

# BUILDING SOCIALLY CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



2024 Awardee Project Descriptions

# BUILDING SOCIALLY CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

## Program Overview

In light of concerning public health statistics regarding loneliness throughout the country, OCRA is uniquely positioned to address these challenges through a community and economic development lens with the creation of the BSCC grant program.

## Program Purpose

### Community Well-being and Social Capital

Build social connections, strengthen community bonds and enhance the well-being of those experiencing loneliness.

### Economic Vibrancy and Local Businesses

Foster community engagement, support local businesses, enhance economic vibrancy and contribute to Indiana's economic health.

### Align with Statewide Development Goals

Provide a platform for collaboration between local units of government, community organizations, businesses and residents to develop initiatives that enhance connection.

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## Areas of Funding

Community Infrastructure



Social Clubs and Interest Groups



Transportation Accessibility



Intergenerational Initiatives



Local Business Support



Community well-being programs



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## Town of Vernon

The Town of Vernon is awarded \$50,000 to transform the Vernon Gym into the new Vawter Recreational Center. This project will help the community address issues related to social connection among older residents and host intergenerational programs to facilitate meaningful interactions between different age groups.



## Town of Hope

The Town of Hope is awarded \$44,285 to repair and replace sidewalks vital for residents accessing key locations in the community. The grant will also help fund signage and banners in the town square with maps, key locations and walking loop details to enhance community connectivity and reduce loneliness.



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## Rush County Economic & Community Development Corporation



The Rush County Economic and Community Development Corporation is awarded \$27,000 to expand transportation services provided by the Rush County Senior Center. This funding will offer free transportation for seniors to attend community events organized by local groups such as the Rush County Boys and Girls Club and the Love Community Center.

## Merom Camp and Retreat Center



The Merom Camp and Retreat Center is awarded \$24,500 for renovations to College Hall's first floor and third floor auditorium. These spaces will foster connections and provide consistent support, especially for vulnerable populations like seniors and individuals in recovery.

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## Brown County Art Gallery Foundation

The Brown County Art Gallery Foundation is awarded \$20,000 to expand the Creative Aging Program for Brown County seniors who are 55 years and older, titled "Make Art, Make Friends." The program provides opportunities to socialize through 32 sessions of professional art instruction, each four-hours long, combined with mental health education at the Brown County Art Gallery.



## Owen County Community Foundation

Owen County Community Foundation is awarded \$14,000 to enhance community gathering locations in conjunction with the Meet Me on MYpath project. A scenic pavilion overlooking the White River will accommodate moderate-sized groups of people experiencing nature on the trail. A fire ring development will allow the Friends of MYPath to organize poetry readings, ghost storytelling events and other activities to draw people together.





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## Orange County Community Gardens



Orange County Community Gardens is awarded \$9,215 for the "Preserving Food, Building Community" project. The project seeks to strengthen community connections while addressing food insecurity and loneliness by implementing community gardens, seasonal food preservation events, Senior Soup Nights and Baking with Children events.

## Thriving Grant County, INC

Thriving Grant County, INC. is awarded \$5,000 for the GatherGive Garden Project.



The project aims to foster intergenerational connections by creating a vibrant, shared space where kids, young families and seniors can come together and engage in community gardening activities.

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## Traditional Arts Today

Traditional Arts Today is awarded \$5,000 for a local artisan to hand-forge and install handrails to the front door of its building to improve accessibility. Additionally, the funding will be used to upgrade the kitchen to health department standards, purchase kitchen equipment to serve food and offer cooking classes, and create a gathering space for social engagement.



## North Daviess Spanish 4

North Daviess Spanish 4 is awarded \$1,000 for a student led project that will reuse old steel cable spools and turn them into multi-use activity tables that will be donated for public use to promote socialization and connections in the communities of Odon and Plainville.





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Learn more about the Building Socially  
Connected Communities program by  
visiting [ocra.in.gov/bbcc](https://ocra.in.gov/bbcc)