

Able ARTS Work

Civic and Community

Long Beach, CA

\$500,000

Able ARTS Work provides life-long learning, mental health/wellness activities, and vocational opportunities through the creative arts for people with physical and intellectual disabilities at four sites, including one in Long Beach. At local low-income schools, the agency offers music therapy for preschool and elementary school students with disabilities and/or behavioral issues. Able ARTS also provides sequential, standards-based instruction in visual arts, music, and drama for students of all abilities in grades 3-12. A W. M. Keck Foundation grant will support the renovation of a newly acquired 7,000-square-foot building in Long Beach that will be the agency's first permanent home. At 3,000 square feet larger than its current leased space, the new facility will allow Able ARTS to increase the number of moderately to severely disabled individuals attending its unique arts-based adult day program. A centrally located conference room will host arts and wellness workshops and be available to nonprofits and community groups for meetings and training. A catering kitchen will enable staff to train clients in everyday living skills. A dedicated room for music therapy will serve children and adults from the community and an adjoining observation room will allow the staff to train music therapists. Other features include a relaxation room for clients with sensory integration needs, and two soundproof rooms for music making and podcast production. A separate entrance will lead to an administrative headquarters wing. An estimated 4,500 individuals will participate in services and art-making activities throughout the year, and thousands more will attend art exhibitions, community forums, and professional training.

Foothill Family Service*Early Childhood**Pasadena, CA**\$265,000*

Foothill Family delivers comprehensive early childhood development, mental health, and social services to children and families in homes, schools, and family centers throughout the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys in Los Angeles County. The agency's Zero to Five Programs include services for parents with young children by offering home visitation, early care, and education for pregnant women and infants and toddlers. Foothill Family launched the Parents to Professionals (PTP) Program to support vulnerable parents and caregivers. The program helps participants enter the early childhood education workforce as home visitors, family childcare providers, or center-based assistant teachers for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. In 2024, the program was renamed *Pathways to Professions* to reflect a broader vision for expanding educational opportunities for early childhood professionals and include a wider range of community members beyond parents. A W. M. Keck Foundation grant will support the program's full implementation over the next two years. Participants complete 180 hours of tuition-free coursework provided by a consultant and accumulate 480 hours of paid work experience at an approved early childhood program site, earning the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Foothill's professional development supervisor observes and supports students during their placements, helping them to develop their teaching and classroom management skills. Additionally, a career coach assists with goal setting, resume writing, and interviewing skills. Foothill anticipates that at least 60 participants will earn their CDA credential by the end of the grant period, with 70% securing employment upon program completion. With a new career path, PTP participants enter the early childhood education field fully equipped to deliver essential, high-quality early care and education services to low-income families in the communities served by Foothill Family.

Koreatown Youth & Community Center*Civic and Community**Los Angeles, CA**\$400,000*

Koreatown Youth and Community Center (KYCC) serves low-income people through early childhood education and youth development services, housing, and community economic development programs. A W. M. Keck Foundation grant will support the expansion of free Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs to help very low-income individuals and families file for the federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit and the state's tax credits for young children and foster youth. Among this group are cash earners, part-time workers, and those who are self-employed in the gig economy whose incomes are so low that they are not required to file a return but are eligible to claim the tax credits if they file. The project is part of a new county-wide poverty alleviation initiative. Over the next three years, KYCC staff will work for the first time with several Los Angeles County Departments, including Public Social Services, Public Health, and Economic Opportunity to increase the referral of eligible non-filer households to VITA programs. KYCC will provide county employees with educational materials to share with their clients and train them on how to discuss the advantages of filing. To facilitate a warm hand-off, KYCC will operate a multilingual call center to schedule appointments for free tax preparation services at community-based organizations offering VITA services. Anticipating an increase in demand, KYCC will recruit and train at least 125 new VITA volunteers to become certified tax preparers. The agency will also increase staffing at their VITA sites and support expanded staffing at four existing sites run by other nonprofits. To broaden geographic coverage, KYCC will help establish four new sites and conduct pop-up tax events at county offices. KYCC expects VITA providers to complete tax returns for a minimum of 3,000 households. In 2024, families earning up to \$60,000 who claim all federal and state tax credits could receive as much as \$10,000.

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County*Arts & Culture**Los Angeles, CA**\$1,000,000*

The Natural History Museums of Los Angeles County house one of the world's largest and most important collections of natural and cultural history. At the Museum's flagship location in Exposition Park, construction is underway on the NHM Commons, a new wing and entrance to the museum that will serve as a lively hub for exploration, discovery, and community. Its transparent glass facade and sustainably landscaped indoor-outdoor community plaza and cafe will serve as an inviting "front porch." The new 400-seat Discovery Theater will allow the Museum to make its content and collections more accessible. A W. M. Keck Foundation grant will support the cost of furnishing and equipping the theater. The theater will provide the space and state-of-the-art multimedia equipment necessary to significantly enhance the visitor experience, improve and expand programming, and increase capacity to host school and community groups. Various new series, talks, and events are being planned to take advantage of the theater's capabilities. In addition, a new 20-minute 3D film featuring NHM's Thomas, the *T.Rex*, will be shown 50 times per week. Other examples include programs with life-sized dinosaur puppetry, an immersive, multimedia program about local prehistoric oceans, and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Clubs offered after school in collaboration with community organizations. The Museum anticipates attracting between 50,000 to 100,000 additional visitors annually.

ONEgeneration*Early Childhood**Van Nuys, CA**\$500,000*

ONEgeneration is a multi-service agency that provides care and education, social services, and intergenerational programming at three locations throughout the San Fernando Valley. At the main eight-acre campus in Van Nuys, the agency operates an intergenerational shared site, consisting of an infant, toddler, and preschool early learning program for 150 young children ages 0-6. There is also a dual Medical and Social Model Adult Day Care/Adult Day Health Care for adults and older adults diagnosed with cognitive impairment including Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias, all with the intention to ensure independence and safety as they continue to age in place at home. One Generation's childcare program is a nationally accredited and a distinctive intergenerational model that brings the children and older adults together daily for supervised, structured activities such as story time, artmaking, music and movement, and gardening. There is a growing need to expand access to childcare and preschool programs for working families, especially those who are low income. A W. M. Keck Foundation grant will support the construction of an 11,000-square-foot indoor and outdoor space to house six new classrooms, an intergenerational indoor-outdoor activity room, and age-appropriate playgrounds. The new building will accommodate 100 additional children and expand the overall total enrollment capacity on the campus to 250, making it one of the largest Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Childhood Development Centers serving working families in the San Fernando Valley.

University of California, Los Angeles*Health Care**Los Angeles, CA**\$400,000*

The UCLA Medical-Financial Partnership is a cross-sector initiative of physicians, social workers, and financial services experts whose goal is to improve health by preventing child poverty and promoting economic opportunity. To date, the partnership has implemented financial coaching and referrals to community resources for patients at four prenatal, pediatric, and family medicine clinics that are part of the Los Angeles County public health care system. The team also developed and piloted a web-based benefits explorer app to connect families to underutilized anti-poverty programs such as utility and phone discounts, and food stamps. With funding from the W. M. Keck Foundation, the Partnership will redesign the app to incorporate additional programs tailored to a child's developmental stage. To ensure widespread use, the grant will support implementation by all levels of providers at the existing clinics and expand to five more clinics. New resources to be incorporated into the app will include supplemental nutrition for new mothers and their young children, Early Head Start/Head Start, and the new California Kids Investment and Development Savings Plan (CaKIDS). The team will update outreach and training materials to cover frequently asked questions about eligibility and benefits and train clinic staff on how to introduce families to the app during visits. Between patient visits, a texting campaign will encourage families to finish or stay current on their enrollments in the various programs. The evaluation will involve observations, patient surveys, and discussions with clinic staff to flag facilitators and barriers to engagement, track program enrollment, identify best practices, and refine the implementation strategy. The partnership anticipates helping 20,000 families in the next two years and plans to codify the approach for adaptation by other safety-net clinics.

Woodcraft Rangers*Civic and Community**Los Angeles, CA**\$300,000*

Woodcraft Rangers is one of the largest providers of afterschool and summer enrichment programs in Southern California and has been serving Los Angeles youth for five generations. Programs are offered primarily to children in transitional kindergarten through high school at Title I campuses across Los Angeles County. Woodcraft recruits its staff from local communities to reflect the students it serves. Forty percent of its staff are alumni of its programs, and the majority are young adults of color. They face the same challenges that program participants encounter, including lower college-going rates and greater instances of financial hardship. With new state funding available, Woodcraft added 28 new sites this year and is now serving over 25,000 students at 115 campuses. Ten additional school districts have expressed interest in contracting with Woodcraft for the 2024-25 school year. Together, between attrition and adding more sites, Woodcraft anticipates the need to hire up to 500 staff within the next few years and has created a leadership pipeline to prepare for this growth. A W. M. Keck Foundation grant will expand a college and career planning and leadership training program to address Woodcraft's need to attract and retain experienced and qualified staff. Woodcraft promotes this program, called "Lifecraft," as a unique benefit at their recruitment presentations, orientation for new staff, and ongoing professional development sessions. Interested employees meet with Lifecraft staff to develop a customized career plan that can include a roadmap to complete an academic degree at the lowest possible cost based on their specific goals. In addition, motivated employees have access to a five-week leadership training academy to qualify for site coordinator and regional manager positions. Lifecraft's program manager will be promoted to direct the program, and Woodcraft will contract with two college and career counselors. Over the course of the grant, Lifecraft staff will engage 400 employees, 130 will complete the training academy, and two-thirds of new supervisory roles will be filled by internal candidates.
