% of students living in poverty, 5 % English Language Learners, and 44% minority &/or mixed racial students

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

The grant will provide a glide path to covering costs for technology and leveraging reliable staffing to expand access to enrichment and field trip opportunities for their underserved population. Data collected will include bus satisfaction and safety results, daily attendance of CCS school bus riders, number of additional off campus learning opportunities provided to students, and number of available stops on the daily bus routes to serve more students wanting to attend CCS.

CHINLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

SERVING NORTHERN ARIZONA COMMUNITIES SPREAD OUT ACROSS 4,200 MILES

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Chinle Unified School District (CUSD) serves the northern communities of Chinle, Many Farms, Lukachukai, Wheatfields, Nazlini, Cottonwood and Tselani which are spread out across 4,200 square miles – roughly the size of Connecticut. CUSD Superintendent Quincy Natay was just recognized as 2022 Arizona Superintendent of the Year by the Arizona School Administrators Association.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

CUSD's current capacity for student transportation leaves 833 students without a seat on the bus and does little to address needs of families outside the bus route areas. Their unimproved roads can leave buses – and therefore children – stranded in muddy ditches. Technology related upgrades and bus replacements are needed throughout their fleet to improve student safety and reliable transportation to and from school.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

This rural Arizona school district on the Navajo Nation proposes to support their long-distance travelers with direct-to-parent transportation stipends as well as getting vehicles that are inoperable due to road conditions back in service more quickly. Their proposal also includes transportation staff recruitment and retention programs and converting some of their fleet to modern electric vehicles that will save them hundreds of thousands in gas and maintenance costs.

Grant Award
\$2,000,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- PreK-12th grade students, 99% of whom are of the historically underserved Navajo people
- In a community characterized by generational poverty, 94% of the students who attend the CUSD schools qualify for free or reduced lunch
- 14% are Exceptional Students, 7% are English Language Learners and 20% of students are in need of intensive SEL support

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

The effectiveness of this well thought out suite of options to improve the complicated transportation needs of this vast district will be measured through a series of metrics. The desired outcomes include but are not limited to increased student attendance; parent surveys to determine satisfaction related to customer service and processes for the mileage reimbursement program; improved quality, safety and efficiency of student transportation on electric buses; reduced time in transit - including the average time in transit for students residing 30 miles or further from their school; and enhanced driver retention.

CITY OF CHANDLER

SERVING CHANDLER AREA DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

The City of Chandler (City) coordinates with Valley Metro to provide regional bus services that are utilized by K-12 students. However, there is no customized solution for students with needs not currently met by mass transit.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Chandler schools offer many before-school and after-school activities such as clubs and athletics. Limited transportation options make these activities out-of-reach for many youth within Chandler city boundaries and can make it hard to get to class on time or home safely. Those students that do participate in these activities and rely on mass transit or school buses can miss windows and need alternative transportation. Students in the service area being proposed (generally south of Chandler Blvd. between Price Rd. and Arizona Ave.) are at a further disadvantage because public transportation options are extremely limited compared to other parts of Chandler and the Phoenix metropolitan area.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

The City crafted a unique micro-transit solution so that individual kids stuck on campus at night or lacking family transportation to enrichment, tutoring, clubs and their school day can get there. A city van program will operate from 6 am to 9 pm and can be extended to individual or small groups of students in need of pick up or drop off to learn, get home, or participate in enrichment safely.

Grant Award
\$2,000,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Serving Chandler Unified School District students attending Chandler and Hamilton High schools, Bogle, ACP Oakland, ACP Erie Junior High Schools and students attending charter schools within the service area

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

The City hopes to learn from this two-year study how to better serve the needs of individual students through a micro-transit van program for students who face transportation barriers and who are often traveling early in the morning and late at night. The study will help them better understand potential needs for benches and shelters, and to determine if additional service is needed in a specific location. Trips by day and time of day will also be closely monitored to when and if additional or fewer vehicles are needed in service at a specific time. Following the two-year study and pilot period, the program can serve as a model to other transit systems.



COLORADO RIVER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #2

SERVING A DIVERSE POPULATION OF FAMILIES

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Colorado River Union High School District #2 (CRUHSD) is a rural high school district in Mohave County. They serve a diverse population of families working in the service industry and there is limited public transportation.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Although CRUHSD was formed in 1989, it already faces a rapidly aging fleet that is often breaking down and has driver retention issues directly related to problems and challenges of the old fleet. The current fleet also lacks air conditioning, which is hard on their older drivers who have trouble operating the fleet in the hotter months when this communities' temperatures can reach 120 degrees. More than a dozen buses are over 15 years old, uncomfortable for students, and expensive to fuel and maintain.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

CRUHSD wants to give their students safer, more comfortable transportation options to increase ridership and, therefore, school attendance. This grant will give CRUHSD the financial head start they need to fund an energy-efficient bus replacement program and charging station, providing a proof point for cleaner and safer routes in rural communities.

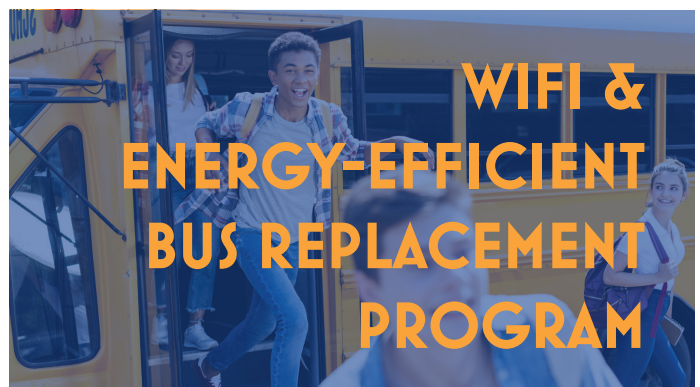
Grant Award
\$850,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- The ethnicity of the Colorado River Union HSD#2 is as follows: 54% White, 40% Hispanic, 1.6% Two or More ethnicities, 1% Asian, 1% Black or African American, 2.7% American Indian/Alaskan, and .01% Native Hawaiian/Pacific
- Exceptional students make up 11% of the student population
- 20% of the population in Mohave County is considered as being in poverty, and with 55.2% of the Colorado River Union HSD#2 students being reported as economically disadvantaged

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

CRUHSD hopes to improve safe and comfortable driving conditions in order to enhance student attendance and driver retention as a result of more reliable transportation. The district also plans to lean into the latest technology to save tens of thousands on fuel costs, bus maintenance and to provide wifi for students with long commutes.



CRANE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT #13

SERVING AN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY AND THE NEARBY MILITARY BASE

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Located in Yuma, Crane Elementary School District #13 (CESD) was established in 1899 and serves an agricultural community and the nearby military base.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

CESD faces several challenges, the need to establish transportation hubs for homeless students and carpooling families, and the desire to serve more neighborhoods on the fringe and outside the district, including the military base. Additionally, parents expressed interest in being able to track student routes through a mobile app which would alert them about route changes, delays, and arrival times. Because of their limited routes the last two school years, parents have expressed frustration with inconsistent arrival/departure times for their students. CESD would like to have a technology tool at their disposal that can inform, track, and update families and school leadership on all transportation-related issues.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

CESD proposes to develop a menu of transit options with this grant. Easier to staff and deploy vans, new electric buses and charging station, and system wide technology enhancements will make routing more efficient, streamline fleet management, reduce calls to dispatch, ensure data security, and regularly capture student ridership. The current staffing, student demand, and aging vehicles require this bundle of transit options to ensure safe transport of students and to diversify the portfolio of options for getting kids to and from their school of choice in the Yuma public school community. One of the electric buses will be used for the route to the military base to support 65 students of military families that utilize open enrollment within CESD and have been largely without reliable transportation options.

Grant Award
\$1,500,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 100% of students qualify for free breakfast and lunch
- 60% Latino, 30% White, and roughly 5% Asian and African American student population
- Higher-than-average number of gifted students, especially for an incredibly remote school system

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Over time, CESD hopes to improve timeliness of bus arrivals, reduce waiting time at the bus stop for students, the safety of students in transport and to begin addressing the reach of their current transportation system. By implementing multiple transit strategies targeting existing barriers, CESD's goal is to see an increase in regular student attendance.

DYSART UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

A HIGH DEMAND DISTRICT WITH ROBUST OPEN ENROLLMENT & CTE PROGRAMS

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Dysart Unified School District (DUSD) is located in the West Valley in the Greater Phoenix Metro and serves more than 8,000 students in their high schools with approximately 1,700 of those enrolling through in-district and out-of-district open enrollment. There is high demand for easier access to Career & Technical Education.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Currently, DUSD students that would like to continue their education at nearby WEST-MEC Career & Technical Education campus must provide their own transportation. This is a significant barrier to many students and families and limits their ability to ensure interested DUSD students are Career Ready. DUSD seeks to address transportation challenges that create an access gap for students in four of their high schools who want to choose CTE programming but do not have the transportation to do so.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

DUSD will create a shuttle system for high school students to easily commute from their high school to the Northwest Campus of WEST-MEC and back. CTE is proven to keep students engaged in their high school education and to promote focus, higher levels of achievement and graduation. It is critical that this programming be available to all students regardless of income, zip code, or access to transportation. This grant-funded pilot would serve to develop a model for more high schools in the West Valley to use in enhancing access for students who choose CTE programs.

Grant Award
\$450,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 42% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch
- 4% of students have been identified as Exceptional Students
- 41% of the student population is Hispanic

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

DUSD aims to grow access for students interested in impactful CTE learning opportunities and to develop a reliable and efficient transportation model to fill this current statewide void in CTE transportation options.



EMPOWER COLLEGE PREP

A HIGH PERFORMING HIGH SCHOOL PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Empower College Prep (Empower) Middle Schoolers prepare for the Empower High School experience that graduates their scholars with more than a diploma. These students will have in hand a college acceptance letter, a scholarship to help pay for college, and a plan to maximize their impact on the world. They do this in a high-poverty, high-crime neighborhood along the I-17 frontage road in Central Phoenix.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Despite being a high performing organization, reliance on private contractors to get kids to and from school has been the most unreliable, costly, and educationally disruptive aspect of their public school system.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Empower proposes to transition away from the costly, unreliable system they now contract for to running their own transit system. The existing funds can be put to better use running their own system once costs to cover new equipment is covered. They are collaborating with Grand Canyon University and Valleywise Transportation with plans to collaborate with other partners in the future. 75% of Empower's K-8 students use school-provided transportation. Zip codes served by Empower's schools have the highest rates of violent crime in Phoenix making a safe and reliable commute to and from school a high priority for the families they serve.

Grant Award
\$460,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Located in an extraordinarily high-crime area of Phoenix
- Serving predominantly low-income families with over 90% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch
- Over 35% of students are English Learners, including a growing number of refugees from both Central America and Africa, 12% are Exceptional Students, and 15 students are McKinney Vento students

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Empower's goal is to move from an expensive, extremely unreliable system to one that one that can be supported by a not-for-profit public school and ensures that extremely high needs students get to school and back home safely every day.

Empower will measure overall success using a robust set of metrics including: 1. Reduce time students spend on buses 2. Student and Parent Satisfaction 3. Cost of buses 4. Increase homework completion by reducing time on bus but also improving learning time while on bus by reducing distractions and providing staff support 5. Reducing student attrition caused by unreliable transportation and 6. To reduce student referrals related to too much time on bus and stressful commutes.

HERITAGE ELEMENTARY WILLIAMS

A RURAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SERVING STUDENTS IN POVERTY

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Heritage Elementary Williams charter school (Heritage) is a rural school serving students whose parents work early or late and for whom transportation is a significant challenge.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Family poverty and odd work hours in the local service industries have led to student absenteeism, tardiness, and a lack of access to quality before and after school programming for many students at Heritage. At-risk kids not on the regular bus route are late or miss school altogether when parents cannot bring them in. Students in families with unreliable transportation often miss school and do not participate in after school activities. Parents with erratic access to transportation cannot rely on taxi cabs, ride share or public transit in this rural community. Many students live on the outskirts of town with families working in tourism. Employers are allowing pick up and drop off for parents with early and late shifts. Their micro-transit solution is well thought out and is a perfect fit for the conditions in Williams.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Heritage proposes an innovative on-demand transportation model that plans around individual family needs and coordinates with employers for home and work pick up/drop off. Without a reliable micro-transit solution that meets the needs of individual families, vulnerable groups of students will continue to fall through the cracks. Vans make it easier to find drivers and to serve small clusters of students in neighborhoods on the outskirts of town or that are at work with parents who go to work very early or need to be dropped off at their parents' job when parents work very late. Without this on-demand service, students of working parents without reliable transportation will continue to be underserved and miss critical learning years.

Grant Award
\$95,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 45% of students identify as Hispanic, 48% as White, & 7% as a mixed race or other nationality
- 89% of students qualify for free and reduced lunches
- 10% of students identify as Exceptional Students and 12% of students are English Language Learners

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Individual students who are taking advantage of the shuttle will show a marked change over their attendance the prior year and an increase in academic proficiency and growth. Heritage will also send quarterly surveys to all families about use of the shuttle and on-demand convenience. This information will be used immediately to incorporate any necessary changes or adaptations to the program. It is important to be flexible especially within the first year to make this project as accessible to parents as possible to meet the needs of the families.

HOLBROOK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #3

SERVING MORE THAN NINE COMMUNITIES ACROSS 1,500 SQUARE MILES

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Holbrook Unified School District #3 (HUSD) spans 1,500 square miles and serves nine communities within their district boundaries as well as a considerable number of families who live outside of the school district boundary. 40% of students live on the Navajo Nation and some students travel 150 miles round trip per day to attend a HUSD school. HUSD's Native American graduation rate exceeds the state average by 10%.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

HUSD aims to improve school choice equity for families that live outside the district and bus pickup boundaries and want their kids to attend HUSD but face financial and transportation barriers to do so. HUSD also faces overcrowding on certain routes. Some families have resorted to renting hotel rooms near school with their children to assist in lowering their student's stress levels and tiredness that are a result of unmanageable transportation travel times - this is not a long-term solution or equitable.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

By funding transportation grants directly to parents, families who are too far out to access a bus route or would drive and carpool their kids if they received financial support to do so can now receive transportation-cost reimbursement for getting their kids to a good school via accessing the closest bus stop or being able to drive their kids all the way to campus. This grant award will help set up the infrastructure and grant program to create a rural family-centered stipend program.

Grant Award
\$155,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- The student population identifies as 62% Native American, 17% Hispanic, 15% White, 4% Multi-racial, 1% Black and 1% Asian
- The rate of poverty stands at over 85%, with 100% of those students receiving free breakfast and lunch
- 40% of students are transported from the Navajo Nation

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

The HUSD transportation fund is an easy to use, family-centric option for getting kids to school in the vast geography served by HUSD that can be sustained over time after initial investments in building out the structure and processes. The district hopes to decrease stress on students and families while increasing student attendance and engagement.



**LEADING THE STATE
WITH DIRECT
TRANSPORTATION
GRANTS TO FAMILIES**

LEMAN ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE

PROVIDING A CLASSICAL EDUCATION AT SIX CAMPUSES ACROSS ARIZONA

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Leman Academy of Excellence (Leman) believes that exposure to educational opportunities such as field trips, after school and enrichment activities, and sports are essential to growing the whole child.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

All transportation to and from Leman's six campuses is dependent on parents, many of which work full time and are unable to provide reliable transportation which prevents many students from participating in various school activities such as field trips, sports, and after school learning activities.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Leman will create its first-ever van system to provide transportation to any scholar who would like to participate in rigorous school activities but would be currently hindered due to a lack of transportation. This ensures that high needs families have access to the enrichment that a classical education requires.



Grant Award

\$300,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Serving an ethnically diverse student body, with over 45% of students identify as an ethnicity other than Caucasian
- Leman campuses exist predominantly in Southern Arizona, including both suburban and rural communities of Marana, Oro Valley, Tucson, Sierra Vista, as well as Mesa in the Greater Phoenix Metro

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

The goal of providing transportation for these activities would be to empower Leman scholars to participate who otherwise would not be able to participate due to lack of transportation. Important metrics within this category include increased participation among scholars with diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds participating in sports, enrichment activities, and clubs. If the number of scholars increases due to access to transportation, this proposal is successful. This proof-of-concept can also be analyzed to determine if additional support should be given to more families via transportation options.

MIDTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROVIDING A COMMUNITY-BASED SMALL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

This is the ultimate community-based small learning environment with a track record of excellence in the heart of the Phoenix metro area. Their proposal is a simple but effective solution that breaks down real barriers for students attending class and opens direct communication between transit leaders, the school, and families.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Most of the 112 Midtown Primary students live on the same block and in the same apartment complex and surrounding area along a busy road. Many of the families are unable to support their children getting to school and many of the students have unstable living environments without reliable transportation which has resulted in poor attendance and academic decline.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Small Ask. High Impact! Midtown Primary will pilot a Walking School Bus, an affordable and simple solution to the dangers of crossing busy intersections and lack of attendance by its students in grades K-4.

They will use veteran staff members, additional hired walkers, and walking ropes to ensure students are able to get to and from school safely which will promote higher attendance rates and academic growth. Families will be able to track when their child's Walking School Bus arrives and departs from school thru Google Chat and technology that will enable constant communication with the 'Bus Driver', including whether their child has arrived safely. This proposal ensures students arrive in time for breakfast to be well-fed to learn and also have a meal before returning home.

Grant Award
\$25,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- High crime zone – within one block from the corner with the highest police calls in Phoenix
- 98% of Midtown students live in poverty, with 20% identifying as Homeless
- 16% of students are English Language Learners, 10% are Exceptional Students, and overall students identify as 45% Hispanic, 19% Black, 17% White, 12% Asian, and 7% Native American

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Improved attendance, decreased tardiness, increased breakfasts served, and parent satisfaction per survey. There will also be academic growth – overall due to improved attendance and improvement in performance in their first class of the day if tardiness was a problem.

NOGALES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

SERVING LOW-INCOME K-12 STUDENTS AT A VERY HIGH LEVEL

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Nogales Unified School District #1 (NUSD) is located in Nogales, a rural city located on the Arizona-Mexico border, serving low-income students at a very high level. The town of about 21,000 has many families who have lived there for generations, creating a close-knit community often referred to as "Ambos Nogales". This bi-cultural, bi-national community has high expectations for student achievement and desires all students to be successful, responsible, culturally appreciative, critical thinkers.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

NUSD is seeking equity for students locked out of extended learning, enrichment, internships, clubs and CTE due to after school transportation needs.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

NUSD will acquire vans to increase efficiencies and limit staffing challenges related to recruiting bus drivers. This makes it possible to grow a transportation network around after-school and career education for their most underserved students. Many after-school activities are pipelines to great careers for under-represented communities in IT and STEM.



Grant Award
\$550,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 82% of students receive free & reduced lunch in their schools
- Predominately Hispanic community with approximately 70% of students entering their school system as English Language Learners
- 10% of students are Exceptional Students, including students receiving speech & language services and resource support

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

NUSD plans to drastically improve access to Career and Technical Education, career clubs, after school learning support, and various forms of enrichment by building a transportation solution for these areas where equity gaps are most severe. By doing so, NUSD layers on top of their excellent academics, supports for enrichment, social-emotional growth, as well as college and career readiness, for students to explore the interests that keep them engaged in learning.

OSBORN SCHOOL DISTRICT #8

PROVIDING ROBUST OPEN ENROLLMENT AND DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Osborn School District #8 (OSD) is home to an award-winning dual language program that generates a large influx of open enrollment students. This Central Phoenix district serves a high poverty population of kids with nearly 90 percent of their elementary students eligible for free and reduced lunch support.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

OSD seeks to eradicate limited access to transportation, chronic absenteeism, and student achievement disparities. Operating in the heart of the fifth largest city in America, OSD is also seeking to improve on environmental efficiencies.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

OSD's proposal for a modern transportation program in an urban district with robust open enrollment and unique programming is thorough and leverages innovation in transportation and transportation technology. Electric buses and the accompanying technology infrastructure will reduce gas and maintenance costs, allow additional routes to meet the growing demand for transportation and open enrollment, facilitate efficient routing and enable parent awareness and notification of bus location and student pick up and drop off.

Grant Award
\$2,000,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- OSD has a total of 2,245 students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunch which is equal to 89.58% of their student population
- They currently serve 32 students who are classified as homeless and have 279 students who are identified as Native American Indian
- OSD serves approximately 344 students whose first language is one other than English, thus qualifying as English Language Learners

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

OSD hopes to improve attendance, reduce absenteeism and see related increases in student achievement. The electric buses and technology purchases will enable OSD to achieve these goals efficiently with reduced long-term costs for gas and maintenance while meeting parent demand for modern tech that helps them keep track of their kids during school transportation.

PIMA JOINT TECHNICAL EDUCATION DISTRICT

PROVIDING CTE PROGRAMS TO OVER 22,000 STUDENTS IN SOUTHERN ARIZONA

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Pima Joint Technical Education District (Pima JTED) is a Career and Technical Education high school with three main campuses and a partnership with Pima Community College. They serve over 22,000 students over a 12,000 square mile radius who reside in the 14 different school district boundaries in Southern Arizona. The CTE curriculum, certifications, and internships are focused on training young people for new and emerging fields.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Many students want to participate in high-demand career learning but do not have access to affordable transportation to get them there. Currently, Career and Technical Education Districts do not provide transportation and students' home campus is generally unable to provide much support either. Because these central campuses are often some distance from the home high school campus, hundreds of students are limited in the pathways they can choose in high school. This locks a substantial number of students interested in these impactful programs out of an option that improves educational outcomes and can support a viable career path immediately upon graduation from high school.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Pima JTED will launch a transportation program for students who need a ride to access CTE education and to close this access gap in public education. They are buying or retrofitting gas powered vans into hybrid or electric and will provide training to students to help maintain these vehicles. Hybrid and electric vehicles allow Pima JTED to launch this concept with vehicles that cost less to run and that are easier to staff than buses. This proof-of-concept would not only help establish demand in the Pima JTED service area but also help model what replicating this program would cost for others.

Grant Award
\$500,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 22,000 students served over 12,000 square miles
- 95.7% of Pima County is classified as rural with many students qualifying for free & reduced lunch

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Hundreds of students identified transportation as a barrier to Career and Technical Education. Good data will confirm if providing transportation can reduce this access gap. The number of students who register and complete a program measures the success of Pima JTED. 100% of the students who complete a program are eligible to test for certification. This data is collected annually and reported to the Arizona Department of Education. Certification and completion data for the Pima JTED van riders will be gathered separately for the purpose of this grant to show the correlation between transportation and Pima JTED completion and certification.

SCHOLA

A TECH SOLUTION FOR PARENTS SEARCHING FOR THE IDEAL EDUCATION SETTING

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Schola is a tech solution for parents seeking a new school or learning environment for their child. School Districts and Charter Schools partner with Schola to help parents understand their options and make it easy to tour or enroll in their school.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Schola has learned that once families identify a school, they often cannot exercise that choice due to their lack of transportation options. This makes the idea of educational options inequitable, defeating the purpose of school choice and Schola's digital finder app.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Schola is enhancing their platform to blend ease of searching for the ideal education setting with finding transportation options to get there. When a child is struggling in school, bullied, or simply not thriving, parents are desperate to get their kids to a better fit. Tackling transportation is key to connecting families to a school they want for their child and to reduce income-related hurdles to making a real choice.

Grant Award
\$255,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 55% of students qualify for the free & reduced-price lunch (FRPL) program
- One third of Maricopa County families are of Hispanic origin
- Approximately half of Maricopa County families exercise school choice and attend a charter or district school other than the one they are assigned

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Schola hopes to build on their current success and connecting families to schools and will increase the number of students with access to transportation; reduce the miles traveled for families and students through more efficient routing; reduce transportation costs; increase parent satisfaction; and, of course, improve student outcomes.



THE LEONA GROUP

PROVIDING K-12 LEARNING MODELS IN 29 CAMPUSES ACROSS ARIZONA

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

The Leona Group network of schools (Leona), governed by Kaizen Education Foundation and American Charter Schools Foundation, provide educational opportunities for 7,400 students across 29 campuses including elementary schools, middle schools, traditional high schools, and alternative high schools. Demand for the Leona models is high for students who struggle in traditional settings and who historically have less access to enrichment, college, and career programming.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

By targeting students who are most vulnerable and/or typically have the hardest time attending school, Leona plans to decrease tardy and absenteeism rates and increase student engagement and academic proficiency, as well as access to enrichment, career training, and dual enrollment. But the current site-based transportation program is not working efficiently or effectively for students.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

Moving to a more efficient system-wide approach, Leona can expand transportation options to more students to address access issues getting to school, to dual enrollment opportunities and to supplement the school day with before and after-school activities. With tech solutions, vans, and on-demand transportation solutions, Leona seeks to bring even more transit personalization to their unique cohort of students during a time of rapid enrollment increases while planning a larger solution for the future. This bundle approach to transportation options is one to watch.

Grant Award
\$500,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Nearly 90% of students qualify for free and reduced-priced meals and over 5% face homelessness
- 82% are students of color, 13% are English language Learners, 11% are Exceptional Students, and 1% are immigrants and/or refugees

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Through transitioning and restructuring the current site-based transportation program into a system wide approach, Leona can expand access to the most vulnerable students while maximizing efficiency. The network of schools is committed to equity by improving access to reliable, safe, and efficient transportation so Leona students can attend a high-quality school of choice that meets their needs. Key metrics of success will include ensuring the most vulnerable students with the toughest time getting to school, dual enrollment courses, career and technical education, and enrichment do so more regularly, improve their academic achievement, college, and job readiness, and have access to the flexible scheduling students with more reliable transportation tend to take advantage of. In addition to tracking the utilization and safety of a van fleet compared to buses, qualitative data will be collected from staff and students who utilize the fleet.

TOLLESON UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

PROVIDING ROBUST OPEN ENROLLMENT AND SPECIALIZED CAREER PATHS

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Tolleson Union High School District (TUHSD) is a predominantly Hispanic school community with high demand for in-district and out-of-district open enrollment due to the specialized career paths offered in their high schools.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Thousands of students in and out-of-district seek transportation options to pursue their educational interests with TUHSD. Eliminating access barriers to transportation is essential to achieving equity in educational opportunities and outcomes. The district aims to give all students the support they need to succeed which requires targeted solutions for both small and large groups of students. Getting TUHSD's most vulnerable students, particularly those who are homeless and have high mobility in foster care, to school is critical to meeting every need. But bus transportation has limitations, including driver shortages.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

TUHSD is expanding transit options by bringing in a proven and safe third-party partner to scale ridesharing for students that need a safe, customized solution as well as creating pick up and drop off hubs for students coming from outside the district. Distance is a key barrier to accessing any school but particularly one that is out of a child's neighborhood. By bringing thoughtful mass and micro transit solutions to the district's portfolio, TUHSD can serve more kids and help them access the education that inspires them and gives them the tools they need to escape homelessness.

Grant Award
\$2,000,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 78.5% of the student population is predominantly hispanic, and 93% of students identify as non-white
- Nearly 70% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Tolleson will track participation, academic success, attendance, travel time for students and cost to ensure the program is reaching its goals for students and their revamped transportation model.

**SCALING SAFE,
CUSTOMIZED
RIDESHARING
OPTIONS**

TOMBSTONE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

SERVING THREE COMMUNITIES ACROSS 1,200 MILES

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Tombstone Unified School District #1 (TUSD) serves three communities in Southern Arizona across 1,200 miles with a large open enrollment population.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

TUSD faces several challenges: increasing safety and learning concerns for students waiting in remote areas or spending a long time in commutes; lack of appropriate and reliable communication with parents trying to keep track of their students and with public safety when needed; and lack of reliable bus and micro transit options to address staffing needs and micro transit solutions for individual or small groups of students who are missing school and enrichment due to transport.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

TUSD is bringing high tech, hybrid and smaller vehicles to a large rural area to address costs, safety, and learning time all with one proposal. TUSD wants to increase student safety and stakeholder trust in the district. Since many students do not have Wi-Fi at home, the district will improve communication efforts with technology to know where buses and kids are and add Wi-Fi so students can learn anywhere, including completing homework on long commutes. They will also add vans and white fleet options for smaller groups of students when buses are not an economically viable option or CDL licensed bus drivers are not available. These solutions will help with an increasing challenge in getting TUSD kids safely to and from school and to bring equity to out-of-school learning.

Grant Award
\$850,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 47% of their population is represented by ethnically diverse students
- 40% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch
- 18% are Exceptional Students, 3% are English Language Learners & 1% are homeless or in foster care

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

TUSD aims to improve access thru a diverse set of transportation options, including supporting technology to get more kids learning to and from school; to know where students are in their journey; to ease driver shortages; and to enhance learning time which are all critical to the long-term mission of TUSD. The district will monitor cost savings, increased attendance, increased assignment completion, improved student achievement, improved public safety response times, and safer kids – which are all the desired outcomes of this grant.

VISTA COLLEGE PREP

A CUTTING-EDGE COLLABORATIVE TRANSIT SOLUTION IN THE PHOENIX AREA

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Vista College Prep (VCP) is a K-8, tuition-free network of public charter schools educating a high minority and low-income student population and home to the highest performing elementary school in Phoenix. VCP firmly believes that demographics do not determine destiny and that college preparation begins in Kindergarten.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

VCP lacks cost effective, nimble solutions to provide more students access to their excellent schools. Contracted options are expensive and unreliable and becoming more so over time. For some of Arizona's highest poverty neighborhoods, reliable transportation for getting to school every day and receiving out-of-school support is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty and reaching goals for their most vulnerable students.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

VCP aims to transition away from privately contracted services that have failed VCP families and build a new collaborative and reliable option with their community partner – the Boys & Girls Clubs in the Phoenix Metro region. By sharing costs for staffing and vehicles, VCP can have an efficient, reliable, transportation partner that can help with residential pick-up to meet the blended needs of getting kids to and from school as well as to the Club for the many enhanced learning, enrichment, and wrap around services provided there before and after school.

Grant Award
\$1,000,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Over 90% of students qualify for free & reduced lunch
40% of students are English Language Learners
- More than 90% of students identify as students of color

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Because many schools serve low-income students with intense transportation needs that make the difference between going to school or not, VCP hopes to not only solve the transportation challenges for their families, but to provide a proof point for others to learn from their affordable, reliable, multi-tiered transportation approach in their community. VCP will evaluate the outcome through the lens of all that they do – student outcomes relative to historical performance and student attendance.



At A for Arizona, we firmly believe that expanding excellence is our best chance to ensure all K-12 students have access to, and benefit from, high-performing schools, learning communities, and opportunities. We imagine a day where excellence has spread, and failure has fallen away, leaving only the best learning options available for all students.

AforArizona.org