

coworkers, social, educational, spiritual, and medical providers. This in turn promotes an increased feeling of self-worth.

Early Child Development (6 weeks-5 years) gives children the opportunity to learn, prepare and build School Readiness Skills that will better prepare them for Kindergarten. Skills teachers work with students are: Language Development, Literacy, Math, Science, Creative Arts, Social and Emotional Development. There is also a concentrated focus on Physical Health and Development.

Volunteers participate in the Preschool Program. Last year **3,032 hours** of time were volunteered! **2,264** of those hours were from **parents** and their **families** while the remaining **768 hours** were donated by **community members** and **professionals**.

Ozark Opportunities, Inc. is passionate about the impact of **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. **577 men** were engaged in several activities throughout the school year.

Staff work diligently with families to provide **encouragement** and **support** in providing **resources** and **referrals** for family needs throughout each school year: parenting education, Health Education, Mental Health services, Emergency/crisis intervention (food, clothing or shelter), Adult education such as GED programs and college selection, Job training, Housing assistance such as subsidies, utilities, repairs, English as a Second Language (ESL) training, Child support assistance, and Assistance to families of incarcerated individuals.

* All Head Start information reflects the 2015-16 school year.

Outreach Offices:

Baxter County

1318 Bradley Drive Suite 16
Mountain Home, AR 72653
Phone/ Fax: (870) 425-5118

Boone County

406 Hwy 43 East
Harrison, AR 72601
Phone: (870) 741-2089
Fax: (870) 741-2090

Marion County

300 West 11th Street
Yellville, AR 72687
Phone/ Fax: (870) 449-6250

Newton County

506 West Court Street
(At the Health Dept.)
Jasper, AR. 72641
Phone/Fax: (870) 446-2222

Searcy County

110 Ruff Street
Marshall, AR 72650
Phone/Fax: (870) 448-2414

Van Buren County

Van Buren County Annex Building
P.O. Box 473
Clinton, AR 72031
Phone/Fax: (501) 745-2437

Head Start:

(870) 741-9406 ext. 228

Ozark Opportunities, Inc.



Stabilizing and Empowering
Families and Communities

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Ozark Opportunities, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer and service provider. We do not, will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment or services because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or veterans' status.

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.”

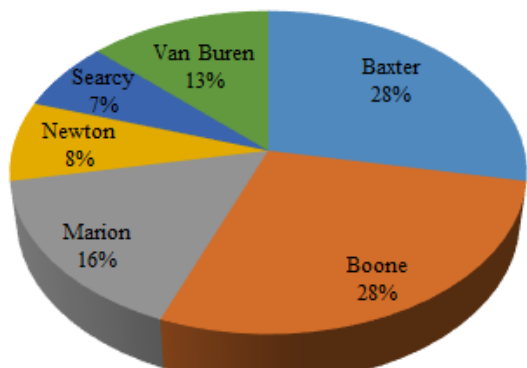
Our six-county service area includes Baxter, Boone, Marion, Newton, Searcy and Van Buren counties, encompassing nearly 4,000 rural and rugged square miles. Many families travel in excess of 50 miles to access services.

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 center around two strategic commitments:

- **Family Stabilization**
- **Family/Child Development & Empowerment**

In 2016 **21,676 individuals received services** provided by OOI which included assistance in the following areas: employment, work supports, education (adult and child), family development, family stabilization activities, and emergency assistance.



Breakdown of individuals receiving assistance by county compared to the total assisted by OOI.

Family Stabilization is an overarching approach to working with individuals and families to get them stabilized or out of crisis – it 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 Stabilization Programs include:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program has two sub-programs. A **non-emergency program** that helps low-income households cope with the high cost of heating fuel and electricity in the form of monetary assistance paid directly to utility companies. And an **emergency program** that helps households establish utilities (gas or electric) or to alleviate an energy-related emergency such as disconnected service, shut-off notice or depleted heating fuel.

Vehicle Repair Loan Program is a \$500 maximum loan for applicants needing repairs to their vehicle. Those approved for the loan will show their ability to make monthly payments in which the loan would be paid in full within a year.

Stability Programs includes emergency assistance and collaborative initiatives with community partners. Emergency assistance can include **homelessness prevention** (help with house payment/rent), **rapid rehousing**, medical, dental, vision and disconnects for water. Collaborative initiative can include working with a partner to install handicap ramps, etc.

Often **stabilization programs** are seen as a ‘hand out.’ What many do not realize when someone applies for assistance is the 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. Staff are considered a **valuable resource** to assist those in need to improve their lives by helping them to access a **coordinated web of services**. This often overlooked resource (our staff) has been instrumental in assisting clients to leave abusive relationships, obtain employment, increase their education, improve their living conditions and even become self-reliant.

Family/Child Development and Empowerment is a two-fold approach which includes adults and children. 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. , increase their education, improve their living conditions and even become self-reliant.

Family/Child Development and Empowerment Programs include:

SUCCESS is a unique, life changing and individual-based program. 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 and 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,