WE ARE MADE OF CONNECTION

Communities In Schools (CIS) of Mid-America is an organization with 25 years of experience empowering young people to realize their full potential. We know that every child holds tremendous promise. Working directly with schools, we connect students to caring adults and community resources that help them see, confront, and overcome the barriers that stand between them and a brighter future. Together, we build a powerful change movement made up of peers, students, and alumni committed to shaping an equitable path to education for future generations.

For the more than 37,000 students we serve, these connections have the power to help them change the trajectory of their lives.

Case-managed students that we served during the 2019-2020 school year saw the following successes.

- **87%** improved their behavior
- **80%** improved their academics
- **73%** improved their attendance
- **99%** stayed in school
- **96%** promoted to next grade
- **95%** of Seniors graduated

WE ARE MADE OF RESILIENCE

The pandemic has created even more of a need for the programs and services CIS Site Coordinators and staff provide. Schools may be open or closed, but CIS of Mid-America is always working. We operate beyond the classroom to provide the resources and supports that many of our students and families once found within their school buildings. This crisis has created new burdens for the students we support and forced us to find innovative new ways to connect with them.

Just as the educational landscape has adapted to protect students and staff’s health and safety, we have adjusted our delivery to reach students learning in-person, remotely, or a hybrid model of both.

The way students are learning may look different, but our commitment to students has never been more substantial.
WE ARE MADE OF DEPENDABILITY

Because our model has our staff already working closely with families and other service and program providers, we are uniquely positioned to assist students and their families during this unprecedented time. In fact, Site Coordinators and CIS staff have been doing just that. CIS staff have stepped up to deliver services in unique ways at a time when their services are needed like never before. We have been:

- Working with school districts to collect food donations, bag them, and coordinate pick-ups at school sites.
- Working to sustain the one-to-one relationships with at-risk students, by creating pen pal and utilizing group meeting technologies to set up peer support groups for students who might be struggling emotionally.
- Providing supports to parents who may be out of work because of businesses being closed. They are collecting and distributing hygiene products, cleaning supplies, diapers, and other household products that families might not be able to afford during this time.
- Dropping off education packets to families who don’t have transportation and/or internet access for remote learning in rural communities. Staffers are also helping to secure financial assistance of prescriptions.
- Leading virtual study groups and social-emotional learning support groups.
- Providing direct outreach and home visits to students and families and set up a referral system so that school personnel could make direct referrals to Site Coordinators.
- Developing programs to provide social-emotional learning opportunities and to ensure no students were falling through the cracks.

CIS of Mid-America has the experience, the capacity, and the evidence-based model to not only help communities recover from this crisis and its long-term effects, but to address so many of the stressors already overwhelming students, teachers, and families in under-resourced communities.

WE ARE MADE OF COMMITMENT

We strongly believe a dedicated Site Coordinator, delivering CIS’s evidence-based model of integrated student supports, at every Title I school is crucial to stabilizing students and families as well as creating a foundation of supports for the long-term.

These can’t be stop-gap measures that happen only during a national crisis. This is a chance for us to refocus our attention and ensure that every child and family has the educational and social resources they need.

www.cismidamerica.org
COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF MID-AMERICA & THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ESSER FUND

What is the American Rescue Plan ESSER fund?

The "American Rescue Plan ESSER" fund is the "American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief" fund or "ARP ESSER." The ARP ESSER is from the COVID-19 stimulus package. The ARP ESSER includes $123 billion for K-12 state education agencies, (including $800 million for homeless children); $40 billion for institutions of higher education; and $2.75 billion to governors for private schools.

What does the ARP ESSER have to do with Communities In Schools of Mid-America?

CIS of Mid-America's work every day in partner schools is fully aligned with the purpose and intent of the ARP ESSER funds coming to local school districts. These funds represent a critical opportunity to bring the CIS model and quality program to more students and families. Now, more than ever, CIS of Mid-America can be a key part of the effort to support students and families to overcome barriers and challenges threatening the success of a generation of students and have a vital impact on the success of both students and schools.

As schools plan how to utilize these funds effectively for the greatest impact, CIS of Mid-America is proposing that school leaders consider allocating funding to bring CIS to schools that have not had the benefit of our program. CIS is a smart use of these funds in schools to support recovery from the COVID pandemic. CIS can respond to many of the long-term effects of COVID as well as the chronic stressors overwhelming students, teachers, and families in under-resourced communities.

Education funding provided by the ARP ESSER could address social-emotional learning, mental health supports, basic needs for students, and much more through the implementation of CIS programs. We can be a strong partner to schools in re-engaging students and their families and assist in mitigating the effects of interrupted and disrupted learning. This is crucial to stabilizing students and families as well as creating a foundation of supports for the long-term.

Does CIS of Mid-America qualify for funding under the ARP ESSER? Yes.

The ARP ESSER specifies that Department of Education funds can be used for any programs or services authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Section 2001: Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER III) fund ($123 billion) states that at least 90% of these funds must go to school districts.

Within 30 days of receiving funding, school districts must publish a plan to reopen schools for in-person instruction. In addition, at least 20% of funds must be used to address learning loss through evidence-based interventions that respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs. This is what CIS of Mid-America does for students and families every day.

CIS of Mid-America has long accessed funding under ESEA, and the reauthorization of ESEA provided increased flexibility in CIS of Mid-America accessing this federal funding source by naming integrated student supports as an allowable use of funds in Title I.

ESSA created a flexible block grant program under Title IV, Part A, called the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants. The program authorizes activities that provide a well-rounded education, supports safe and health students, or supports effective use of technology, thus qualifying CIS providers for this funding. CIS affiliates currently draw down these funds.

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