

Work with local agencies to identify children in need

Depending on your clinic's location and community demographics, you may find that your appointment schedule fills up quickly, or very slowly, for your event. At times, it may feel frustrating to offer FREE service, and then have to go out and find patients to receive it. Rest assured, the children who need this service are out there – many of them. In fact, Minnesota had 143,000 children (11.2%) living in poverty – with 62,000 (43%) in extreme poverty -- as of November 2020, according to Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota. However, these families can be difficult to reach.

*The MDA will coordinate statewide promotion of Give Kids a Smile, directing families to the association website and to United Way 2-1-1 to find participating clinics. This can help fill your appointment schedule IF you have opted to be included on the online/United Way listing. Whether or not you do that, it is always beneficial to reach out to schools and agencies in your own community that work with low-income children. **Ask if you can work together to get those children scheduled at your clinic.** These community connections not only create a satisfying event for your clinic, knowing you've helped those closest within your own community, it also helps prevent failed appointments.*

Here are a few resources to help you find local organizations that work with low-income families:

County public health nurses and/or WIC agencies. An online directory, sorted by county, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/forms/cfh/wicdirectory/index.html>

Help Me Connect. A comprehensive online directory for people who need human service resources, <https://helpmeconnect.web.health.state.mn.us/HelpMeConnect> This is a great place to start looking for your local food shelves and other emergency-need programs.

School nurses and counselors. Start by contacting your local school district health office or a nearby school directly. Don't forget local Head Start (<https://mnheadstart.org/Head-Start-Programs>) and Family Education (ECFE) locations.

Community Action Partnership (**MinnCAP**). This network of agencies includes those that offer the last local line of defense for families in need, <https://www.minncap.org/>

Minnesota County Child & Teen Checkup coordinators. This directory lists the coordinator for each county or tribe, <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfs/Server/Public/DHS-7927-ENG>

Faith communities. Larger faith communities may offer health resources or be able to pass information along to families who could most benefit from Give Kids a Smile.