

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

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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

- ▶ [Northwest Arkansas Delivers New Destinations to Ride - and Relax](#)
- ▶ [Shaping our Housing Future with Open Minds, Bold Actions](#)
- ▶ [Building Pathways to Healthy, Successful Communities](#)
- ▶ [Downtowns in Demand](#)
- ▶ [Brightwater Puts Northwest Arkansas on Nation's Culinary Map](#)
- ▶ [A Region on the Move](#)
- ▶ [A Regional Canvas for Art in Northwest Arkansas](#)



Recent News and Announcements

Foundation Supports Fitzgerald Mountain Trail System in Springdale

Springdale is growing Northwest Arkansas' mountain biking scene with a brand-new trail system that will be the largest in the city. The project, funded by grants from the Walton Family Foundation to NWA Trailblazers, will include 10 miles on Fitzgerald Mountain. The first 7 miles of natural-surface trails opened to the public in June 2018 with the remaining 3 miles to be finished in the fall of 2018. The \$1.16M project builds on the 163 miles of natural-surface trails and paved paths funded by the foundation in Northwest Arkansas.



Bicycling Provides \$137 Million on Economic Benefits to Northwest Arkansas

With an increasing number of locals and tourists taking advantage of its network of natural-surface trails and shared-use paved paths, bicycling provided \$137 million in economic benefits to Northwest Arkansas in 2017. According to three new studies from the Walton Family Foundation, the region has reaped these positive economic, social and health benefits while still managing to keep its trail building cost lower than many regions with comparable bicycle infrastructure.

Growing Populations, Strong Development Reported in Northwest Arkansas Downtowns

Downtowns in Northwest Arkansas continue to experience strong population growth and increased demand for residential and commercial development, according to a new [report](#) commissioned by the Walton Family Foundation. Amidst the positive economic progress, the data also reaffirm the region's need for additional accessible housing options in Benton and Washington counties. The report was compiled by the Center of Business and Economic Research at the University of Arkansas to measure the impact of the foundation's downtown efforts. The study, which highlights trends over a five-year period from 2012 to 2017, shows various stages of progress on the implementation of master plans in the five largest downtowns in the region.

Design Excellence Program Unveils Grants for New Parks and Public Spaces, Affordable Downtown Housing

The Walton Family Foundation's Northwest Arkansas Design Excellence Program unveiled grants for five new projects that will enhance downtowns and urban parks. In March 2017, the foundation invited local governments and nonprofits to submit grant applications for parks, green spaces and plaza projects. To be selected, qualifying entities had to present innovative ideas for spaces that would increase public access and leverage the region's existing trail network. In addition, projects had to show a commitment to sustainability by encouraging residents and visitors to engage with the spaces in new ways.



2017 Home Region Program Grantmaking

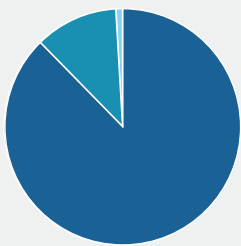
The foundation's roots in Northwest Arkansas and the Delta region of Arkansas and Mississippi run deep. We invest in bold ideas that improve quality of life and generate economic opportunity for their residents.

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.

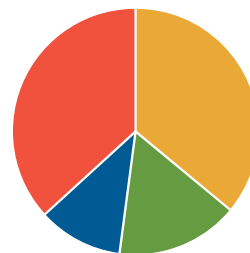
A full list of 2017 grants is available [here](#).



2017 Home Region Program Grants

Home Region: \$59.9 million

- Northwest Arkansas (\$52.5 million)
- Delta Region (\$6.8 million)
- Research and Evaluation (\$0.6 million)



2017 Grants

\$535.5 million in grants awarded in 2017

- K-12 Education (\$192.7 million)
- Environment (\$86 million)
- Home Region (\$59.9 million)
- Special Projects (\$196.9 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.