

# Summary Report for Partnership Services for Community-Based Organizations



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*(also known as Families Supporting Families grants)*

## Background

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) partner with five community-based organizations (CBOs) that primarily serve families of color and/or Spanish speaking families and their children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. All the CBOs are run by people of color and/or people who speak Spanish as their primary language. All support families to navigate the complex service systems within schools and the broader community. This report summarizes the work and achievements for year two of the project (October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023).

The funding from DPI and BPDD supports the CBOs to carry out their work and expand their efforts. Each grantee develops a workplan at the start of the contract year to outline their activities, intended outcomes, and timeframes. Activities are based on what each grantee knows works best for their families. Activities focus on sharing information about services and supports, creating opportunities for families to connect with each other, practicing self-care, feeling empowered to advocate for one’s needs, advocating for others, and participating in disability-related conferences.

## Grantees (location; target population)

<p><b><u>ALAS</u></b> -  <b>Elsa Diaz-Bautista,</b>  <b>Executive Director</b>          (Milwaukee and beyond;          Spanish-speaking community)</p>	 
<p><b><u>Ho-Chunk Nation</u></b> and their          non-profit partner <b><u>LOV, Inc.</u></b> -  <b>Cheryl Funmaker, Educational          Disabilities Director and          Stefanie Primm,</b>  <b>Executive Director</b>          (Statewide; Ho-Chunk tribal          members)</p>	   
<p><b><u>Mommy Beautiful Sunrise</u></b> -  <b>Shanice Baquet, Founder</b>          (Milwaukee; Black community)</p>	 

## Grantees (location; target population)

**Padres E Hijos en Accion -  
Hector Portillo, Executive  
Director**

(Madison and beyond; Spanish-speaking community)



**Parent University - Delores  
Sallis, Director**

(Milwaukee; Black community)



### Impact

Evaluation activities include quarterly calls with each grantee to gather qualitative and quantitative information about activities, number of families and people with disabilities participating, barriers families face, strategies to overcome barriers, and success stories. Evaluation also includes surveys and conversations carried out by grantees, with a subset of families to learn more about families' experiences and the impact of project activities.

### Participant numbers

This year we aimed for a total of 60 families to engage in opportunities and events. The grantees surpassed this number: they coordinated over 65 events or gatherings designed specifically for their communities. Over 365 families (over 1,000 people) participated in at least one event or received 1:1 support from these organizations.

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### Results and Impact for Individual Organizations

Each grantee identified goals for the families they serve, based on family priorities. They gathered outcome information from a subset of families and found the following:

#### Family and Youth Advocacy outcomes:

- **78%** (62/80) of family members are participating in their child's IEP meetings. (Parent University, Ho-Chunk Nation)
- **100%** (35/35) of family members feel they **have the skills to advocate** for their child's education. (Padres e Hijos en Acción)
- **97%** (197/204) of family members and youth with disabilities report feeling **empowered to advocate for their own needs and the needs of their children.** (Mommy Beautiful Sunrise; ALAS)

- **100%** (60/60) family members report that their **children are more independent.** (Mommy Beautiful Sunrise)
- **100%** (170/170) of family members and youth with disabilities **reported knowing it's okay to do self-care.** (Mommy Beautiful Sunrise, Parent University)

### Community connections outcomes:

- **100%** (45/45) of family members now participate in **programs they are eligible for.** (Parent University)
- **91%** (32/35) Ho-Chunk families **know about services they are eligible for** and decide whether to access. This is a substantial increase from last year: 41% (9/22).
- **49%** (17/35) Ho-Chunk families know about the Children's Long-Term Support waiver and signed up. Last year 0 families enrolled. This data point and the one above illustrate how it takes time for families to trust people and services.
- **49 parents of children with disabilities trained in CPR.** (Mommy Beautiful Sunrise, Padres e Hijos en Acción)
- **99%** (120/121) of families **are more connected and feel supported.** (Parent University, ALAS)
- **4 youth in collaboration with the Waisman Center presented** at the Self-Determination Conference. This is an incredible shift for families and youth: to feel ready to share their experience and knowledge as leaders in a public forum. (Padres e Hijos en Acción)
- **39 family members took the respite training** in Spanish through Respite Care Association of Wisconsin. By taking the training, families are then able to provide respite for other families, helping to build capacity in our state. (Padres e Hijos en Acción)
- **1 tribal youth served as a Youth Leadership Forum counselor** and presented at the Self-Determination Conference. (Ho-Chunk)
- **3 of the 5 organizations were approached by other states interested in replicating their models.** (Parent University, Padres e Hijos en Acción, Mommy Beautiful Sunrise)
- 1 grantee provided a training on ABLÉ accounts to 36 families. **About 90% of attendees called to open an ABLÉ account after the training.**
- All grantees have seen **family members and people with disabilities emerge as advocates interested in making change** in their communities. For example, youth now serve on Mommy Beautiful Sunrise's Junior Board; Tribal families are connecting with one another to enact systemic change within tribal infrastructure; and Padres E Hgios En Accion's Serving On Groups that Make Decisions workshop led to family members joining committees and boards.

### All grantees were asked to report on specific questions related to satisfaction and advocacy with their subset of families.

- **98%** (351/369) of participants report being **satisfied with activities.**
- **94%** (111/118) of youth with disabilities and **92%** (230/251) family members have increased their advocacy. They feel they have the skills they need to advocate, they feel empowered to advocate, and/or they are participating in school meetings.
- **93%** (110/118) of youth with disabilities and 100% (251/251) of family members report being **better able to say what they want and need.**
- **19 youth with disabilities and 67 family members** report **servicing in a leadership or advocacy position** (such as being on a board, committee, or council).



## Leverage: total leveraged from October 2022-September 2023: \$81,200

The grantees are very connected to their communities and often get materials, meals, and opportunities for their families donated from outside organizations.

- **\$75,000** (each year for 3 years): One grantee leveraged this grant as she wrote for and was awarded an additional grant.
- **\$6,200**: meals, materials, and supplies donated for events.

This means that DPI's and BPDD's investments in these organizations led to **over \$81,000 in additional funding and resources** going to these communities.

### Barriers and Strategies

During our quarterly calls with grantees they share barriers families face. Below are some of these barriers and possible strategies to begin addressing them.

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#### **BARRIER:**

There is an expectation that people who need help will need help in the same ways as white people. We've created systems that align with white people, and when other people try to access these systems of support, they are treated as 'other' and as not worthy. This results in people not wanting to engage with services.

**STRATEGY:** Possible ideas include more flexible application processes and services; warm handoffs from one service system to another (for example, a Children's Long-Term Support service coordinator supporting a family as they connect to the local Aging and Disability Resource Center to apply for adult long-term care); service provider diversity; and more demographic data on who accesses services.



**BARRIER:** Many families are reticent to apply for and use services and programs. When families do engage with systems, many face barriers applying to the program, navigating the process, and advocating for the services their loved one needs and is eligible for.

**STRATEGY:** One grantee hired a family navigator who supports families as they engage and navigate systems. They have found this to be an effective strategy: there is an overflow of people working with the family navigator. Another strategy grantees use is taking time to get to

know families and, when they think it's appropriate, try to acclimate families to services. Once families warm up to the idea of using services, grantees then work to minimize barriers to accessing those services, such as gas money, transportation, time off work, etc. One grantee emphasized that it can take a long time for tribal families to consider services even when the person supporting them to get connected is a tribal member herself.

**BARRIER:** One grantee noticed a growing problem of hospital staff contacting CPS on families of color when their children were patients. The families felt discriminated against and wanted to talk to someone from the hospital.

**STRATEGY:** The grantee went straight to the source: she invited a hospital representative to an event she hosts monthly with her families. This provided a venue for families to voice their concerns, to hear from the hospital, and to problem solve.

**BARRIER:** A grantee brought attention to a racist incident that occurred in a school district. While incidents like these are not isolated, this one was recorded and spread through social media, shedding light on an ongoing problem.

**STRATEGY:** Because of this partnership, DPI staff were able to identify key people to work with the Ho-Chunk Nation and the school district. DPI offered technical assistance to the district. Whether substantial change in the district occurs remains to be seen.

**BARRIER:** Agency representatives do not tailor their messages to the audience. This is especially problematic when the information is presented in English and interpreted into Spanish. Grantees provide educational workshops to their families focused on topics of interest such as Social Security, ABLE accounts, special needs trust funds, etc. They often invite a representative from that service or program to join the workshop to connect to families and to share the most up-to-date information. The representatives often assume the information they share is relevant to all audiences and fail to tailor it to fit people's needs and to be culturally relevant. When the information is not adapted, people feel confused, frustrated, and that the service/program is not intended for them.

**STRATEGY:** When representatives present information in a way that families don't connect with, one grantee will research the information afterwards and re-present it to their families in a culturally relevant way. This is very time consuming and requires the grantee to become an expert in many topics rather than being able to rely on those working for that service or program.



# Testimonials and Stories

“ You can tell this organization is here to support families with special needs. Why I say that is because she don't remind us everyday, they don't make us feel funny or bad, and make us feel as one as a family. ”

- **ALAS** partnered with a theatre company to offer an inclusive class for youth. The class was held in English and ALAS provided Spanish interpretation. Due to the success of the class, and through the encouragement of ALAS, the theatre company decided to hire a bilingual theatre teacher to broaden their offerings to the community. ALAS also partnered with the Medical College of Wisconsin to provide mock clinic situations with real people who need interpretation AND a patient with disabilities. This gave medical students experience talking to families, interacting with a patient with disabilities, and answering questions. This pilot partnership was successful and the College plans to do it again next semester.
- **ALAS** strives to develop leadership in families, including how to approach in IEP. A parent of two children with disabilities was in an IEP meeting and felt the team was at an impasse. She knew from information she'd received from ALAS that she could ask for a break during the meeting. She did this and called ALAS with her question. ALAS staff suggested the mom ask the IEP team an open-ended question to lead the team to brainstorm solutions. Afterwards, the mom texted ALAS staff to thank them. The strategy worked: the team brainstormed ways to solve the issue and the mom felt satisfied with the next steps.
- Ho-Chunk tribal members are spread across the state, so people often feel isolated. **Ho-Chunk Nation, with LOV, Inc.**, coordinated 5 family retreats. These overnight events give families time to connect in a neutral, relaxing environment. When Ho-Chunk and LOV, Inc. advertised for the September 2023 family retreat, it filled up very quickly. The grantees were thrilled. Trusting relationships are of utmost importance and it takes time to establish them. They have been working with families for about 4 years, and the grantees are now starting to see more people wanting to be a part of the family group. In fact, there are now waiting lists for these family events. This illustrates an ongoing need for more culturally responsive services for families and children from birth through young adulthood. Besides families participating more readily in events, more families are also joining the online Facebook group. Last year 5 of the 22 family members participated in the Facebook group. This year, 20 of 35 family members participated.



- Several new families joined the **Ho-Chunk** family retreats this year, and for one new teen with intellectual and developmental disabilities being new meant they were nervous and shy about spending time with the other young people. During the first event, the teenager stayed with their caregivers during the whole event but watched as other youth with disabilities engaged in the planned activities. They seemed to want to connect, but anytime a staff or volunteer approached them, they declined to join. At the next event, when they were invited to join in the activities for kids and youth, they took off with the volunteers and didn't look back. They talked a lot more with their peers and with staff and volunteers, and they stayed engaged throughout the event. They plan to bring a friend who has the same disability to a future event.
- **Mommy Beautiful Sunrise** expanded their community CPR trainings to get more people trained. They offered CPR trainings for their families and children, including children with disabilities. This empowers the families and the children to know what to do in case of an emergency. Families who have been trained have needed to use their CPR skills: one family found their baby unresponsive and used CPR to revive their child.
- **Mommy Beautiful Sunrise** builds capacity for their families to participate in community meetings and to be a part of systems change. This year they expanded their organization's Junior Board. Youth join the board and help direct the activities of the organization. They gain leadership skills and contribute to their community. Some Junior Board members attended and spoke at a Milwaukee Public School Board meeting about students' needs.



**If they have it again next year and it costs any money, I'll get a job so my family can come again. ”**

*– Josh, a 17-year-old who went with this family to the Self-Determination Conference with the support of a grantee.*

- **Padres e Hijo en Acción** believes that when families ask for help and assistance, it is very important to help them and to not deny them support. Padres then aims to build independence and support families to gain skills to navigate by themselves. Padres has watched mothers do all the paperwork and navigate the red tape to change social workers on their own. The moms felt empowered that they have the knowledge, they have backup, and they can speak their minds. These families now know that they have skills and tools and that they don't have to wait for someone to help them. They know where to look and where to go for help. They are learning how to learn about the process themselves.
- **Padres e Hijos en Acción** provides many workshops throughout the year, including radio programs. They coordinated a Serving on Groups that Make Decisions training for interested families. 25 people graduated and 4 are now serving on boards or committees and 5 others have submitted applications for other councils. 40 families (80 people, including 15 youth) took a nutrition and cooking class. Padres also hosted 24 radio show programs on La Movida Radio (94.5 FM/1480 AM).
- **Parent University** provides 1:1 support to families. She continued her “Tea and Talk” book club where families read books about special education or other related topics. They then meet to discuss what they read. Many families are foster families who do not know about special education. The biological parents often have decision-making authority but most do not participate in IEP meetings. As a result, no family member is actively involved in the IEP and educational processes. Parent University supports the foster parents to talk to the biological parents to get permission to attend IEP meetings.



- This year **Parent University** focused on supporting families and youth as they transition out of high school. She is very concerned that youth are transitioning to their family’s couch. She is starting a podcast called “Get off the Couch” to get families thinking about how to enrich their children’s lives. She brings in elements of future planning to help people understand that they need to be prepared for the future. She also hosts fun and inviting events at the Wisconsin African American Women’s Center, a trusted venue in the community. Her “Western Round Up Resources Fair” attracted 160 participants and included exhibitors with many resources, lunch, the Black Cowboys, line dancing, and a horse.

*One grantee explained to her families the DPI and BPDD partnership that supports her organization. The families shared that working with the grantee is*

**“ Like getting Black and brown perspectives”, and they “enjoy open and honest conversations” and they can “share personal challenges”. “Not all environments are welcoming,” so they appreciate ones that are. “Like minds working together and they feel stronger when they go home. ”**





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