

# BCBSAZ's Foundation for Hope and Health

Building on a long tradition of inspiring health  
by Tyler Butler

► Our healthcare system has been through the most strenuous of times. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed communities to the brink, with many healthcare professionals receiving the worst of it. Despite this, one healthcare company has somehow completed a strategic transformation while handling the worst public health crisis in modern history.

Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Arizona has long stood for inspiring health. It focuses not only on the health of its members, but also its community and the State of Arizona at large. Making a positive difference is intrinsic to the work BCBSAZ does. In fact, it's been the company's mission to do so. And, with most of BCBSAZ's employees being local, the organization is engrained in the community.

BCBSAZ offers health insurance and related services to nearly 2 million customers. Having a strong connection to the community is important to the company's philosophy. Helping Arizona communities thrive is so innate that volunteering and giving back have been a priority to BCBSAZ. In 2019, the organization implemented Blue Gives Back to support strategic employee participation in community-related service projects. This program continues to grow and serves to inspire the health of the community.

Additionally, BCBSAZ has been a reliable leader in Arizona during the pandemic. This is largely the case because thousands of its employees stepped up to assist with vaccination rollout support in partnership with the state, federal and various local groups. By mobilizing employees, their families and the community, BCBSAZ was able to deliver nearly 150,000 volunteer hours, 24/7, administering almost half a million doses.

This level of support isn't new for BCBSAZ, though. For years, BCBSAZ has been a very visible philanthropic leader in the community — more recently even deepening its dedication to the state. Through its recently launched foundation, BCBSAZ will formalize its commitment to inspiring health and impacting health outcomes in positive ways. The Foundation will provide structure for BCBSAZ's philanthropic investments while expanding its reach.

Announced in January 2022, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona launched the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Foundation for Community & Health Advancement. This entity will build upon the work of BCBSAZ's public health initiatives and expand efforts to tackle the state's toughest health challenges. Focusing on mental health, health equity, chronic health conditions and substance use disorder, the Foundation will work to mobilize, uplift and advance Arizona's communities.

"We've always had a strong commitment to improving the health of Arizonans, and the Foundation is the framework that will allow us to take that commitment one step further," says Christine Wiggs, Ph.D., president, and board chair for the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Foundation for Community & Health Advancement.



The Foundation serves to amplify impact through cross-sector partnerships, and by providing grants that support programs and applied research. Their flagship focus is mental health. Through a three-year, \$5 million commitment, a wide range of mental health issues will be addressed. Applications for the first competitive grants opened on March 1, 2022, for programs and/or applied research that target issues such as access — provider shortage, telehealth, suicide prevention, youth mental health, intersection of mental health and substance use disorder, and the COVID-19 effect.

As a 501(c)(3) private, non-operating foundation, the Foundation for Community & Health Advancement works in service of the public good through grant funding for programs and applied research that align with its focus areas. "There is no better investment we can make than solving Arizona's most critical health issues," says Pam Kehaly, president and CEO of BCBSAZ. "Our organization is committed to addressing the rise in substance use disorder in Arizona; something that has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. By supporting the organizations that are doing important work in this field, we can amplify the impact and make real change for families and communities."

BCBSAZ continues to grow in its commitment to helping Arizonans get healthier faster and stay healthier longer. Having spent more than 80 years working hard to take care of its neighbors and friends around the state, BCBSAZ has an interconnected relationship with the State of Arizona. Both work to support the needs of Arizonans.

Whether helping members access care for chronic medical conditions or acute illnesses or developing programs to empower them to live healthier lives, BCBSAZ and its Foundation have the collective ability to affect people in profound ways. With a mission to inspire health and make it easy, BCBSAZ continues to make commitments to ensure it will enhance and uplift health in Arizona for many more generations to come. ■

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona [azblue.com](https://www.azblue.com)

## BCBSAZ'S CORPORATE GIVING PROGRAM

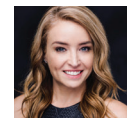
Through BCBSAZ's corporate giving program, a select number of event sponsorships and corporate memberships are supported each year. Grant opportunities for programmatic impact and applied research are available through the Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Arizona Foundation for Community & Health Advancement. Applications are accepted year-round. Event sponsorships must be submitted 60 calendar days in advance of the event to be considered.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR BCBSAZ FUNDING

Organizations eligible for BCBSAZ corporate giving are those that are based in Arizona and meet one of the following entity definitions:

- 501(c)3, (4), (6), or (19) organization
- Recognized government agency (includes state, county, or city agency, including law enforcement)
- Accredited educational institution
- Religious organization with a nonsectarian program

[azbluefoundation.org](https://www.azbluefoundation.org)



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