REACH OUT AND READ MINNESOTA



FY26 Annual Report

7/1/25 - 6/30/26

INTRODUCTION

The magic of the Reach Out and Read program tends to happen in small, quiet moments. It happens when a child opens their eyes wide and reaches out their hands as their doctor hands them a brand new book. It happens when a family sees that they've been given a book chosen just for them, perhaps a book in their language or a book about their child's favorite topics, maybe construction trucks or unicorns. It happens when a parent and child snuggle up in bed with their brand-new book, and the child gleefully turns the pages on their own, just as their doctor modeled for them in their visit.



These are the kinds of moments that, over time, are transformational in the life of a child. **Every shared story, every back and forth conversation, and every loving snuggle between the child and their caregiver helps to build a foundation for a happier, healthier life.**

The outside world, however, tends not to be so quiet. The world we live in can be chaotic, stressful, and full of noise. And in recent years, the world has felt especially tumultuous. Just since 2020, we've lived through a global pandemic, wide-reaching social movements, massive changes and cuts across the healthcare sector, and most recently, Operation Metro Surge, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement surge which resulted in violence in our streets and untold stress and fear for families in the Twin Cities and across the state. In 2026, it is hard to remember the last time we experienced a "normal" year.

And yet, amid all of this chaos and noise, the quiet, everyday moments matter even more.

INTRODUCTION



It is impossible to know when — or whether — the world will ever feel "normal" again, yet we remain steadfast in our belief that we can make our world better. **Each time we share a book with a child, we are committing ourselves to the future. We are committing ourselves to a belief that we can and will make a better life for that child and a better world for them to inhabit.**

In this sense, doing this work is an act of faith — a faith that all of our efforts are worth it in the end. Importantly, however, it is not an act of blind faith. It's an act based on years of rigorous research and generations of shared wisdom. It would be an understatement to say that we have strong evidence that reading, singing, and talking to children set them up for healthier, happier lives. Most of us know it through firsthand experience, though there is also more research behind this idea than we could ever attempt to cite here!

It would also be an understatement to say that the Reach Out and Read program has strong evidence behind it. More than two dozen peer reviewed studies demonstrate the positive effects the program has on children, families, and clinics, including increased reading in the home, improved language scores, and higher rates of trust and patient satisfaction.

The science makes it clear. We know what works and we know what we need to do to support young children and their families in our state. It's how we choose to act on this knowledge now, in this constantly changing, chaotic, and challenging landscape we find ourselves in, that matters most.

INTRODUCTION

We cannot say we know what the next year holds, and at this juncture, we certainly cannot guarantee more “normal” times ahead. What we can say for certain, however, is that we will keep showing up for Minnesota’s young children, their families, and our network of 300+ clinics who care for them.

Amid all of the noise, Reach Out and Read Minnesota committed to supporting our program for our families and clinics in whatever ways they need, including showing up in the big ways, but also — perhaps especially — in those quiet and consistent ways.

After all, we know that every book shared between a child and a loved one makes a difference. We’ll keep showing up to make moments like this happen. We invite you to join us.

With gratitude and hope,

Kris Hoplin

Kris Hoplin
Executive Director

Kate Keiper

Kate Keiper
Board Chair



OUR WORK

Our Mission

We seek to strengthen all families with young children in Minnesota through guidance from medical clinicians about nurturing relationships through shared reading.

Our Vision

A Minnesota where every child has the relationships essential to learn and thrive.

Our Work

At over 300 clinics across the state, medical clinicians trained in our program give books to children and give developmental guidance to parents and caregivers at their children's routine well-child visits. Our program gives young children and their families both the resources and knowledge they need to build a foundation for a healthier and happier future.

Reach Out and Read Minnesota is an independent 501(c)(3) affiliate of the national Reach Out and Read network.

IMPACT NUMBERS

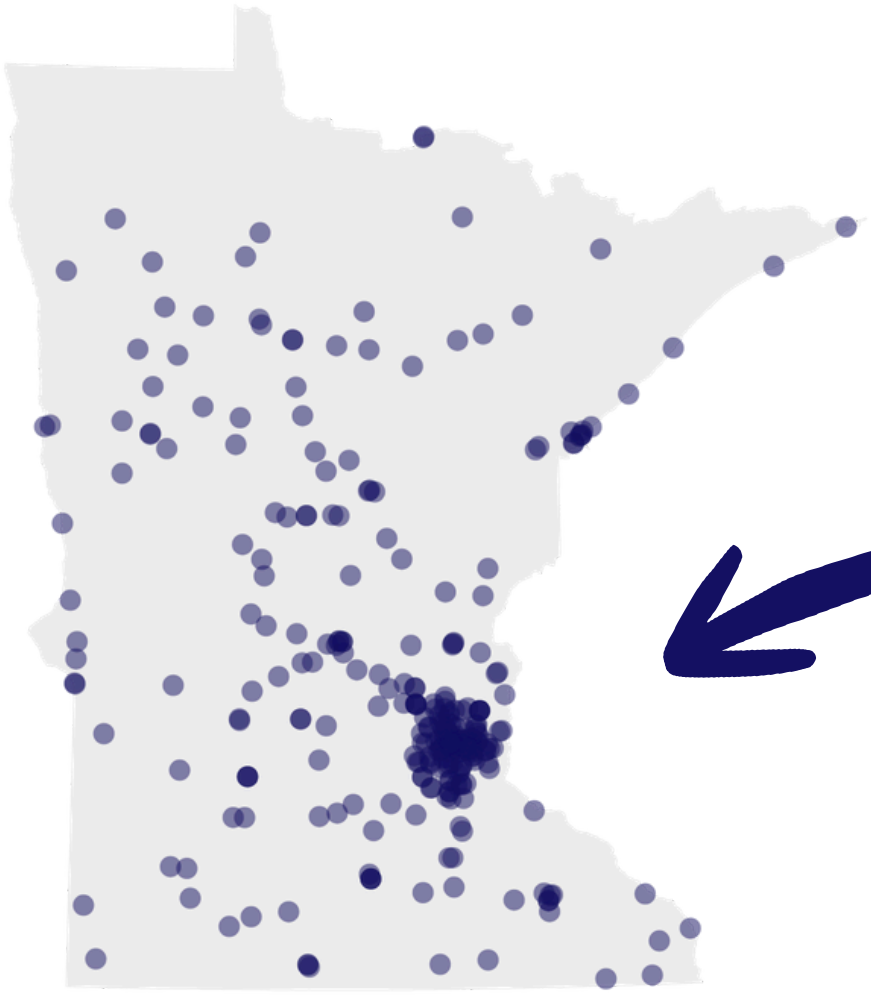
296,459 books
distributed in our primary programming, ages 6 months through 5 years

+

29,608 books
distributed to children in our expanded early infancy programs, ages 0 to 5 months

161,997
children
served annually

through



302
active clinics

with

2,588
clinicians

IMPACT NUMBERS

We brought on 5 new clinics to our program in FY26:

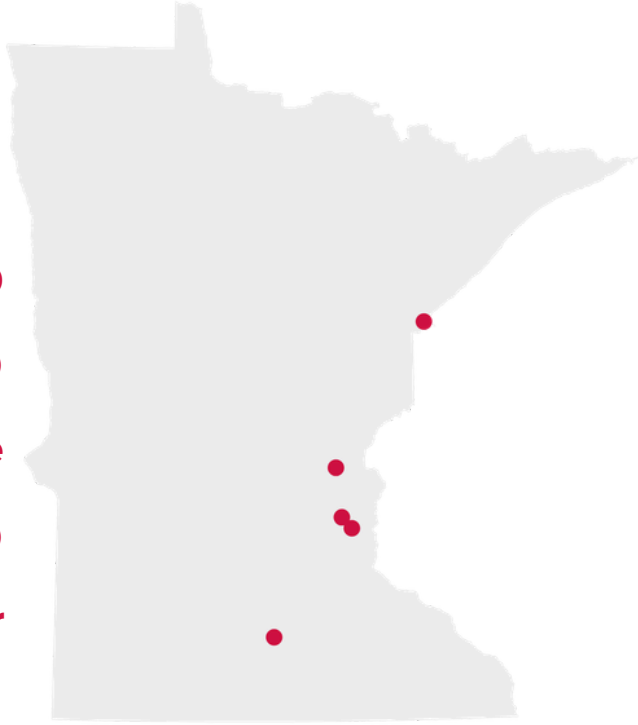
Lake Superior Community Health Center (Duluth)

Northern Pines Wellness (Cambridge)

North Memorial Health Clinic - Blaine

AAFLA Family Clinic (White Bear Lake)

Mankato Clinic Children's Health Center



14% of families we serve speak a **language other than English in the home**.

Our top 10 most common non-English languages are:

Spanish, **Somali**, Amharic, Hmong, **Karen**, **Oromo**, Chinese, Vietnamese, **French**, and **Russian**.

We are proud to offer books in these languages and many more.

> "Our favorite Reach Out and Read experience was when a family who primarily speaks Amharic was given a bilingual Amharic/English book for their child . They cried at recognizing their own language printed in the office."
>
> **Clinic in St. Paul**

NEWS AND UPDATES

Books for Neighbors

When hard times show up, so do the good people. This was our team's mantra this winter as Operation Metro Surge took its toll on our Minnesota communities. ICE operations left tens of thousands of Minnesota families living in fear, feeling too unsafe to leave their homes for work, school, shopping, and even medical care.

In response, Minnesotans from all walks of life found new and creative ways to care for and protect their neighbors at risk. For Reach Out and Read Minnesota, this meant taking the books and guidance we normally provide to families in the exam room, and bringing them straight to their doors.

Partnering with mobile medical care teams, schools, food shelves, and other nonprofits, Reach Out and Read Minnesota delivered nearly 10,000 brand-new children's books to families alongside specialized guidance on using reading as a tool to manage stress. This included books and materials in Spanish, Hmong, Somali, and Karen.

This project was just one part of a much larger effort by neighbors, businesses and nonprofits to support their neighbors, but we could not be more grateful to our community for making this happen. Amid all of the chaos in the outside world, these book deliveries gave families a chance to get lost in books, manage stress, and keep their kids' brains developing healthily. Perhaps most importantly they sent a message to families that their neighbors and their communities care!

We would like to give special thanks to our partner organizations who helped to deliver these books to families' homes, our book vendors, including All About Books, Barefoot Books, and Scholastic whose donations helped kickstart this project, our volunteers who helped to pack, sort, and transport thousands of books, and the Reach Out and Read National Center who were our constant collaborators in this project and who provided the funds and materials we needed to bring this work to scale.



NEWS AND UPDATES

Spring Benefit and Awards Winners

After a trying winter, our team was thrilled to gather with our community at our annual Spring Benefit Breakfast in May. Sheyanga Beecher, a nurse practitioner who leads Hennepin Healthcare's mobile health team, and Dr. Krishnan Subrahmanian, a pediatrician at Hennepin Healthcare, headlined this year's keynote address, "How We Heal: Perspectives from Minnesota Clinicians".

Sheyanga and Dr. Krish shared anecdotes, both heartbreaking and inspirational, about their experiences providing care for Minnesota families during Operation Metro Surge, and outlined how we as a community can heal together and move towards a brighter future for our state.

"In that chaos, books gave us a way to breathe. Children saw characters with the same black hair that they had. Parents could sit with the child on their lap and point to a picture of *un perro* or *una naranja* and for a few minutes everyone could feel safe and everyone could feel a little less like an alien in a world that had told them otherwise. Healing is not a solitary act. It happens in a relationship, in a community, in the small rituals of care that tell families that they belong. Reach Out and Read gives us one of the simplest and most powerful tools to do that: a book that opens a door, softens fear, and reminds of our shared humanity."

Sheyanga Beecher, CNP, MSN, MPH

After hearing about the outstanding work of our community to meet the needs of the moment, and gathering with so many people who care deeply about Minnesota's young children and their families, it was difficult to not to feel hopeful about the future of our state — an amazing feeling after all of the challenges our communities faced over the winter!





NEWS AND UPDATES

Our Spring Benefit also gave us the opportunity to celebrate two champions for Reach Out and Read Minnesota, one in the medical field, and another in the policy sphere.

We were delighted to present this year's Gerald Gilchrist Medical Champion Award to Dr. Seth Gregory, a pediatrician practicing at Mayo Clinic Health System in Red Wing in recognition of his advocacy for and outstanding implementation of our program at his clinic. Dr. Gregory was first introduced to the program thirteen years ago during his pediatric residency with Mayo Clinic. He says the program helped him to connect more deeply with his patients from the outset.

> "[Sharing a book] lowers the tension, lowers the anxiety from the parent, anxiety from the child, anxiety from the doctor... having a book to sit down with and being able to read to the child immediately helps start that visit off on the right foot. It really helps build trust, and that just compounds in the future visits."
>
> **Dr. Seth Gregory, MD**

When Dr. Gregory arrived at his new clinic after residency, he felt it became harder to connect with patients or encourage healthy early learning habits in the home without the program. He worked quickly to change that. Dr. Gregory became the champion for Reach Out and Read at his clinic, helping to bring his colleagues on board, and establishing systems for ordering and tracking books with clinic staff.



After Reach Out and Read Minnesota supplied the first year of books, Dr. Gregory and his colleagues worked to find funding to sustain the program into the future, eventually landing a multi-year grant from Jones Family Foundation in Red Wing.

Dr. Gregory's advocacy does not stop in the exam room, however. He has also joined Reach Out and Read Minnesota the last two years for the Minnesota Children's Book Festival in Red Wing. Our staff reports that many of his young patients were thrilled to see him at the festival, running up to tell him about their new favorite books.

NEWS AND UPDATES

Our team was also excited to have the chance to celebrate one of our state's strongest advocates, both our program and for early childhood issues more broadly. We were proud to present this year's Diane Loeffler Legislative Champion Award to Rep. Dave Pinto, a Minnesota state representative serving district 64B in St. Paul.

Rep. Pinto has been a consistent champion for supporting evidence-based approaches to early learning in Minnesota. He has frequently brought experts on early childhood, including Reach Out and Read clinicians, to educate and inform his colleagues about important issues. Rep. Pinto was instrumental in each of Reach Out and Read Minnesota's three successful campaigns for state funding, connecting us with his colleagues and consistently building a case to support our program. Thanks in no small part to Rep. Pinto's efforts, Reach Out and Read Minnesota now receives an annual grant of $250,000 from the state through the Department of Children, Youth, and Family Services. This grant has been critical in allowing us to provide high-quality support for all of our 300+ sites across MInnesota, and continue to bring on new sites across the state.



"There is so much that we know when it comes to young children and families. There is so much we know based on evidence and research, and just so much we know based on common sense, and there is so much that we don't do. I've been trying to work to close that gap... and especially Reach Out and Read has worked to close that gap. I will call on all of us to continue to do that work, because we know that when we do, we all do better as a society."

Rep. Dave Pinto

NEWS AND UPDATES

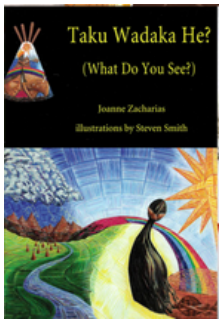
Expanding Our Book Selection

Reach Out and Read Minnesota is proud to offer a wide array of high-quality books that we can be sure families will love. Alongside our partner vendors, we work hard to source books which fit the unique needs of the communities we serve, including books in the languages our families speak at home, books which have rich and full depictions of people from different walks of life, and books which promote messages around health, well-being, and belonging that will resonate with the communities we serve. Most importantly though, we seek to make sure that every book our clinicians hand out is one that a family can get excited about reading together!

This year, we added a new partner vendor, Barefoot Books, which has added dozens of new, beautifully illustrated books in a wide range of languages to our catalog. So far, our partner clinics have been thrilled with these new options!



Through our Mirrors and Windows initiative, we also continue to source books outside of our typical catalog which meet emerging or culturally specific needs, such as books in harder-to-source languages, or books which lift up specific populations we serve. With the support of a generous grant from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Reach Out and Read Minnesota worked with Birchbark Books to put together a collection of Native Book Packs including a variety of books by and about Indigenous people and books which featured Dakota and Ojibwe languages and cultural themes. These packs were sent to clinics across the state, including to many of our Indian Health Service and Tribally-affiliated clinics.





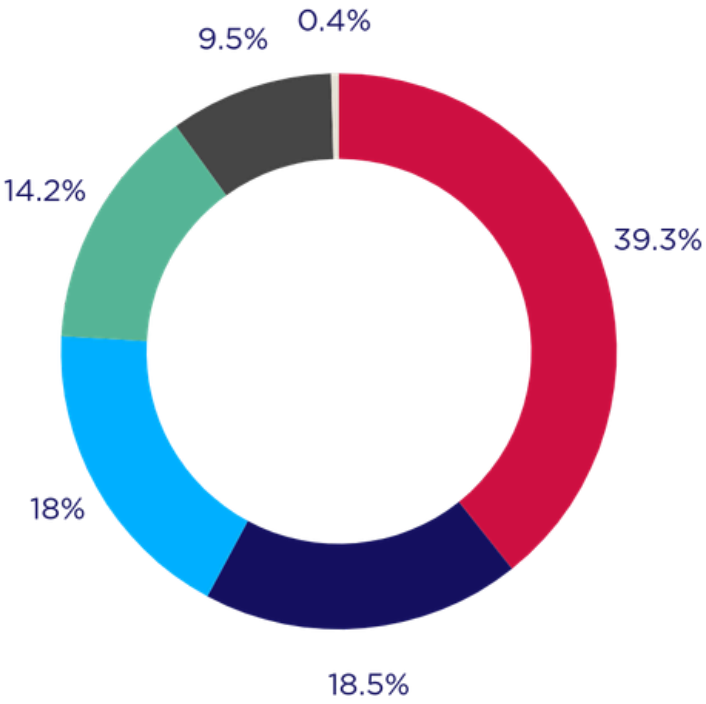






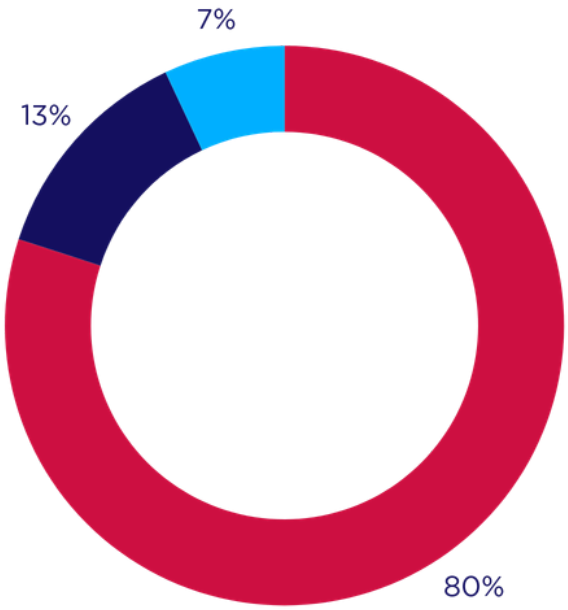
FINANCIALS

REVENUE: $636,259



- Government Grants
- Foundation Grants
- In-Kind Donations
- Individual and Corporate Donations
- Events
- Misc. (investments and apparel sales)

EXPENSES: $626,051



Program Fundraising Admin

*rounded to the nearest whole number

"It's a simple gift, but you can see how it transforms a routine well-child visit into an opportunity for connection, learning and joy."

St. Croix Health, Lindstrom Clinic



OUR SUPPORTERS

Foundations, corporations, and other organizations who stepped up to support Reach Out and Read Minnesota in FY26. This list does not include individual donors or anonymous donors.

$250,000
Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families

$20,000 – $30,000
CenterPoint Energy Foundation
Giving WoMN
St. Croix Valley Foundation
Hugh J Andersen Foundation

$10,000 – $19,999
Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
AbleNet Inc
University of Minnesota Medical Center - Fairview Medical Executive Committee
CAW Memorial Foundation

$2,500 – $9,999
All About Books
HealthPartners
Barefoot Books
Children's Minnesota
Delta Dental of Minnesota
Best & Flanagan
M Health Fairview

$1,000 – $2,499
Blaze Credit Union
North End Community Foundation
Gray Duck Publishing
Interstate Books4School

$500 – $999
Granite Partners
Xcel Energy Foundation

"I've seen how even very young patients light up, engage with the pages, and interact more with their caregivers. Parents often tell me they read more at home because of the books we give them."

Clinic in Southeastern Minnesota



OUR TEAM

Board of Directors

Gigi Chawla, MD, MHA (Medical Director)
VP Chief of General Pediatrics, Children's Minnesota

Michael O. Esan, MD, PhD
Pediatrician, Fairview

Tricia Dege
Founder & CEO, Mom Mastermind

Amy Fields, CPA (inactive)
Business Development Executive, Brown & Brown Insurance

Alicia Garrett
Resident Initiatives Director/Human Resources Director, St. Paul Public Housing Agency

Erin Ghere
Director of Consumer Experience Management, HealthPartners

Kate Keiper, SPHR, CPC (Chair)
Vice President of Human Resources and Physician Services, HealthPartners/Park Nicollet

Anna Kellund, MD
Pediatrician, Mayo Clinic

John C Markham, JD
Lawyer, Contracting and Vendor Coordinator with Minnesota Department of Information Technology

Mike Mercer, MD
Physician and faculty, United Family Physicians and United Family Medicine Residency Program

Anna Regas Paulson, M.Ed.
Grant Project Coordinator, Help Me Grow

Stephanie Snyder (Secretary)
CEO & Founder, Memitz Solutions | Executive Coach & Architect of Transformative Leadership

Liza Soto De Cichowicz, MBA, CMA (Treasurer)
Financial Executive, Life Floor

Christina Tibesar
Senior Client Solutions Director, Brillect

HaiVy Thompson
Managing Director, Medical and Health Content, American Cancer Society

Leann West, MD (Vice Chair)
Pediatrician, HealthPartners/Park Nicollet

Thank you to our board alumni who completed their terms this year:
Dr. Nathan Chomilo, **Lauren Gilchrist**, and **Dr. Molly Martyn.**

OUR TEAM

Staff

Cate Belleveau
Program Specialist
(Northern Minnesota)

Gigi Chawla
Medical Director

Eleanor GrandPre
Program Coordinator

Kris Hoplin
Executive Director

Janice Haines
Program Manager

Danette Kubit*
Program Specialist
(Southern Minnesota)

Liam Mackin
Communications and
Development Manager

Kristi Woods
Program Specialist
(Twin Cities & Central Minnesota)

*Left June 2026

"Reach Out and Read has been a huge blessing for so many families. They truly appreciate the books we provide."

Clinic in Minneapolis



CONNECT WITH US:

INSTAGRAM

FACEBOOK

LINKEDIN

YOUTUBE

3800 AMERICAN BLVD WEST
SUITE 1500 - 8013
BLOOMINGTON, MN 55431

(612) 208-9765