

Caritas Family Solutions Receives \$20,000 COVID-19 Grant From Blue Cross And Blue Shield Of Illinois

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BELLEVILLE – To help ease the ongoing needs of Illinoisans created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) has awarded Caritas Family Solutions Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) program a \$20,000 grant as part of BCBSIL's latest round of giving aimed at helping the helpers.

The grant will provide funds for additional direct client support costs associated with the ongoing pandemic.

The CILA program provides adults with developmental disabilities the opportunity to live in a loving, caring home environment where they can experience independence and community. The program allows people who are not fully able to care for themselves the opportunity to live in a home environment, rather than an institution. Caritas operates six homes throughout Southern Illinois and the Metro East serving 21 adults. Director of CILA Operations, Leontrez Dickerson, said all six of their CILA homes are operating at capacity, and they are still receiving up to seven referrals each month for individuals needing placement.

“This grant will provide us with some much-needed financial support to ensure we are meeting the needs of this vulnerable population,” said Dickerson. “Between staffing shortages, extra sanitation measures and changes to programming due to the pandemic, this year has taken a toll on our dedicated staff, while also highlighting the increased need for our services in the community. Individuals with developmental disabilities don’t always have a voice. Some have no family, no support system and this grant will help provide them with the care they need.”

Dickerson said the CILA program currently has seven unfilled hourly staff positions which they are hoping to fill immediately. The community is encouraged to apply at www.caritasfamilysolutions.org/join-our-team/

BCBSIL selected 175 organizations across Illinois with missions focused on access to care, hunger, shelter and behavioral health care, and COVID-19 health education and vaccine access to receive \$20,000 grants as part of its COVID-19 Community Collaboration Fund.

“A year into the pandemic and the health, economic and social impacts around Illinois are still great,” said Harmony Harrington, vice-president government and community relations for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois. “We’re proud to be able to help so many organizations increase their capacity to help more people receive the help they need.”

Click here to see the [full list of grantees](#) from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois from this grant cycle.

About Caritas Family Solutions:

Founded in 1947, Caritas Family Solutions strengthens the social and emotional well-being of individuals and families in order to create healthy relationships, loving homes

and strong communities. Caritas provides services across Southern Illinois from offices located in Belleville, Carterville, Mount Vernon, Olney, East Alton and Effingham. For additional information, visit www.caritasfamilysolutions.org.