



THINK BIG

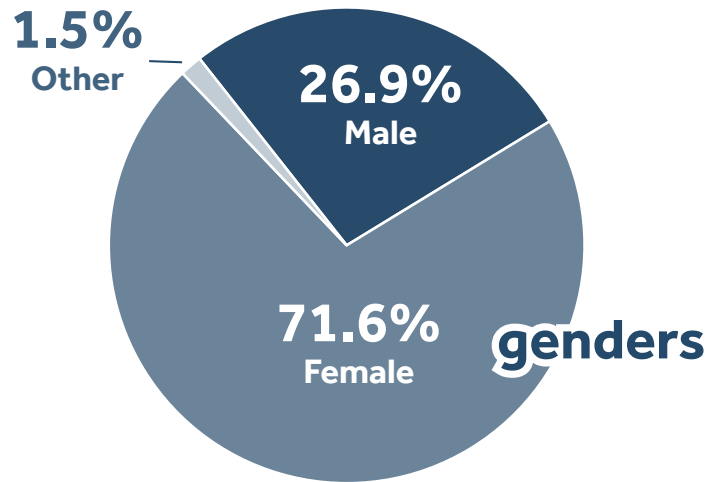
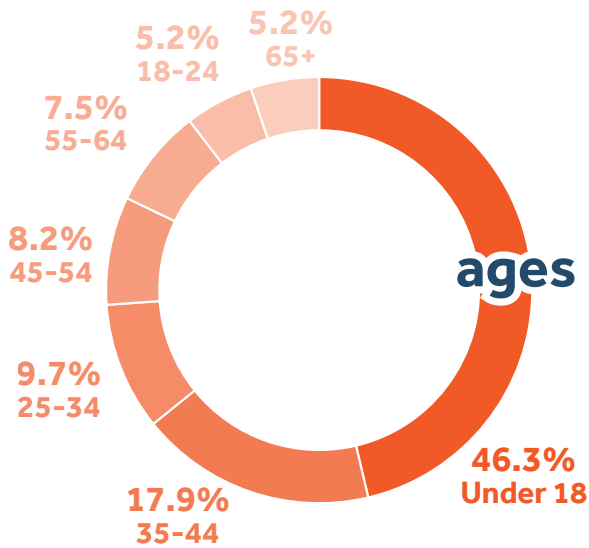
Oct. 2021

2021 Results



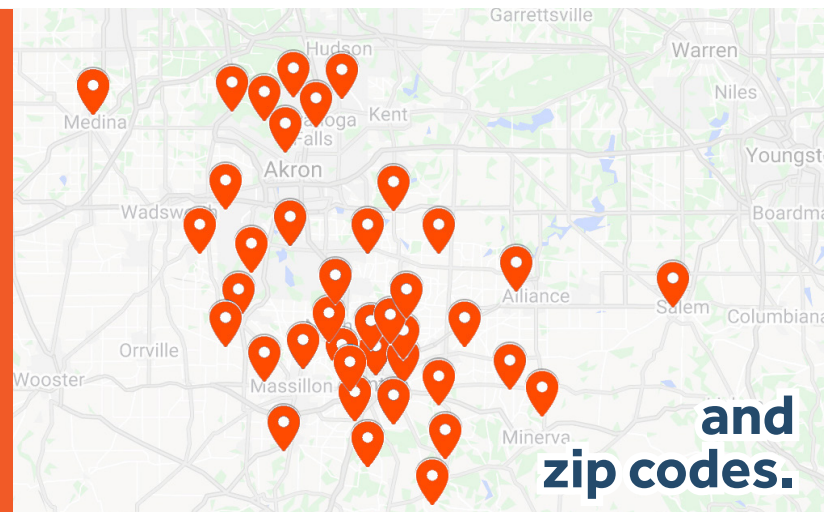
Coordinated by Stark Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Stark County, THINK**BIG** 2021 brought the community together to brainstorm solutions for escaping the cycle of poverty using the story of Claire, a low-income single mother, and her family. Following these THINK**BIG** community conversations, participants were asked to complete a short survey about their thoughts, discussions and ideas they have to move our community forward. Nearly 160 surveys were completed and analyzed, and the results made evident that residents are creative and ready to act on solutions to the challenges of poverty.

Conversation participants were of various...



ethnicities

- 80% White/Caucasian
- 14.1% Black/African American
- 3.7% Other
- 0.7% American Indian/Native American
- 0.7% Hispanic/Latino
- 0.7% Asian American



Participants described their conversations as:

Deep Eye-Opening **Enlightening**
Strategic Inspiring Collaborative
Informative Thoughtful **Engaging**
 Insightful Interesting **Productive** Open

Ideas for Our Community by Our Community

While discussing the multitude of challenges caused by poverty, our community came up with these BIG ideas to help a hypothetical character named Claire and others just like her break the cycle of poverty:



Employment, Income and Benefits

- Implement a step-down program to help people decrease their dependency on public assistance
- Encourage employers to develop a better understanding of their employees' challenges and consider ways to help address these barriers
- Educate employers about what it means to offer a livable wage



Education

- Offer family-friendly housing options for college students to accommodate their children
- Shift people's mindset of seeing those who rely on social services as lazy and instead identify opportunities for community care and support



Resources

- Create a volunteer support group where individuals can share their story and get help navigating and identifying resources from others who have experienced poverty
- Host informational fairs to educate those in need of services about community resources
- Pilot a resource navigator program in specific neighborhoods to connect people to resources
- Organize a coordinated response from county agencies and organizations providing resources to people in need
- Increase awareness of resources by placing resource stations in targeted neighborhoods, similar to the library's leave-and-take-a-book concept



Mentoring and Empowerment

- Create a parent empowerment program to better equip themselves and their kids with tools for success
- Lead parent cohorts to help families move together along organized pathways out of poverty



Basic Needs, Food and Shelter

- Extend pantry hours to evenings and weekends to accommodate residents without flexible work schedules
- Work collaboratively with area landlords, developers and organizations to develop a pathway to homeownership for all
- Establish more local affordable housing options



Transportation

- Create an old car bank where people can donate their used cars to benefit those without reliable transportation
- Partner with vocational and technical schools to repair vehicles either free of charge or at a discount
- Establish a ride share program as an alternative to public transportation



Learn more about Claire's story and explore ways to help reduce poverty at

www.thinkbigstark.com