Innovation in Action Award Recipients

Excel by Eight believes every child deserves a strong start, with education and health outcomes that are not determined by barriers related to age, disability, gender, income, ethnicity, geography or community resources. The group, made up of a vast network of families, communities, policymakers and business leaders, works to improve the lives of children, prenatal to age eight. Excel by Eight is committed to strengthening resources by building local models for change, identifying and resolving barriers, and enhancing public understanding of early childhood development.

Immerse serves over 500 youth ages 14 to 24 and their families each year who are in and around Arkansas' foster care and adoptive systems, as well as young people who have experienced homelessness, escaped trafficking or fled unsafe situations. Through relationship-based coaching, therapy and wraparound supports, Immerse empowers youth to enter adulthood as overcomers: healing, resilient and ready for life. Immerse's program sites include its flagship Little Rock campus — home to The Station, Arkansas' first emergency shelter for young adults 18 to 24 — and Immerse Conway, launched in 2023. A Northwest Arkansas program launched in September 2026.

Providence Park is an innovative housing initiative in southern Pulaski County aimed at providing permanent, supportive, and sustainable housing to chronically homeless individuals in a community-driven environment. The project, which broke ground in 2024, will include 400 tiny homes with full support services — medical, mental and dental — as well as income opportunities. Emphasizing the importance of meeting basic needs to tackle homelessness at its core, this approach aims to enhance quality of life, reduce societal costs, and foster a sense of belonging and stability for its residents.

Restore Hope, creates community-driven, tailored solutions that enhance communities' capacity to effect transformational change for those at risk of involvement in the justice or child welfare systems. Restore Hope enables leaders and community alliances to coordinate action more efficiently and achieve stronger, measurable outcomes for the people they serve through a repeatable model that extends outside our state. In 2025, Restore Hope's community alliances served 4,560 families across Arkansas helping 1,005 individuals move from crisis to career.

The Wolfe Street Foundation serves people and families impacted by substance use through peer-led prevention and recovery support rooted in lived experience. Peer Recovery Support Specialists provide free, confidential, non-clinical support, helping individuals navigate treatment resources, healthcare and insurance systems, workforce readiness, housing support, and safe sober living. Each year, the recovery community center doors are opened more than 80,000 times for services such as recovery housing, youth empowerment programming, and community-hosted meetings, including more than 60 recovery support meetings each week.