2017

ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARDS
FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

DENVER, CO JUNE 14-16
Supporting Inspiration and Innovation to Create Equitable Communities

We celebrate the 2017 recipients of the All-America City Awards and applaud their work to transform their communities for a brighter, more equitable future for all children and families.

NCL invites all communities to apply for the 2018 All-America City Award with a spotlight on Promoting Equity through Inclusive Civic Engagement

Join us in 2018 to strengthen existing community connections, learn from experts and peers on using an equity lens for community governance and celebrate progress towards creating a more equitable country.

The 2018 award spotlight is in connection with WKKF’s Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation initiative which provides critical resources to help communities examine and improve their equity.

Interested communities email aac@ncl.org
National Civic League was founded in 1894 (as the National Municipal League) by civic reformers such as Theodore Roosevelt, Louis Brandeis, Marshall Field and Charles Evans Hughes. Its mission was to address the corruption and ineffectiveness of local government. NCL played a key role in promoting professional city management and created the ever popular Model City Charter (now in its 8th edition and in continuous use for 85 years). For more than 65 years, NCL has connected people to each other and people to their government. NCL coined the phrase “civic infrastructure” and created the original Civic Index more than 20 years ago. Now, NCL is a community coach and trainer helping people build their capacity to work toward win-win solutions in fiscal sustainability, comprehensive community development, environmental stewardship, racial equity, immigrant integration, and transportation oriented development.

The All-America City Award started in 1949. Gideon Seymour, managing editor of the Minneapolis Star Tribune, appointed reporter Jean James to cover NCL’s National Conference on Governance in St. Paul. In addition to covering the event, James was assigned to ask NCL (then called the National Municipal League) to support an award to recognize the best-governed cities in America. Instead, NCL suggested recognizing cities where citizen action had succeeded in making these communities a better place to live. Thus, the All-America City Award was born. It is called All-America City Award, rather than All-American City Award, because it recognizes the whole community and not an individual. George Gallup, Sr., the renowned public opinion pollster, served as president of the National Municipal League Board and Chairman of the All-America City Award jury that selected the winning cities. Gallup described the award as “… a Nobel prize for constructive citizenship.”

Winning the All-America City Award reinvigorates a community’s sense of civic pride. All-America City winners and finalists also experience heightened national attention — a proven boost for the recruitment of industry, jobs, and investment. Perhaps as important as the tangible benefits of being named an All-America City are the benefits a community derives from completing the application and making its presentation to the jury. The application process presents a unique opportunity for people to evaluate their community and foster new partnerships. At the jury presentation, the delegation bonds with each other and networks with the other finalists. Most importantly, All-America Cities teach and inspire others throughout the nation that are struggling with similar issues how to meet their challenges in innovative and collaborative ways. It is common to find previous All-America Cities or prospective applicants attending the jury presentations to hear the pearls of wisdom from the finalists.

All-America Cities have been neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties, and regions. The communities honored each year are models of civic excellence. They demonstrate they are problem solvers. They provide examples of how they have been collaborative, innovative, impactful, and promoted civic engagement. Since its inception, over 600 communities have won the All-America City Award designation and more than 2,000 others have been finalists. Some communities have won the award five or six times.
Greetings:

It is my honor to welcome the Grade-Level Reading Network Communities and All-America City Award participants back home to the Mile High City. Denver is, in many respects, the birthplace of the GLR Campaign, dating back to June 2012 when nearly 600 leaders from communities across the country participated in this unique gathering of funders, educators, and community stakeholders.

This is the largest gathering of local, state and national funders that support early literacy, early learning and early school success. Over the next few days, the GLR Campaign will convene more than 200 funders and 500 community leaders to continue to push here in Denver and across the country galvanize communities around dramatically increasing the number of children who can read proficiently by the third grade.

By working with families, early childhood providers, community partners to make early language development a priority from the moment a child is born, we can make significant gains in closing achievement gaps, increasing graduation rates and improving outcomes for children, families and communities. Together, we will discuss how we can continue to share strategies from education programs and communities that are experiencing success while exchanging innovative ideas that will shape future policies and practices.

This gathering is also a time to celebrate achievements in early literacy during the All-America City Awards ceremony, as well as reflect on the hard work each and every one of you do day in and day out to help our children succeed in school and in life. You and your organizations have made a commitment to families in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty to bundle services through public private partnerships. We’re proud to set a benchmark on how to leverage assets in a collective, comprehensive and coordinated way that ultimately improves the lives and outcomes for children in low-income families. Denver, for our part, is especially excited to receive the 2016 Pacesetter award for our exemplary work in the early childhood arena and our Birth to Eight Roadmap which aligns more than 100 leaders across the city and draws from their collective expertise.

On behalf of the City and County of Denver, please accept my gratitude for your dedication to improving the quality of education for all children. I wish all of you a successful and productive week.

Respectfully,

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor
These words are more than just a tagline. They define our mission to create opportunities so people can live better. We work to fulfill our mission everyday by providing access to affordable fresh food and merchandise; creating jobs that lead to life-long careers; and making a positive impact on the communities we serve.

At Walmart, we are passionate about helping people live better. **One community at a time.**

**Save money. Live better.**

**Better communities. Better health.**

**WE BELIEVE GOOD HEALTH BELONGS TO ALL OF COLORADO.**

When people are surrounded by healthy food, safe neighborhoods, fresh water, and clean air, good health is highly possible. We recognize that healthy communities and a healthy environment are critical to the wellness of every person. That’s why in 2016 we invested $118 million toward Colorado community health initiatives.
On day one, public sector workers begin serving others.

That’s the day we begin serving them. People who dedicate their lives to serving others deserve an organization that dedicates itself exclusively to them. For over forty years, we’ve met the challenge to help public sector workers realize their retirement dreams.

icmarc.org/info

2017 ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALISTS

Ames, IA
Avondale, AZ
Council Bluffs, IA
Dallas, TX
Delray Beach, FL
Des Moines, IA
Dubuque, IA
Gulfport, MS
Kansas City, MO
LaFayette County-Oxford-University, MS
Lane County, OR
Montgomery County-Dayton, OH
New Britain, CT
Newport, RI
Quad Cities, IA & IL
Roanoke, VA
Rochester, NY
Salt Lake (Clearfield, Kearns, Park City & South Salt Lake), UT
San Antonio, TX
Springdale, AR
Springfield, MA
Stockton-San Joaquin County, CA
Suncoast (Manatee & Sarasota Counties), FL
Syracuse, NY
Tahoe Truckee, CA
Wake County, NC
Worcester, MA
2016 GLR CAMPAIGN COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PACESETTERS

in alphabetical order by state:

Marvell-Elaine, AR
Springdale, AR
Phoenix, AZ
Fresno, CA
Stockton-San Joaquin County, CA
Tahoe Truckee, CA
City and County of Denver, CO
Hartford, CT
New Britain, CT
Broward County, FL
Delray Beach, FL
Indian River County, FL
Suncoast (Manatee & Sarasota Counties), FL
Colquitt County, GA
Seminole County, GA
Whitfield County, GA
Ames, IA
Cedar Rapids, IA
Council Bluffs, IA
Des Moines, IA
Dubuque, IA
Dyersville, IA
Quad Cities, IA & IL
Shawnee County, KS
Louisville, KY
Springfield, MA
Worcester, MA
Flint & Genesee County, MI
Kansas City, MO
Gulfport, MS
Mecklenburg County-Charlotte, NC
Wake County, NC
Camden, NJ
New York City, NY
Rochester, NY
Syracuse, NY
Montgomery County-Dayton, OH
Portland-Earl Boyles, OR
Lane County, OR
Wallowa County, OR
Philadelphia, PA
Newport, RI
Dallas, TX
San Antonio, TX
Salt Lake (Clearfield, Kearns, Park City & South Salt Lake), UT
Roanoke, VA
Tacoma, WA
Hancock County, WV

In celebrating our 50th anniversary at GT, we reflect upon a long-standing tradition of serving communities by serving as pro bono counsel, volunteering our time and resources, and forging local partnerships to support worthy causes like the National Civic League.
CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING COMMUNITIES

ALABAMA
- Birmingham*
- Montgomery*
- West Alabama/ Tuscaloosa*

ARIZONA
- Avondale+
- Balsz
- Buckeye
- Bullhead City
- Chandler*
- Cochise
- Copper Corridor
- Flagstaff
- Globe-Miami
- Goodyear*
- Hualapai
- Greater Surprise
- Goodyear*
- Globe-Miami
- Flagstaff
- Copper Corridor
- Cochise
- Avondale+

ARKANSAS
- Washington County
- Whitfield County#
- Wilcox County
- Wilkinson County
- Worth County

HAWAII
- Statewide

IDAHO
- Statewide

ILLINOIS
- Chicago*
- Waukegan

INDIANA
- Fort Wayne*
- Greater Lafayette*
- Indianapolis*
- Muncie
- Richmond*

IOWA
- Ames*#
- Cedar Rapids*#
- Cedar Valley (Waterloo and Cedar Falls)
- Council Bluffs#*
- Coralville#
- Des Moines*#
- Dubuque*#
- Dyersville#
- Grinnell
- Jackson County
- Marshalltown#

IOWA & ILLINOIS
- Quad Cities#*

KANSAS
- City of El Dorado
- Emporia
- Shawnee County#

KENTUCKY
- Louisville*#

LOUISIANA
- New Orleans*

MAINE
- Lewiston*
- Portland*
- Sacopee Valley
- Waterville

MARYLAND
- Baltimore*
- Montgomery County*

MASSACHUSETTS
- Boston*
- Holyoke
- New Bedford*#
- Pittsfield*
- Springfield*#
- Worcester*#

MICHIGAN
- Ann Arbor*
- Detroit*
- Flint & Genesee County*#
- Kent County

MISSISSIPPI
- Gulfport*#
- Lafayette County- Oxford-University#

MISSOURI
- Kansas City*#
- Emporia
- Shawnee County#

MONTANA
- Billings*

NEVADA
- Las Vegas
- Northern Nevada and the Sierra (Reno)

NEW JERSEY
- Camden#
- Carteret
- Newark*
- Paterson

NEW MEXICO
- Albuquerque*
- Doña Ana County/ Mesilla

NEW YORK
- Buffalo*
- Chemung County
- Cortland County
- Herkimer & Oneida Counties
- Madison County
- New York City#
- Rochester*#
- Syracuse*

NORTH CAROLINA
- Gaston County
- Mecklenburg County/ Charlotte*
- Moore County
- Nash and Edgecombe Counties

OHIO
- Franklin County
- Montgomery County- Dayton*#

OKLAHOMA
- Enid
- Oklahoma City*

OREGON
- Lane County#
- Portland- Earl Boyles#
- Wallowa County#
- West Medford
- Yoncalla

PENNSYLVANIA
- Allegheny County
- Lehigh Valley
- Philadelphia*
- Reading*
- Wyoming Valley

PUERTO RICO
- San Juan

RHODE ISLAND
- Newport#
- Providence*

SOUTH CAROLINA
- Richland County*

SOUTH DAKOTA
- Sioux Falls*
- Yankton*

TENNESSEE
- Knoxville*
- Memphis*
- Middle Tennessee
- Nashville*

TEXAS
- Austin*
- El Paso*
- Houston*
- San Antonio*

UTAH
- Salt Lake City*#
- St. George*

VIRGINIA
- Alexandria*
- Arlington
- Richmond*
- Virginia Beach*

WASHINGTON
- Everett
- Fife
- Federal Way*
- Kirkland
- Renton*

WEST VIRGINIA
- Charleston*
- Wheeling*

WISCONSIN
- Milwaukee*
- Madison*
- Superior*

WYOMING
- Cheyenne*
- Casper*
- Gillette*
- Sheridan*

NOTE: * indicates a City-County* or a County*
SOUTH DAKOTA
Rapid City

TENNESSEE
Memphis

TEXAS
Arlington-Mansfield
Austin*
Brownsville*
Dallas*#
Houston
Palacios
San Antonio*#
Waco

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
St. Thomas, St. Croix,
St. John

UTAH
Salt Lake (Clearfield,
Kearns, Park City and
South Salt Lake)#+
Salt Lake City

VIRGINIA
Alexandria*
Greater Richmond*
Harrisonburg & Rock-
ingham County
Martinsville-Henry
County*
Petersburg*
Roanoke*#
Virginia Beach

WASHINGTON
Anacortes*
Bellevue*
Seattle and the South
King County cities
of Auburn, Burien,
Federal Way, Kent,
Renton, SeaTac, and
Tukwila*
Tacoma*#
WASHINGTON, D.C.
Washington, D.C.

WEST VIRGINIA
Barbour County
Berkeley County
Boone County
Bradford County
Brooke County
Cabell County
Calhoun County
Clay County
Doddridge County
Fayette County
Gilmer County
Grant County
Greenbrier County
Hampshire County
Hancock County#
Hardy County
Harrison County
Jackson County
Jefferson County
Kanawha County
Lewis County
Lincoln County
Logan County
Marion County
Marshall County
Mason County
McDowell County
Mercer County
Mineral County
Mingo County
Monongalia County
Monroe County
Morgan County
Nicholas County
Ohio County
Pendleton County
Pleasant County
Pocahontas County
Preston County
Putnam County
Randolph County
 Ritchie County
Roane County
Summers County
Taylor County
Tucker County
Tyler County
Upshur County
Wayne County
Webster County
Wetzel County
Wirt County
Wood County
Wyoming County

WISCONSIN
Eau Claire*
Milwaukee

* Former All-America City
awardee
# 2016 Pacesetter
+ 2017 All-America City
finalist

CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING COMMUNITIES

68TH ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARDS AGENDA
Westin Denver International Airport

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14
5:00 PM AAC Registration Opens
Grand Foyer

6:00 PM Closing GLR Funder Huddle and Opening All-America City Reception
Grand Foyer

THURSDAY, JUNE 15
7:00 AM Registration opens, Grand Foyer

8:00 – 9:00 AM Welcome Breakfast for New and Prospective Communities

8:00 – 9:00 AM Share and Learn Breakfast for Communities Using Vroom

8:00 – 9:00 AM Welcome Breakfast for California Communities

9:00 – 9:45 AM Morning Plenary, Spruce Ballroom

10:00 – 11:15 AM Workshops and Roundtable Conversations

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM Plenary Session — 14 AAC Award Finalist Presentations, Spruce Ballroom

12:30 – 1:30 PM Luncheon — Honor GLR Campaign Champions, Spruce Ballroom

1:45 – 2:30 PM Plenary Session — 13 All-America City Award Finalist Presentations, Spruce Ballroom
68TH ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARDS AGENDA

FRIDAY, JUNE 16

7:00 AM  Registration Open, Grand Foyer

8:00 – 9:00 AM  Building Equitable Communities: All-America City Awards 2018 and Beyond
• National Civic League Board Chairman Derek Okubo, City and County of Denver
• Carla Kimbrough, Racial Equity Director, National Civic League

9:00 – 9:45 AM  Breakfast Roundtables to share communications products

9:45 – 10:15 AM  Multi-Media Morning Plenary, Spruce Ballroom

Presentation of Communications Honors

10:30 – 11:45 AM  Workshops and Roundtable Conversations

12:00 – 2:00 PM  Lunch Plenary, Spruce Ballroom

Announcement of the All-America City Award Recipients

2:00 PM  Adjourn

WELCOME TO DENVER!

BEST WISHES & GOOD LUCK TO THE ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALISTS
2017 COUNCIL OF CHAMPIONS

MARTHA BRUCKNER*
Superintendent
Council Bluffs Community School District

JOHN H. DAVIS
Senior Trustee
Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Ventry Industries, LLC

MORGAN FREEMAN
Oscar-winning Actor & Founder
Tallahatchie River Foundation

CAROLE GROOM*
Supervisor
San Mateo County

SANDRA GUTIERREZ*
Founder and National Director
Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors

SLY JAMES
Mayor
Kansas City, Missouri

MICHAEL JOHNSTON*
Former state legislator
Colorado Senate, representing
Senate District 33 in Northeast Denver
Currently a candidate for
Governor of Colorado 2018

PORTIA KENNEL
Senior Vice President
Ounce of Prevention Fund

RHONDA H. LAUER*
President and CEO
Foundations, Inc.

ANGEL TAVERAS
Former Mayor
Providence, Rhode Island

*Attending

From Festivals to Fleet Week, find out how you can join in the year-long celebration at
norfolk.gov/navy100

Honor the past.
Experience the present.
Shape the future.

NORFOLK - PROUD NAVY TOWN 100 YEARS
AMES, IOWA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Ames, Iowa, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Ames is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness, school attendance, summer learning and overall grade-level reading for children from families with low incomes, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. Ames Reads is a cross-sector coalition involving local government, nonprofit agencies and regional organizations to ensure that all children (a) enter kindergarten ready to learn; (b) read at grade level by the end of third grade; and (c) graduate from high school. The coalition has successfully partnered with area health care providers, WIC, a federally funded health care center, human service agencies and food pantries to engage and serve families with low incomes. Local citizens, faith groups and businesses generously volunteer and financially support their work.

In Ames Community School District (ACSD), subgroups of students from families with low incomes have shown improvement in multiple areas. From 2014 to 2016, kindergartners showed a 19 percent improvement in meeting the benchmark for school readiness and literacy. More young children attended school more regularly, as a result of ACSD’s use of an Early Indicator System to track children at risk of dropping out. Once a student is identified, district teams develop plans to address barriers to attendance. Between the 2012–13 and 2015–16 school years, the rate of chronic absence among pre-K–3 students from families with low incomes declined from 10.24 percent to 8.73 percent, a slightly more than 15 percent improvement. In the Little Cyclone Summer Enrichment program, the percentage of children moving from not proficient to proficient increased from 10.11 percent in 2015 to 17.03 percent in 2016. The third-grade students at all elementary schools went from 80.19 percent proficient in reading in 2014–15 to 83.18 percent in 2015–16.

AVONDALE, ARIZONA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Avondale, Arizona, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Avondale is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. In 2014, Valley of the Sun United Way, the City of Avondale and the Avondale Elementary School District formed Read On Avondale (ROA) as a cross-sector collaborative, targeting third-grade reading proficiency. The coalition has continued to build and diversify its membership to include a school board member, local health providers, parents and a state legislator. ROA has placed a high priority on reaching children and families in public housing and other children who are especially vulnerable. For example, the City of Avondale, Care 1st and First Things First jointly support a resource center that serves as a one-stop shop for low-income families, providing housing assistance, health and nutrition programs, community meeting space, job assistance and parenting education programs. ROA has partnered with the Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce and FirstBook to purchase books for children enrolled in a set of focus schools in the area. The community operates a Summer Learning Collaborative (SLC) for students who have completed kindergarten through third grade to mitigate summer slide. Data on the SLC reveal that during the summer of 2015, 95 students participating in the SLC maintained or increased literacy skills, while in the summer of 2016, 133 participants maintained
Avondale also saw an increase in the number and percent of students who are reading proficiently by the end of the third grade. 17 percent of third graders were reading proficiently in the spring of 2015, while 28 percent were reading proficiently in the spring of 2016.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Council Bluffs, Iowa, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Council Bluffs 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. With funding from the Iowa West Foundation, United Way of the Midlands and private donors, Raise Me to Read — the locally branded GLR campaign — has engaged over 40 local organizations to elevate the issue, align the community on grade-level reading and spearhead collectively developed strategies for the campaign. Council Bluffs’ free community WiFi B-Link has been leveraged to support student success, and the coalition plans to expand its literacy promotion efforts to reach children in underserved communities. New literacy efforts, including book distribution programs and volunteer reading opportunities, will be directed at the Pottawattamie County Jail, the Centro Latino Center, the domestic violence shelter, permanent supportive housing programs and foster care settings. As a result of its efforts, Council Bluffs reports the following measurable progress for low-income children: From spring 2014 to spring 2016, Council Bluffs Community School District saw an increase in the percentage of children meeting kindergarten readiness criteria, from 82.2 percent to 92.7 percent. The percentage of first graders who were chronically absent went from 6.9 percent in 2012–13 to 5.3 percent in 2014–15. The percentage of second graders improving their reading proficiency levels over the summer increased from 7.7 percent in 2015 to 12.5 percent in 2016. There was also an increase in the percentage of third-grade children reading at the proficient level, from 28.7 percent in 2014 to 44.4 percent in 2016.

DALLAS, TEXAS

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Dallas, Texas, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A previous winner of an All-America City Award, Dallas is currently cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. In 2012, a broad and diverse coalition of stakeholders came together to collectively work to benefit students throughout Dallas County, from cradle to career. The Commit! Partnership was formed to act as a backbone organization supporting over 190 organizations, which include public school districts, charter school networks, private schools, higher education institutions, foundations, businesses, nonprofits and faith-based and community organizations. The partnership convenes, facilitates and provides resources to partners to achieve better student outcomes across 11 critical community achievement indicators, which were all developed and agreed on by the partners. The coalition also works at a systems level to directly recruit volunteers and strengthen messaging. For instance, a influenced Dallas Morning News, the largest regional newspaper, to adopt early childhood as a priority area that receives consistent coverage and reporting. As a result of its work, the community has seen measurable outcomes for children from low-income families. There was a significant increase in the number of low-income K-3 students who stayed on grade level or improved over the summer 2016 (271 students) compared with the previous summer 2015 (73 students). In overall
grade-level reading, 42 percent of K–2 students were reading on grade level in the spring of 2015, compared with only 30 percent in the spring of 2014.

DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Delray Beach, Florida, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A previous two-time All-America City Award winner, Delray Beach is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. When Delray Beach found that only 50 percent of its children were reading at grade level by third grade, community leaders issued a “call to action.” A local coalition was created that studied the issues, took ownership and committed to be accountable. Key to the success of the ensuing campaign was negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with Palm Beach County School District to share student data. Also significant was the campaign’s ability to leverage the mayor’s support in enhancing local school, family and community partnerships. In 2016, the campaign launched the Mayor’s Task Force on Family Engagement, which included 40 members of the community including educators, parents, students and nonprofits. Despite early challenges in engaging non-English speaking families, the task force found ways to reach families successfully. District and city support for interpretation services for Spanish and Creole families enabled the task force to engage parents of children from Title 1 schools in developing solutions to increase parental involvement in supporting early literacy and learning. Between 2011–12 and 2015–16, the percentage of low-income K–3 children who were chronically absent was reduced from 6.54 percent to 2.1 percent. The results of an evaluation of Delray’s 2016 summer programming reveal that there was a significant increase in the mean reading scores for program participants, in contrast to prior summers that produced no statistically significant gains. In addition, Delray Beach saw an increase of 22 percent over two years in the number of low-income children reading proficiently.

DES MOINES, IOWA

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
CONGRATULATIONS
2017 ALL-AMERICA CITY FINALISTS!

Asheboro, North Carolina wishes you the best of luck in the competition

*Asheboro*  
2016

DUBUQE, IOWA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Dubuque, Iowa, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A three-time All-America City Award winner, Dubuque is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. Building on a history of community-wide visioning and strategic planning, the campaign for grade-level reading in Dubuque was developed with inputs from students, parents and educators, as well as leaders from nonprofits, business, government and philanthropy. Partners in the campaign come from every major institutional sector in the community — education, government, business, nonprofit, faith and philanthropy. The mayor and city council have made third-grade reading a priority in the city’s strategic plan for each of the past five years, while the school district has also identified third-grade reading as a strategic priority. The local GLR effort receives strong support from the Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation recently began tracking third-grade reading as one of its success indicators. Continuous outreach to new partners and groups has ensured that diverse perspectives are brought to the network. As a result of the efforts of the local campaign, the number of kindergartners who were chronically absent in five Title I schools fell from 14.5 percent in 2014–15 to 9.5 percent in 2015–16. Results from the Summer Academy showed that 64.9 percent of low-income students maintained or improved reading scores in 2016 compared with 56.3 percent in 2015. At the end of the 2015–16 school year, 59 percent of low-income third graders scored at the proficient level in overall grade-level reading compared with 53 percent the previous year.

GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Gulfport, Mississippi, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Gulfport is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. In 2012, a group of 20 business leaders from the Gulf Coast Business Council joined with the mayor of Gulfport to focus on early education and preparing children for academic success. The result was the formation of the Coast Coalition, which led to the creation of privately funded, free preschools for 4-year-olds living in the Coastal Counties. Staff from businesses, nonprofit agencies, hospitals, accounting firms, attorneys, the library, the Secretary of State’s office and the Coast Chamber, as well as school district superintendents, have continued to work together under the One Coast Coalition to address other school readiness needs in the community. Working with others in the state, the coalition played a significant role in helping to pass legislation that established state funding for preschools for the first time. Additionally, while the state of Mississippi does not routinely disaggregate test data into free/reduced-price lunch subgroups specifically, the coalition made a special request to have data disaggregated for two districts in Gulfport. The coalition partnered with the Bezos Family Foundation to bring the Vroom application to parents, while also collaborating with researchers to monitor and evaluate the use of Vroom by parents. As a result of the work of the GLR coalition, school readiness among children entering kindergarten increased from 32...
CONGRATULATIONS TO
THE 2017 ALL-AMERICA
CITY FINALISTS.

Aurora, Colorado wishes you the
best of luck in the competition.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Kansas City, Missouri, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A five-time winner of the All-America City Award, Kansas City is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. Working with over 50 partner organizations, Turn the Page KC (Kansas City’s locally branded third-grade reading initiative) has dramatically increased public support for early learning. Several key organizations have integrated the initiative’s goals into their work, and there has been an increase in the percentage of philanthropic support focused on literacy from birth through age 8. The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, for example, adopted kindergarten readiness as one of its “Big 5 Initiatives.” In order to address the school absence issue, Lead to Read KC recruited, trained and placed over 1,000 volunteers to serve as caring adults in the school building. This includes teams of volunteers from more than 25 businesses who read in 48 classrooms and 74 volunteers from the Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) who read with students every week. As a result of its efforts, Kansas City has reduced chronic absence for K–3 students attending Title 1 elementary schools from 15 percent in the 2012–13 school year to 12 percent in the 2015–16 school year. For low-income children ages 5–8, 44 percent increased an average of 23 Lexile points during the summer of 2016, compared with only 7 percent who increased an average of 19 Lexile points during the summer of 2013.

Finally, the percentage of students enrolled in Title I schools scoring proficient or above on the third-grade ELA assessment increased from 30 percent in 2012 to 41 percent in 2016.

LAFAYETTE COUNTY-OXFORD-UNIVERSITY, MISSISSIPPI

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Lafayette County-Oxford-University, Mississippi, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Lafayette is cited for making measurable progress in both school readiness and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. The local GLR coalition includes an especially strong and diverse set of partners representing various sectors of the community, including both local school districts (Lafayette and Oxford), LOU United Way, Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction at the University of Mississippi, University Museum, the Oxford Park Commission (OPC), Lafayette County & Oxford Public Library, the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council, LOU Home and the Oxford Housing Authority, LOU Excel by 5, child care providers, early intervention and health care service providers, and other literacy-related programs and organizations. The coalition is divided into four workgroups, reflecting the GLR Campaign’s framework, to advance the work of the coalition and increase community participation. Participation in the Campaign has increased understanding among coalition members especially about the interrelationship among strategies and activities that promote literacy, health and wellness. The coalition also hosts free community events, such as the annual EXCELebration, quarterly play dates and parent workshops that help parents understand how to play with their children to boost development and early literacy skills. As a result of its GLR campaign efforts, Lafayette reports the following measurable progress:

- There was a dramatic improvement in the percentage of economically

percent ready in the fall of 2014 to 66.3 percent ready in 2016. Additionally, in 2015, 91 percent of low-income third-grade students in the city of Gulfport met standard on the Mississippi Reading Assessment, while 92 percent met standard in 2016.
disadvantaged children entering kindergarten who scored proficient: 29 percent of entering kindergartners scored proficient in fall of 2014, while 50 percent scored proficient in the fall of 2016. Also, drawing on data collected in the spring of 2015 and 2016, the community saw a slight increase in the percentage of first graders who are proficient in reading, from 94 percent to 95 percent.

LANE COUNTY, OREGON

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Lane County, Oregon, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Lane County is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness and summer learning for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. United Way of Lane County serves as the backbone of the Early Learning Alliance (ELA), which is focused on working together with cross-sector partners to create systems that are aligned, coordinated and family centered to ensure children are prepared to succeed in school and life. The ELA's primary decision-making body, the Governance Consortium, includes five designated community sectors (health, K–12 education, early childhood education, social/human services and business and community leaders); parents; representatives from rural communities; and individuals who have expertise in equity. The ELA also established a group of “equity advisors” from community-based organizations that work with diverse populations, specifically families who identify as African American, Latino and Native American. These organizations conduct surveys and focus groups with families; provide guidance on culturally-relevant, best practice programming and outreach methods; and implement early learning programs. Through the ELA's collaborative efforts, developmental screening rates have increased from 28.3 percent in 2013 to 67 percent in 2015, indicating a significant improvement in school readiness for low-income children. Data from the Kids in Transition to School (KITS) summer program reveals progress for low-income kindergartners in the areas of early literacy, numeracy, social-emotional skills and self-regulation. Results from the pilot study indicate there was a 28 percent drop in the number of children at risk for reading failure and a 40 percent drop in the number of children at risk for difficulties with concepts about print. KITS served approximately 11.12 percent of all entering kindergartners in Lane County in 2016, up from 1.5 percent in 2011–12.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY-DAYTON, OHIO

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Montgomery County-Dayton, Ohio, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A three-time All-America City Award winner, Dayton is cited for measurable progress in school attendance and summer learning, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. Led initially by Montgomery County, the community has been intensely focused on improving student success starting in preschool. In 2013, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley created the City of Learners Committee to advance this and other goals. Composed of over 70 representatives, the committee hosted listening sessions to gain feedback on fostering a strong education culture. The local GLR coalition's implementation partnerships include the county's 16 school districts, the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority, the Junior League of Dayton and the Dayton Metro Library system. The campaign has recently engaged parents through focus groups, data walks and family representation on the Preschool Promise board. The coalition's focus and County Commissioner Debbie Lieberman and Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley's commitment to making early childhood education a priority resulted in the passage of an increase in the city’s income tax to fund universal preschool for
all Dayton 4-year-olds (as well as ensure the city’s ongoing financial stability). Strongly supported by the mayor, the levy funds the Preschool Promise for eight years, with $4.3 million in annual support. Dayton has seen reductions in chronic absence among low-income children in four of its partner school districts, with the highest chronic absence rate among the four at 20 percent in 2012–13. In that same district in 2015–16, the rate had been cut to 14.7 percent. To promote summer learning, two high-poverty school districts partnered with the BELL summer learning program in 2016; their students gained an average of two months in reading proficiency.

NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize New Britain, Connecticut, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A previous winner of the All-America City Award, New Britain 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. The local campaign is led by the Coalition for New Britain’s Youth, which is a citywide group that includes parents, educators, government officials, health and social service agencies, and others as members committed to improving the lives of New Britain’s youth, birth through age 24. The New Britain GLR Campaign reaches approximately 5,000 low-income children in a school district of roughly 10,000 students. When it first started its work in 2001, the coalition pursued a two-pronged strategy of (1) mobilizing parents to advocate for more school readiness funding from the state and (2) working with preschools to plan for additional classrooms. As a result, New Britain has made the following measurable progress: From 2013 to 2016, the percentage of low-income kindergarten students scoring in Performance Band 1 on the NWEA Reading Assessment increased from 30.4 percent to 41.8 percent. The percentage of low-income first-grade students who were chronically absent dropped from 25.1 percent in 2011–12 to 13.3 percent in 2015–16. The percentage of third-grade students from low-income families who participated in the Summer Enrichment Experience and who did not experience summer reading skill loss improved from 36.3 percent in summer 2014 to 60.7 percent in summer 2016. Similarly, New Britain saw an increase from 35.7 percent in spring 2014 to 45.7 percent in spring 2016 in the percentage of second-grade students achieving reading proficiency.

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Newport, Rhode Island, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Newport is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness and school attendance for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. The Newport Campaign for Grade-Level Reading was launched in 2015 in coordination with the Newport Data in Your Backyard presentation, an annual event hosted by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. This event attracted representatives from more than 60 organizations and stakeholder groups that are part of the local GLR campaign’s broad and diverse coalition, including a state senator, several city council members and leaders of major community organizations, such as the Newport Public Schools, Newport Partnership for Families, East Bay Community Action Program, Child & Family, Boys & Girls Club of Newport, Newport Public Library, Newport Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Martin Luther King Community Center, Reach Out and Read Rhode Island, and the van Buren Charitable Foundation. The community has the highest percentage of affordable housing in the state and has made the Newport Housing
Authority a key partner in its GLR campaign effort. Through the Walking School Bus program, community partners, volunteers and university students help walk students to school from nearby housing communities, while also working with the housing authority to ensure that sidewalks and pathways are clear of snow after winter snowstorms. As a result of Newport’s GLR efforts, child outreach developmental screening rates for 5-year-olds increased from 31 percent in 2014–15 to 51 percent in 2015–16. During the 2012–13 school year, 17 percent of students in grades K–3 were chronically absent, compared with 11 percent in 2014–15.

QUAD CITIES, IOWA & ILLINOIS

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Quad Cities, Iowa and Illinois, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Having previously won an All-America City Award, Quad Cities is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness, school attendance and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. With eight school districts and five different city governments located along the Mississippi River in two separate states, cross-sector collaboration and coordination in the Quad Cities has been important to achieving results for the area’s children. In 2012, representatives from 18 local organizations came together to focus initially on school readiness and other strategies. Since then, the coalition has worked to establish a community-wide data warehouse, which houses individual-level identified data from all eight local school districts and is working toward incorporating data from local social service agencies. This has helped to clearly establish community-wide benchmarks to measure progress on a range of issues. To inform its messaging and engagement with parents, the coalition organized Community Conversations focus groups with parents. As a result of its GLR efforts, between fall 2012 and 2016, the percentage of children in low-income neighborhoods assessed with the Kindergarten Skills Inventory who were ready for kindergarten increased from 74.3 percent to 80.4 percent. The chronic absence rate for K–3 students at three elementary schools decreased from 21 percent in 2014–15 to 14 percent in 2015–16. Reading scores for third graders in the Bettendorf Community School District (one of the partner districts in the collaborative) increased from 73.5 percent proficient in 2014–15 to 78.9 percent proficient in 2015–16.

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Roanoke, Virginia, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A six-time All-America City Award winner, Roanoke 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. Star City Reads, Roanoke’s locally branded campaign effort, encourages data sharing, data analysis, best practices and targeted strategies. The coalition currently consists of 25 partners, including libraries, schools, health programs, arts organizations and the police department. With the help of coalition partners at Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, Star City Reads reviews and disaggregates system-wide data for a variety of subgroups (e.g., family income and child special needs, such as being an English language learner or having an IEP). As the community lead within the local coalition, the Roanoke Public Libraries (RPL) have partnered with the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) better to meet the needs of children living in public housing. As a result of its work, Roanoke has seen the following outcomes: In the fall of 2012, 78.8 percent of Title I kindergartners met or exceeded school readiness benchmarks for language and math. Reading scores for third graders in the Bettendorf Community School District (one of the partner districts in the collaborative) increased from 73.5 percent proficient in 2014–15 to 78.9 percent proficient in 2015–16.

SOLESMART BY THE NUMBERS

48M people in participating communities,
101 communities receiving Technical Assistance from teams led by The Solar Foundation,
58 communities awarded for their local solar achievements by the teams led by ICMA with the support of the National Civic League, Home Innovation Research Labs, and Meister Consultants Group.

21 All-America City Award recipients have achieved designation.

We congratulate the following communities for being at the forefront of civic and solar innovation, achieving both SolSmart designation and All-America City status:

- Ames, IA
- Atlanta, GA
- Austin, TX
- Charlotte, NC
- Fremont, CA
- Gladstone, MO
- Hartford, CT
- Indianapolis, IN
- Kansas City, MO
- Lincoln, NE
- Madison, WI
- Maricopa County, AZ
- Miami-Dade County, FL
- Minneapolis, MN
- Philadelphia, PA
- Providence, RI
- San Antonio, TX
- Santa Rosa, CA
- SolSmart@icma.org | @GoSolSmart | #BeSolSmart
criteria, compared with 80.4 percent in the fall of 2016. For the 2012–13 school year, 13.6 percent of first graders in Title I schools were chronically absent, compared with 11.9 percent in the 2015–16 school year. Roanoke launched a new summer learning program in all 14 of its Title I schools in 2013. Since that time, the percentage of first graders who maintained or improved their performance over the summer months increased from 81.6 percent to 85.9 percent. In the same timeframe, the overall percentage of third graders reading proficiently in all 14 Title I elementary schools increased from 60.5 percent to 70.6 percent.

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Rochester, New York, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A two-time winner of an AAC Award, Rochester is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. The City of Rochester led the development of a collaborative, community-wide third-grade reading initiative known as ROC the Future, aimed at promoting alignment and focusing community resources to improve the academic achievement of children in the city. ROC the Future’s efforts are supported by over 60 partners across the community that participate in one or more of six workgroups (“Collaborative Action Networks,” or CANs), which guide their work along the cradle-to-career continuum. Notably, ROC the Future’s Convener Board includes executives from 27 organizations that have contributed funding, in-kind services, backbone support, advocacy and influence. Two key recent achievements include the addition of two new foundations and $1 million in private funding, as well as a $12 million Early Pre-K grant. The Rochester City School District, a critical member of ROC the Future, has established and maintained a laser-like focus on ensuring sustained educational equity, fostering relational capacity, nurturing innovation, building coherence and establishing accountability in serving all students and families. As a result, the community reduced the percentage of chronically absent K–3 students from 37 percent in 2013–14 to 28 percent in 2015–16. Additionally, the percentage of low-income third graders who regularly attended summer school and who maintained or gained in reading over the summer rose from 46.8 percent in 2015 to 54.2 percent in 2016. Also, the percentage of low-income third graders who met the grade-level reading standard rose from 4.4 percent in 2014 to 6.6 percent in 2016.

SALT LAKE (CLEARFIELD, KEARNS, PARK CITY & SOUTH SALT LAKE), UTAH

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and National Civic League recognize Salt Lake City, Utah, and the surrounding communities of Clearfield, Kearns, Park City and South Salt Lake as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Salt Lake is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness, summer learning and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusion. A broad coalition of 37 businesses, government institutions, faith groups, nonprofit organizations, school districts and institutions of higher education comprise the Promise Partnership Regional Council (PPRC), which is working collectively to improve outcomes for children in the four-school-district region. The partnership includes full-service community schools that address student and family needs as well as integrated service delivery in several low-income housing communities. There, coalition members respond to the needs of refugee and immigrant youth by assisting new arrivals with academics, quality out of school time and parent engagement. School readiness data from
Granite School District reflect an increase from 46 percent of low-income kindergartners ready at the beginning of the year in 2012–13 to 47.4 percent ready at the beginning of the year in 2015–16. In 2016, the Elementary Reading Network worked with teachers and afterschool providers to pilot high-quality literacy instruction during summer months. This framework for integrated summer programing eliminated summer learning loss for students who participated for 20 or more days. Low-income students in Granite School District have realized a 6 percent increase in third-grade reading, from 50 percent in the 2013 school year to 56 percent in 2015. The collective efforts of the many partners engaged in improving conditions for students and their families are clearly driving the noteworthy education improvements happening throughout the Salt Lake region.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize San Antonio, Texas, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A five-time AAC Awardee, San Antonio is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. The City of San Antonio, Department of Human Services (DHS) and Pre-K 4SA, in partnership with United Way’s ReadyKidSA Coalition, the P-16 Plus Council of Greater Bexar County, San Antonio Housing Authority, local school districts and numerous community organizations are merging resources to help San Antonio’s young children follow the path to educational success. Cross-sector collaboration, community outreach, engagement, diversity and inclusiveness are key to San Antonio’s GLR Campaign, which reaches over 51,000 low-income children across 15 local school districts. Historically, the City of San Antonio has had a strong cross-sector of collaborators collectively working toward improving school readiness, school attendance and grade-level reading proficiency. Through the campaign, San Antonio was able to coordinate and integrate varied resources of dozens of committed partners to make a measurable community impact that is sustainable and scalable. The community uses the Early Development Instrument (EDI) to assess and track school readiness. Results from 2012 to 2015 reflect major improvements in all EDI domains among kindergarten students from low-income families, including those in every public housing community in the city. The community also reported a slight increase in overall grade-level reading during the same time period: 66 percent of third-grade students from low-income families scored “satisfactory” on the STAR reading assessment in the spring of 2012, while 67 percent scored “satisfactory” in the spring of 2015.

SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

The GLR Campaign recognizes Springdale, Arkansas, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Springdale is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness, school attendance, summer learning and overall grade-level reading, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. The Springdale Grade-Level Reading Coalition has made parent engagement and cultural competency a staple of their work. When OneCommunity Reads, UnaComunidad Leyendo! launched in 2013, its goal was to improve kindergarten readiness and grade-level reading by increasing the parent and community involvement of Hispanic and Marshallese families in the Springdale area. The foundation of the initiative is Parents Taking Leadership Action (PTLA), which believes parents have gifts and talents to contribute to their child’s school and community and are the primary leaders of their children and family. Through PTLA, parents meet weekly and engage in music and interactive lessons aimed at strengthening
The classes are facilitated in Spanish. As a result of these efforts, Springdale reports measurable progress, as follows: The average percentage of kindergartners in three elementary schools scoring developed across all six domains on the Qualls Early Learning Inventory increased from 38.5 percent in 2012–13 to 45.3 percent in 2015–16. The percentage of first graders at Monitor who were chronically absent decreased from 24 percent in 2012–13 to 10 percent in 2015–16. The percentage of rising first through fourth graders at the George and Jones elementary schools who did not experience loss of literacy during the bilingual Feed Your Brain summer program increased from 81 percent in 2014–15 to 89 percent in 2015–16. The percentage of third grade students who were reading at grade level increased from 35 percent in 2012–13 to 36.5 percent in 2015–16.

**SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Springfield, Massachusetts, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Having previously won an All-America City Award, Springfield is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. Springfield’s Reading Success by 4th Grade (RS4G) is a collaborative initiative spearheaded by a coalition that includes the Springfield Public Schools, the early childhood education community (including center-based and family child care), the business community, legislators and community organizations such as the Springfield City Library, Springfield Museums, WGBY Public Television, the housing authority and medical and behavioral health providers, as well as the funding community. The coalition has created a Community Data Warehouse, a universal pre-K curriculum with professional development and coaching support for local early childhood organizations (public schools and private providers), and a funder collaborative. To inform outreach to parents, the coalition organized multiple focus groups with parents. These focus groups helped provide insights into the messaging challenges of reaching parents, leading to creation of a text-messaging campaign. As a result, 1,500+ families signed onto the campaign that shares “cool things for families to do together.” As a result of the work of the local GLR effort, the percentage of K–3 students who were chronically absent declined from 18.2 percent in 2012–13 to 14.6 percent in 2015–16. The percentage of rising third graders participating in a summer learning program who maintained or improved their reading level during the summer increased from 76.7 percent to 83.4 percent between 2012 and 2016. In addition, Springfield also saw an 11 percent increase in third graders scoring proficient in reading from 2014–15 to 2015–16.

**STOCKTON-SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Stockton-San Joaquin County, California, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Having previously won the AAC Award twice, Stockton-San Joaquin County is cited for reporting measurable progress in school attendance and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. In 2012, just after the City of Stockton declared bankruptcy, the University of the Pacific and a coalition of 50 community partners from the education, business, health, government, nonprofit, arts, faith, law-enforcement and media sectors launched the Beyond Our Gates Reading by Third campaign. The coalition has implemented a variety of creative strategies and programs. For example, in collaboration with
First 5, the coalition has hosted special trainings — and provided mini-grant funding — for Black faith communities interested in supporting early literacy through story times, messages from the pulpit and other measures. The coalition has supported Stockton’s Pride Festival, distributing inclusive children’s books — with stickers and bookmarks offering literacy tips — to hundreds of participants. Volunteer readers visit housing authority sites to lead story times and craft activities. In the summer of 2015, the local public transportation agency, San Joaquin Regional Transit District, launched Books on Buses, placing capsule libraries of high-quality children’s books on previously underused luggage racks. Children and families can borrow books to read together on one bus trip (where they might also notice literacy-promoting bus ads), and return them on the next. Countywide efforts to raise awareness of attendance-related issues has led to a reduction of chronic absenteeism from 9 percent to 6.9 percent. Similarly, the number of low-income third graders who were reading at grade level increased from 20 percent in 2015 to 23 percent in 2016.

SUNCOAST (MANATEE & SARASOTA COUNTIES), FLORIDA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR), covering Manatee and Sarasota Counties, Florida, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. SCGLR is cited for reporting measurable progress in school attendance and overall grade-level reading for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. SCGLR was formed in 2015 with the support of The Patterson Foundation, when Sarasota County, under the leadership of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and Manatee County, under the leadership of United Way of Manatee County, both agreed to adopt a regional approach to the Campaign’s solutions areas. SCGLR has built a strong collaborative multisector coalition involving not-for-profits, government agencies, faith-based organizations, businesses, individuals and the media. SCGLR works to regionally align funding priorities, data collection and sharing, and key strategies of the GLR Campaign. To strengthen parental engagement, the campaign went deep into the community, recruiting 300 families to participate in a pilot of Vroom, and is now spreading Vroom widely throughout the region. A two-generation approach is evident in Sarasota County in four Title 1 schools as parents attend Parent University, taking courses based on their needs. A community-wide messaging campaign including a poster contest to increase awareness on the importance of attendance saw a reduction in chronic absenteeism among targeted students of three percentage points in both counties. The two-county focus also has accelerated and strengthened community-wide efforts to improve third-grade reading scores. The percentage of third graders reading at grade level increased, for example, from 3 to 4 percentage points in three Title 1 elementary schools in Sarasota from 2015 to 2016, and overall from 67 percent to 80 percent in five Title 1 elementary schools in Manatee County.

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Syracuse, New York, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Syracuse 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. SCGLR was formed in 2015 with the support of The Patterson Foundation, when Sarasota County, under the leadership of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and Manatee County, under the leadership of United Way of Manatee County, both agreed to adopt a regional approach to the Campaign’s solutions areas. SCGLR has built a strong collaborative multisector coalition involving not-for-profits, government agencies, faith-based organizations, businesses, individuals and the media. SCGLR works to regionally align funding priorities, data collection and sharing, and key strategies of the GLR Campaign. To strengthen parental engagement, the campaign went deep into the community, recruiting 300 families to participate in a pilot of Vroom, and is now spreading Vroom widely throughout the region. A two-generation approach is evident in Sarasota County in four Title 1 schools as parents attend Parent University, taking courses based on their needs. A community-wide messaging campaign including a poster contest to increase awareness on the importance of attendance saw a reduction in chronic absenteeism among targeted students of three percentage points in both counties. The two-county focus also has accelerated and strengthened community-wide efforts to improve third-grade reading scores. The percentage of third graders reading at grade level increased, for example, from 3 to 4 percentage points in three Title 1 elementary schools in Sarasota from 2015 to 2016, and overall from 67 percent to 80 percent in five Title 1 elementary schools in Manatee County.
The City of San Antonio has created an early childhood education and care continuum that is committed to aligning resources to ensure that the most vulnerable children have access to opportunities for educational success. We would like to especially acknowledge the contributions of the City of San Antonio’s Department of Human Services, Pre-K 4SA, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, P-16 Plus Council of Greater Bexar County, and our many community partners.
the Syracuse City School District), local governments and businesses, coupled with the emergence of an Early Childhood Alliance and Greater Syracuse HOPE. Outreach to immigrant and refugee populations has been strengthened through collaborations with InterFaith Works and Catholic Charities (refugee resettlement agencies); the Hispanic population through the Spanish Action League, MANOS, and La Casita Library; as well as ACTS, which is a grassroots interfaith network. Syracuse is also implementing Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library program, a key element of its local GLR campaign that has expanded countywide. The Syracuse Housing Authority implemented a door-to-door campaign to sign up children living in public housing for the Imagination Library’s free book program. As a result of its efforts, in 2014–15, 44.9 percent of low-income kindergartners scored ready for school, compared with a baseline of 43 percent scoring ready in 2013–14. Chronic absence was reduced among K–3 students living in extreme poverty census tracts from 43.7 percent in 2013–14 to 40.8 percent in 2015–16. In 2014, 46.5 percent K–3 students living in extreme poverty census tracts experienced summer learning loss, compared with 43.4 percent in the summer of 2015. In 2012–13, 7.5 percent of low-income third graders living in poverty were reading at or above grade level, compared with 11.3 percent in 2015–16.

TAHOE TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Tahoe Truckee, California, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Tahoe Truckee is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. In response to a compelling need to address grade-level reading, the Tahoe Truckee Reads campaign was created by a coalition including the education and community foundations, the health and human services department, the school district, organizations working in early childhood development, educators and parents. Efforts to address attendance-related issues have been markedly successful. The percentage of low-income students who were chronically absent decreased from 11 percent of students in TK (Transitional Kindergarten) through third grade in 2011–12 to 8 percent in 2015–16. As part of the campaign strategy to address summer learning losses in low-income neighborhoods, trained teachers have offered literacy programming in five low-income neighborhoods (mobile home parks and apartment complexes) and are serving over 100 students each summer. Infusing literacy into existing summer programming is another strategy deployed by the campaign. At the start of each summer, school district literacy coaches conduct a training with frontline summer camp staff (Parks and Recreation, Boys & Girls Club) on how to incorporate literacy activities into their existing camp structure. The public libraries are also a partner and coordinate rotating lending libraries for the various summer camps. The school district offers a summer school program, Summer Scholars, to assist students with the greatest needs in reading. Third-grade students who attended Summer Scholars demonstrated average growth of .4 Independent Reading Levels (IRLs) over the summer. In overall grade-level reading, the percentage of third graders who scored proficient increased from 50 percent in 2014–15 to 51 percent in 2015–16.

WAKE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Wake County, North Carolina, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Wake County is cited for reporting measurable progress in school readiness, school attendance and summer learning for children from low-income families, as well as for exemplary efforts in promoting civic engagement and inclusiveness. In response to a compelling need to address grade-level reading, the Wake County Reads campaign was created by

TAHOE TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Tahoe Truckee, California, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. Tahoe Truckee is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. In response to a compelling need to address grade-level reading, the Tahoe Truckee Reads campaign was created by
engagement and inclusiveness. WAKE Up and Read (WUAR), Wake County’s locally branded GLR campaign, encompasses a broad coalition that includes businesses, Chambers of Commerce, the public library, the school system and numerous nonprofit organizations including Motherread Inc., Marbles Kids Museum, Reach Out and Read, WakeEd Partnership, Books Are Magic and the Wake PTA Council. The effort has incorporated a strategy that builds children’s home libraries to promote reading and combat summer learning loss, coupled with literacy training for families and educators. Families are enrolling in Ready4K, a literacy texting support, at pediatric offices and clinics, public and private pre-K classrooms, and a partnership to prevent homelessness. WUAR is also initiating partnerships with barber shops to spread messages about the importance of reading. The local campaign works with partners, including the school system, to identify higher-needs communities and schools to concentrate services to those children who need it most. This aligns with other public services, such as Wake County Human Services. Countywide results in school readiness are impressive: The percentage of incoming kindergarten students in all Title I elementary schools scoring proficient or above went from 22 percent in 2014–15 to 34 percent in 2016–17. Additionally, chronic absence among K–3 students in Title I schools supported by WUAR decreased from 9.3 percent in 2014–15 to 7.5 percent in 2015–16. Among rising first- and second-grade students in the targeted Title I schools, summer learning losses were reduced from 22 percent in 2015 to 10 percent in 2016.

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

The GLR Campaign and National Civic League recognize Worcester, Massachusetts, as a 2017 finalist for the All-America City Awards. A five-time All-America City Award winner, Worcester is cited for reporting measurable progress in 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. The Worcester Grade-Level Reading Initiative leverages numerous community partnerships to drive action and measurable progress: In 2012, 60 percent of children participating in Worcester’s Summer Literacy Initiative maintained or gained in their DIEBELS reading scores and by the summer of 2015 the percentage had reached 74 percent. In grade-level reading, the percentage of third graders at Tatnuck Elementary School who scored proficient or higher on the MCAS increased from 35 percent in 2013 to 46 percent in 2016, coinciding with the opening of an in-school community library branch and a “Read 20” messaging campaign. Notably, Worcester is the leading city for refugee settlement in Massachusetts with more than 40,000 foreign-born residents. Through partnerships with a coalition of immigrant communities, education organizations and the Worcester Public Schools (WPS), the Worcester Institute for Parent Leadership in Education was launched last fall with 50 parents graduating by December. Providing contextual information for immigrant and refugee families is critical. Worcester Family Partnership hosts playgroups for families at area laundromats, along with a meal and free laundry, helping to build community ties while also creating access points for young children to engage with educators and the school system. Another community initiative led by UMass Memorial Medical Center, WPS and others identifies meaningful interventions for students with asthma to reduce some of the health determinants that contribute to chronic absenteeism. Services include focused medical treatment and prevention as well as legal aid for home environmental mediation.

Congratulations!

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Keep up the enthusiasm!
NEXT STEPS

- Share the Denver experience with members of your community
- Join the upcoming webinar Supporting Parent Success: Applying What We Know to What We Do the week of June 26. Register at glrhuddle.org/webinar
- Make plans to participate in Summer Learning Day on July 13. To learn more and get involved, go to summerlearning.org
- Attend the next GLR Webinar: Leveraging the Momentum from Grade-Level Reading Week, July 27 at 3 p.m. ET. Register at glrhuddle.org/webinar
- Celebrate Attendance Awareness Month in September. To learn more and take action, go to awareness.attendanceworks.org

MORE TO-DOs:
Without a Heart,
it’s just a machine.