

2009 REACH grant profiles

In 2006, The Lake County Community Foundation launched Realizing Excellence and Capacity Here (REACH), a strategic growth program designed to provide support to build the capacity of agencies serving the residents of Lake County. Organizations accepted into this program have demonstrated their ability to address critical community needs and, in partnership with the Executive Service Corps, have completed the program's first phase by creating three-year organizational development plans. Each organization will receive general operating support, renewable over three years, if they continue to progress toward meeting the goals identified in their respective plans.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lake County (BBBSLC): \$15,000

Founded locally in 1980, BBBSLC is one of 500 affiliated chapters of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, which has been in existence since 1904. BBBSLC provides support to more than 600 at-risk children across the county through positive, caring mentoring relationships. Mentors include corporate volunteers, high school and college students, members of faith communities and other caring individuals. As a REACH participant, BBBSLC's goal is to double the size of its programs emphasizing on continuing culturally competent programming that meets the needs of a diverse county. The focus in the final year of the REACH program will be to build capacity in the Homebase Mentoring Program by utilizing full-time staff instead of part-time staff.

Christian Outreach of Lutherans (COOL): \$15,000

Founded in 1983, COOL provides comprehensive assistance to Lake County families by offering transitional housing and a food pantry. COOL is currently deepening the scope of its services by offering expanded opportunities for the children in transitional housing along with more individualized direction for parents. The program is unique in that it offers scattered site housing rather than shelter assistance. The agency's strategic plan as a REACH grant recipient is to build its infrastructure and capacity to support its programs and service goals. The focus in the final year of the REACH program will be to continue work on board and resource development.

Family Service: Prevention, Education & Counseling: \$20,000

Founded in 1930, Family Service assists individuals, families and communities in positively adapting to the ever-changing landscape of today's society. The organization is committed to the people it serves, to advancing the field of human services and proactively identifying and responding to the changing needs of society. In response to the growing Latino population, the program's Nuestro Center provides bilingual/bicultural counseling services for the community. Due to its increased presence in northwestern suburban Cook County and northern Lake County, the agency name was changed in 2006 to be more descriptive of the work of the agency - Family Service: Prevention, Education & Counseling. To continue to serve families in the face of severe budget cuts, its REACH goal includes replacing revenue by enhancing relationships with donors, developing a communications plan and strengthening its board. The focus in the final year of the REACH program is to develop an effective strategy to diversify its funding.

Urban Muslim Minority Alliance (UMMA): \$25,000

UMMA, which means "community" in Arabic, aims to empower individuals by bridging the wide socioeconomic gap in Lake County. The agency provides GED programs, computer training and financial literacy seminars. UMMA has forged relationships with other organizations to support its work and provide social services, housing and food assistance for UMMA's program participants. Its first REACH priority has been board development and enhancement, as well as fund development and expansion of its GED program. The focus in the final year of the REACH program is to increase its revenue through a diversified and reliable funding stream.