

Proposal

A COLLABORATIVE

Funding Requests from the CoC and
Community Partners
for FY 24

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IS RECOVERY

Rimrock Foundation
Jeffery Keller




ALTERNATIVES
CORRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY

Alternatives, Inc.
David Armstrong



YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

CoC
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HEAD START inc.

Head Start, inc.
Janice King

Introduction

Strengthening Our Community: A Funding Request for Continuum of Care Coalition and Community Partners.

The Continuum of Care Coalition (CoC) and its partners are committed to addressing some of our city's most pressing issues: housing stabilization, substance misuse, and mental health concerns, all contributing to increasing crime rates. Our goal is to enhance existing systems and extend our services directly to the community to create a healthier, safer environment for all.

To carry out this work effectively, we are seeking support from the funds generated through the Public Safety Mill, Marijuana Tax, and Opioid Settlement. The responsible allocation of these resources can significantly impact our community and pave the way for a healthier and safer city.

Our proposal requests a total of \$311,000 to focus on four key strategic goals that directly address these critical issues:

1. Housing: Continuum of Care Coalitions follow the Housing 1st model which is a recovery-oriented, evidence-based philosophy and approach that recognizes that housing is a basic human right, and that people are better equipped to make progress in their lives if they have a safe, stable place to live.

2. Diversion: Our objective is to create alternative, supportive pathways for individuals struggling with substance misuse and related crimes. This initiative aims to reduce their involvement with the criminal justice system, allowing more resources to be directed towards preventive measures.

3. Prevention: This approach involves establishing preventive programs that target substance misuse, mental health concerns, and housing instability. Through public education, health initiatives, and community resilience building, we aim to foster a preventive culture against these pressing issues.

4. Treatment: We plan to expand access to a range of treatment services for individuals grappling with substance misuse and mental health issues. By doing so, we aim to provide essential support to those in need, promoting their recovery and housing stability.

Based on our projections, we expect at least \$1.2 million to be available from the Public Safety Mill, Marijuana Tax, and Opioid Settlement funds. Our requested allocation, although a fraction of these available resources, represents a significant and high-impact investment in community health and safety.

The subsequent sections of this handout provide a detailed breakdown of our proposed allocations and strategies, which we believe will deliver substantial benefits to our community.

Your support can help us address these pressing community issues head-on. Together, we can create a profound shift in our city's approach to substance use, mental health, housing stabilization, and crime. Let's build a stronger, healthier community for all. The Goals of the Continuum of Care Coalition (CoC).

Continuum of Care Coalition (CoC): Based in Yellowstone County, the CoC is dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness. It recognizes that homelessness is a complex issue often interconnected with substance misuse, mental health issues, and a lack of affordable housing.

The CoC goals include:

1. **Preventing Homelessness:** By addressing its root causes, such as economic instability, lack of affordable housing, and systemic inequalities.
2. **Rapid Re-Housing:** Ensuring individuals and families experiencing homelessness are quickly provided with suitable, sustainable housing, thereby minimizing the duration of their homelessness.
3. **Integrated Support Services:** Working to provide or connect individuals with essential services such as mental health support, substance use treatment, and job training programs.
4. **Sustainable Housing Solutions:** Partnering with local housing developers and agencies to increase the supply of affordable, accessible housing in the community.

Together, the CoC and community partners address overlapping issues of homelessness, substance misuse, mental health, prevention, and crime in the community. Their goals align to foster a healthier, safer Billings, with a focus on prevention, rapid response, and sustainable, holistic solutions.

A Joint Venture: CoC's Approach to Service Delivery

This funding request is an innovative joint venture between the Continuum of Care Coalition (CoC) and Community Partners aimed at bridging service gaps and ensuring efficient, coordinated services in Yellowstone County, Billings, MT. The goal is to enhance the impact of our work by reducing duplication and streamlining service delivery.

Purposeful Collaboration:

homelessness, substance misuse, mental health issues, and crime are complex, interconnected issues that often overlap in the lives of the individuals we serve. By uniting our efforts, we can ensure a comprehensive, integrated approach to service provision that directly addresses these intertwined problems.

Coordinated Service Delivery:

Our venture will result in an effective use of resources, enabling us to better serve our community. Through shared planning and coordinated implementation, we aim to ensure that every dollar spent has the maximum possible impact on the lives of those we serve. This approach will help to avoid duplication of services and ensure comprehensive coverage.

Enhanced Impact:

By leveraging the strengths and expertise of the CoC, we can provide a broader range of services and support that are essential to our community. This means that individuals and families will have access to more holistic care, addressing not just a single issue, but the spectrum of challenges they may be facing.

In conclusion, this joint venture represents a commitment to strategic, coordinated action. We believe that by working together, the CoC and partners can achieve a greater impact than we would separately. This approach promises a more holistic, efficient, and impactful service delivery model, designed to improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of our community in Yellowstone County, Billings, MT.

Funding Request Overview

Below is a list of services, outline of request, purpose, and requested length of funding anticipated based on the needs expressed at the aforementioned meetings.

The below funding matrix showcases our strategic approach to funding allocations, emphasizing services that address Housing First and reduce re-entry initiatives with boots on the ground actions. By addressing these vital areas, we continue to work towards our overarching goal of combating substance misuse, homelessness, mental health issues, and crime in our community. The funds will be allocated towards the expansion of services and addressing further community needs in the upcoming fiscal year.

| Agency | Need | Role | Requested Amount | Length of Request* |
|---------------------------|--|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Rimrock Foundation | Mobile Crisis Response | Treatment to reduce re-entry | \$50,000.00 | 1 year |
| Alternatives, Inc. | Assistance with Monitoring | Reduce re-entry to jail | \$50,000.00 | 2 years |
| CoC | Coordinated Entry Dir & Program Support | Crisis Now and Reduce re-entry to hospitals/jail & Housing 1st | \$156,000.00 | 2 years |
| Head Start, inc. | BH Spec/Family Advocate partnerships and trainings | Prevention 3–5-year-olds | \$55,000.00 | 1 year |
| Total | | | \$311,000.00 | |

* Anticipated Length of Request



Complementary Efforts

Enhancing Impact through Strategic Alignment

Our proposed funding allocation is not designed to exist in isolation. Rather, it is intended to complement and amplify the impact of existing initiatives that have already gained approval, such as the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) run by RiverStone Health and the provision for additional jail space for misdemeanor offenses.

Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) and RiverStone Health: The FNP focuses on the early intervention and prevention side of the health and wellness spectrum. It supports young families by offering regular home visits from registered nurses, starting early in pregnancy and continuing until the child reaches two years of age. This critical early intervention helps to ensure that babies get the best possible start in life, parents are supported in their role, and potential issues related to substance misuse, mental health, and crime are addressed proactively.

The proposed funding for agencies like Rimrock and CoC complements this work by providing resources and supports further along the continuum. As these children grow, their families will continue to have access to necessary support like housing assistance, treatment for substance misuse, and case management. Furthermore, initiatives like the Head Start's Behavioral Health Specialist funding will provide early prevention services for slightly older children, further reinforcing the efforts initiated by the FNP.

Additional Jail Space for Misdemeanor Offenses: The recent provision from the City Council for additional jail space addresses a crucial need for the community in dealing with minor offenses related to substance misuse and homelessness. This resource provides a more immediate response to crime and a pathway for offenders to potentially access much-needed services.

Our proposed funding to Alternatives will augment this measure by focusing on reducing re-entry to jail and hospital, supporting transition and stabilization efforts. By doing so, we aim to lessen the reliance on jail space as a solution and instead provide more rehabilitative and supportive responses. With these measures, we can help those involved in minor crimes find a healthier path and decrease their chances of reoffending, hence, reducing the overall strain on the jail system.

In summary, the proposed funding request and the already approved measures collectively create a comprehensive response that covers the entire spectrum – from prevention to treatment, and from crisis response to long-term stability. These initiatives reinforce and amplify each other, resulting in a more robust, holistic approach to addressing the complex issues our community faces.

Please find additional information below on each individual funding request item that includes an overview, objectives, outcomes, and additional information needed.

Mobile Crisis

Rimrock Foundation, known for its pioneering work in addiction treatment, has requested funding to support its mobile crisis response. This program costs roughly \$500,000/year and Rimrock requests \$50,000 from the City of Billings to support these efforts. The goal of this request is to provide immediate and effective responses to individuals in crisis, due to substance use disorders, mental health issues, or co-occurring disorders.



Here's a breakdown of how Rimrock Foundation plans to utilize the funding:

- 1. Mobile Crisis Unit (CRU):** A portion of the funding will be directed towards the CRU, an essential resource for individuals experiencing an acute mental health or substance use crisis. The CRU provides a safe, supportive environment where individuals can be stabilized, evaluated, and referred to appropriate treatment. This is an alternative to hospital emergency rooms or jail.
- 2. Immediate Assessment and Referral:** The funding will support Rimrock's efforts to provide immediate assessments to individuals in crisis. These assessments evaluate the individual's immediate needs, mental health status, and substance use issues. Based on these assessments, the individual can be quickly referred to appropriate treatment services within Rimrock or to other community resources.
- 3. Integration with Other Services:** To provide a holistic approach to treatment, the funding will enable better integration between the CRU and other services offered by Rimrock and partner organizations. This can include residential and outpatient treatment programs, counseling services, medical services, and support for co-occurring disorders.
- 4. Staffing and Training:** The funding will support the recruitment, training, and retention of qualified staff to work in the crisis stabilization unit. This includes mental health professionals, substance abuse counselors, medical staff, and support staff. The goal is to ensure the CRU is staffed by a multidisciplinary team capable of addressing the complex needs of individuals in crisis.
- 5. Community Outreach:** The funding will enable Rimrock to improve its outreach efforts to the community. This involves educating the public and other service providers about the CRU, its purpose, and the benefits it provides to individuals in crisis and the community at large.

In summary, the funding requested by Rimrock Foundation for mobile crisis response will ensure that individuals experiencing a crisis related to mental health or substance use have immediate access to specialized, effective services. This not only helps those individuals but also alleviates the burden on emergency rooms and law enforcement and contributes to a healthier, safer community.

One-Time Funding Request and Future Sustainability Plans

The funds being requested at this time for the enhancement of crisis response services by Rimrock Foundation represent a one-time ask. This immediate infusion of resources is necessary to bridge the gap between Medicaid reimbursements and the emergent needs of our community, especially considering the current housing crisis and the ongoing struggle with substance misuse and mental health issues.

However, it's important to note that while this funding is essential to address immediate needs, it is not a long-term solution. Our goal is to create sustainable programs that can continue to provide these vital services to the Billings community well into the future.

For this reason, alongside the utilization of this one-time funding, a comprehensive effort is underway to research and secure additional, ongoing funding options.



Our goal is to combine these and other funding sources to create a diversified, reliable funding stream that ensures the sustainability of our programs. In this way, we can continue to provide our crucial services and impact positively on the Billings community now and in the future.





Jail Alternative Supervision Indigency

Background: Alternatives, a key provider of support for misdemeanor offenders, currently receives a limited amount of funding from Yellowstone County for their Beta Jail Alternatives program. Notably, a significant number of referrals to this program originate from the Billings Municipal Court. The City of Billings previously participated in funding this initiative in the late 1990s and early 2000s; however, this funding has since ceased, while the demand for the program has not.

Need: Individuals referred to Alternatives are often required to participate in monitoring, drug, and alcohol testing, and supervision programs either pre-trial or post-conviction. The failure to comply with these terms, which include daily fees ranging from \$2 to \$11, results in incarceration. These individuals often have limited financial resources, which could be better allocated towards housing, bills, treatment, medications, basic living expenses, and court fines and fees.

Proposal: In light of this, Alternatives is requesting \$50,000 in support from the City Council. This funding would alleviate the financial burden on these individuals and reduce the risk of incarceration due to financial constraints.

Impact: The proposed funding would support 15-69 individuals each day, providing them with supervision and monitoring to ensure court compliance, as well as drug and alcohol monitoring connected with their criminal cases. This funding would not only keep individuals out of jail but also support them in maintaining employment, accessing necessary treatment, and transitioning towards becoming productive members of society.

Sustainability: The proposed annual request would establish a predictable funding source that allows for more effective planning and utilization of resources. By investing in prevention and alternative solutions, the City could also potentially save on costs related to police responsibilities and the criminal justice system.

By considering this ongoing support, the City Council has the opportunity to play a significant role in reducing recidivism, supporting our community members in need, and promoting public safety in a cost-effective way.



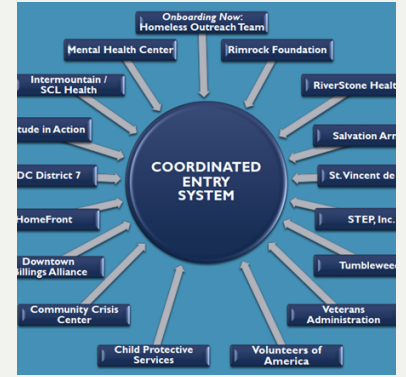
ALTERNATIVES
CORRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY

Coordinated Entry System

Overview and objectives:

As part of a collaboration with the Substance Abuse Connect Coalition, the CoC makes a request to support continual efforts and expand the services provided in the City of Billings.

There are 34 Community Partners in the CoC with a focus on prevention, system alignment, infrastructure, capacity building, and operations. There are 17 direct service providers utilizing one coordinated entry system.



1,395 adults and youth utilize the coordinated entry system throughout Billings with 16 case managers focusing on Adult and 10 focusing on youth services. With a focus on permanent housing and supportive services, 193 families have been permanently housed as a result of CoC Coordinated Entry Services.

Currently, the CoC has a .75 coordinator providing Case Conference (occurring weekly to establish need and tasks), Diversion Fund Implementation, HMIS training, TA, and utilization, among managing a caseload of nearly 1,400 homeless individuals.

Enhanced Need for a Full-Time Coordinated Entry Specialist with Program Support
The need for a full-time Coordinated Entry Specialist (CES) director with dedicated program support is of utmost importance in our community, which faces significant challenges due to its large population, high crime rates, and increasing homelessness. The City of Billings, with the largest population in Montana, serves as a critical hub for individuals seeking assistance and support. However, the growing demand and complex nature of the issues faced by our unhoused neighbors require a comprehensive and focused approach that necessitates a full-time CES specialist.

1. Addressing the Largest Population: With the largest population in the state, the City of Billings serves as a focal point for individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability. As such, the CES plays a pivotal role in efficiently coordinating entry and connecting individuals with the appropriate services. A full-time CES specialist ensures that the increasing number of individuals seeking assistance receives the attention, support, and resources they require to move towards stability.
2. Mitigating High Crime Rates: Billings also grapples with high crime rates, which are often intertwined with issues of homelessness and housing instability. A dedicated CES specialist can effectively collaborate with law enforcement agencies, supporting their efforts to address crime and reducing recidivism rates by diverting individuals towards appropriate support services. By providing comprehensive assessments and linking individuals with targeted interventions, the CES specialist contributes to the overall safety and well-being of the community.
3. Meeting Growing Homelessness Challenges: As the need for homelessness services continues to rise, a full-time CES specialist is crucial in responding to this increased demand. The specialist will have the capacity to address the complexities of homelessness, including underlying mental health and substance abuse issues, while coordinating with various agencies and service providers. By dedicating more time and resources to client assessments, housing navigation, and case conferencing, the CES specialist can ensure that individuals receive timely and appropriate support to exit homelessness.

4. Ensuring Effective Program Support: In addition to the direct service provision, a full-time CES specialist with program support allows for comprehensive program oversight, data management, and coordination of services. The specialist can maintain accurate records, streamline data entry and cleanup processes, and ensure compliance with reporting requirements. This level of program support facilitates collaboration with partner agencies, enhances resource allocation, and helps identify gaps in services to continuously improve the system's overall effectiveness.

The City of Billings faces unique challenges due to its size, crime rates, and increasing homelessness. To adequately address the needs of the community and provide the best possible support, it is imperative to have a full-time CES specialist with program support. This ensures that the largest population in Montana, grappling with high crime rates and escalating homelessness, receives the comprehensive, timely, and targeted assistance necessary to overcome these challenges and move towards stable housing and improved quality of life.

Continuum of Care Coalition (CoC) Funding Request: Enhancing Coordinated Entry System and Diversion Support

The Continuum of Care Coalition (CoC) is submitting a funding request of \$156,000 to support the expansion and improvement of the Coordinated Entry System and provide necessary resources for diversion programs and re-entry support. This request represents a shift in approach from previous funding allocations, acknowledging the need to increase year-round operations, enhance the effectiveness of the Coordinated Entry System, and maximize the impact of available resources.

The funding breakdown and positions are as follows:

1. Coordinated Entry System Director
 - Contracted Services: 30 Hours/Week
 - Annual Cost: \$108,000
 - Job Responsibilities:
 - Statewide HMIS Lead
 - Local Lead for HMIS Training and Technical Assistance
 - Local Lead for CES Case Conferencing
 - Supervisory Duties for all Coordinated Entry Staff
 - Other Duties as Assigned by CoC Board of Directors
2. Data Support Specialist
 - Contracted Services or Employee: 20 Hours/Week
 - Annual Cost: \$48,000
 - Job Responsibilities:
 - Diversion Fund Coordinator
 - Point in Time Count Coordinator
 - HMIS Data Entry and Cleanup
 - Other Duties as Assigned by CES Director

This funding request reflects the transition to a future state where the Coordinated Entry System will be led by a dedicated Coordinated Entry System Director. This position will take on responsibilities such as statewide HMIS leadership, local coordination of training and technical assistance, and supervision of all Coordinated Entry staff. Additionally, a Data Support Specialist will focus on managing the diversion fund, overseeing Point in Time Count coordination, and ensuring HMIS data entry accuracy.

By allocating these funds, the CoC aims to strengthen the Coordinated Entry System's capacity, improve data management and accuracy, and enhance the overall support and services provided to individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability. This investment will enable the CoC to better meet the needs of the community, improve outcomes, and foster collaborations with partner agencies and organizations.

Outcomes: Increasing staff for coordinated entry services using the HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) and FUSE (Frequent Users Systems Engagement) models can have significant benefits for addressing homelessness in a community.

1. **Enhanced Efficiency:** Coordinated entry services, facilitated by HMIS, streamline the process of assessing and prioritizing individuals experiencing homelessness. By increasing staff, the capacity to process and manage client data can be enhanced, leading to more efficient and accurate identification of housing and service needs. This efficiency can help reduce wait times, improve resource allocation, and ensure that individuals receive the support they require in a timely manner.

2. **Comprehensive Data Management:** HMIS is a robust data management system that allows for the collection, sharing, and analysis of homeless population data. By increasing staff dedicated to HMIS administration and data analysis, communities can gather valuable insights about the local homeless population, trends, and needs. This information can inform evidence-based decision-making, target resources effectively, and advocate for additional funding or policy changes.

3. **Coordinated and Targeted Interventions:** The FUSE model focuses on addressing the needs of frequent users of crisis services, often individuals experiencing homelessness with complex health conditions or behavioral health challenges. By increasing staff within the coordinated entry system, more resources can be directed towards identifying these individuals and providing them with targeted interventions. This can include dedicated case managers, housing specialists, or support teams who can work closely with frequent users to address their specific needs, connect them to appropriate services, and help secure stable housing.

4. **Improved Housing Placement:** With increased staff, coordinated entry systems can effectively match individuals experiencing homelessness with available housing resources. Staff members can engage in comprehensive assessments, evaluate housing options, and ensure that placements are aligned with the specific needs and preferences of individuals or households. This personalized approach increases the likelihood of successful housing placements and reduces the risk of individuals returning to homelessness.

5. **Continuum of Care Development:** Coordinated entry services are integral components of a community's Continuum of Care (CoC) system, which encompasses a wide range of housing and supportive services. By investing in increased staff, communities can strengthen their CoC system as a whole, fostering collaboration between different agencies, providers, and stakeholders. This collaboration can lead to better coordination, resource-sharing, and the development of more comprehensive solutions for ending homelessness.



Information on Head Start, inc.

Head Start operates 8 full-day and 8 half-day classrooms in three locations around Billings, MT, with 80 staff. The education provided by Head Start includes both academic and developmental components. Their research-based curriculum utilizes Montana Early Learning Objectives and Head Start Early Learning outcomes while emphasizing learning through play. In addition to academic readiness for kindergarten, Head Start utilizes developmental and social-emotional screenings to help children achieve long term success.



Head Start seeks to create a safe, supportive, and stable learning environment for children. An environment in which children feel welcomed, loved, and cared for is fundamental to their development and lifelong success. Young children who experience persistent stress due to family circumstances are at an increased risk of mental health issues as they grow to adulthood (InBrief, Harvard CODC). Exposure to toxic stress in combination with a genetic predisposition can further increase this risk (InBrief). As many of Head Start’s students experience family stressors and trauma, they have an acute need for the kind of environment Head Start provides. This need has been intensified by the pandemic. Classroom disruptions and behavioral issues have increased by about 50% in the wake of the pandemic (NCES, 2022). Similarly, 80% of public-school leaders suggest that students’ socio-emotional and behavioral development has been negatively impacted by the pandemic (NCES, 2022).

Head Start continues to meet this need through the use of trauma-informed modes of discipline and social and emotional learning such as the Conscious Discipline model. Increased support, though, is necessary to cope with the additional behavior challenges we see today. With 70% of teachers wanting more training on socio-emotional development and additional support staff, it is clear that more resources are necessary (NCES, 2022). Early intervention is crucial to ensuring a child’s emotional, behavioral, and physical health as they grow. Head Start’s extensive services, in addition to a mission of children and families first, provides comprehensive and contextualized support for the community.

Investment in early childhood education has many benefits, as shown by Dr. James Heckman. A Nobel Prize-winning economist at the University of Chicago, Heckman’s research has suggested a 13% per annum return on investment for early childhood programs targeting disadvantaged children (Heckman). This return on investment is due to better “education, economic, health, and social outcomes” (Heckman). The earlier the intervention, the greater the returns. Quality early childhood education also reduces costs associated with special and remedial education, social services, criminal justice, and healthcare (Heckman). This cost reduction is accompanied by increased school retention, graduation, and college attendance rates (Language, 2021). Heckman also recommends that early childhood intervention must include support for children’s families, as “direct investment in the child’s early development is complemented by investment in parents and family environments” (Heckman).

Their comprehensive early childhood education for 3-to-5-year-olds at Head Start includes numerous supportive services for the entire family of the children served. There is a food pantry available for families and staff for at home meals on evenings, weekends, and holidays. They also work with other community organizations to provide holiday meals and household goods when other needs cannot be met. Meals and items such as snow gear, clothing, bedding, hygiene products, diapers, wipes, and gas cards are also provided with coordination from community partners and individual donors. Physical and mental health services are available on site.

Head Start, Inc., is seeking a funding request of \$55,000 to support the hiring of a Behavioral Health Specialist for a 9-month school year. This one-time funding will address the unique challenges faced by preschoolers in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as mitigating violent behaviors exhibited by students. The sustainability of this position will be achieved through budget modifications and future requests for larger federal funding.

Background and Challenges: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on young children, including delays in speech, potty training, and socialization, as well as potential setbacks in cognitive development. The transition to remote learning has limited their exposure to hands-on activities and group learning, leading to potential delays in language development, problem-solving, and fine motor skills. Additionally, the return to in-person learning has seen a rise in violent behaviors exhibited by students, resulting in physical injuries to teachers, staff, and fellow students, as well as damage to classroom items and spaces.

Addressing the Challenges: To address these challenges, Head Start recognizes the need to implement trauma-informed practices, provide individualized attention, and foster strong relationships with families. The addition of a Behavioral Support Specialist will ensure that each of the three Head Start facilities has dedicated staff to address these needs. This specialist will implement play-based interventions, social-emotional learning programs, and facilitate opportunities for peer interactions to help alleviate developmental delays and support children's growth.

Importance of Swift Intervention and Support: When it comes to significant violent and delayed behaviors exhibited by students, prompt and targeted intervention is crucial. The Behavioral Support Specialist will have the capacity to respond swiftly to incidents, offering guidance and counseling to both the student and their families. This proactive approach will not only help prevent further escalation of behavior but also equip students with the necessary skills for academic and social success.

Collaboration and Funding Alignment: The Behavioral Support Specialist will work closely with teachers, staff, students, parents, and family advocates to respond to behavioral issues while aligning with the goals and objectives of the Public Safety Mill funding, prevention funding from the marijuana tax, and the Opioid settlement dollars. The specialist will engage in-home visits, provide on-site training, collaborate with social services, and work with groups such as Child Protective Services, ensuring comprehensive support for children and families.

Sustainability and Impact: This funding request is a one-time investment to support the addition of a Behavioral Support Specialist. Sustainability will be achieved through budget modifications and future requests for larger federal funding. By addressing the developmental delays and behavioral challenges faced by preschoolers, Head Start aims to enhance their overall well-being, improve school readiness, and foster positive family engagement. The support of a Behavioral Health Specialist aligns with the efforts of the Family Nurse Partnership and reinforces the comprehensive and contextualized support provided by Head Start to the community.

Investing in early childhood education and targeted support has long-term benefits, as evidenced by research showing a significant return on investment for early childhood programs. By prioritizing the social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children, Head Start not only reduces costs associated with special and remedial education, social services, criminal justice, and healthcare but also promotes school retention, graduation, and college attendance rates.

In conclusion, Head Start's funding request for a Behavioral Health Specialist underscores the importance of addressing the unique challenges faced by preschoolers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing targeted support, play-based interventions, and trauma-informed practices, Head Start aims to mitigate developmental delays, address violent behaviors, and promote positive outcomes for children and families. This funding request aligns with the overarching goals of early childhood education and complements the efforts of the Family Nurse Partnership, enhancing the holistic support provided to the community.

Thank you!

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