

## Impact Grant

### The Ounce of Prevention Fund



#### Giving children in poverty the best chance for success

Since 1982, the Ounce of Prevention Fund has persistently pursued a single goal: that all American children – particularly those born into poverty – have quality early childhood experiences in the crucial first five years of life.

In the Ounce's home visiting programs, coaches regularly visit teen parents to provide them with child-development information. By modeling appropriate parenting practices, home visitors help young, inexperienced parents nurture the healthy development of their children. Studies of these home visitation programs have shown a significant reduction in potential child abuse and neglect and more positive health outcomes for the infant and mother.

Claire Dunham is the Senior Vice President of Programs and Training and has been with the Ounce for 18 years. She was brought on as the Training Manager for the first classes of home visitors that provided intensive, long-term mentoring services to teen parents and their families in at-risk communities. The Ounce's 'Parents Too Soon' training programs grew quickly and Claire's team was soon training home visitors in 40 different locations across Illinois.

Website: [www.theounce.org](http://www.theounce.org)

Founded: 1982

Located: Chicago, IL

**Mission:** To ensure that all American children—particularly those born into poverty—have quality early childhood experiences in the crucial first five years of life.

the **Ounce**



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– CLAIRE DUNHAM, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS AND TRAINING, THE OUNCE

## Growing quickly while maintaining quality

The Ounce’s home visitor training program is grounded in a specific set of evidence-based competencies. Early on, Claire and her team delivered multiple check-ins and in-person trainings for the home visitors to ensure these competencies were being achieved and to provide ongoing mentorship to the parent coaches.

As the program started to expand, they struggled to maintain this “high-touch” training model and found it increasingly difficult to preserve strong connections with their home visitors. Only a few staff members could deliver the in-person training and Claire and her team began to get more requests from all parts of Illinois. Travel expenses were eating into other program costs and the trainers struggled to balance time out of the office with their other job responsibilities. As a result, training programs in some of the more remote parts of Illinois had to be significantly scaled back or eliminated completely. Claire and her team tried to offset the loss of these smaller training sessions with a conference-style version of their courses, but found these large-scale trainings could not affect the same change in practice.

As the first few cohorts of babies and new parents matured, Claire and her team saw firsthand the impact the home visitor program was having and the sharp increase in demand for home visiting services across the country. As acceptance of home visiting grew, the Ounce did an intensive

needs assessment with home visiting programs and thought leaders across the country and determined they could fill a critical need and have a significant impact on the lives of children in poverty. But the team also knew they could never reach their goal of becoming the de facto training program for home visitors across the country using the existing in-person training model.

## Blending in-person and online training

The Ounce considered different models to reach a national audience of home visitors and began by piloting their first learning management system (LMS) in Illinois in 2006. The online platform was sufficient to register new home visitors and deliver some review courses between the in-person trainings. But the system could not handle complex e-learning or curriculum management. “We spent a lot of time and money getting that first system up and running,” explains Dunham. “And then a colleague I trust came in, took a look at it and said, ‘For this program to make a difference, you need an LMS that can deliver true adult learning. Unfortunately, this isn’t it.’ My immediate reaction was ‘How do we get one that will?’”

The Ounce team met with a consultant who provided an overview of emerging online technology to enable knowledge sharing and online learning to reach national audiences. The consultant also introduced the Ounce to the Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation, believing that the Impact Grant program could be a good match for their needs.

## Taking the program nationwide

The Ounce was awarded an Impact Grant in 2013 and has since been thoughtfully implementing their new online training platform, Achieve OnDemand™. Immediately, Claire and a team of senior leaders at the Ounce saw how this technology could put their program on an accelerated growth path: “We knew the Impact Grant was going to be a game changer for us. Our consultant had recommended an online learning system for some time. But we knew that if we went in baby steps, we would never be able to get there. The Impact grant has been a huge jump ahead and has given us the infrastructure to scale up many parts of the program.”

The team has been moving very quickly to migrate their training to the new Cornerstone platform. They started by bringing in 1,000 Illinois-based home visitors to test the system. Working closely with their Cornerstone client success team, the Ounce is progressively building out the content and officially launching Achieve OnDemand, Professional Development for Home Visitors™ in January 2015. As they have progressed with the software implementation, the Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation team has provided support in many other areas of their program including

business development and strategic planning: “Besides giving us a new platform to scale our e-learning program, the Impact Grant has been a real ‘organization builder’ for the Ounce, as well.”

After the go-live in January, their goal is to bring on an additional 1,000 learners by the end of 2015 and deliver their training program to 22,000 home visitors across the country by 2024 (80% of the home visiting market). “Ours is a very personal type of training and we didn’t want to lose the connection with our home visitors. A few years ago, we never thought we could do this type of training online,” explains Dunham. “Thanks to the Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation, we’re showing that effective, blended online learning programs can bring a measurable change in practice and enable us to significantly scale the impact of our training initiatives.”

Applications are accepted from January through March. All applicants are required to attend an informational webinar prior to applying. Winners are announced in April. Program details and profiles of current grantees are available at: [CornerstoneOnDemand.org/Impact-Grant](http://CornerstoneOnDemand.org/Impact-Grant)