

1. Please provide an organization profile including a brief background/ history including how you are qualified to accomplish the proposed project/program.

YWCA Mankato is requesting a grant of \$25,000 from the Opioid Remediation Community Grant for the use of providing Youth Mental Health First Aid Training to adults in the region. Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis.

In today's fast-paced world, youth face unprecedented challenges that significantly impact their mental health. From academic pressures and social media influences to family dynamics and community stressors, young people are navigating a complex landscape that can lead to anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Providing Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training in our community is crucial for equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize, understand, and respond to mental health crises among youth. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including ADHD), and eating disorders.

Providing Youth Mental Health First Aid training will support the work of YWCA Mankato- working with girls and gender non-conforming youth specifically. The grant funding will enable us to recruit and provide financial support for two contracted trainers responsible for facilitating Youth Mental Health First Aid training within the community. Each course will be led by a certified instructor who will adhere to national curriculum guidelines and teaching standards, with a strong emphasis on fostering hope for recovery.

To foster a supportive community for young people, the grant funding will enable us to offer full-day training at no-cost to the participant- creating an inclusive opportunity to ensure financial barriers do not prevent anyone from participating in this valuable training opportunity- all with the goal of building a supportive community for youth.

2. **Please describe the project/program that you are requesting funds for, its purpose, and measurable objectives. Please be sure to include the need for the project/program, your intended impact on the community, target audience, and how the proposed project /program advances your mission and goals. Also include a timeline of checkpoints for tasks and activities, including a plan for follow-up and evaluation of the project/program.**

Prevalence of Mental Health Disorders in Youth :

- Nationally, approximately 20% of youth ages 13-18 experience a mental health disorder.
- In Minnesota, youth mental health issues have been increasing, with significant concerns around anxiety and depression, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- According to the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey- Mankato Area Public Schools

Do you have any long-term mental health, behavioral or emotional problems? Long-term means lasting 6 months or more. The following data shows the percentage of students answering 'yes'.

8th grade: Male 15% Female 39%

9th grade: Male 17% Female 37%

11th grade: Male 25% Female 43%

Additionally, on the 2022 student survey of students in the Mankato Area Public Schools

Have you ever seriously considered attempting suicide? The following data shows the percentage of students answering 'yes'.

5th grade: Male 5% Female 24%

8th grade: Male 7% Female 18%

11th grade: Male 15% Female 22%

Substance Use Disorders Impacting Youth:

- The Minnesota Department of Human Services reports that substance use among youth, especially alcohol and marijuana, remains a concern. About 12% of Minnesota high school students have reported using marijuana in the past month.
- Alcohol remains the most commonly used substance among youth in Minnesota, with rates of binge drinking reported around 16%.

Access to Resources:

- Many youth in Southern Minnesota face barriers to accessing mental health services, with studies indicating that nearly 60% of youth with a mental health disorder do not receive the necessary treatment.

Recent studies indicate that one in five youth experiences a mental health challenge, yet many are reluctant to seek help due to stigma, lack of awareness, or inadequate access to resources. Schools, community organizations, and families play a vital role in creating a supportive environment, but without proper training, they may struggle to identify warning signs or provide appropriate support. YMHFA training empowers participants to act as first responders in mental health crises, helping to bridge the gap between awareness and action.

By implementing YMHFA training, we can foster a culture of understanding and empathy within by building a supportive community. This program teaches participants—whether they are teachers, coaches, parents, or peers—how to:

1. Recognize Signs of Mental Health Issues: Participants learn to identify early warning signs of mental health challenges, enabling them to intervene before issues escalate.
2. Respond with Confidence: Training provides practical skills for approaching youth in distress, offering support and guidance while reducing feelings of isolation and hopelessness.
3. Connect to Resources: Equipped with knowledge of available mental health resources, trained individuals can direct youth and their families to appropriate services, ensuring they receive the help they need.

The long-term benefits of YMHFA training extend beyond individual youth and schools; they strengthen community resilience. As trained individuals take action, we create a network of support that fosters healthier relationships, reduces stigma, and encourages open conversations about mental health. By investing in YMHFA training, we are investing in the future well-being of our community—creating a foundation where youth feel valued, understood, and empowered to seek help when needed.

These findings collectively underscore the critical need for early identification and treatment of mental health disorders in youth to prevent the onset of substance use disorders. Addressing these issues holistically can lead to better health outcomes and support for young people.

- o NIDA highlights that adolescents with mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and ADHD, are at a higher risk of developing substance use disorders. Studies indicate that about 50% of youth with a mental health disorder may also have a substance use disorder.
- o SAMHSA's reports indicate that youth experiencing mental health challenges are more likely to engage in substance use as a coping mechanism. Their 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that youth with depression were more likely to use substances compared to their peers without mental health issues.
- o Research published in journals such as Psychological Medicine and Developmental Psychology has shown that adolescents with depression or anxiety are at increased risk of substance use later in life. Early intervention for mental health issues in youth can help reduce this risk.
- o Studies, including those published in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence, support the self-medication hypothesis, indicating that youth with untreated mental health conditions often turn to substances to manage their symptoms, leading to a cycle of dependency.
- o A study published in Addictive Behaviors found that adolescents with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders experienced more severe impairment, highlighting the interconnectedness of these issues and the importance of integrated treatment approaches.
- o Meta-analyses in journals like Substance Use & Misuse have synthesized data showing that youth with mental health disorders are significantly more likely to develop substance use disorders, emphasizing the need for targeted prevention and intervention strategies.
- o Data from the YRBSS, managed by the CDC, shows a clear association between mental health issues (like feelings of sadness and hopelessness) and increased rates of substance use among high school students.

Checkpoints and follow-up of the program

- We will conduct participant surveys after each full day training session and then complete an end of the year comprehensive evaluation of impact to determine efficacy, engagement, and impact. We will create a task force to help us evaluate data and determine best practice to continue the program.

3. Please provide evidence of community support for your project/program. Describe plans for collaboration with local schools, social service agencies or community groups.

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training provides significant benefits to the community while complementing existing initiatives. Notable examples of these initiatives include:

- Greater Mankato United Way, which leads efforts in youth mental health and suicide prevention.

- The Substance Use Advocacy Committee, a coalition of local organizations focused on both the prevention and mitigation of substance use within our community.
- The YWCA Mankato's MindSet program, a transformative initiative designed for girls in grades 3-8 that enhances mental wellness and equips participants with a comprehensive toolkit for navigating challenging issues and making informed decisions.

By integrating YMHFA training with these efforts, we can further strengthen community support for youth mental health by increasing awareness and understanding. YMHFA training educates community members about mental health issues, reducing stigma and fostering a culture of understanding. This awareness helps normalize conversations about mental health and encourages individuals to seek help.

1. Early Intervention: By equipping adults with the skills to recognize the signs of mental health issues, communities can facilitate early intervention. This proactive approach can prevent crises and lead to better long-term outcomes for youth.
2. Stronger Support Networks: YMHFA fosters a network of informed adults—parents, teachers, coaches, and community leaders—who can support youth. These connections create a robust safety net for young people, ensuring they have access to resources and guidance.
3. Improved School Environments: Training in schools promotes a healthier, more supportive atmosphere. When staff are trained to respond to mental health concerns, it can lead to reduced disciplinary issues and improved academic performance.
4. Resource Connection: YMHFA training helps adults understand the available mental health resources in the community. This knowledge empowers them to direct youth and families to appropriate services, improving access to care.
5. Community Resilience: A community that prioritizes mental health is more resilient. By investing in YMHFA, communities can better support their youth, leading to a healthier population and reduced long-term costs associated with untreated mental health issues.
6. Positive Youth Development: Training promotes positive youth development by fostering environments where young people feel safe, supported, and understood. This can enhance their overall well-being and encourage them to thrive.
7. Crisis Reduction: With trained adults capable of addressing mental health crises effectively, communities can experience fewer incidents of severe mental health emergencies, reducing the burden on emergency services.

4. **Provide a budget narrative for all items of the proposed project/program budget (maximum one-page in length, can be attached).** *See attached budget.*

Breakdown of Costs

Contracted Trainer Compensation: