

# HOME REGION PROGRAM

We honor our roots by helping build opportunity in the communities that first gave the Walton family opportunity. In Northwest Arkansas, we:

- Continue to improve the quality of life for a fast-growing population of all ages, incomes and cultures; and
- Work locally and on the world stage establishing the region as a global leader in arts, education and overall quality of life.

In the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta region, we:

- Create access to educational and economic opportunity.

## Rooted in a Legacy of Giving

We honor our roots by helping build opportunity in our home region because these are the communities where Sam and Helen Walton first found opportunity. In Northwest Arkansas, we support efforts that enable one of the nation's best places to live to further that status by building on what has always made the region special and evolving to meet the needs of a growing population of all ages, incomes and cultures.

Our work takes us to the unique downtowns of the region where we support efforts to cultivate what makes each community unique. And it also takes us to the world stage as we work to establish the region as a global leader and top destination in education, arts and culture and recreation. We measure progress by student achievement, participation in cultural programs and the use of our trail system for recreation and transportation.

In the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta region, we support efforts that create access to educational and economic opportunity. We do this through support for Pre-K-12 schools, improved public safety, development and engagement of young people and economic development. We measure progress by new jobs, less poverty and unemployment, and a safer community, participation in youth programs and improved student achievement.

## Media Contact

**Luis Gonzalez** | Sr. Communications Officer, Home Region | [lgonzalez@wffmail.com](mailto:lgonzalez@wffmail.com)

**Kathryn Heller** | Communications Officer, Home Region | [kheller@wffmail.com](mailto:kheller@wffmail.com)

# Home Region Program Director

## Karen Minkel



Karen Minkel is responsible for work with grantees focused on quality of life initiatives in Northwest Arkansas and the Delta region of Arkansas and Mississippi. Karen was previously a senior research officer in the Strategy, Learning and Evaluation Department (SLED) at the foundation and provided analysis and evaluation of the Home Region Program's grants and strategies. Before coming to the Walton Family Foundation, Karen worked for the City of Fayetteville as director of strategic planning and internal consulting, administering and evaluating myriad programs, policies and processes. She has also worked in public sector consulting in London and served as a Teach For America corps member in Harlem.

She holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of California at Berkeley and a B.S. in communication studies from Northwestern University.

## Recent Publications

- ▶ [Walton Family Foundation Releases Latest Quality of Life Report](#)
- ▶ [Survey says NWA good place to live](#)
- ▶ [As Tour de France begins, the Walton family wants to kickstart U.S. cycling](#)
- ▶ [How corporate philanthropy built the best place you've never heard of Walton Family Foundation Awards \\$2 Million to Spur Growth in Arkansas](#)
- ▶ [Endeavor to open Northwest Arkansas office with \\$2 million gift from Walton Family Foundation](#)



# Recent News and Announcements

## **Northwest Arkansas Residents Report High Quality of Life**

Northwest Arkansas residents continue to view the region as a great place to live, with 95% of residents reporting being “very happy” or “fairly happy.” According to the latest [Quality of Life Survey Report](#) commissioned by the Walton Family Foundation, residents in Benton and Washington counties are generally satisfied with the region’s overall quality of life. The survey also highlights affordability and infrastructure trends that could limit access to key amenities.



## **New Regional Arts Service Organization Launches in Northwest Arkansas**

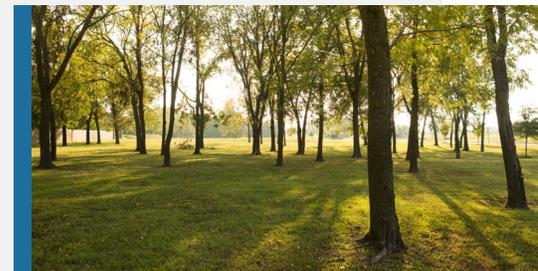
A new [regional arts service organization](#) will help expand access to arts, culture and heritage in Northwest Arkansas. Incubated at the Northwest Arkansas Council with support from the Walton Family Foundation, the institution will be led by Allyson Esposito, the former senior director of arts and culture for The Boston Foundation.

## **Northwest Design Excellence Program Welcomes New Design Professionals**

Eighteen new design firms have been selected to join the Northwest Arkansas Design Excellence Program. Early Spring 2019, the Walton Family Foundation held an open application cycle for design professionals, with a focus on landscape architecture and urban design in small communities.

## **Foundation Unveils Findings on the Northwest Arkansas Arts and Culture Ecosystem**

Northwest Arkansas’ arts community has offerings for nearly every audience, according to a [new study](#) commissioned by the Walton Family Foundation. With the growth of internationally recognized museums and other cultural amenities, the report found the region is becoming more competitive with American arts capitals.



## **Endeavor Launches in Northwest Arkansas**

Endeavor, a global organization that supports and accelerates high-impact entrepreneurs through connecting them with talent, capital, and a worldwide peer and mentor network, is announcing the launch of a new office in Northwest Arkansas, to aid growth and economic development in the region. Launching with a \$2 million grant from the Walton Family Foundation, Endeavor Northwest Arkansas will leverage the strong engagement and backing from local business leaders to support the founders and companies in the region that have passed through the initial start-up phase and who demonstrate the potential for rapid expansion and scale.

# 2019 Home Region Program Grantmaking

The foundation's roots in Northwest Arkansas and the Delta region of Arkansas and Mississippi run deep. We invest in bold ideas that improve quality of life and generate economic opportunity for their residents.

In Northwest Arkansas, the foundation's steady support for arts and culture, education, entrepreneurship and urban design has played an important role in preserving the region's unique sense of place.

In the Mississippi and Arkansas Delta, we are expanding high-quality Pre-K-12 school options, working to improve public safety and developing new opportunities for young people facing challenging economic circumstances.

Across Northwest Arkansas, and in the Delta, these achievements provide inspiration to continue working with community partners to build a prosperous future.

A full list of 2019 grants is available [here](#).



## 2019 Home Region Program Grants

Home Region: \$66.1 million

- Northwest Arkansas (\$58.2 million)
- Delta Region (\$7.5 million)
- Research and Evaluation (\$0.4 million)



## 2019 Grants

\$525.8 million in grants awarded in 2019

- K-12 Education (\$207.4 million)
- Environment (\$90.5 million)
- Home Region (\$66.1 million)
- Special Projects (\$161.8 million)

The foundation tackles tough social and environmental problems with urgency and a long-term approach. The children and grandchildren of our founders, Sam and Helen Walton, share stories about the foundation's origins and their commitment to the vision and values that guide its work.

No one ever solved big problems by thinking small. Creating lasting change in society requires leaders driven by a spirit of innovation, a curiosity to explore what is possible and an urgent willingness to be bold where others are cautious. It's how we seed success – it's how opportunity takes root.