Ozark Opportunities, Inc. (OOI) is a private, non-profit community action agency established in 1969. Our mission is “to partner with organizations, families, and individuals to provide services and empowerment opportunities for those with limited means to improve their quality of life.”

Our six-county service area includes Baxter, Boone, Marion, Newton, Searcy and Van Buren counties, encompassing nearly 4,000 rural and rugged square miles. Many families travel in excess of 50 miles to access services.

OOI is governed by a tripartite eighteen (18) member Board of Directors representing public, private, and low-income sectors. Each county in our service area is represented by three (3) Board members, one from each sector.

OOI offers several opportunities to low-income individuals and families. All services are centered around two Strategic Commitments:

- **Family Stabilization**
- **Family Development & Empowerment**

**Family Stabilization** is an overarching approach to working with individuals and families to get them stabilized or out of crisis. This is the crucial first step to getting people of limited means to a safe and stable situation to allow them to focus on the future instead of the crisis of the moment.

**Family Development and Empowerment** is a two-fold approach. As individuals and families develop skills necessary to become self-sufficient, their self-confidence increases and they become empowered to take active roles in their lives; making decisions that directly affect their families and the community at large.

Breaking the cycle of poverty takes willpower and perseverance. OOI strives to provide opportunities to assist families through several steps in the process of self-sufficiency.

**21,676 individuals received services provided by OOI in 2016.** This included assistance in the following areas: employment, work supports, education (adult & child), family development, family stabilization and emergency assistance.
Ozark Opportunities, Inc. provided 86 employment opportunities and approximately $580,000 in employee benefits that included medical, dental, retirement and family Air Evac membership. OOI was also responsible for contributing over five million dollars ($5 M) in economic activity in our local communities; supporting local business while helping our communities most vulnerable citizens; our children, our elderly, our disabled, and our impoverished.

All the individuals and families we assist are considered ‘vulnerable’ because they are low-income. Those that are elderly, children, or disabled are among the most vulnerable of those we help. 62% of working age adults who received direct assistance were disabled.

Education is considered a critical step in the process of breaking out of the cycle of poverty. OOI supports individuals and their families in obtaining this goal through SUCCESS and Head Start programs and activities.

In 2017 expanding housing focus to include rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention!
The above graph depicts the population size of each of the counties in our service area, the number of low income individuals in poverty and the number of low-income individuals OOI served. Although informing the community as a whole as to who *Ozark Opportunities, Inc.* is and what we do seems to be a constant challenge and struggle we at least know the low-income population know how to reach us. We will continue sharing our mission with all community members.

Our service area encompasses Baxter, Boone, Marion, Newton, Searcy and Van Buren counties. The pie chart to the right represents the break down of services provided and budgets spent in each county as compared to agency totals. You will notice this is inline with low-income populations by county as depicted in the bar graph at the top of the page.
**Family Stabilization**

Often, “stabilization programs” are seen as a “hand out.” What many do not realize; however, is that when someone applies for assistance there is a high degree of interaction between the individual seeking assistance and our staff. This interaction leads to referrals and a more holistic approach to helping those in need by addressing multiple challenges instead of just the immediate emergency.

Once emergency needs are met, extensive family development can be the focus of our families in their journey to break the cycle of poverty and become self-reliant. The mission of SUCCESS is to assist participants to Succeed at Understanding and Conquering Challenges to Establish Stability and Self-reliance. SUCCESS is a program that helps individuals & families restore their sense of self-respect and hope to help them to reclaim their dreams of a better life through educational classes and goal setting. SUCCESS also promotes a healthy interdependence with the rest of the community; family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, social, educational, spiritual, and medical providers. This in turn promotes an increased feeling of self-worth.
Family Development & Empowerment

- **330** individuals were involved with family development activities.
- **226** achieved self-reliance goals; several achieved multiple goals.
- **60** were still progressing.
- **44** exited without reporting outcomes.

- **Employment:** 95 individuals who were unemployed obtained a job, 50% had maintained that employment for over 90 days while 32% were approaching the 90 day mark when the program year ended. Of the 43 who were already employed, 53% obtained an increase in income.

- **Education:** 113 individuals were enrolled in educational goals. Of those 22% obtained pre-employment skills training, 16% completed college, and 3% obtained their GEDs. 35% were still progressing on their educational goals.

- **Work Supports:** 85 individuals obtained work support goals. 31% obtained reliable transportation, 20% obtained health care services, 31% obtained safe and affordable housing, 28% obtained food assistance, 5% received emergency housing assistance.

WOW (Wonderfully Outstanding Work) awards presented to individuals who made remarkable progress in their journey to self-reliance.
**Child Development & Empowerment (Head Start)**

**Education:** Head Start truly gives children the opportunity to learn, prepare, and build School Readiness Skills that will prepare them for Kindergarten. Here is how Ozark Opportunities, Inc. is doing compared to the rest of the state. As you can see, OOI Head Start Program is performing at a very high level. This is due to our investment in top-notch facilities, supplies and materials, and use of qualified methods of teaching and our ability to retain highly skilled and qualified staff. All of these factors have a direct impact on the overall outstanding results in the listed areas (domains) of development. The Arkansas Head Start Association State Collaboration Office in Little Rock Arkansas compiled this data.

**Average Student Growth from Beginning to End of School Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>All AR</th>
<th>OOI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>124.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>119.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>115.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Emotional</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>117.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Volunteers:** Our Head Start Program had more than 3,032 hours of time Volunteered to our classrooms during the 2015-16 school year! Professionals and Community members donated 768 hours while 2,264 hours were donated by Head Start parents and families.
Father Engagement: Head Start is passionate about the impact that Father/Male involvement has in the lives of children, and takes that commitment seriously. Fathers and other positive male role models (grandfathers, uncles, step-fathers, community members, etc.) are welcomed and encouraged to participate in activities involving the children. There were 577 men that engaged in several activities including; Family Assessments, Goal Setting, Governance, Workshops, and the development of their child in Head Start.

Family and Community Engagement: 1501 Adults participated in Head Start associated activities; 733 of them being Parents or Former Parents. This is more than the number of enrolled children! Boone County Imagination Library is currently serving 1,017 children in Boone County. It costs approximately $2,500 a month to provide these free books to families. If you are interested in sponsoring a child please contact Ryan Clayborn or Krystal Mayes at 870-741-9406.

In 2017 we are expanding programs to include 0-3!
Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Head Start Locations 2016-17

****BAXTER COUNTY****

COTTER

Head Start Address: P.O. Box 70, (physical: 208 Lucille St.), Cotter, AR. 72626-0070
Head Start Phone/Fax: 870-435-5040

MOUNTAIN HOME HEAD START

Head Start Address: 1414 Post Oak Rd (Rooms 1 & 2), Mtn. Home, AR. 72653
ROOM 1: Head Start Phone: 870-425-2123
ROOM 2: Head Start Phone: 870-425-9111

NORFORK HEAD START

Head Start Address: 215 Mildred Simpson Dr., Norfork, AR. 72658-8498
Head Start Phone: 870-499-5611

****BOONE COUNTY****

HARRISON HEAD START

Head Start Address: 701 E. Prospect (downstairs), Harrison, AR. 72601-4419
Head Start Phone/Fax: 870-741-8757

VALLEY SPRINGS HEAD START

Head Start Address: P.O. Box 640, (7349 School St.), Valley Springs, AR. 72682-0640

****MARION COUNTY****

BRUNO PYATT HEAD START

Head Start Address: 4754 Hwy 125 S., Everton, AR. 72633-8036
Head Start Phone: 870-427-5661

YELLVILLE-SUMMIT HEAD START

Head Start Address: 1124 Panther Ave Yellville, AR. 72687-0296
Head Start Phone: 870-321-7437
Ozark Opportunities, Inc. Head Start Locations 2016-17

****NEWTOWN COUNTY****

JASPER HEAD START

Head Start Address: PO Box 82 (600 School St.), Jasper, AR. 72641-0082
Head Start Phone/Fax: 870-446-5818

WESTERN GROVE HEAD START

Head Start Address: 300 School Street, Western Grove, AR. 72685-9501
Head Start Phone/Fax: 870-429-8242

****SEARCY COUNTY****

ST. JOE HEAD START

Head Start Address: 250 S. Hwy 65, St. Joe, AR 72675-8278
Head Start Phone/Fax: 870-439-2210

****VAN BUREN COUNTY****

SHIRLEY HEAD START

Head Start Address: P.O. Box 196, (Physical: 154 School Street), Shirley, AR. 72153-0196
Head Start Phone/Fax: 501-723-4301

Central Office Contact Information: (870) 741-9406

Richard T. Atkinson, Child Development Director  Ext. 235
Ryan Clayborn, Child Development Program Manager  Ext. 224

Halloween in Mrs. Campbell & Mrs. Lawhorn’s room!
Getting Ahead Awards were presented to SUCCESS participants who completed over 27 hours of intensive study into causes of and potential solutions to poverty.