

# ESSENCE PREP

San Antonio, Texas



USI | URBAN STRATEGIES, INC.  
Families at the Center of Results

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## ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WILL BE STABLE AND THRIVING

Urban Strategies Inc. (USI) is a national nonprofit leader and transformative force in community development, championing EQUITY AND INNOVATION across 45 communities in 28 metropolitan areas, including two territories. With over 45 years of experience as a national non-profit leader, we've embraced that real change happens when families are placed at the center of our efforts. This belief drives our commitment to data-led, people-first approaches, empowering communities to chart their own course toward stability and prosperity.

Through the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, USI provided Family Supportive Services to individuals living in Wheatley Courts public housing development. In 2019, USI became a partner of the United Way of San Antonio & Bexar County Successful Students Impact Council (SSIC). Through this partnership, USI strives to ensure all young people are actively engaged in their communities, prepared for the 21st Century workforce and have resource-rich environments with prepared and engaged adults to support them in reaching their full potential. We provide the support and service connections to change the trajectory of children and families' education and career opportunities. For children, we intentionally connect them with strong education options while providing ongoing holistic family support. As an intermediary, we help schools tackle the academic achievement gap, by helping our children to not only become stronger in academics but also become socially and emotionally solid as well thought leaders.

### EDUCATION INDICATORS

Enroll 1st - 3rd grade scholars of which 52% will narrow reading proficiency gap by the end of the school year.



Enroll 4th - 8th grade scholars of which 63% will narrow math proficiency gap by the end of the school year.



### CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

USI addresses the need for equitable innovative programming by connecting in-school youth to experiences that motivate learning, develop relationships, and inspire a vision for STEAM related careers. Programs are implemented at Essence Preparatory Public School, a tuition-free public school on the Eastside of San Antonio, which opened in August 2022. Essence Prep was created to meet black and brown children's educational, social, and emotional needs by developing leading agents of change through rigorous academics and intentional character development.

*Our local education scope utilizes the Development Relationships framework and includes three components: reading support, hands-on math, and community awareness.*

## READING SUPPORT

USI collaborates with local education partners such as the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) College of Education to facilitate an inquiry-based literacy mentoring program called Roadrunner Readers. For ten weeks, scholars receive one-on-one instruction from college students that help enhance reading skills, including fluency, vocabulary, and decoding. At the end of the semester there is a celebration of learning and student showcase. Additionally, USI participates in Jumpstart's Read for the Record, which is a shared reading experience to celebrate children's language and social-emotional development. The annual day of celebration raises awareness around literacy.

## HANDS ON MATH

USI facilitates innovative math activities for scholars to use real life experiences like cooking, games, and sports to help gain a deeper appreciation about math all around them. One way we do that is through NBA Math Hoops, a program of Learn Fresh, that leverages the game of basketball to build fundamental math and social-emotional skills through a physical and digital basketball-themed board game, a curriculum, and a community program experience.

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS

USI hosts grade level field trips to foster curiosity, empathy, and a broader understanding of the world. Field trips contribute to community awareness by bridging classroom learning with real-world contexts, fostering cultural understanding, and encouraging active engagement in local issues. USI has provided STEM related field trips for scholars to San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology (SAMSAT), HEB Outdoor Camp, Legoland Discovery Center, and Morgan's Wonderland.

