



2016 All-America City Award Application
*Spotlight: Ensuring All Children Are
Healthy and Supported to Succeed in School and Life*

Collaboration Partners: Attendance Works and Healthy Schools Campaign

Deadlines:

September 2015-February 2016: Monthly conference calls on spotlight and AAC process

November 4, 2015: Submit Letter of Intent to Apply (Letter of Intent is not required, however, save \$100 on your application fee when you submit a Letter of Intent to Apply by November 4, 2015!)

March 9, 2016: Submit Application

April 2016: Finalists Announced. Finalist community delegations will be invited to Denver to present.

June 2016: Peer-Learning Workshops & Awards Presentation/Competition in Denver, Colorado.

Application Guidelines:

The National Civic League invites you to apply for America's original and most prestigious community award, now in its 67th year. In 2016, the All-America City Award will recognize ten communities for their projects, plans for the future, and community vision that demonstrate innovation, inclusiveness, impact, civic engagement, and cross-sector collaboration. The 2016 spotlight for the Award are efforts focused on community-wide health and education strategies that enable all children to succeed in school and in life. School attendance and healthy school projects are particularly welcome and in alignment with our collaborating partners, Attendance Works and Healthy Schools Campaign. We also welcome other projects that benefit all children, particularly at-risk children, using education and/or healthy community strategies. We encourage projects that address any barrier to children's success in school and life, including but not limited to attendance, health (of children, parents and community), positive discipline interventions, transportation, poverty, healthy food access, job opportunities (for students, parents and community members), affordable and safe housing, and safe and healthy natural environments. Our goal with this spotlight is to raise up local examples of innovative and effective community problem-solving that recognizes all influences on the success of children and uses all sectors to address those influences. For examples and ideas please see the resource section of this application for links to helpful information. Or contact National Civic League at 303-571-4343 or aac@ncl.org. This year, we are interested in recognizing not only the work that has been accomplished but also the plans and vision for future work. For that reason, we give you the option of telling us about vision or plans or accomplishments in your project descriptions.

A youth member of one finalist community is also recognized with the AAC Youth Award. Nominations for this award will be requested after finalists are announced.

Community Information

Community name and state: City of Avondale

Your community is applying as a:

Neighborhood Village Town Tribe City County Region

If applying as a region, name participating communities: _____

If applying as a neighborhood, name city: _____

Has your community applied before? Yes (No) If Yes, which years: _____

Has your community been a Finalist before? Yes (No) If Yes, which years: _____

Has your community been an All-America City before? Yes (No)
If Yes, which years: _____

Contact Information

All-America City Award contact (primary contact person available throughout competition & follow-up):

Name: Stephanie Small Title (if any): Neighborhood and Family Services Director

Organization/Government/Other: City of Avondale

Address: 1007 S. 3rd Street City, State, Zip: Avondale, Arizona 85323

Phone (business/day): 623-333-2711 Mobile Phone _____

E-mail Address(es): ssmall@avondale.org

The applying community will receive a complimentary membership (or membership renewal if an AAC application was submitted last year) to the National Civic League for one year. To whom should this membership be directed?

Name Stephanie J. Small

Address 1007 S. 3rd Street

City, State & Zip Code Avondale, Arizona 85323

Phone Number 623-333-2711 Fax _____

Email ssmall@avondale.org

We agree to follow NCL's rules regarding use of the All-America City Award logo, a registered trademark of the National Civic League. We allow NCL and the All-America City Award to share this application and the information enclosed in it with the NCL and AAC networks to promote the work of our community. If we are named an All-America City, we agree to conduct a post-AAC conference call or regional forum for the AAC network that features our projects. In a pay-it-forward spirit, if named a finalist or All-America City, we agree to consider supporting AAC through an NCL membership for a minimum of the next three years.

Signature: Stephanie Small Date: 3/9/2016

Name: Stephanie Small Title: Director of Neighborhood & Family Services

Community Statistics and Map

Note: Use the most up-to-date statistics possible for your neighborhood, town, city, county, or region (source suggestions: U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Economic Security, State Department of Finance, Department of Public Health, and local school statistics).

POPULATION (in year 2010 or most recent): 85,167

Source/Date: Census/Claritas, February 2016

POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2000-2010 (indicate + or -): +103.48 %

Source/Date: Census/Claritas, February 2016

RACIAL/ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN:

White	<u>25.0</u> %
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	<u>51.39</u> %
Black or African American	<u>9.80</u> %
Asian	<u>3.70</u> %
American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN)	<u>0.30</u> %
Mixed Race	<u>0.26</u> %
Other	<u>9.55</u> %

Source/Date: Census/Claritas, February 2016

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: \$ 54,759

Source/Date: Census/Claritas, February 2016

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 13.74 %

Source/Date:

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 5.3 %

Source/Date: Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 2016

POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP (percentages, if available):

19 years old and under	<u>35.4</u> %
20-24	<u>6.27</u> %
25-44	<u>30.69</u> %
45-64	<u>20.85</u> %
65 and over	<u>6.79</u> %

Source/Date: Census/Claritas, February 2016

PERCENTAGE OF HOME OWNERSHIP: 61 %

Source/Date:

WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION -- Name the three largest employment sectors (include military services and/or installations, if any) in your community and provide the percentage of total employed in each:

<u>Retail</u>	<u>27</u> %
<u>Education</u>	<u>21</u> %
<u>Consumer Services</u>	<u>14</u> %

Source/Date: Maricopa County Association of Governments, Employer Database, February 2016

MAP -- Please attach a state map (8.5" x 11") with your community clearly marked



ARIZONA



Prepared By: Geospatial Services Division of Information Technology - March 2016

ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARDS CRITERIA

Civic Engagement and Collaboration: comprehensive citizen/resident engagement in decision-making and action planning, cross-sector collaboration (business, local government, nonprofits, military, etc.) and regional collaboration.

Inclusiveness and Diversity: recognition and involvement of diverse segments and perspectives (ethnic, racial, socio-economic, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, people with disabilities, and others) in community decision-making.

Innovation: creative use and leveraging of community resources.

Impact and Future Planning and Vision: demonstrable, significant, and measureable achievements from the past 5 years (for example: reduction in chronic absenteeism rates, increased access to school health services, improved student fitness scores, increased number of affordable housing units, or improved third-grade reading levels). Especially for communities who have recently begun this work, we also welcome a description of a community-wide vision or long-term plan to address local challenges, particularly in projects that address the community's greatest challenges.

Resources Available to You

As you fill out this application, it may be helpful to consult the following material:

1. For questions to help evaluate your civic infrastructure--**NCL's Civic Index**. Ask for a free copy!
AAC@ncl.org
2. To help identify associations and their impact in your community--**New Community Tools for Improving Child Health: A Pediatrician's Guide to Local Associations**. (Provided by permission of co-author John McKnight) <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/Pediatricians.pdf>
3. For an asset-based framework--**Discovering Community Power: A Guide to Mobilizing Local Assets and Your Organization's Capacity**. (Provided by permission of co-author John McKnight)
<http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/images/kelloggabcd.pdf>
4. **National Civic Review Articles:**
 - a. [Tackling Chronic Absence Starting in the Early Grades: What Cities Can Do to Ensure Every Child Has a Fighting Chance to Succeed](#)
 - b. [What Makes an All-America City?](#)
5. [Previous All-America City presentations](#)
6. www.attendanceworks.org **Attendance Works** is a national and state initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance. We promote tracking chronic absence (missing so much school for any reason including excused and unexcused absences) beginning in kindergarten, or ideally earlier, and partnering with families and community agencies to intervene when poor attendance is a problem for students or schools. Interested in learning more? Watch this [Bringing Attendance Home video](#).
7. www.healthyschoolscampaign.org **Healthy Schools Campaign** has developed an effective approach that is helping transform the school experience for children in Chicago and across the nation. This means working at multiple levels — with individual schools, throughout Chicago and nationally. The goal is a future in which all students have access to a school environment that provides healthy food, physical activity, nutrition education and health services. This gives students the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to live healthy lives. Learn more about our work on this site — from **food policy** to **environmental justice** and much more.
8. <http://gradelevelreading.net/> **The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading** is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared

for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade.

PART I: TELL YOUR COMMUNITY'S STORY

Tell us your community's story. Focus on the last ten years of your community's progress and development and how that has benefited your residents. Utilizing the awards criteria (above) describe how your community addresses its pressing challenges and plans for its future. How are citizens/residents involved in planning and implementation? Provide examples of cross sector collaboration among the neighborhoods, government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations engaged in these efforts. How is the community illustrating diversity and inclusiveness? What is your community's vision? Include real examples of how your community has demonstrated its strengths, innovations, and faced its challenges. Don't forget to tell us about the people in your community. (2,000 word maximum)

Avondale

Avondale, Arizona is situated in the southwest region of the Phoenix Metropolitan area and resides in Maricopa County; the fourth most populous county in the United States. The City of Avondale is proud of its rich history rooted in the agriculture industry. Agriculture was the first economic engine in the community during the early 1900s and farm working settlers that came to Avondale helped to shape the diverse growing community we enjoy today. In the last decade, population growth took place at a rate of approximately 103%, making Avondale one of the fastest-growing cities in Maricopa County and in the country. Avondale's current population is estimated at 85,167 and is projected to rise to 106,000 by 2020.

The Avondale community boasts a young population with a median age of 29 years. There are homes in virtually every price range and a strong sense of community that welcomes families. Avondale government actively engages with its residents while strongly supporting and encouraging business. In keeping pace with the young and growing population, the city is focused on providing an assortment of cultural, economic, recreational and educational opportunities while attracting quality businesses and employers to the area in a variety of industries.

Avondale offers nearly 200 acres of parks and 7.5 miles of lakeside trails providing parents and their children a range of options of both active and passive activities. Attractions include the Tres Rios Base Meridian and Wildlife area, with a rich riparian habitat, located along the Gila River abounding with many species of fish, birds and small wildlife and offering various recreational opportunities. In addition to outdoor sports recreational venues, the Randall McDaniel Sports Complex offers 83,000 square feet of indoor arena type sports including soccer leagues for all ages and indoor courts for basketball and volleyball. The city hosts events at these locations throughout the year that serve to introduce our residents to all that Avondale has to offer to support an active and healthy lifestyle.

Avondale offers a wide range of educational opportunities ensuring the foundation for a diversified workforce and several post-secondary educational options for our residents. Avondale is home to Estrella Mountain Community College (EMCC), Rio Salado College and Universal Technical Institute. The city partners and collaborates with the schools to provide internship opportunities and promote various education and outreach initiatives.

Once primarily a sparsely populated farming community with many acres of alfalfa and cotton fields, Avondale transformed into a bedroom community during the housing boom of the early 2000s. To serve Avondale's growing population, the city has worked hard to attract new businesses both large and small that serve to provide employment opportunities close to home for our residents.

To that end, a dynamic Healthcare Corridor has emerged. Uniquely situated between two major hospitals, our Healthcare Corridor has become the location-of-choice for specialty personalized healthcare in the Southwest Valley. Our most recent healthcare corridor developments have provided more than \$45 million in capital investments to our community, and have supported 400 net new, high-wage jobs, and services to our most vulnerable populations in Avondale.

Additionally, Avondale has welcomed Main Event Entertainment, the fastest growing bowling-anchored entertainment center in America, which has provided 150 jobs to residents, many of whom are teens seeking their first employment opportunity. In the manufacturing sector, Copper State Rubber will be breaking ground on a 150,000 sq. ft. development which will add jobs to the region as well.

Resident Involvement, Cross-sector Collaborations –

Annual Resident Survey:

Over the last decade, Avondale has strived to connect with its citizens in many different ways. The city conducts an Annual Resident Survey whose results serve to inform future planning, budgeting and programming needs. The survey also measures the level of satisfaction of city-provided services. Each year the city reaches out in various ways to increase the number of surveys received from the prior year, and has done so successfully. The survey is collected both electronically and on paper and is available at various city buildings, via email, on the city website and at Avondale's annual Resident Appreciation Night event. Social media posts with a link to the survey are posted throughout the survey period as well.

Rebranding Initiative:

In 2013, in response to the recent population growth, the decision was made to begin a rebranding initiative that would focus on the city's current profile and its future. The rural-inspired logo no longer reflected the city's identity as new development sprouted from what were once cotton fields. Avondale set out to define its new identity and develop a brand that would be embraced by residents, businesses, developers and visitors alike.

Through this process, city staff engaged more than 16,000 individuals through various focus groups, individual surveys and community meetings. This resulted in 25 diversified focus groups that were engaged and an integral part of the process including citizens, developers, businesses, education representatives and youth, faith-based organizations, non-profits and other stakeholders. In addition, some 20,000 surveys were sent out electronically to residents and businesses with great success. The response rate, which would typically be approximately 3% – 4% for this type of survey, was much higher than anticipated and came in at 10%. Even more telling of the level of engagement was the fact that 75% of those responding included written input in their response.

The new logo breaks the traditional local government logo that tends to focus on geographic location. Avondale's new logo and tagline brings the focus to its people. The rebranding initiative has provided and solidified a true sense of place for residents and business owners. The new tagline, which is described in greater detail later in this narrative, has served to spotlight and draw attention to Avondale's achievements and has created a forward-thinking culture.

Since the initial launch in May 2014, the city continues to drive the initiative forward through various outlets including social media and logo-inspired collateral. The rebranding initiative has received the following awards:

- National Civic Engagement – Project of the Year, Governing Institute, 2015
- National Savvy Award – Marketing Tools, Branding, City-County Communications & Marketing Assoc. (3CMA), 2015

Diversity & Inclusiveness –

Tale of Two Cities Parade & Festival – an International Celebration:

Avondale has partnered with the City of Goodyear and Estrella Mountain Community College for the last several years to bring this large scale event to our residents. Each year, the parade and festival event proudly celebrates a variety of diverse cultures represented through people, arts, crafts, music, traditions, cuisine and much more. In partnership with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services, the festival hosts a Naturalization Ceremony where as many as 150 area residents take the Oath of Allegiance and become United States citizens. This event is a coordinated effort of two diverse cities coming together for common celebration and to share the history, traditions and people that make our communities thrive.

This event has received the following accolades:

- Cultural Diversity Award (2nd place), National League of Cities, 2014
- Outstanding Event of the Year, AZ Talent in Event Concepts, 2015

Goodyear Farms Historic Cemetery –

Goodyear Farms Historic Cemetery honors the legacy of those who laid the foundation for the diverse and culturally aware community that Avondale has come to be recognized for. The city strongly supports the preservation, education, and maintenance of this historic site as a tribute to the lives that helped shape the community we love; a community that is welcoming and continues to embrace our diverse heritage.

Located in the heart of Avondale is the Goodyear Farms Historic Cemetery. Established in 1917 to bury deceased employees of Goodyear Farms, the cemetery not only holds the remains of Hispanic workers but also their stories and their significant contributions to the area's identity. During the flu epidemic of 1918, the site received a large number of those who did not survive and numerous military veterans. Though time and the elements have left many graves unmarked or with only simple crosses and dates, descendants, activists, community leaders, and others see the site as a substantial part of Avondale's rich cultural heritage.

The cultural contribution extends well beyond the diversity of ethnicity that has molded this tight-knit community. Lifestyle lessons from the migrant farm culture have left an indelible mark on the Avondale culture. Today, much like in the time of the labor camps, Avondale is known for its closely-knit community and its readiness to welcome visitors and new residents alike.

Each year, the city supports a Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) Celebration that is organized by a local dance organization, Ballet Folklorico Esperanza. This event brings together numerous community members, performers, and City Officials in a celebration of cultural remembrance of those who have passed and serves as a glimpse into the cultural traditions that are a large part of Avondale's history and its people. The Goodyear Farms Historic Cemetery was recently awarded 2nd Place in the 2016 National League of Cities Cultural Diversity Awards.

One Step Beyond Partnership –

One Step Beyond (OSB) is a non-profit organization that works with developmentally disabled adults to give them the support necessary to be independent adults under some guided supervision. In 2015 the Turning Page bookstore opened its doors at the Avondale Civic Center Library. This program is made possible through a partnership between the City of Avondale who provides space in the library and OSB who manages and operates the bookshop filled with unique items crafted by the OSB participants and donated books for sale. All proceeds help support the One Step Beyond program.

Community Vision –

Through the rebranding initiative, a theme emerged: three words began to stand out when describing Avondale; aspiring, achieving, accelerating. More valuable than just providing the city with its new identity, these words demonstrate the pride residents and business owners felt toward their community. As the conversations continued and design of a new logo was underway, the Avondale Story was written – a story that depicts how residents and business owners feel about their city.

The Avondale Story is this: Avondale is a family-friendly community where people share a deep sense of pride in what has been accomplished and how far we have come. In Avondale, there is a strong belief that the blending of a broad spectrum of cultures comes from a true sense of harmony throughout the community. Here, people and businesses are welcomed with open arms and supported in a way that exemplifies a progressive, intelligent and driven city, ready to take on the future.

Community Strengths, Innovations and Challenges –

Aligning with our community vision, Avondale's City Council created an innovative program to help spur development opportunities that provide our residents with amenities and jobs through the Accelerate Opportunity Now program. This is an annual \$2 million development incentive program that provides a 20% discount on development impact fees for new residential, commercial and office projects. Avondale's newest 58,000 square foot family entertainment facility, Main Event, took advantage of this program, which not only provides amenities for our residents, but over 150 jobs for many of our youth entering the workforce for the first time.

As development grows, nurturing a community equipped with a broad spectrum of opportunities is paramount, with education as the foundational element. Similar to many other municipalities, Avondale has a strong focus on supporting education but is challenged without having direct administrative impact. City Council has taken an innovative approach to supporting and partnering educational efforts by designating each Council Member to a specific school district. Through partnering relationships, district needs are readily identified and collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders are brought to the table to solve challenges with limited resources.

An example of Avondale's innovative approach was bringing together the extended community, educators and stakeholders in a unique day-long problem solving Education Summit. This program bolsters community ownership and develops strategies that increase educational successes and outcomes that are accessible to all students, while strengthening commitment from all partners. These approaches develop a healthy sustainable community by promoting a broad array of opportunities for tomorrow's community leaders.

PART II: DESCRIBE THREE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROJECTS

Describe your three best projects that have a compelling community-wide vision or short- or long-term plan or have resulted in significant local impact and action planning within the past five years. We welcome descriptions of projects that ensure the success of all children, including at-risk children, through health or healthy community strategies; and/or education strategies particularly those seeking to improve attendance in school; and/or projects that reflect the intersection of health and education. Past All-America City Award applicants have highlighted projects to increase third grade reading success for at-risk children, to increase health care for underserved populations, to create new businesses and jobs, to revitalize downtown, to engage youth in identifying and planning services and facilities, to promote cross sector collaborative centers, to increase fiscal sustainability, to develop emergency disaster plans, to recover from a natural disaster, and more. For 2016, NCL invites all applicants to include at least one project in their application that spotlights your community's approaches to ensuring all children are healthy and succeeding in school. Be sure to tell us how each of these projects promote civic engagement, collaboration, inclusiveness, innovation, and impact. See criteria above and consult NCL's Civic Index – available at no cost to applicants. Request it at aac@ncl.org.

PROJECT ONE

Provide the project name and a description of its vision or plan for future work or qualitative and quantitative impacts in the past five years. (2,000 word maximum) Tell us the challenge being addressed, actions taken, and the impact/outcomes of this project on your community's residents.

Provide the name of the primary contact for the project. Name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)

Rick Miller – Executive Director, Kids at Hope
2501 W. Dunlap Suite 155
Phoenix, AZ 85021
rick@kidsathope.org
602-674-0026

Kids at Hope is a cultural framework and holistic youth development strategy designed to create an environment where all children experience success. The intent of the program is to make Avondale a community in which children and youth experience positive outcomes in school and at home. Beginning in July 2008, the City of Avondale began efforts to promote Kids at Hope as a foundation for serving Avondale children by providing training to school districts, city staff and community leaders.

In September 2009, the City of Avondale became the nation's first official Kids at Hope City when the City Council signed a resolution demonstrating a commitment to learn and share a set of principles and practices that support the success of all children, without exception. The City Council has embraced the philosophy and played a leadership role in promoting Kids at Hope. The Neighborhood and Family Services Department coordinates a training program to enable school districts and community organizations to adopt the belief system and practices.

Chris Lopez, Avondale's Youth Development Coordinator, works directly with organizations in the community to promote the cultural framework and generate commitment. Kids at Hope has provided the city the means to have a positive effect on the lives of nearly every school age child in our community. Avondale recognizes that cities have a responsibility that goes beyond providing direct programs and services. While the city continues to provide a variety of recreational and youth development programming to youth and teens, it has made significant strides toward uniting a community around a shared belief. In support of the Avondale Kids at Hope initiative, the city provides a half-day introductory training and a two-day Train-the-Trainer program on the Kids at Hope philosophy at a cost \$4,500. Historically, the training targeted educational institutions but has since expanded to include Juvenile Probation community members representing non-profit agencies, businesses and families.

Prior to Avondale becoming a Kids at Hope City, the Pendergast Elementary School District was the only Kids at Hope District serving Avondale. Within a year of signing its resolution, the city provided the initial trainings and encouraged both the Littleton Elementary School District and the Avondale Elementary School District to adopt Kids at Hope district wide. In just one year, Avondale accomplished its first major goal to weave Kids at Hope into the fabric of its culture. The addition of the Littleton Elementary School District and the Avondale Elementary School District as Kids at Hope practicing districts introduced the remarkable power of Kids at Hope to over 22,000 school age children. Since adopting Kids at Hope in September 2009 over 300 adults have received formal Kids at Hope training via city sponsored events. The student population feeding into the three elementary school districts is rich in their diversity and culture. With over 80% of student population from families where English is not the primary language, Kids at Hope creates a conduit to instill success regardless of race, ethnicity or socio-economic background.

At the start of the initiative, Avondale projected that it would provide direct training to 40 adults each year. Over the past three years, Avondale has far exceeded this goal and has provided training to over 300 adults to date. These figures reflect only a portion of what has been accomplished since the adoption of the philosophy. Avondale's Kids at Hope initiative is designed to build community wide capacity. City sponsored Kids at Hope trainings inspire, empower and transform. The technical support and training provided by the City of Avondale and Kids at Hope have empowered and prepared both the Avondale Elementary School District and the Littleton Elementary School District to adopt the Kids at Hope initiative district wide.

The Avondale Kids at Hope initiative is an extremely innovative response to the needs of families in our community and an effective approach to improving the lives of children and youth. This initiative demonstrates that cities and towns have a greater responsibility than simply providing recreational or youth development programming. The Avondale Kids at Hope initiative is an example of how a community can rally around a common belief and support all children without exceptions. The City of Avondale invites all interested parties to learn how an entire community can create a culture that views all its children as "at hope" vs. "at risk" by adopting a paradigm supported by evidence based practices used by schools, recreation departments, police departments, faith based groups, community based organizations and families. Each group suspends self-interest, shares resources and agrees to engage in an effort larger than anyone group can achieve alone.

The greatest obstacle experienced in launching the Avondale Kids at Hope initiative has been convincing organizations to temporarily suspend self-interest and attend introductory Kids at Hope training with other stakeholders from the community. Leadership provided by former Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers was instrumental in asking groups to participate in something larger than anyone of them could achieve alone, which is supporting the success of all children, no exceptions. No single group can achieve that, but a community can.

The research-based belief system, Kids at Hope, reverses the paradigm of “kids at risk.” It states and demonstrates that “All children are capable of success, No Exceptions,” and the city has introduced this belief system into every department, from the police force to the library to parks and recreation. A number of schools and other organizations including the Boys and Girls Club, Jobs for Arizona Graduates, and Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services, have attended Kids at Hope trainings or expressed an interest in doing so.

As a Kids at Hope community, Avondale made a commitment to learn and share a set of principles and practices that can support the success of all children, without exception. This commitment includes:

- Advancing the belief and practice that all children are “at hope” and all are capable of success, No Exceptions!
- Branding and promoting the community as one which has adopted Kids at Hope, and celebrating National Kids at Hope Day/Week in November to rally interest around the belief, principles, and practices.
- Sponsoring at least one 4-hour seminar a year for all interested adults in the community to learn about the research behind Kids at Hope, its principles and practices, and how that information can empower each adult to help all children succeed.
- Sponsoring at least one 2-day Train the Trainer Certification Academy each year, in which adults from all walks of life can be empowered to train other adults about Kids at Hope, as well as advancing the principles and practices in their own organizations.
- Ensuring that city departments engaged in children and youth services model Kids at Hope principles and practices.
- Being willing to share with other communities and organizations its experiences with Kids at Hope through on-site visits, publications, and attendance at conferences sponsored by Kids at Hope or other entities committed to advancing knowledge and success with all children.

An eight year study determined the five most powerful and forceful practices which support three universal truths. Those truths are:

Three Universal Truths

- Children succeed when they are surrounded by adults who believe they can succeed, no exceptions.
- Children succeed when they have meaningful and sustainable relationships with caring adults
- Children succeed when they can articulate their future in four domains rather than one: Home and Family; Education and Career; Community and Service; and Hobbies and Recreation.

The first truth revolves around meaningful and sustainable relationships with caring adults. These relationships are commonly referenced as the four Elements of Success or the Four ACES: Children from Avondale’s elementary school districts describe their ACES as such:

The **ACE of Hearts** identifies the anchor parent -

“My mom is my support, she encourages me to do my best, she helps me when I need it and she celebrates my success.” B. Parks, 4th grade

The **ACE of Clubs**, all other caring adults who can positively influence a child -

“Ms. Aguilar represents Kids at Hope because she teaches with kindness and respect to others. She also teaches us to be confident and proud of our work.” Ashley, 2nd grade

The **ACE of Spades** (now known as the Treasure Hunting ACE) which refers to those unique individuals who can uncover the treasures and talents often buried in our most vulnerable children -

"Mrs. Stoltenberg is an ACE of Spades for her class. She holds high expectations for us and knows we can accomplish anything. She knows that we are scholars!" Julia, 4th grade

The **ACE of Diamonds** recognizes those important adults who facilitate children's pathways to success by exploiting, uncovering, and nurturing their intelligence and talents - .

"Adults in my school inspire me to be a better student and shows through the work that they give me. When they are proud of me it is a huge honor and empowers me to never give up." Culp, 4th grade

Below is a link to videos on the website where students discuss their Kids at Hope Artwalk project:

http://www.avondale.k12.az.us/kids_at_hope/art_walk_of_hope_student_artists/

The second requirement for creating a cultural framework was *Destinations*, where one needs to contribute to succeed. Kids at Hope's research revealed that "success" is *somewhere* rather than *something*. These destinations included: Home & Family; Education & Career; Community & Service; and Hobbies & Recreation. This distinction also introduced an enhanced understanding of the concept of HOPE (children who visualize a future within these destinations are expressing a sense of hopefulness). Supporting a child's sense of future is paramount to instilling hope. Accordingly, it also encourages all groups and individuals to empower their children to achieve their goals by sharing a common understanding and language about success.

The city continues to promote Kids at Hope as a foundation for serving children through training, outreach, taskforce groups and its annual National Kids at Hope day celebrations. Mayor Kenn Weise and the City Council has continued to support Kids at Hope through participation in annual trainings and most recently, a special presentation by guest speaker Antwone Fisher. The city has formed partnerships with businesses such as Peter Piper Pizza to sponsor a litany of youth initiatives and activities. Avondale has created a culture and will continue to foster a community where "All children are capable of success... no exceptions".

PROJECT TWO

Provide the project name and a description of its vision or plan for future work or qualitative and quantitative impacts in the past five years. (2,000 word maximum) Tell us the challenge being addressed, actions taken, and the impact/outcomes of this project on your community's residents.

Provide name of the primary contact for the project. Name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)

Anna Maria Maldonado – Director of Sales & Marketing, Care1st HealthPlan of Arizona
2355 E. Camelback Road. Suite 300
Phoenix, AZ 85016
AMMaldonado@care1st.com
602-778-8321

Care1st Avondale Resource Center

The first of its kind in the Southwest Valley, the Care1st Avondale Resource Center (RC) is a multifaceted hub for human services made possible by the innovative public and private partnership between the City of Avondale, Care1st HealthPlan of Arizona and the Southwest Regional Council for First Things First. This one stop shop of human and social services was created to serve Maricopa County's highest density of vulnerability and to enhance a young fragmented human services infrastructure.

Due to the economic environment created by the recession, Avondale community needs significantly increased. At this time, 20% of homes were in foreclosure and unemployment was at an all-time low. As a small municipality with minimal funding and resources, the City's ability to address those needs were limited. In 2008 Care1st Health Plan Arizona approached the City with the offer to fund a resource center in Avondale. With relatively minor renovations, the former library building was converted into a resource center. With transportation to services as a major barrier, the center is conveniently located in Historic Avondale which is home to our most vulnerable population. The center provides convenient, comprehensive human and housing services to the community by providing space for non-profit organizations to operate.

The resource center opened its doors in April 2009 with four agencies providing nutrition services, health insurance enrollment, GED classes and early childhood education. It has since expanded to provide an array of services to include, but not limited to: financial education, rental/mortgage/utility assistance, employment services, citizenship classes, English tutoring and developmental/dental/vision/hearing screenings through 20 in-house partners and direct service and referrals with over 100 human service providers. Through consistent adjustment of programs and services based on a community needs assessment, the Center has experienced a significant increase in utilization of services provided within the facility. There was a 142% increase in individuals utilizing the Center from 2010 to 2015. Currently, the Center serves nearly 6,000 people per month with over 70,000 served in 2015. Over 300,000 people have been served since the doors opened in 2009. (See Figure 1)

Care1st Avondale Resource Center Utilization							
	2016*	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Total # of individuals utilizing the Center	10,778	70,257	60,114	52,794	44,098	34512	29052
% Increase from the previous year	-	16.87	13.86	19.71	27.77	18.79	n/a
* As of February 2016							

Figure 1

Recognizing that government cannot solely fulfil the entirety of human services needs for the community, the City of Avondale has made a concerted effort to partner and collaborate with an array of agencies uniquely qualified to provide specific services to each family's needs.

Due to the sheer volume of the amount of service providers partnering with the center, we would like to highlight three agencies whose programs results and indicators closely align with this year's All-America City Award.

One of the major needs identified through gap analysis and community surveys is the lack of health insurance for those living below the federal poverty level. The City explored a conduit to meet this need through our partnership with First Things First. This funding allowed us to contract with an organization that provide health enrollment services. Currently, Helping Families in Need provides these services through the Care 1st Avondale Resource Center. Their data shows a consistent and ongoing need for health insurance enrollment, food stamp assistance, and cash assistance to our community. Over the past five years, HFIN has enrolled on average 3,500 people per year.

The City of Avondale Community Action Program has been in operation for over 30 years. As a subrecipient through Maricopa County the program provides utility, mortgage, and rental assistance to families in crisis. An important component of community action is assisting families in becoming self-sufficient. The Avondale's CAP Office supports families through case management and has developed a level of trust in the community. CAP recognized the client needs centered around health insurance enrollment, nutrition assistance and support for families with children 0-5 years of age. Each demographic was an area of concentration for the RC since inception. By relocating CAP to the Resource Center in March 2013, clients with rigid employment schedules and transportation barriers received more efficient services by all human service providers. (See Figure 2)

Community Action Program NASCSP Statistics FY 2012 - 2016					
	2016*	2015	2014	2013	2012**
Unduplicated persons served	1245	1932	1963	1762	5587
Number of Unduplicated households served	354	555	589	502	2141
Children 0-5 yrs.	151	259	254	238	605
Receiving Food Stamps	272	424	483	422	1503
No Health Insurance	130	298	326	286	2824
Hispanic (self-reported)	552	911	910	677	3158
Non-White (self-reported)	808	1204	1119	1021	3961
High School graduate	189	295	320	251	876
12+ Post-Secondary or 2/4 yr. college grad	175	289	300	283	334

*As of 3/3/2016
 ** The service delivery model changed significantly from 2012 to 2013.

Figure 2

The City of Avondale and its community partners have identified the Historic Avondale area as a food desert. The RC's central location is ideal to sustain a means to address the nutritional needs of Avondale families as well as those in the Southwest Valley. Adelante Healthcare (WIC) joined the Care1st Avondale Resource Center in 2009 to provide nutrition assistance and education to pregnant women and children 0 to 5 years of age. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), operated through Adelante Healthcare, provides health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. In 2015, WIC served 31,387 individuals. To meet the unique needs of our community, the center has adapted and modified its service delivery model based on community input and demands and will continue to make adjustments as the center continues to grow.

A recent jewel in the resource center's crown is the Siemer initiative. Valley of the Sun United Way (United Way) working, in agreement with the Siemer Institute for Family Stability (SIFS) established by the Siemer Family Foundation, initiated a pilot program designed to prevent family homelessness and reduce student mobility within

the City of Avondale. A New Leaf, a local non-profit, oversees the initiative which utilizes the Care1st Avondale Resource Center for case management.

The program's success is based on intervention, prevention and education. Case managers work intensively with Avondale Elementary School District families for up to eighteen months to create a plan for the family to become successful and to provide stability. The intensity, frequency and duration of assistance are based on the specific needs of each family. This program complements the Resource Center's holistic approach to serving our most vulnerable families. (See Figure 3)

Siemer Institute Family Stability (SIFS) Initiative - Avondale					
	Outcomes	% of Families	% of Children	% of Parents	% of Adults
Financial Stability	Improved their financial outlook	63.6%	-	-	-
	Basic needs met	96.9%	-	-	-
	Family Stability Case Plan	100%	-	-	-
	Completed workshops/training/educational session	-	-	48.7%	-
Education	Remained in their school of origin	-	88%	-	-
	Maintained or improved school attendance.	-	88%	-	-
	Maintained or improved in-school behavior.	-	86%	-	-
	Maintained or improved grades	-	90%	-	-
Housing	Secured stable housing	99%	-	-	-
	Avoided an eviction or foreclosure.	99%	-	-	-
Employment	Obtained employment	-	-	-	44%
<i>106 Families Served as of March 2016 240 Children Served as of March 2016</i>					

Figure 3

Future Vision of the Care1st Avondale Resource Center

With funding provided by Care1st Health Plan of Arizona and First Things First, the City of Avondale continues to identify human and housing service needs as well as recruit agencies to provide these services. Currently, the resource center has grown beyond its walls, and staff has made efforts to bring programming to libraries and schools located in the surrounding community. The services provided at the resource center are essential to the revitalization of the Historic Avondale area as well as the greater Southwest Valley.

The Southwest Regional Council of First Things First has identified the formation of resource centers as a key strategy to ensuring the success of children ages 0 to 5. The Care 1st Avondale Resource Center remains a best practice example throughout the state of Arizona and at least 4 centers have been created in recent years based on Avondale's model. For more information regarding the Care1st Avondale Resource Center, please click the link below.

https://www.care1st.com/az/aboutus/care1st_resource_center.asp

PROJECT THREE

Provide the project name and a description of its vision or plan for future work or qualitative and quantitative impacts in the past five years. (2,000 word maximum) Tell us the challenge being addressed, actions taken, and the impact/outcomes of this project on your community's residents.

Provide the name of the primary contact for the project. Name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)

Kirk Haines- Parks and Recreation Director, City of Avondale

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Avondale Let's Move Initiative

Let's Move! Cities, Towns and Counties (*Let's Move*) is a key part of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* Initiative and helps local elected officials, their staff and communities ensure all children grow up healthy and have the ability to reach their full potential. In partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National League of Cities (NLC) provides a framework and resources to support participating local elected officials in their efforts to address the policy and environmental factors that contribute to childhood obesity. The *Let's Move* initiative calls upon local elected officials to adopt sustainable and holistic policies that improve a community's access to healthy affordable food and opportunities for physical activity.

All *Let's Move* sites have the opportunity to earn up to five gold medals, one for each actionable goal to which they commit as part of the initiative. Medals are awarded to the city or county based on their achievements in the five goal areas as described below:

Goal I: Start Early, Start Smart – To provide children with a healthier start, local elected officials commit to helping early care and education providers incorporate best practices for nutrition, physical activity and screen time into their programs.

Goal II: My Plate, Your Place – To empower parents and caregivers, local elected officials commit to prominently displaying My Plate in all municipal or county venues where food is served.

Goal III: Smart Servings for Students - To provide healthy food in schools, local elected officials commit to increasing participation in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Goal IV: Model Food Service – To improve access to healthy, affordable foods, local elected officials commit to implementing healthy and sustainable food service guidelines that are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in all municipal and county venues that serve food.

Goal V: Active Kids at Play – To increase physical activity, local elected officials commit to mapping local play spaces, completing a needs assessment, developing an action plan, and launching a minimum of three proven policies, programs or initiatives aimed at increasing access to play.

Avondale committed to the *Let's Move* program in 2012, recognizing that the *Let's Move* goals were aligned with many of the city's programs and activities geared toward building a healthy and sustainable community. Using the framework provided by the *Let's Move* initiative, Avondale improved upon or developed new strategies/programs

to ensure all five goal areas were being met. In 2014, as a result of several city departments' efforts toward improving healthy options and opportunities, Avondale became the first Arizona municipality to achieve gold medal status in all five of the goal areas. This achievement demonstrates Avondale's commitment to ending childhood obesity and improving the health of our residents.

Parks & Recreation:

Avondale Parks and Recreation is committed to helping youth be active and learn the importance of exercise, self-confidence and healthy lifestyles. Avondale strives to build, encourage, enlighten and support the growth of our youth through the *Let's Move* initiative. Teaching youth that, through positive play, healthy living, respect, kindness, and hard work, they can aspire, achieve and accelerate throughout all aspects of life! Below are some of the accomplishments that serve this purpose.

Park Enhancements –

The City of Avondale is currently undergoing some major park renovations and implementing new features along with additional play areas. The extensive park project will provide more enhanced playgrounds to encourage kids to be creative while playing. Future features include enhanced open spaces and sports fields, more picnic ramadas, fishing, a splash pad and additional parking, all of which will encourage families to visit our larger regional parks. Renovations will be completed in phases allowing for playable areas to remain open around the park. The entire project is projected to be completed by December 2016.

Soccer League –

In an effort to continue the forward momentum of the *Let's Move* campaign the Recreation Department started its first soccer league in 2015. Soccer is an athletic pastime that has long since taken place on Avondale fields provided by private organizations. After reviewing resident surveys, trending field usage and population growth, Avondale determined that it was advantageous to our residents for the city to offer a soccer program that was affordable for our community. Avondale took a great amount of time and consideration during the development process of the soccer program to engage citizens and sift through all the feedback and best practices to design a program that addresses many facets of youth development such as: fostering a lifestyle of physical health, team building, skill development, sportsmanship, self-confidence, and responsibility.

Events –

The City of Avondale offers many free events throughout the year that provide opportunities for the community to get outdoors and be active. Two events that encourage an active and family friendly atmosphere are the Tres Rios Nature Festival and Avondale KidFest.

- The Tres Rios Nature Festival welcomes over 7,500 visitors of all ages who participate in outdoor recreational activities such as; hiking, bird watching, canoeing, rock climbing, archery, fishing and kayaking during the two day festival. This festival addresses the growing trend of nature deficit disorder that we see in today's youth, providing them the opportunity to get outdoors and be active. The festival introduces participants to various outdoor activities that serve to inspire a new hobby or interest that could last a lifetime.
- Avondale KidFest was developed in 2013, when staff recognized an underserved population in regard to city offered events. While programs such as a monthly Day of Play for school-aged children, library programs, and annual festivals/parades existed with limited activities for preschoolers, nothing was being offered aimed directly at toddler to preschool-aged children. In response to this need, KidFest was created.

Inspired by the "Week of the Young Child," sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, KidFest was designed to focus on the importance of developing early reading

skills. With increased literacy as a primary goal for the event, Avondale was tasked with the challenge of creating exciting and interactive, yet simple ways to incorporate literacy-building activities into a family friendly, festival style event and would encompass the *Let's Move* concepts of health-promoting goals in a way that is fun for the whole family.

Rising to the challenge of meeting these goals, alliances were created with Valley of the Sun United Way, Arizona Public Broadcasting System (PBS), Arizona Literacy and Learning Center, Partners in Participation, and many more. In 2014, at the inaugural KidFest event, more than 55 exhibitors set up informational, fun, interactive booths with educational activities for attendee participation. Garnering strong community support as well as sponsorships from local companies helped to cover event costs. Attendance in 2014 was approximately 3,500 and increased in 2015 to more than 5,500 people. It is anticipated that this event will continue to grow exponentially each year.

Neighborhood and Family Services (NFS) Department:

The Neighborhood and Family Services Department strives to enhance the quality of life for all Avondale residents by supporting families and fostering self-reliance. In line with the *Let's Move* initiative, NFS continues their efforts by providing education, outreach and programming that serve to ensure children are healthy and supported to succeed in school and in life.

Avondale has long since recognized the importance and value of partnerships and collaborations in providing services to our residents. Through valuable partnerships, Avondale is able to offer a variety of early education and nutrition classes that align with the *Let's Move* initiative goals and meet the needs of our residents. This approach to community-based health education focuses on the goal of improving the health and safety of young children through healthy food choices and safe and age-appropriate physical activity. Parent and child interactive classes provide parents with valuable childhood developmental milestones, health screenings and literacy information to build a solid foundation for the child's wellbeing and educational success.

Adelante Healthcare: Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program –

This program is administered by a partner agency, Adelante Healthcare, out of the Care1st Avondale Resource Center. In 2015 alone, this program served over 6,800 adults, nearly 7,300 infants and an additional 17,200 children. The WIC program is a national federally funded program for breastfeeding and pregnant women and their children under age 5 with the goal of ensuring they remain healthy. Participants are provided nutrition and health education, access to healthy food and other services.

Kith and Kin Program –

This program is designed for caregivers. During the 8-week program, participants are provided with developmental standards for children 0-5. The program teaches CPR and First Aid while promoting school readiness. Parents and caregivers attend with the child and participate in activities that help them progress toward developmental milestones and prepare the child for kindergarten.

Nutrition & Physical Activity Program –

Provided in partnership with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health, this health education program was designed with a focus on obesity prevention for children, families and early care and education professionals. Physical activity trainings are designed to be fun and interactive for both the child and the adult. Parents and caregivers are provided with ideas that are no-cost or low cost that can be continued at home. Food demonstrations are also provided and teach participants about nutrition and how to prepare healthy meals that kids will enjoy.

Born Learning Trail –

The *Born Learning Trail* has been installed in three locations throughout the city including the Care1st Avondale Resource Center, the Civic Center Library and Friendship Park. In an effort to improve health and develop an active lifestyle at an early age, the *Born Learning Trail* was developed as an interactive, playful and visible community engagement tool. As part of the United Way's Born Learning campaign, the trail is designed to help parents, caregivers and communities support early learning through exercise. The trails, through the use of brightly colored sidewalk graphics and engaging signs, provide 10 fun active outdoor games to help parents and caregivers create learning opportunities for young children. Recently, the sidewalk graphics were repainted as they have experienced a great deal of use since the trail installation in 2014.

Annual Family Fun Fair –

This is a free community event that promotes healthy living for children and their families. This event features physical activities, fun exercises and games that promote an active lifestyle. Also included are information on parenting and raising healthy children as well as healthy food options, demonstrations and tastings. This event was launched in 2013 and has experienced a huge growth in attendance of nearly 800% in just three years.

Historic Avondale Farmers' Market –

This new program was just introduced in January 2016 and is being provided through collaboration with local vendors in an effort to provide the Historic Avondale District with additional access to fresh and healthy foods and organic products. The market will be held on a monthly basis on the front lawn of the Care1st Avondale Resource Center on the third Saturday of the month when the center is open. Families in the WIC program are provided a \$10 voucher to use at the farmers' market to encourage them toward purchasing healthy foods.

The city continues to strive toward building a healthy and sustainable community, where all children are provided with the tools and encouragement they need to become healthy, successful adults. As Avondale works toward reaching "All-Star" status through the *Let's Move* initiative, additional opportunities and strategies are constantly emerging. Looking toward the future, projects include increasing bike lanes and providing pedestrian-friendly streets, continuing education and outreach and developing or strengthening partnerships and collaborations with the community, schools, churches, businesses and non-profit organizations.

End of Application. Thank you for submitting your All-America City Award Application!

Submit the application:

- 1) by email (aac@ncl.org) or fax (888-314-6053) by Wednesday, March 9, 2016, 11:59 p.m. PST; and,
- 2) mail one hard copy with \$200 (*You only pay \$100 application fee if you submit a Letter of Intent to Apply by November 4, 2015) application fee to:
National Civic League, 6000 East Evans Ave., Suite 3-012, Denver, Colorado 80222.

Need additional guidance? Email aac@ncl.org or go to www.nationalcivicleague.org for announcements of upcoming conference calls for prospective applicants and AAC resources or call NCL at 303-571-4343.

Timeline:

September 2015-February 2016 – Monthly conference calls with NCL staff and AAC community leaders to learn more about the benefits of AAC, application tips for success, and to share best practices on the spotlight.

November 4, 2014 -- Letter of Intent to Apply Due. The Letter of Intent is not required. However you save \$100 of the application fee if you submit a Letter of Intent to Apply by November 4, 2015.

March 9, 2016, Wednesday -- Application Due

April 2016 -- Finalists Announced

Finalist community-wide delegations will be invited to Denver to present.

April-June 2016 – Finalist communities assemble your cross-sector community delegation to present your story at the June 2016 awards event and peer-learning conference. Raise the funds to send your delegation to the June event in Denver. *Finalist community delegations will be asked to present their story to a national jury of civic, local government, business, philanthropy, and community experts. All applicants are invited to participate in the June workshops and networking opportunities!*

June 2016, Peer-Learning Workshops & Awards Competition/Presentation in Denver, Colorado

July 2016-Feb 2017, All-America Cities tell their community's story through a series of AAC/NCL coordinated conference calls and regional forums to the AAC network.