



**BANK ON  
ARKANSAS+**

**Arkansas**  
Asset Funders Network

## **Bank On Arkansas+**

*A coalition of community organizations, financial institutions, grantmakers, and other stakeholders creating an environment that reduces and removes barriers to mainstream banking and promotes asset building*

### **The Challenge: Too Many Arkansans are Unbanked and Underbanked**

When people don't have an account at a financial institution, they are vulnerable to a number of financial threats. Check-cashing services hit them with sky-high service fees. Predatory lenders and rent-to-own establishments can trap them in cycles of debt. And, because they operate on a cash basis, a loss, theft, or disaster can wipe them out.

This cycle of "barely scraping by" is not uncommon among the unbanked and underbanked community in Arkansas. According to the latest Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's survey, Arkansas has 9.7% unbanked households and 22.6% underbanked households.

A checking or savings account is a critical part of financial empowerment and economic mobility. With an account, people keep more of their hard earned money. They build a relationship with a financial institution—essential for saving, borrowing, and long-term financial planning. When people are banked, they are in a position to contribute to the overall health of the communities in which they live.

### **The Solution: Bank On Arkansas+**

In response to this national issue, cities and towns across the country have adopted the "Bank On" model. The model is housed at a national nonprofit organization—Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) Fund—which helps support local coalition efforts to connect consumers to safe and affordable bank accounts. In Arkansas, the Arkansas Asset Funders Network (AR AFN) recognizes the benefits resulting from the Bank On model initiative and seeded the first-ever statewide Bank On Arkansas+ Coalition.

The goal of Bank On Arkansas+ (BOA+) is for all Arkansans to have safe, trusted, and affordable banking so they have the opportunity to save for themselves, build wealth for their families, and improve quality of life in their communities.

### **Where It's Working: Savannah, GA**

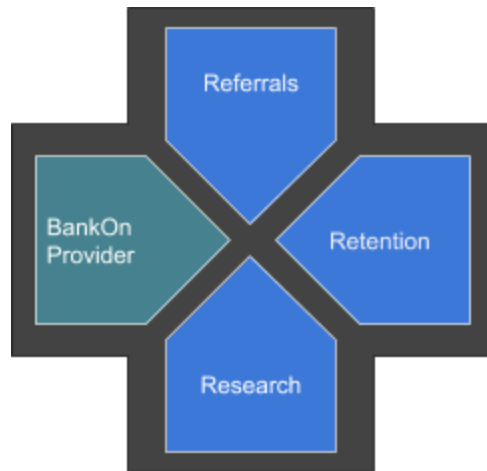
The City of Savannah, GA, built its Bank On structure in 2009. Bank On Savannah is a joint effort among the Banking Taskforce, the City of Savannah, the Federal Deposit

Insurance Corporation, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Several area banks participate in the taskforce and regularly meet to discuss and make improvements to the campaign. Since launch, banks have reported an estimated 1,000 Bank On accounts have been opened annually.

Savannah is a great example of what can happen when cities prioritize and protect their vulnerable communities. As a result, Savannah's citizens are provided with affordable access to bank accounts and financial education so they may become more financially secure and build, maintain, and protect financial assets such as savings, homes, and small businesses.

### **Be Part of the Solution as a Bank On Arkansas+ Partner**

A Bank On Arkansas+ Partner has a statewide footprint and provides three functions:



Referrals - Plus Partners are willing “channel” partners, those that drive their clients to financial institutions with Bank On Arkansas+ accounts.

Retention - Plus Partners are those that offer financial capability services such as financial education, financial coaching, credit building, debt management, asset building, and/or small business development.

Research - Plus Partners are engaged in data collection and synthesis to inform coalition members on metrics related to target audience demand for

financial products and services as well as outputs and outcomes of participating Bank On Arkansas+ clients.

Bank On Arkansas+ Partners are coalition members who offer financial capability services, develop demand for Bank On products, support Bank On client retention, and build a body of research related to the Bank On Arkansas+ initiative.

### **Next Steps: Join the Bank On Arkansas+ Coalition**

Schedule a call with Kara Wilkins, director of Bank On Arkansas+, to discuss how you can engage in the coalition. (Email: [kara@assetfunders.org](mailto:kara@assetfunders.org) | Cell: 410-292-9569)

Financially empowered families lead to financially empowered communities where everyone in the state of Arkansas, not just the few, can set and achieve their financial goals. Will you join us?