



## 2023 IMPACT REPORT

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**Barber County  
UNITED, Inc.**



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## 2023 IMPACT REPORT

# Barber County UNITED, Inc.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors May, 2024*

**BCU strengthens communities by bringing its citizens together to become healthier Kansans.**

### **A message from Deb Kolb, Executive Director**

I am humbled as we reflect on BCU's remarkable accomplishments of 2023. With each project and every partner, we've made a tangible difference in the quality-of-life of our rural countywide community. 2023 is a testament to the integrity of our people. Each partner, whether it's a local business, a community organization, a municipality, a funder, a neighbor, or an individual volunteer, has played a vital role in our collective success.

2023 was a year unlike any other, presenting us with unique challenges and unexpected obstacles, we also discovered opportunities for progress, innovation, steadfastness, and growth.

I have been deeply moved by the profound gratitude within each of our rural towns and organizations. It is this spirit of gratitude and also selfless generosity that truly defines us as a UNITED Barber County community.

With 2024 came my new appointment as Executive Director to BCU, I'm looking forward to all that BCU and our community will accomplish in the upcoming year.

*Deb*





*Barber County United, Inc. (BCU) was formed in 2018  
in the pursuit of uniting the county-wide community by generating opportunities  
to work together through coordinated and partnered efforts  
to enrich the lives of Barber County Kansans.*

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## MISSION

Barber County United, Inc. (BCU) strengthens communities by bringing its citizens together to become healthier Kansans. Offering guidance and compassion BCU connects people to organizations, ministries, and solutions and provides services aimed at enriching lives. BCU is a progressive coalition instrumental in new approaches to rural wellbeing and a leader in fostering an environment of awareness and support surrounding rural wellness issues both countywide and regionally. BCU is an advocate and an engaged voice for rural quality-of-life issues at the state level.

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## 2023 Impact Snapshot



**157** Social/Emotional Books  
into BACO Libraries

**47** Local Kansans Insured  
through the Online  
Marketplace

**20** Barber County Communities  
& Organizations Served

**23** Wellness or Health  
Focused Policies Passed

**9** South-Central Kansas Region  
Communities & Organizations  
Served

**4** NEW Tobacco Free  
Spaces Policies Passed





## Current Board of Directors

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Hannah Brass, Co-chair  
Janell Goodno, Co-chair  
Crystal Cummins, Treasurer  
Brenda Myers, Secretary  
Melva Armbruster  
Allison Foulkrod  
Cody Jackson  
Tom Lee  
Pake McNally  
Mellissa Mixon  
Ashley Taylor

## Retired During 2023

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Robin Eubanks-Callis  
Allan Colborn  
Austin Graves  
Sarah Meador  
Shelby Nielsen



# 2023



## Programs

## Details

## Outcomes

### **Pathways to a Healthy Kansas** Blue Cross Blue Shield of KS

Evidence-based solutions and promising practices for improving active living, healthy eating, and tobacco prevention.

- Policy-driven projects for lasting impacts on BACO.
- Project decisions informed by community conversations.

### **Childcare Accelerator** State of Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund

Accelerator was designed to advance the rapid development of additional childcare slots statewide.

- Overcame barriers to adequate, quality childcare.
- Formation of the Tri-County Childcare Coalition (TCCC)

### **Innovation Communities** State of Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund

IC cohorts collaborate to assist the state to identify and scale effective and transformative statewide approaches to childcare.

- Engaged multiple early childcare experts regionally.
- TCCC Mentor Outreach Program was developed.

### **Kansas Cares CMS Navigator** Thrive Allen County

Assisting citizens to Navigate the federal Health Insurance online Marketplace.

- Increased percentage of BACO insured residents.
- More affordable policies for BACO families.

### **Mental Health Initiative** Barber County ARPA, South Central Community Foundation

MHI implements projects identified locally to face the needs to support overall wellness countywide.

- Addressing day-to-day issues through citizens self-identified as BACO's mental health front-line.
- Senior Center Outreach program.

### **Leadership BCU** Barber County ARPA, South Central Community Foundation

BCU's approach to Leadership lies in empowered and active citizens willing to engage and seize opportunities.

- Leadership is small actions taken in moments of opportunity.
- Empowering ourselves to empower others.

### **Early Literacy Program** Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Local Affiliate Locally funded BCU program

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children up to age five.

- Increases kindergarten readiness of BACO children.
- Financially supported through local funders & donors.



# 2023 PATHWAYS

Pathways to a Healthy Kansas  
a Blue Cross Blue Shield of KS Initiative

From 2020-2024 BCU will invest  
**\$500,000** into Barber County over  
the 4-year **PATHWAYS** Implementation  
Period.

Grant Coordinator: Deb Kolb



Dollars  
Directly into  
Barber County  
**\$241,175**  
*in 2023*

Matching, In-kind, and  
other related funding

**\$74,200**

## 2023 Projects:

# 12

Isabel,  
Sharon,  
Hardtner,  
Kiowa District Healthcare's  
Childcare Center,  
ML Memorial Hospital,  
NBCRC Wellness Center,  
Memorial Peace Park,  
Engineering Studies,  
Barber County

### Addressing Key Risk Factors to Health

# 3

- Increasing Physical Activity
- Accessing Healthy Food
- Avoiding Tobacco Products

*Every implementation grantee engages  
in community wellness related policy-  
work and adopts policy changes.*

Adopted  
policies  
attributed to  
**PATHWAYS**  
work.

# 18





# CHILDCARE ACCELERATOR GRANT

State of Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund

## \$1,725,004



### TRI-COUNTY CHILDCARE COALITION

Barber, Harper, and Kiowa Counties

Federal Grant Administrator: Deb Kolb

#### Tri-County Childcare Coalition

*An impactful Accelerator coalition was discovered*

- Uniting the efforts of south-central Kansas childcare champions.
- Focusing on a collaborative approach towards the current rural childcare environment.
- Recognizing the unique scope and needs of five different communities.

#### Centers that aren't Centers in Medicine Lodge & Greensburg

Medicine Lodge and Greensburg have faced the rural childcare crisis with steadfast solutions.

Instead of being run as traditional centers with daycare employees, these facilities lease each classroom to independently KSDE licensed childcare providers.

Developing new entrepreneurs and business owners.

#### AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION TO A COMPLEX SITUATION IN CHILDCARE

#### New or Expanded Childcare Centers

- 3**
- Anthony, Harper County
  - Attica, Harper County
  - KDH Childcare Center, Barber Co.

#### Licensable Childcare Classrooms

**13**

- Medicine Lodge, Barber County
- Greensburg, Kiowa County



**196**

**New childcare slots added in Barber, Harper, and Kiowa counties**

#### Barber County locations:

96.....Medicine Lodge Daycare, Inc.  
42.....KDH Childcare Center (76 total)

#### Harper County Daycare:

12.....Anthony location  
12.....Attica location

#### Kiowa County United:

36.....Greensburg location



# INNOVATION COMMUNITIES COHORT

State of Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund

## \$250,000

### TRI-COUNTY CHILDCARE COALITION

Barber, Harper, and Kiowa Counties

Program Director: Deb Kolb

Early Childhood Consultant:

Julie Warner

Conscious Discipline Consultant:

Gayle McNett

All-Abilities Consultant:

Emily Tompkinson

Curriculum Consultant:

Rosie Mitchell



### INNOVATION COMMUNITIES COHORTS

**Collaborate** to assist the State of Kansas to **identify** and scale effective and **transformative** statewide approaches to childcare.

### MENTOR OUTREACH PROGRAM \$85,000

- BUSINESS MANAGEMENT TOOLS
- CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE TRAINING
- HIGHER STANDARD OF CURRICULUM
- ALL-ABILITIES ARSENAL
- STEM - LEARNING THROUGH PLAY
- NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR
- CRITICAL START-UP NEEDS

*Fostering a commitment to ALL children*

## 34%

of funds committed to MENTOR OUTREACH Program and into the communities.

The **BCU managed Mentor Outreach Program**, aims to **encourage** all licensed providers in our communities.

By way of **mentorship opportunities**, local providers may choose to gain **tools, materials, resources, and knowledge** at no cost to them.

**A HIGHER STANDARD OF LOCAL CHILDCARE**



## APRIL TCCC NEWSLETTER

MONTHLY FOCUS: SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL LEARNING





# KANSAS CARES NAVIGATOR

Kansas Cares Thrive Allen County

Assisting Barber County and Kansas Residents to Navigate the Federal Health Insurance Online Marketplace.

Certified Navigator: Walinda Arnett



*open*  
**ENROLLMENT**

**November 1st -  
January 15th**

*call*

**BCU's Navigator at  
620-930-6667**

## Navigators

- Specially trained Community Health Worker in Kansas.
- There is no fee for Navigator services.
- Special enrollment periods can allow for year-round enrollments.
- Trained, unbiased assistance to compare health insurance plans.
- Assisting consumers with the online application process.
- Answers to any Marketplace questions year-round.

**Navigators do not  
sell insurance**

## 23-24 Navigator Services Report:

- 180• In-person meetings
- 47• Insurance Enrollments
- 43• Medicaid/CHIP assist
- 20• Outreach events

**3 YEARS**  
**2021-2023**

**444** *In person meetings in  
Barber County & Kansas*

**109** *Insurance enrollments at  
the online Marketplace*

**68** *Medicaid & CHIP assistance*

**38** *Outreach events*

**Program Funding**  
**\$160,000**



# MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

## Barber County ARPA South Central Community Foundation

MHI takes a “boots on the ground” approach to implementing projects identified locally as providing wellness support to the overall mental health of Barber County residents.

Program Director: Deb Kolb

In USD 254's search for Healthy Habits Day funding, they turned to BCU.

**BCU leveraged MHI funds & issued a matching challenge.**

*Open Range Gravel Race,  
NBCRC,  
and ML Memorial Hospital  
met that challenge!*

## 2 MHI YEARS 2022-2023

**193** Barber County residents  
certified in Mental Health  
First Aid.

**157** Barber County Libraries  
**social/emotional (SEL)**  
**support BOOKS** purchased.

**27** Barber County projects  
completed by the Mental  
Health Initiative.

**Dollars To Date**  
**\$31,475**



## Impacting Barber County

- USD 254 Healthy Habits Day challenge
- Freedom Gates Boys Ranch counselor training
- USD 254 WSU therapist mileage
- Kiowa Library SEL section
- Mental Health First Aid at Hazelton
- Hardtner Library SEL section and computer
- Kiowa Manor Health and Wellness program outdoor space

**2023 Funding**  
**\$12,200**





# LEADERSHIP BCU

Barber County ARPA  
South Central Community Foundation

Encouraging an involved, leadership-minded  
Barber County community.

Program Director: Deb Kolb  
Leadership Coordinator: Brenda Myers  
*Brenda is pictured below at KLC Training Center in  
Wichita, KS.*



*ENCOURAGING  
leadership-minded  
citizenship through regular  
networking engagements.*

## Leadership BCU

Keep an eye out as Leadership BCU  
programs further develop in **2024** to  
include:

- Senior Center Outreach
- Gift of Giving
- Art Contest
- L.I.F.T. Cards
- Annual Luncheon
- Newsletter
- and more

**Empowering those around  
us to empower those  
around us.**

**MONTHLY  
Coffee Talks!**  
*30-minute community check-ins*

**third**

TUESDAY's  
in Kiowa.

THURSDAY's  
in Medicine Lodge.

**EVERYONE IS INVITED**  
*Catch up with others around  
town - **Learn, Share,  
Connect!***



# EARLY LITERACY PROGRAM

**Barber County United, Inc.**  
**Local donors**

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is the perfect partner organization to further BCU's Early Literacy Program efforts in Barber County.

Early Literacy Coordinator: Robin Eubanks-Callis  
BACO Early Literacy Committee

*Books mailed to Barber County children in 2023* **1,791**

**7,383** *Books mailed to Barber County children in just 4 short years.*

**4 YEARS**  
**2020-2023**

Books Mailed in Barber County

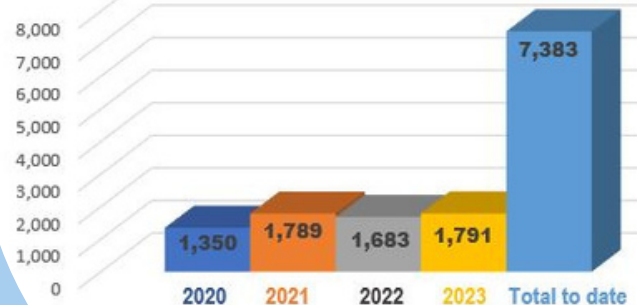
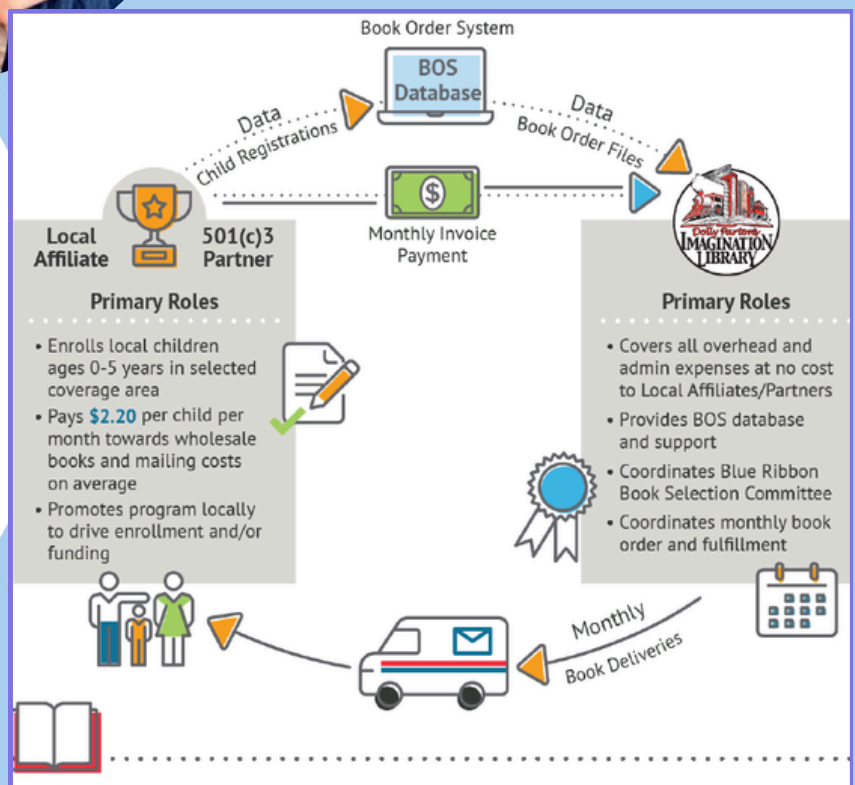


Chart data reflects date range of January 2020 to March of 2024



## Impacting Barber County

- BCU is the local Dolly Parton Imagination Library affiliate.
- DPIL is sustained with local donations and sponsorships.
- At no cost to the families, books are delivered monthly to children from birth to 5 years within Barber County. Books arrive at the children's home with their name on the mailing label.





# BARBER COUNTY UNITED, INC.

BCU is a progressive coalition and a leader in fostering an environment of awareness surrounding rural wellness issues both countywide and regionally. BCU is an advocate and an engaged voice for rural quality-of-life issues at the state level.

Director & Grant Coordinator: Deb Kolb



## NetWorked for CHANGE 2023 Annual Conference

BCU was invited to NetWork KS 2nd Annual Conference by BCBS. NetWork KS aims to spark greater collaboration among organizations looking for sustainable solutions to improve the Heartland. Pictured is BCU treasurer Crystal Cummins, Deb, and BCU secretary Brenda Meyers.



## Impacting More than Barber County in 2023

BCU was invited by the **Sunflower Foundation** to exhibit the Peace Treaty Trails & BCU's vision for wellness on the trails at the **Capitol** in Topeka during **Trails Appreciation Day** at the legislature. Pictured is Deb with Joscelyn Nittler President of the Peace Treaty Assoc. & VP of Barber Co. Development; Elizabeth Burger, VP of Healthy Communities, Sunflower Foundation, Topeka; Crystal Cummins City Clerk of Isabel, KS & Treasurer of BCU; Steve Cummins City of Isabel, KS Councilman & Barber Co. Development.







HEALTHCARE/NONPROFIT AWARD  
SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

**Barber County United**  
2023

*Laura Kelly*  
LAURA KELLY  
GOVERNOR OF KANSAS

*David C. Toland*  
DAVID C. TOLAND  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR/ SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

**KANSAS**  
COMMERCE



CONGRATULATIONS  
TO OUR NOMINEES

## Governor Kelly's *To the Stars:* Kansas Business Awards Banquet

BCU was honored in 2023 to receive a Healthcare/Nonprofit Award of Merit for the South-Central Region of Kansas. We are incredibly proud of this prestigious recognition and deeply grateful for the nomination by our peers.



Managed  
Grant Dollars  
To Date **\$3.1M**



# PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

## LOCAL

Achenbach Memorial Park  
Barber County Commissioners  
Barber County Development BCD  
Barber County Extension Agency  
Barber County Health Coalition  
Barber County Health Department  
Barber County Literacy Committee  
Freedom Gates Boys Ranch  
Gyp Hills Corridor Coalition  
Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway Committee  
Hardtner Library  
Intertribal Powwow Grounds at Memorial Peace Park  
Isabel City Park  
Kiowa District Healthcare  
Kiowa District Healthcare Childcare Center  
Kiowa Hometown Market  
Kiowa Manor  
Kiowa Public Library  
Lincoln Library  
Medicine Lodge Daycare, Inc.  
Medicine Lodge Memorial Hospital & Physicians Clinic  
Medicine Lodge Peace Treaty Association  
North Barber County Rec. Commission NBCRC  
Sharon, KS Community Center  
South Barber Food Bank  
South Barber Ministerial Alliance  
USD 254 North Barber County Schools  
USD 255 South Barber County Schools

**Local**

**County**

## COMMUNITY

City of Hardtner  
City of Hazelton  
City of Isabel  
City of Kiowa  
City of Medicine Lodge  
City of Sharon



## REGIONAL

Attica Long-Term Care Facility  
Harper County Childcare Center  
Harper County Commissioners  
Kansas Sampler Foundation  
Kiowa County Economic Development Foundation  
Leadership League of South-Central Kansas  
Ninnescah Opioid Workforce  
South-Central Community Foundation SCCF  
Thrive Allen County  
Tri-County Childcare Coalition TCCC

### Regional

## STATE

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas  
Kansas Cares  
Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund  
Kansas Department of Commerce  
Kansas Department of Transportation KDOT  
Kansas Leadership Center KLC  
Kansas Office of Rural Prosperity  
Kansas State Dept. of Education KSDE  
Kansas Tourism - TravelKS  
NetWork Kansas  
Pathways to a Healthy Kansas a BCBSKS Initiative  
Seed 2 Roots Legal and Policy Consultants  
Sunflower Foundation  
Thrive Kansas  
WSU Community Engagement Institute

### State



## NATIONAL

Dolly Parton Imagination Library  
Federal Highway Administration  
National Scenic Byway Program

### National

# PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS



Barber County UNITED, Inc  
103 N. Walnut St.  
PO Box 382  
Medicine Lodge, KS 67104  
620-930-6667  
[barbercountyunited.org](http://barbercountyunited.org)

Debra Kolb, Executive Director  
620-886-1759

Find & follow us on our socials:  
**@barbercountyunited**  
**#barbercountyunited**

*BCU has emerged as the countywide leader for rural quality-of-life issues and a dependable resource for community partners. Identified and achievable objectives, thoughtful strategies, and measurable outcomes ensure continued growth into 2025 and beyond.*

*Emphasizing four key divisions of focus, future BCU programs will align our mission into Community Engagement, Community Care, Grant Services, or Arts & Culture.*

*Through clearly articulated goal statements for each division, BCU's commitment to serving the countywide community and its role as a sustainable support partner remains steadfast.*