

TEXARKANA -- The Literacy Council of Bowie and Miller Counties is moving full speed ahead with a transition into a larger office space and the addition of several new community education programs, including one tailored to families in crisis.

The additions come after a year when the COVID-19 pandemic made progress difficult, especially fundraising, Executive Director Jenny Walker said in an interview for the Texarkana Gazette podcast "On the Line."

Walker is most excited about adding a program called 100 Families Alliance to the Literacy Council's many education offerings. It's a program that has seen success in four other Arkansas counties in providing families a pathway out of poverty. The tagline is "from crisis to career."

It was started by a nonprofit called Restore Hope Arkansas to assist the families of previously incarcerated people. The group quickly saw its potential to help other families, as well, Walker said.

"We know that when men and women are struggling with unemployment or addiction issues or transportation issues, it doesn't just affect the person who is dealing with those issues. There are children in that home who are also impacted. And so we really want to look at this entire the entire family as a unit and connect them with resources that are already here in our community.

Other new Literacy Council programs in the works include a citizenship class for the growing immigrant population; expanded programming options for children and teenagers; evening and online options for adults; and free tax preparation services for those in the Council's financial literacy program.

And it will all take place in a new setting. The Council is moving into new offices more than twice the size of its current space.

(All Literacy Council programs and classes are free. For more information, visit literacytxk.org or call 903-255-7733.)