Blue & You FOUNDATION For a Healthier Arkansas

25 YEARS OF IMPACT

Blue & You Foundation: A Brief History



> "We don't want to only be known as a funder, but rather a connector and collaborative partner to those we fund."

Rebecca Pittillo,
President of the Blue & You Foundation

The Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas was established in 2001 as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization through an initial gift from Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield. The Foundation uses the earnings from this investment to fund grants, ensuring it can continue to support communities across the state for generations to come. Since its inception, the Blue & You Foundation has granted over $70 million to nearly 3,500 projects and initiatives, in partnership with over 2,000 organizations and entities, to improve the health of Arkansans.

The creation of the Foundation came after Arkansas Blue Cross Board members challenged the company to think more intentionally about community investment and the unmet health needs facing people across the state. That vision was uniquely shaped by **Dr. Mahlon Maris**, whose experience as a physician in rural Arkansas instilled in him the belief that health is influenced by much more than what happens in a doctor's office.

As the Foundation's first executive director, **Patrick O'Sullivan** built its early processes, developed relationships across the state, and helped ensure that investments reached both urban and rural communities. Mr. O'Sullivan was dedicated to seeing that all 75 counties in Arkansas received a grant from the Foundation.

One of the Foundation's earliest major efforts was a mini grant program that supported small projects, like the placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and related training, an initiative that helped save lives across Arkansas. The mini-grant program helped the Foundation establish a presence in smaller communities, reinforcing an early commitment to meet communities where they were and invest in solutions shaped by local needs.

As the Foundation matured, its work became increasingly strategic under the direction of Foundation President **Rebecca Pittillo**. In 2021, the Foundation launched a transformative behavioral health initiative, awarding multi-year

Number of unique organizations funded by the Blue & You Foundation

524 SCHOOLS

1013 NONPROFITS

43 HOSPITALS

359 RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION



> "Forming the Foundation allowed us to do planned, purposeful, results-driven measureable and scalable giving."

Dr. Mahlon Maris

grants to organizations focused on mental health. In 2023, funding focused on mental health initiatives for youth and adolescents. The Foundation has since focused on maternal health, social determinants of health and behavioral health, while embracing a broader role as a partner and convener.

Through synergy meetings held with each grant cycle cohort, the Foundation provides space for grantees to connect, share ideas and identify collaborative solutions to community problems. Its Behavioral Health Collaborative, which meets twice a year, supports learning and coordination among organizations working to strengthen mental health and substance use services across Arkansas. More recently, the Blue &You Foundation has also engaged partners through a statewide **Landscape of Philanthropy** survey and roundtable discussions to better understand community needs, funding gaps and opportunities for collective impact.

Over the past 25 years, the Blue &You Foundation has built a statewide network of nonprofit, education, healthcare and community partners. It is both a grant maker and a catalyst for change, listening to local voices, investing in evidence-based solutions, and helping community organizations work together to improve health outcomes. This partner-centered approach has provided opportunities to bring people and organizations together beyond providing funding.

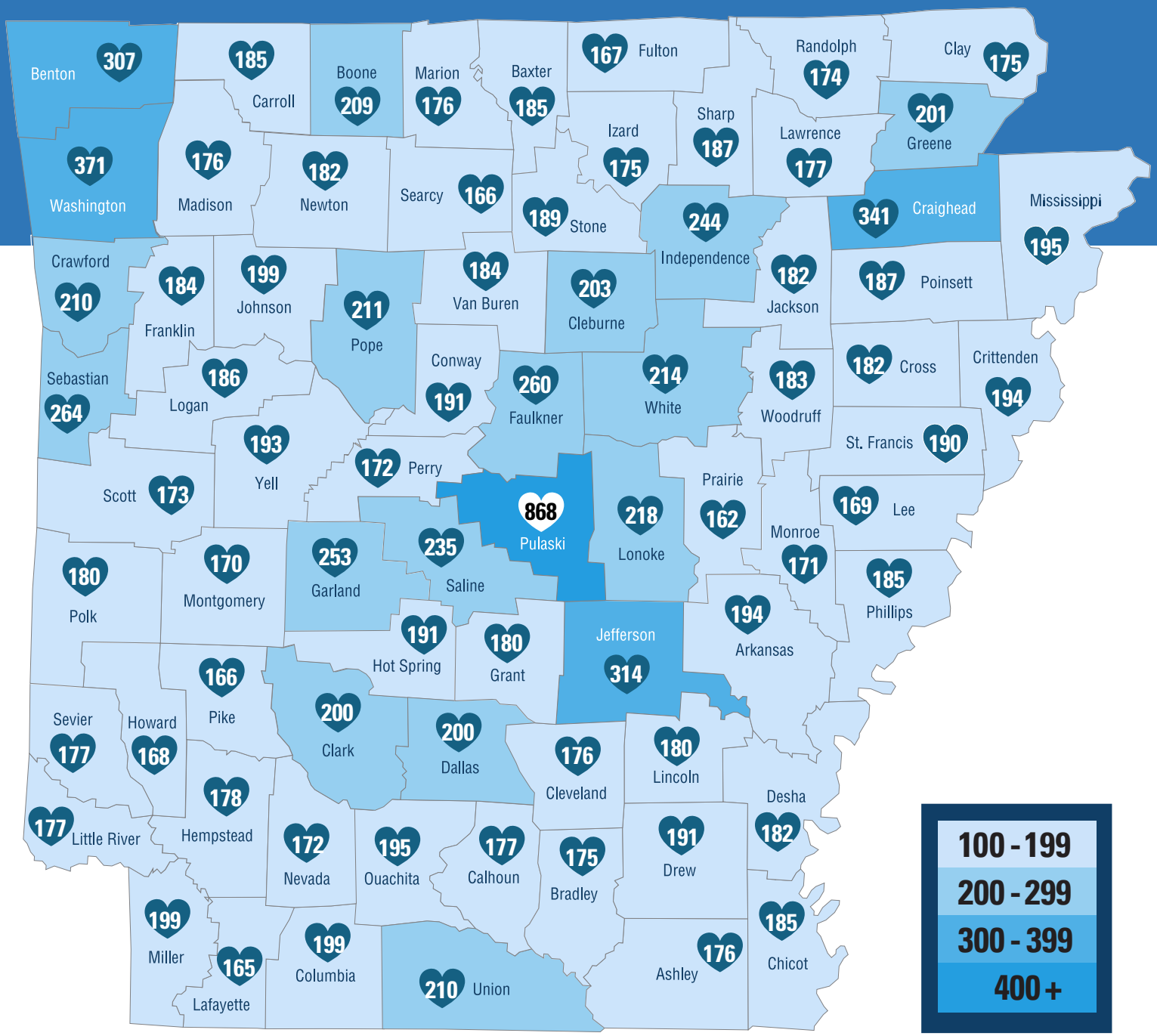
Learn more at blueandyoufoundationarkansas.org.



> "The Blue & You Foundation has become a real force for health improvement in Arkansas."

Patrick O'Sullivan

Number of grants awarded by county



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