

EMBARGOED: For Release August 12, 2021, 9:00 a.m. EDT

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Inaugural Springboard Prize for Child Welfare Grants \$800,000 to Awardees

The Aviv Foundation Celebrates Four Awardees, Selected from 389 Proposals

Bethesda, MD — The Aviv Foundation announced today the results of the [Springboard Prize for Child Welfare](#), its nationwide search to identify exceptional, innovative, early-stage projects working to improve the lives of children and families navigating the child welfare system.

Launched on January 12, 2021, the Springboard Prize for Child Welfare invests in ideas focused on preventing child neglect and abuse, lifting up children and families within the child welfare system, and assuring their well-being beyond. The Springboard Prize is rooted in the theory that many leaders have developed effective solutions, but have not had the resources, networks, or social capital to pilot or scale.

The Springboard Prize team reached hundreds of leaders within and beyond the child welfare community to spread the word about this new grant opportunity. As a result, the applicant pool reflected a diverse array of approaches and communities. “We were blown away by the Springboard Prize applicant pool, which reflects the talent and commitment of child welfare leaders across the country. We made this an open call in an effort to level the playing field for access to capital for organizations across the country,” says Jill Nagle, Deputy Director for the Aviv Foundation.

The four awardees were selected from a pool of 389 applicants, representing 48 states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. An external [Advisory Committee](#) evaluated proposals on four criteria: innovation, impact, achievability, and connection to the child welfare system. Ultimately, the Aviv Foundation Board selected four awardees to receive \$200,000 over two years, along with ongoing partnership with the Aviv Foundation.

"In launching the inaugural Springboard Prize, we hope to uncover new, exciting ideas in the child welfare space and spur a spirit of innovation. We are eager to see how the winning projects develop over the next few years and encourage others to try and find new solutions to entrenched problems," shares Chani Laufer, Aviv Foundation President.

Introducing the Four Inaugural Springboard Prize Awardees

The four awardees are:

- The **Children’s Justice Attorney Education Program (CJAE)** plans to launch a fellowship program to provide extensive training, expert case consultation, and reflective practice to attorneys practicing in rural areas in Nebraska, with the goal of improving the availability and quality of legal representation for children and families in rural communities. Housed at the University of Nebraska’s [Center on Children, Families, and the Law](#) and [College of Law](#), Michelle Paxton, Director of the [Children’s Justice Clinic](#), will build and lead the program, which is inspired by her

clinic's efforts to provide law students with support to help them represent children as Guardians ad Litem.

- **Family Reunification, Equity, & Empowerment (FREE)** intends to expand the support groups, resources, and personalized coaching it provides to formerly-incarcerated parents, grandparents, and other family members navigating the child welfare system. It also plans to grow its work with system-impacted families to advocate for changes to state laws that unfairly prevent parents and family members with conviction histories from being reunited with their children. FREE's goal is to reduce the number of caring, capable birth parents or other family members with criminal records who are denied custody because of their past convictions. FREE, an initiative of [Starting Over](#), was founded by Vonya Quarles, who built the organization based on her professional and personal experiences in the criminal justice and child welfare systems.
- The [Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition \(NICWC\)](#) aims to develop a culturally-specific program to help tribal youth aging out of care access the available services and financial support to aid their transition into adulthood (e.g., Chafee, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' Bridge to Independence program). Led by Misty Frazier, a member of the Santee Sioux Nation, NICWC hopes to reduce barriers to independent living grants, with the long-term goal of strengthening the relationship between Nebraska Tribes and state agencies. Through existing relationships with tribal leaders in child welfare across the country, NICWC hopes to share its program and lessons learned beyond Nebraska.
- [Uptrust](#) plans to create a new version of its mobile app to streamline court appointments and other administrative needs for families involved in the child welfare system. The app will provide a calendar of obligations, text messages to remind families of upcoming appointments, an opportunity to connect directly with their lawyers, and access to vital social services. Its goal is to reduce administrative burdens on parents in the child welfare system, so they can focus on what's most important for themselves and their families. The organization scaled a similar technology solution in the criminal justice system, which has been used by over 250,000 public defender clients across 100+ counties, and has demonstrated a 50% reduction in missed hearings. The team is adding this child welfare feature in part based on their own varied experiences with the foster care system, both as parents and attorneys.

The Aviv Foundation expresses its gratitude to the Springboard Prize Advisory Committee, partners, and applicants for their support of and engagement with the Springboard Prize for Child Welfare.

About the Aviv Foundation

The Aviv Foundation is a family philanthropy founded in 2016. Aviv is committed to funding efforts that provide disadvantaged children with opportunities to improve their lives, with a particular focus on child welfare and education. The foundation also supports efforts to promote pluralistic Jewish engagement; build a peaceful and equal-opportunity society in Israel; and promote civic engagement and voting rights for all U.S. citizens.