

Wellspring Foundation Awards Grant to Grayson County DSS to Launch Community Support Platform Across Four Counties

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A new regional initiative is launching this fall to support residents in crisis across Southwest Virginia. Thanks to a generous grant from the Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia, Grayson County Department of Social Services (DSS)—in partnership with Washington, Russell, and Smyth County DSS offices—will expand access to CareForward, a Roanoke-based mobile technology platform that connects community members with neighbors in urgent need.



The expansion will officially launch with a community kickoff event at 11:00 AM October 17th, 2025 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

“We believe healthy communities are built when people step up to serve one another,” said Sean McMurray, Executive Director of the Wellspring Foundation. “CareForward is doing the essential work of connecting neighbors through purpose and compassion, and we’re proud to support their expansion into Southwest Virginia.”

CareForward operates a secure, mobile-friendly platform that connects local volunteers and partner organizations with critical needs identified by departments of social services. These needs may include transportation to appointments, donation of gently used medical equipment and furniture, basic home repairs, accessibility improvements, or other supports that promote safety, dignity, and health at home.

“This partnership allows each of our local departments to offer new tools that directly address urgent gaps in care,” said Kristin Shumate, Director of Grayson County DSS. “It’s an opportunity to activate local volunteers, businesses, churches, and civic groups to improve lives right here in

our communities.”

CareForward supports individuals who are at risk of experiencing a negative health outcome without timely community intervention. This includes seniors, people with chronic or complex health conditions, individuals with disabilities, and those facing housing instability or social isolation. CareForward’s goal is to connect these individuals with volunteers and resources that help them remain safely in their homes and communities. Eligibility is determined by whether the person’s well-being could be significantly improved, or harm prevented, through a responsive act of care.

“Our mission is simple: bring people together to improve health and well-being,” said Natalie Handy, CEO of CareForward, Inc. “This partnership with the Wellspring Foundation allows us to strengthen the fabric of Southwest Virginia communities by mobilizing care at the neighborhood level. We’re grateful for their investment and excited to get started.”

Community members are encouraged to get involved by signing up as individual volunteers or partner organizations. Volunteers can build ramps, check in on isolated individuals, provide transportation, and more. Businesses, churches, nonprofits, and civic groups can contribute by donating goods, offering discounts, or organizing volunteer teams.

To learn more or to sign up, volunteer.careforward.io/wellspring

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