



DES MOINES, IOWA



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The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Des Moines, Iowa, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A five-time All-America City Award winner, Des Moines is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness, school attendance, summer learning and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. Over the past year, United Way of Central Iowa (UWCI), the GLR community lead for Des Moines, has worked to strengthen collaboration across institutional sectors (business, nonprofit, library, government, K–12 education, higher education, social service, health, faith, philanthropic, neighborhood/civic groups) in support of the local GLR effort. To increase diversity, UWCI strategically engaged local companies, volunteers and non-traditional partners such as churches, specific ethnic groups and African-American fraternities and sororities. In May 2016, UWCI introduced the READ to SUCCEED campaign to the larger community in a media event, which resulted in over 300 volunteers signing up to read with children through the Power Read and Book Buddy programs. As a result of its efforts, Des Moines reports the following measurable progress for children from low-income families: In school readiness, the percentage of students who met the benchmark on the Formative Assessment System for Teachers went from 28.6 percent in 2014 to 49.3 percent in 2016. The percentage of students who were chronically absent went from 15.2 percent in the 2013–14 school year to 12.2 percent in 2015–16. In summer learning, the percentage of students improving from pre- to post-testing over the summer increased from 34 percent showing improvement in the summer of 2014 to 73 percent in the summer of 2016. Over three years, the percentage of low-income children proficient in reading went from 58 percent to 61 percent.

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