



## MEDIA RELEASE

Press release for Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. For immediate release.

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### **ARKANSAS HUNGER RELIEF ALLIANCE RECEIVES BLUE & YOU FOUNDATION GRANT**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR (November 16, 2018)** – The [Blue & You Foundation](#) for a Healthier Arkansas recently awarded a total of \$2,733,532 in grants to 42 health improvement programs in Arkansas including \$83,808 to the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance for its Arkansas Produce Gleaning and Gardening Expansion Program (APGGE). The program will work with three food banks in Arkansas to distribute fresh produce to 104,000 food insecure Arkansans in 24 counties.

The goal of APGGE is to expand access to fresh fruits and vegetables in areas of the state not currently well served. "We're very grateful to the Blue and You Foundation for this grant," said Michelle Shope, Alliance food sourcing and logistics director. "By establishing additional gardens and gleaning sites in three regions of the state, the program will make it possible for low-income people to acquire healthy, fresh, in-season produce they would not otherwise be able to afford." The program will also benefit people in towns where many local grocery stores have been forced to close, leaving residents many miles from a source of produce. Gardens and gleaning sites will be expanded into north central Arkansas through the Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Mountain Home, in western Arkansas through the River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith and in southwestern Arkansas through the Harvest Regional Food Bank in Texarkana. Working with food bank partners to identify growers who invite gleaning from their current crops and to locate potential garden sites to plant produce will be the first phase. The long range plan is to expand the program statewide.

The Alliance will also be partnering with [Economics Arkansas](#), another Blue and You Foundation grant recipient, to use Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters programming as a tool for PreK-12 teachers in financial literacy instruction. The Alliance's Cooking Matters team will be conducting a series of six workshops that will offer a condensed version of the successful courses that will empower participants to serve as connectors to the counselors or parental engagement coordinators who will facilitate the hosting of the complete Cooking Matters series in

their communities, thus recruiting a different audience and increasing the projects aim to create a healthier, financially-savvy population. Cooking Matters is an evidence based nutrition education program that teaches low-income adults and teens how to shop for nutritious food and prepare meals on limited food budgets. Bulk purchasing, reading nutrition labels and comparative pricing in addition to cooking skills make Cooking Matters a valuable asset to low-income Arkansans.

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#### **About Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance**

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 440 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit our [website](#) for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

#### **About the Arkansas Gleaning Project**

The Arkansas Gleaning Project is a partnership between Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Society of St. Andrew and the growers of Arkansas who donate their unharvested crops to feed Arkansas's hungry. Volunteers and others go into the fields and gather produce that is left after harvest. The cost of operating the Arkansas Gleaning Project is less than 5 cents per pound. Since the project began in 2008 more than 11 million pounds of fresh produce has been distributed to food banks, pantries, soup kitchens and shelters throughout Arkansas. The Arkansas Gleaning Project is funded in part through grants from Union Pacific, Kroger, Arkansas Community Foundation and appreciates the ongoing support of the Arkansas Agriculture Department.