



2025 Progress Report



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Paul Ryan".

Paul D. Ryan



Former Speaker of the House
& President of the American Idea
Foundation

Measuring Results
Expanding Opportunity
Improving Lives.



www.AmericanIdeaFoundation.com





2025 Progress Report

Upon leaving Congress in 2019, former Speaker of the House Paul Ryan redoubled his commitment to advancing solutions that reduce poverty and expand economic opportunities for all Americans. This commitment stemmed from his desire to help individuals pursue their version of the American Dream and a sense of frustration over the federal government's failure to prioritize results and evidence, particularly when it came to helping people get back on their feet.

In 2019, to channel these sentiments in a productive way, Ryan launched the American Idea Foundation (AIF), a not-for-profit whose mission is to support front-line organizations with a track record of using evidence and data to alleviate problems being faced by Americans.



The American Idea Foundation believes by taking the politics out of poverty-fighting and focusing on results, successful programs can be scaled, elevated, and replicated. In Ryan's view, this approach – developing solutions that work and validating these interventions with evidence -- should provide the government with a clearer blueprint to better address the challenges facing individuals and communities across the United States.



This is why the American Idea Foundation actively partners with organizations to help build repositories of data which serve to validate innovative strategies. The Foundation believes by providing funds, offering strategic advice, and raising awareness about evidence-based approaches, Americans who are in-need will be better off.

The mission of the American Idea Foundation is to expand the “American Idea” by fighting poverty, expanding upward mobility, and deepening the use of evidence and data in decision-making. AIF does this by identifying groups and organizations around the country living this mission and supports their efforts in the following ways:

1. The Foundation provides direct funding, via annual grants, to community-led organizations so these groups can work with academic partners to evaluate their approaches through data and evidence.
2. The Foundation brings policymakers and local leaders to these organizations and explains first-hand why these programs are working, what evidence supports their success, and how these solutions can be scaled and replicated.
3. The Foundation utilizes Speaker Ryan's public profile to shine a light on programs, policies, and solutions with demonstrated track records of improving outcomes.



Supporting Impactful Organizations, Promoting Evidence-Based Solutions

With polarization and partisanship on the rise, the American Idea Foundation believes that leaders have an obligation to strengthen civil society and support local organizations making a tangible difference in people's lives. After 25 years in Congress, Paul knows the answers to all of America's problems are not necessarily found in Washington, DC. They are found in our neighborhoods and in our communities.

Beginning in 2022, the Foundation has issued annual grants to groups developing evidence-based solutions to issues like financial literacy, workforce development, early childhood health, education, recidivism, and family well-being. Each year, Ryan and his Foundation work with these amazing outfits, share policy expertise and insights, and elevate their efforts in a variety of ways.



In 2025, the Foundation partnered with 8 different organizations from across America who are making an impact in a data-driven way. Upon announcing this year's grant recipients, Ryan said:

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“I recently spent a day with two of the Foundation's past grant recipients: NPower and Per Scholas, meeting their students, learning from their leaders, and understanding the transformative impact they have in their communities. We brought together employers, practitioners, and legislators – all of whom want to create more economic opportunities and upward mobility. It was inspiring. It showed the importance of fostering these strategic relationships, and it filled me with excitement about our 2025 grant recipients.

“The 2025 grant recipients are at the forefront of scaling evidence-based solutions to America's toughest challenges. They are helping the most vulnerable among us and doing it in ways that are supported by data. By combining the dedication of these front-line organizations with the know-how of academic researchers and policymakers, I am confident America can move the needle when it comes to alleviating poverty.”

This year, the Foundation provided funds and support to the following organizations.

1.

ASSISTments



Developed by Neil and Cristina Heffernan, who began their careers as middle-school math teachers, the mission of ASSISTments is to improve math instruction and comprehension by making learning more evidence-based and more aligned with the diverse needs of students. ASSISTments blends tutoring assistance with assessment reporting for teachers and students to ensure every student, particularly those in grades 3 through 8, is supported and successful in math classes.



ASSISTments aims to improve mathematics education by giving schools access to their proprietary online tools and by providing training for teachers so they can educate students using illustrative assignments aligned with testing-standards and curriculum.

This tech-based programming provides instant data to students and teachers, allowing them to adjust their instruction in real-time. ASSISTments allows students to build math skills, to understand that mistakes are part of the learning process, and to utilize data and technological tools to improve test scores in math.

ASSISTments has developed one of the strongest bases of evidence across education interventions. ASSISTments has been recognized by the federal [What Works Clearinghouse](#) and is one of the few mathematics-education interventions with credible evidence supporting it. Multiple researchers have found that ASSISTments does 3 critical things:

1. ASSISTments provides long-term gains for students, improving test scores over multiple years.
2. It narrows the achievement gap, with students of color seeing the strongest effects among subgroups.
3. It has a more profound impact in schools with higher percentages of economically disadvantaged students and those in resource-limited schools.

Because of this commitment to evidence and because of the short-term and long-term benefits of ASSISTments, [Maryland Governor Wes Moore](#) announced he would provide 24,000 Maryland students with access to ASSISTments from 2024-2028. As ASSISTments scales in a data-driven way, the American Idea Foundation is proud to support their efforts which help school districts, teachers, and individual students alike.

2. Care Portal



CarePortal is an online hub, a digital platform, and a networking community that links caseworkers, social service agencies, churches, local philanthropists, and aid organizations with children and families in times of crisis.

CarePortal predominately serves those involved in the child welfare system or those who are at risk of entering the child welfare system due to preventable causes like poverty and neglect. The organization's mission is to keep families together, keep children healthy and happy, and harness the power of networking to create a community of caregivers that those in-need can turn to during trying times.

Each service provided or request met via CarePortal is designed to prevent children from entering foster care, to aid their families, or to improve their educational or health outcomes -- and to do so before a breakdown occurs.

CarePortal's growth is driven by individuals and communities' desire to support their neighbors in-need. The Wall Street Journal's Andy Kessler described CarePortal as "[The Uber of Foster Care](#)," and explained the organization's maturation in this way:



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“The origin story: Healthcare executive Adrien Lewis and his wife began fostering children in 2011 and spent two years trying to get churches in the Kansas City area to recruit foster parents—no easy task. Then, “out of nowhere,” Mr. Lewis says, “I get a vision for CarePortal, to leverage technology to connect. In crisis, those touched by the child-welfare system could connect with churches and people who care in proximity that would want to help if they knew...

So “with shoestring and duct tape, we pulled together different software platforms and kind of jimmied them together. A pilot of CarePortal hit the market in Austin, Texas in late 2014. People went nuts over it. The very first request was for a family with a bedbug problem who was trying to adopt a cousin who had been in foster care. Supplies and volunteers solved their bedding problem....

CarePortal at its essence is a request-response loop. On one side are social-service professionals, social workers and others who enter “real-time vetted needs of kids and families in crisis” into the CarePortal app. On the other side are local churches and community responders who see the need and jump into action.”



From those earnest beginnings, CarePortal has developed a network of 1,000 agencies and 6,000 local church and aid response teams across 37 different states that serve a projected 140,000 children and families annually.

By combining modern technology with local civic, philanthropic, and faith-based organizations’ desire to help society’s most vulnerable children, CarePortal has hit on an innovative and impactful strategy to keep families intact. The American Idea Foundation is honored to support their efforts to strengthen civil society and assist our neighbors in times of crisis.

3.

Catholic Charities of Fort Worth



AIF President Paul Ryan has long believed the [case-management](#) model utilized by [Catholic Charities of Fort Worth](#) is an effective way to help individuals out of poverty. As [Fort Worth Inc.](#) explained when profiling Catholic Charities of Fort Worth’s approach:

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“Catholic Charities isn’t handing out scholarships or money; they’re guiding students to make the right decisions and navigate challenges. The goal is to help individuals move from survival jobs to career roles, teaching soft skills that lead to promotions.

As Paul Ryan says, “What [Catholic Charities] Padua Project is doing is more than just helping people get jobs or improve housing — they’re helping them achieve their God-given potential, building a more just society.”

How does Catholic Charities of Fort Worth’s Padua Project work?

Notre Dame’s Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO), which has partnered with Catholic Charities of Fort Worth on empirical [studies](#), described the Padua Project this way:



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“The backbone of Padua is wrap-around, “supercharged” case management that involves a two-person team of social workers and begins with building a relationship with clients. The Padua model ensures a high level of personal support for each client. Clients work with their teams to set goals related to asset areas that are key to clients’ long-term success including finances, education, social skills, legal status and physical and emotional well-being.”



It’s a high-touch, labor-intensive care modality designed to help people get back on their feet over the long-term. And it’s delivering results.

Catholic Charities’ approach to expanding upward mobility has been the subject of multiple [randomized controlled trials](#), each with incredibly promising findings, and though there have been [challenges](#) along the way, the “Padua Project” has made an enormous impact helping those struggling in Fort Worth, Texas.

Notre Dame’s RCT found real improvements in self-sufficiency and labor market outcomes for Padua participants, including:

- 25% more likely to have full-time employment than the control group.
- Monthly earnings were 18% higher after 2 years, compared with the control group.
- 43% of participants reported improved health after two years.

Because of their impact and because of the strong base of evidence in support of the “Padua Project” in Fort Worth, the American Idea Foundation has awarded a 2025 grant to Catholic Charities so they can scale, replicate, and study their program’s effectiveness in other U.S. cities.

4. College Possible



Founded by [Jim McCorkell](#), who was a first-generation college student, in St. Paul, Minnesota, College Possible was built on the belief that every student, regardless of their individual challenges, should have a chance to attend and succeed in college.

Starting with 35 students and a group of AmeriCorps coaches, College Possible has helped nearly 100,000 students since they began twenty-five years ago. Their expansion is due, in equal parts, to their unique programming model and their fidelity to data and evidence.

College Possible matches eligible students with near-peer coaches and provides an intensive curriculum designed to help these students overcome the most common barriers to getting into college and completing their degrees. They provide these services at no cost to students or their families.



Operating from one of College Possible's 8 sites across the country, coaches provide students who have been selected as having high academic potential and who come from low-income backgrounds, with 5 critical services:

- (1) academic support through ACT/SAT test preparation;
- (2) college application assistance;
- (3) financial aid consulting;
- (4) guidance in the transition to college; and
- (5) coaching throughout college to support the academic confidence, financial literacy and resilience needed to graduate.



Originally conceived as a program centered around “[test prep help for students who can't afford Kaplan](#),” College Possible has expanded methodically.

Beginning in 2008, College Possible began working with the Milwaukee Public School system, deploying their model to help students successfully apply and complete an undergraduate degree. In 2018, [a multi-year evaluation](#) was commissioned to measure how students participating in the College Possible program performed relative to a peer group who were also in the Milwaukee Public School system. The [results](#) of the evaluation were impressive. Among them:

- College Possible students were 30% more likely to enroll in college immediately after high school.
- College Possible students completed 1.4x the number of scholarship applications relative to the comparison group.
- Enrolled students were 30% more likely to attend a 4-year college or university.

The data from [College Possible](#) alumni is a testament to the program's impact. In a 2024 survey of alumni, 95% of college graduates were employed, 71% were saving for retirement, 57% have experienced material career advancements, and nearly 40% were pursuing or had completed an advanced degree.

College Possible was created with the noble goal of helping every young person in America pursue higher education and because of the effectiveness of their peer-coaches and their reliance on evidence in shaping their programming, they are well on their way to succeeding.

5. Family Promise of Wisconsin



Family Promise of Wisconsin is a state-based affiliate of the national Family Promise organization, which works with faith-based and community organizations to move families to stable housing where they can grow and thrive. Family Promise of Wisconsin is focused on ending homelessness by connecting families with a suite of services like supplies to meet their basic needs, access to family support and emergency assistance, and other stabilization efforts.



Family Promise of Wisconsin employs a case management model, providing individualized, wrap-around support for families and their children. The people engaging Family Promise of Wisconsin are often seeking urgent assistance with basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter and Family Promise works tirelessly to address their immediate problems while identifying long-term solutions for shelter.



They try to divert clients from homelessness and costly shelter stays by instead providing them with alternative temporary housing options. Most individuals who enter emergency shelters tend to remain homeless longer, which is why Family Promise seeks to intervene before that occurs, operating with a lighter touch and supporting individuals as they find alternatives like short-term rental housing or staying with family and friends.

Across the country, Family Promise has a network of 200 sites in 40 different states. Since 1988, they have helped over 1,000,000 families in times of great need. Most of their families (50%) are minorities and 100% are low-income or no-income.

In 2025-2026, Family Promise is looking to expand to 8 sites operating full-time in Wisconsin. Thus far, they have served 516 Wisconsin families with 936 children through their four core programs: Prevention, Shelter, Housing, and Stabilization.

As Family Promise summarized in their [2024 Annual Report](#): “Preventing and ending family homelessness requires a community response. Family Promise maximizes impact through extensive partnerships and collaborative contributions at the national level, as well as through local businesses and community organizations within every community.” The American Idea Foundation is eager to assist them in this endeavor as they expand their impact in Wisconsin and across the nation.



6. Saga Education

Started in 2014, Saga Education is a high-dosage math tutoring program for students in grade 9 delivered by a combination of in-person tutors and technology-enabled support systems. Saga Education uses high-impact, in-person and online tutoring to transform public education outcomes for diverse student populations.

Saga Education focuses on math for a specific reason, because Algebra 1 is a pivotal gateway subject to high school graduation and long-term economic mobility.

Saga Education directly addresses this issue by delivering in-school-day tutoring that utilizes the power of human capital and modern technology to support students facing external challenges, like income disparities and racial barriers.

Saga Education tutors work in small groups, 1 tutor to 2-3 students, and they hold sessions 3 times per week for 30-50 minutes per day. The tutoring received is a dedicated, credit-bearing course embedded with students' daily class schedules and delivered in addition to their core math classes. The Saga Education teachers, most of whom are recent college graduates being provided an annual stipend, stay with students throughout their educational journey and combine academic instruction, mentoring, and strong school-to-home relationships.



According to Saga Education, when looking more holistically at their impact, the effect of the tutoring program was meaningful:

- Students learned up to 2.5 years' worth of math in one academic year.
- Math course failures were reduced by as much as 63% and course failures in non-tutored subjects were reduced by as much as 26%.
- Student attendance improves by as much as 18 days per academic year.

Each of the RCTs found “that the program produced sizable, statistically significant effects on student math scores on the district tests at the end of the tutoring year.” They also found that the positive effect of the program persists over time.

As University of Chicago researchers summarized when analyzing Saga Education's approach.

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“It is possible to substantially improve academic skills by accounting for the challenges of individualizing instruction—among other things—and these strategies can be effective even when implemented in traditional public high schools to broad, representative samples of students. These strategies seem to work even with secondary school students, yielding benefit cost ratios comparable to promising early childhood programs. Evidently adolescence is not too late to realize large social benefits from human capital investment.”



Without question, Saga Education has produced promising initial results in helping students cross a critical educational threshold and pass Algebra 1, which is why the American Idea Foundation is excited to partner with them as they continue to grow and evaluate their strategies.



7. Triple P – Positive Parenting Program

Triple P, which stands for “[Positive Parenting Program](#),” is a system of community-level education and training programs for parents of children ages 0 through 16. The program focuses on delivering customized-tools for parents to utilize during the major developmental periods of a child’s life: infant, toddler, pre-school, elementary school, and as a teenager.



Triple P gives parents the skills to ensure a safe environment for their kids, to foster a positive learning atmosphere, to develop an understanding of assertive discipline, to set realistic expectations, and to care for themselves and their children. The core services provided by Triple P include cognitive behavioral therapy; community mobilization; conflict resolution; counseling and social work; family therapy; parent training; skills training; and social emotional learning.

Just as the program is tailored to specific development periods of a child’s life, the Triple P system is also comprised of specific “levels,” which are bundles of services provided to families and communities based on need, including risk levels for child maltreatment. The more in-need, the more support that is provided through the Triple P programming.

The Triple P program is one of the earliest parenting interventions, started by an Australian doctor in the 1970’s, and it has been implemented across the globe. Because of its long history and global reach, Triple P has a more [extensive evidence base](#) than any other parenting program in the world.

Triple P is an ideal example of how these successful programs can be founded on a basis of evidence, can maintain fidelity to data during the scaling and replication process, and can incorporate findings from its evidence base to better assist parents and families.

Because of the positive impacts seen across the globe, the American Idea Foundation awarded a 2025 grant to the [Running Rebels](#) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin so they can bring the Triple P model to local parents and families who are in need.

Speaker Ryan has championed the example set by the [Running Rebels’ Victor and Dawn Barnett](#) and believes they can effectively introduce the concepts of the Triple P parenting program to Milwaukee families.

Consequently, funds from the American Idea Foundation will be utilized to train a cohort of Milwaukee-area parents with the Triple P model and to collect evidence and research on the program’s impact. The hope is that not only will this effort contribute to the growing body of data around Triple P’s effectiveness but also assist Wisconsin families and children have happier and healthier lives.



ADVANCING POLICES & PROGRAMS TO EXPAND UPWARD MOBILITY

The Foundation has continued to use Speaker Ryan's platform as a recent leader of the House of Representatives to lend a voice to the public policy challenges facing our nation. Throughout 2025, the Foundation visited a series of think tanks, forums, and college campuses where Speaker Ryan was able to talk to community leaders, as well as the next generation of American leaders, about policies that expand economic opportunities.

This Spring, at the [American Enterprise Institute](#) (AEI), Ryan led a conversation with House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Jason Smith (MO-08) and facilitated a panel with policy experts on the One, Big, Beautiful Bill and the future of the U.S. tax code. In both discussions, attended by over 150 DC-area policy leaders, Ryan extolled the need to extend portions of the Tax Cuts and Job Act, making the case that pro-growth tax policy will promote economic opportunities for millions of Americans. Ryan said:

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“Our goal with the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) was simple: Improve the competitiveness of the United States internationally, spur economic growth and provide tax relief for hard-working Americans. I think the TCJA succeeded with accomplishing these goals. We saw robust economic growth since its passage and, at least prior to the inflationary policies of President Biden, strong wage growth for all Americans, particularly lower-income Americans... I truly believe that your success [in extending the TCJA] will be determinative of America's continued leadership of the world as we progress through the 21st century.”

In March, AIF President Paul Ryan talked with Georgetown University students and young professionals about fiscal policy and how America's out-of-control national debt is imperiling economic growth. In an hour-long discussion facilitated by AIF Board Member Jonathan Burks, who serves as the Executive Vice President for Economic & Health Policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, Ryan detailed the drivers America's growing debt, touched on how elected officials can address our economic challenges, and why doing so matters to current and future generations. He also imparted some wisdom for Georgetown students pursuing a vocation in public policy. During the forum hosted by Georgetown's McCourt School, Ryan discussed AIF's work in this way:



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“My foundation looks at programs that we think have promise to see how well they do and if they do well, we want to franchise, scale, and replicate them around the country. We evaluate these programs in conjunction with Notre Dame economists, and the point I'm trying to make is America should have a strong emphasis on helping the poor in this country....

One of my frustrations is that we have these 20th-century welfare benefits that are well-intended, but our poverty rates are the same. We have had the same poverty rates since we started the War on Poverty over 50 years ago and we have spent trillion of dollars on it....

If we measure in the War on Poverty by throwing money at the problem and creating new programs, rather than measuring whether people are actually getting out of poverty, we are not doing it the right way. We need to focus on outcomes, not inputs. We can use what we now know in economics and technology to create a far better performing system to fight poverty.”



In June, at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, CA, Paul joined the [Reagan National Economic Forum](#) to talk about applying Reagan's pro-growth philosophy to today's economic challenges. On stage, he said:

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“In a growing environment, the politics and culture that come from pro-growth economics is a positive sum game. It's win-win. We strive for equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome in people's lives. In a growing economic environment, our politics are better. It is not “one side wins and one side loses.” It is positive sum, an additive game, and the populism that comes from that kind of movement is positive. We are happy about other people's success. We don't want a class-based society; we want a society punctuated by upward mobility.”

And in November, Vice President Mike Pence welcomed Ryan to Grove City College where he served as the keynote speaker for the college's 18th Annual Reagan Day lecture. In a lengthy conversation on the past, present, and future of the conservative movement, Ryan offered straight-forward advice to the next generation of leaders:

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“Don't chase social media applause. Play the long game.... Don't compromise principles for popularity.... When they expect anger, meet them with optimism and confidence.”

“Be a happy warrior—don't be an angry troll—and articulate timeless principles in a persuasive, inclusive, and joyful way.”

Led by our President, the American Idea Foundation will continue advancing solutions that address our nation's fiscal problems and increase economic opportunities. AIF will keep advocating for the use of evidence and data when it comes to fighting poverty and shine a light on those organizations making real differences in people's lives.



“If we’re going to preserve the American idea, it’s going to take all of us working together. Supporting organizations doing the hard but amazing work on the front-lines of our communities is incredibly valuable as leaders craft public policies to promote upward mobility.

“By focusing on evidence-based strategies with proven track records of success and by allocating resources based on results, not partisan preferences, I know we will make meaningful progress in the war on poverty. I’m grateful the American Idea Foundation can play a small role in this effort and bring attention to deserving interventions.”

— AIF PRESIDENT & FORMER HOUSE SPEAKER **PAUL RYAN**



To learn more about the American Idea Foundation, please visit:

www.AmericanIdeaFoundation.com

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