



# DANE COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: January 3, 2025

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## **Dane County Awards \$50,715 for 2024 Partners in Equity - Racial Equity & Social Justice Grant Recipients to Five Organizations**

MADISON - Five local agencies have been selected to receive the Tamara D. Grigsby Office of Equity and Inclusion's 2024 Partners in Equity (PIE) Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Grants; Dane County Executive Melissa Agard announced today. The grants are intended to address systemic racial inequities in one of the following areas as it relates to criminal justice: health (including pandemic health related responses), education, employment, and criminal justice.

"These grants are a testament to the Dane County Way, an unwavering commitment to advancing equity and justice in our community," said Dane County Executive Melissa Agard. "Each of these organizations is doing vital work to dismantle systemic barriers, foster inclusion, and create opportunities for individuals and families to thrive. By investing in these programs, we are taking meaningful steps toward building a more just and equitable future for everyone in Dane County."

"The recipients of the 2024-25 Partners in Equity Grant are meeting the challenges of tomorrow by investing in our people today. Their programs demonstrate our effort to address systemic inequalities, and promote authentic partnerships between the County and our communities," said Greg Jones, Chair of the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Board.

### **The 2024 PIE-RESJ Grant recipients include:**

#### **BIG BROTHERS AND BIG SISTERS OF DANE COUNTY (BBBS) - \$14,500**

With this funding Big Brother Big Sister's (BBBS) will aim to expand their School Friends High School Leadership (HSL) Program to East High and Emerson Elementary School to support an additional 70 students by the end of 2025. The HSL Program is an innovative peer to peer mentoring program that pairs high school mentors with elementary mentees in supportive relationships that build confidence and increase connectedness to school, culture, and peers. The program is offered at school during the day and uses a curriculum that gives younger and older students an opportunity to grow and learn from one another weekly.

#### **BLACK MEN COALITION (BMC) -\$15,000**

BMC's program seeks to provide comprehensive financial literacy education to the residents of the Dane County Jail. The goal is to equip these individuals with essential financial skills that can help them achieve economic stability and personal empowerment upon reentry into society. By focusing on financial literacy, BMC aims to address a critical gap that often hinders successful reintegration and long-

term success. The program covers a range of topics, including budgeting, saving, credit management, and investment basics. Through interactive workshops and one-on-one coaching sessions, participants gain practical knowledge and tools to manage their finances effectively. This hands-on approach ensures that the information is not only understood but also applied in real-life scenarios, fostering a deeper understanding and retention of financial concepts.

**JOURNEY MENTAL HEALTH - \$15,000**

Journey’s project directly addresses Mental Health, Solitary Confinement, and Incarceration by developing a framework for community-based, culturally responsive mental health services that prevent individuals from being incarcerated. The program aims to eliminate barriers to mental health access for all individuals, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, who are disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system, and to reduce the reliance on jail as a solution for mental health crises.

**WAUNAKEE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION \$5,500**

The Waunakee Neighborhood Connection program will focus on people living within the Waunakee Community School District, which includes the villages of Waunakee and Dane and the towns of Westport, Springfield and Vienna in Dane County. The program seeks to empower community members as they work toward financial stability. The Cafecito program provides a means to support members who speak Spanish as their primary language by offering learning experiences across a broad array of topics that will provide resources and guidance which will include but is not limited to: Offer learning opportunities that support efforts to stabilize and grow individual financial circumstances, provide the tools and resources needed to accomplish individual goals, like access to technology to apply for jobs online and assist individuals with understand how to navigate an often-new environment – including understanding rights and responsibilities and when and how to seek support

To learn more about the Office of Equity and Inclusion and its’ mission, please visit:

<https://equity.danecounty.gov/grants>

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