pennsylvania
COMMISSION ON CRIME
AND DELINQUENCY

DATE: October 30, 2020

SUBJECT: Evidence-based 6-12 Substance Abuse Prevention Initiative

TO: Pennsylvania Intermediate Units

CC: Superintendents; Single County Authorities (SCAs); Student Assistance Program (SAP) Contacts

FROM: Mike Pennington, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)

Introduction

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs (DDAP), seeks letters of interest (LOIs) from Pennsylvania Intermediate Units (IUs) regarding the provision of training and technical assistance (TA) to school districts implementing evidence-based programs that directly address substance use issues for students in grades 6-12.

Program Description and Priority Areas

The purpose of the *Evidence-based 6-12 Substance Abuse Prevention Initiative* is to increase availability of universal prevention programs that address all substance use initiation – including preventing the use of opioids, cocaine, methamphetamine, and/or prescription stimulants – within school districts, especially in areas of the Commonwealth hardest hit by the opioid epidemic and those with the greatest need demonstrated by the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) and other data. PCCD will prioritize sustainability of programs by supporting training-of-trainer models and strategies that engage both school personnel as well as parents/families. This includes providing funding for IU staff training to help individuals become trainers in evidence-based programs identified by the IUs that best address the needs of their local school districts. The initiative also seeks to minimize the impact of substance abuse on school-aged youth.

Available Funding, Eligibility, and Other Information for Prospective Applicants

PCCD plans on funding projects in 4-5 Intermediate Units using $1 million in available federal State Opioid Response (SOR) Year 3 funding. PCCD anticipates awarding up to $200,000 per project. The application period will take place in January 2021, with an anticipated start date of project activity beginning April 1, 2021 and an end date of September 29, 2022.

Eligible applicants include IUs only. (Note: IUs can propose sub-awarding funds to qualified providers (such as community-based organizations or agencies) to support proposed project activities as long as they describe why such an arrangement is necessary to implement evidence-based programs with fidelity.)

Applicants must be able to demonstrate need (as measured by overdose rates and 30-day/lifetime substance use data from PAYS), ability to implement evidence-based programs, and how proposed activities will be sustained after the project period ends. In addition, priority will be given to applicants that offer a clear plan for providing TA and other continued implementation support beyond the project period with minimal financial impact for participating school districts (e.g., a commitment to providing a certain number of trainings following the end of the project period at no cost).

For program selection, applicants must be able to make the case for how their chosen program specifically addresses the substance use issues of the local community using relevant data (e.g. PAYS, Student Assistance Program (SAP), etc.). Applicants must also describe how the IU determined that model would be most appropriate and how the IU will work with the Program Developer to implement the model with TA, implementation support, and sustainability as key focus areas. Program Developers must commit to train IU staff in a training-of-trainer model.

Letter of Interest Instructions

If interested in applying for this funding opportunity, please provide an LOI that addresses the following information:

1. Organization name
2. Organization address
3. Organization's authorized representative (name, title, email, and direct telephone number)
4. Project title
5. Organization experience and capabilities
6. Statement of problem and description of need (including data analysis – see Appendix for suggested resources)
7. Proposed approach (including identifying the evidence-based program/model to be implemented – see Appendix)
8. Proposed partnerships (e.g., school districts, program developer, community-based organizations/agencies, other entities)
9. Total requested funding (note: a full budget proposal is not necessary for the LOI, just a preliminary estimate of direct and indirect costs)

LOIs may not exceed three single-spaced pages, using one-inch margins and no smaller than 12-point font. Letters of support from proposed partner organizations (such as participating school districts, Single County Authorities, community-based organizations, etc.) are encouraged, but not required, as part of the LOI process; any letters of support submitted as attachments to the LOI will not count toward the page limit. (Note: Letters of support will be required for all project partners as part of the formal application process.)

Please submit the LOI with the IU in the subject line to RA-PCCD-OJJDP@pa.gov. PCCD will contact selected IUs in writing to invite them to submit full proposals for funding within the Egrants System.

Key Activities	Timeline
LOIs due	November 30, 2020
Invitations for full proposals issued by PCCD	December 28, 2020
Full proposals/applications due in Egrants System	February 12, 2021
Notification of awards	March 19, 2021
Project start date	April 1, 2021
Project end date	September 29, 2022

Questions to clarify this solicitation should be sent to RA-PCCD-OJJDP@pa.gov. Responses will be posted on PCCD's website.

Appendix: Suggested Data Sources

PA Opioid Data Dashboard

2019 Overdose Rates by County
2019 Overdose Incidents by County

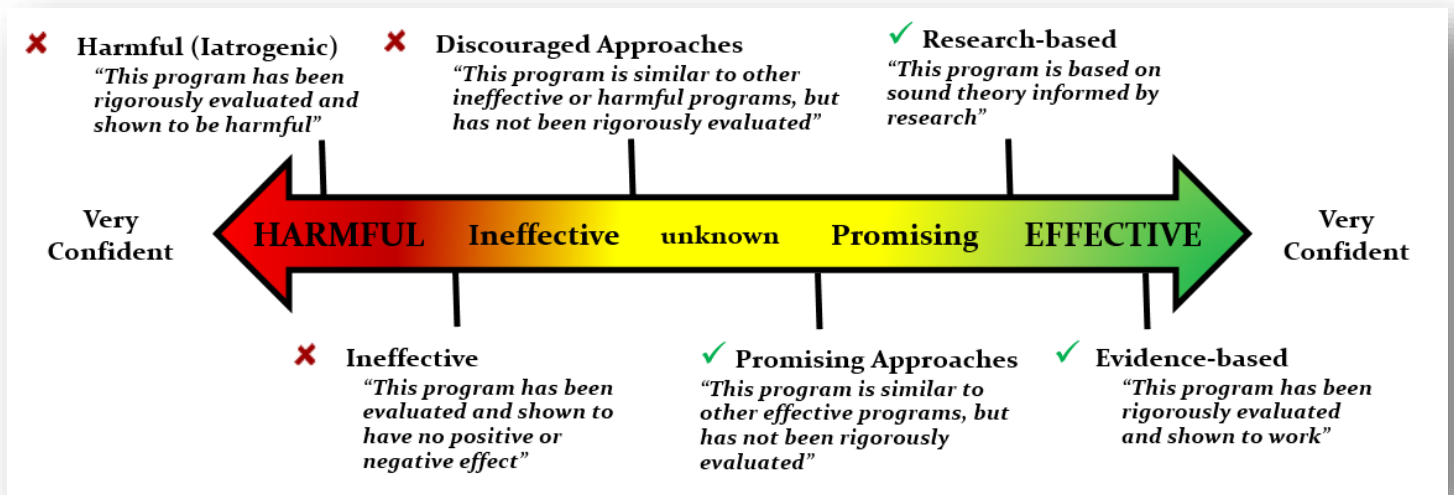PA Youth Survey

2019 PAYS Results – Statewide
2019 PAYS Results – County

What Do We Mean When We Say a Program is "Evidence-based"?

Prevention scientists rate programs along a continuum of confidence:

✗ **Harmful (Iatrogenic)**
"This program has been rigorously evaluated and shown to be harmful"

✗ **Discouraged Approaches**
"This program is similar to other ineffective or harmful programs, but has not been rigorously evaluated"

✓ **Research-based**
"This program is based on sound theory informed by research"

Very Confident — HARMFUL — Ineffective — unknown — Promising — EFFECTIVE — **Very Confident**

✗ **Ineffective**
"This program has been evaluated and shown to have no positive or negative effect"

✓ **Promising Approaches**
"This program is similar to other effective programs, but has not been rigorously evaluated"

✓ **Evidence-based**
"This program has been rigorously evaluated and shown to work"

Bumbarger & Rhoades, 2012

Researchers examine research studies to determine whether a program:

- ✓ Demonstrated effectiveness in rigorous scientific evaluations including randomized control trials.
- ✓ Was assessed in large studies with diverse populations or through multiple replications by independent researchers (not the developer of the model)
- ✓ Resulted in significant and sustained effects for a minimum of 6 months, post program.

Programs that meet all three of these criteria tend to fall in the green, evidence-based end of the continuum.

How to Identify Highly Rated Evidence-based Programs

Several websites have already done the work of reviewing research studies and rating programs' effectiveness. Consult these resources to ensure that the programs you want to implement will be effective.

Rating Source	Area of Focus	Website
Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development	Child welfare, juvenile justice	http://www.blueprintsprograms.com
California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare	Child welfare	http://www.cebc4cw.org/
Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy	Social policy	www.coalition4evidence.org
CrimeSolutions.gov	Criminal justice	http://www.crimesolutions.gov/
National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs	Child welfare, juvenile justice, social programs	https://www.samhsa.gov/nrepp
Promising Practices Network	Child welfare, juvenile justice, social programs	http://www.promisingpractices.net/programs.asp
What Works Clearinghouse	Education	http://www.ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse	Criminal justice	https://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/

One particularly useful clearinghouse is the **PEW Charitable Trusts Results First Clearinghouse Database**. This is a one stop shop for accessing the many lists of evidence-based programs.

1. Go To: http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/multimedia/data-visualizations/2015/results-first-clearinghouse-database

2. Type in the key words for the program or type of program you are looking for

3. Compare ratings across various clearinghouses to determine which programs are rated most highly, most frequently.

4. Dig deeper for more information by hovering over the colored rating dots and clicking on learn more!

Please contact the EPISCenter for additional technical assistance: EPISCenter@psu.edu (814) 863-2568