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Public Health
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2025

OPIOID SUMMARY REPORTS

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Horizon Public Health



This report summarizes 2025 Opioid Settlement projects across Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, and Traverse Counties, highlighting initiatives in Prevention & Early Intervention, Treatment & Recovery, Harm Reduction, and Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice to strengthen community responses to opioid misuse.

Table of Contents:

Douglas County.....	2-5
Grant County.....	6-8
Pope County.....	9-10
Stevens County.....	11-13
Traverse County.....	14-15

2025 Regional Impact

Opioid Settlement funding supported prevention, recovery, harm reduction, and public safety initiatives across Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, and Traverse Counties. These efforts expanded access to services, strengthened community partnerships, and increased prevention and recovery support for residents across the region.

During 2025, harm reduction outreach efforts reached more than **1,025 individuals**, connecting community members to treatment, recovery services, and supportive resources. Recovery-focused events hosted throughout the region brought **403 residents together** to strengthen peer support networks and reduce isolation for individuals and families affected by substance use.

Prevention programming in local schools and communities reached **more than 800 students**, providing education, resilience-building activities, and early intervention supports designed to reduce substance misuse and strengthen protective factors for youth. A youth-led opioid prevention media campaign **generated hundreds of thousands of digital impressions and video views**, increasing awareness of opioid risks, Narcan, and mental health resources among youth across the region.

Communities also expanded access to lifesaving overdose response tools. **Twenty-five public Narcan boxes were installed across 10 locations**, increasing access to overdose reversal medication in public spaces. In addition, **six outdoor public safety cabinets were installed**, providing 24/7 access to Narcan, AEDs, and Stop-the-Bleed kits to improve emergency response capacity.

Together, these efforts represent a coordinated regional approach to addressing opioid misuse through **Prevention & Early Intervention, Treatment & Recovery, Harm Reduction, and Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice initiatives**.

Douglas County Opioid Settlement Projects

2025 Progress Update

Prevention & Early Intervention:

Bridgeway Career Learning Center: Academic Transition & Accountability Support Para

Total award: \$55,764.00, Award period: 9/2025-6/2027

- Grant funding supported a Career Readiness Intervention Paraprofessional position focused on early identification and support of students at risk of disengagement.
- The program used daily Career Readiness Score monitoring to identify students needing targeted interventions and coordinate support with school staff.
- During Semester 1, 36 students were served, with measurable improvement among high-risk students. The 25th percentile Career Readiness Score increased from approximately 2.03 to 2.28 (about a 12% improvement).
- The approach emphasizes early intervention, allowing staff to respond proactively and prevent disengagement rather than reacting after students fall behind.
- The program strengthened coordination between school staff and improved the ability to connect students to additional supports, including mental health and community resources when needed.
- Future efforts will focus on refining intervention workflows, improving efficiency in identifying and supporting students, and strengthening connections to external services.

Horizon Public Health; Youth Media Campaign

Total award: \$11,856.00, Award period: 12/2024-12/2026

- Youth-led media campaign focused on opioid awareness, Narcan education, and youth mental health.
- Youth from across the region helped develop the campaign theme “Your Future Matters” and participated in listening sessions to identify key mental health and substance use issues affecting their peers.
- Students collaborated to create social media videos and digital content shared through platforms such as TikTok and programmatic advertising.
- The campaign generated hundreds of thousands of impressions and video views, helping increase youth awareness of opioid risks, Narcan, and available mental health resources such as CredibleMind.
- By centering youth voices in campaign development and messaging, the project strengthened youth leadership, increased knowledge of community support, and encouraged more open conversations about mental health and substance use.

Kalon Prep Academy; Positive Childhood Experiences Program

Total award: \$50,800.00, Award period: 1/2025-12/2026

- Program focused on providing youth with positive childhood experiences and supportive activities that strengthen protective factors and social-emotional wellbeing.

- Activities included bowling leagues, archery events, school trips, and a free prom event designed to provide safe, engaging opportunities for students to connect with peers and mentors.
- More than 100 students participated and received additional social-emotional support through school intervention staff and structured programming.
- Although funding delays due to contract issues limited implementation during 2025, the program plans to relaunch activities and expand youth engagement moving forward.

Treatment & Recovery:

Car Care Program – Transportation Stability for Recovery and Workforce Engagement

Total award: \$110,000.00, Award period: 10/2025-12/2026

- Program addresses transportation barriers that often prevent individuals in recovery from maintaining employment, attending treatment, and meeting probation or court requirements.
- During 2025, the program focused on launching the project and establishing the infrastructure needed to operate effectively, including referral partnerships, intake procedures, and documentation systems.
- Partnerships were developed with probation departments, treatment providers, workforce agencies, and other community partners to identify individuals who would benefit from transportation assistance.
- The program will provide vehicle repair and transportation support for residents impacted by substance use disorder in Douglas, Pope, and Stevens Counties, helping individuals maintain recovery stability, employment, and family connections.

Solutions Behavioral Healthcare Professionals – SUD/LADC Development Project

Total award: \$146,360.00, Award period: 9/2025-12/2026

- Used opioid settlement funding to support development and certification of a substance use disorder (SUD) treatment program in Douglas County.
- Focused on preparing for state approval and licensure, including reviewing the Minnesota SUD Provider Manual, researching the ASAM certification process, and analyzing state guidelines for covered treatment services.
- Staff began developing a Substance Use Disorder Program Manual and agency policies to align with Minnesota Statutes and ASAM certification requirements.
- These efforts strengthen organizational readiness to become a licensed Intensive Outpatient SUD treatment provider, which will expand access to evidence-based treatment for individuals with substance use disorders in Douglas County and the surrounding region.
- Moving forward, the organization plans to hire a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC), establish a sustainable reimbursement structure, and begin offering assessments, group counseling, skills-based interventions, and intensive outpatient services that integrate mental health and substance use treatment.

Unity Recovery – Recovery Events

Total award: \$10,000.00, Award period: 9/2025-12/2026

- Hosted 12 recovery-focused community events designed to support individuals and families impacted by substance use and strengthen recovery connections.
- A total of 403 individuals attended funded events, including recovery celebrations, awareness events, and community gatherings.
- These events provided safe spaces for connection, encouragement, and peer support, helping reduce isolation for individuals in recovery.
- Community gatherings helped strengthen local recovery networks and increase awareness of recovery resources and support services.

WEcovery – Harm Reduction Team

Total award: \$80,680.00, Award period: 12/2024-6/2026

- Provides low-barrier outreach, peer recovery support, and navigation services to connect individuals with treatment, recovery programs, and community resources.
- In 2025, outreach efforts reached 1,025 individuals and resulted in 554 documented service encounters.
- Staff completed 299 referrals connecting residents to treatment services, recovery supports, and other community resources.
- The program increased community awareness of harm reduction services and strengthened collaboration with local providers, helping individuals more easily access support and recovery resources.

West Central Minnesota Communities Action – Housing Stability Program

Total award: \$150,000.00, Award period: 9/2025-6/2027

- Provides housing navigation, peer recovery support, and rental assistance for individuals affected by substance use disorder.
- In late 2025, the program assisted four households with housing stabilization, helping individuals maintain safe housing while working toward recovery.
- Participants also received connections to additional services such as health insurance enrollment, food assistance, and other supportive resources.
- Staff conducted community outreach and presentations and distributed Narcan and fentanyl test strips to increase awareness and improve overdose prevention efforts.

Harm Reduction:

Advocates for Health – Public Safety Cabinets

Total award: \$30,000.00, Award period: 12/2024-5/2025

- Installed 6 outdoor public safety cabinets in high-traffic locations throughout Alexandria.
- Each cabinet contains naloxone (Narcan), an AED, and Stop-the-Bleed emergency kits, providing immediate access to lifesaving supplies during medical emergencies.
- The cabinets are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, increasing the community’s ability to respond quickly to overdoses and other critical incidents.
- This project improves community preparedness and expands public access to harm-reduction and emergency response resources.

Douglas County – Public Narcan Program

Total award: \$1,386.00, Award: 12/2025

- Expanded community access to naloxone (Narcan) by installing publicly accessible Narcan boxes in county parks and government buildings.
- Twenty-five Narcan boxes were purchased, resulting in 10 new public locations where overdose reversal medication is available.
- The program increases the community’s ability to respond quickly to opioid overdoses, particularly in public spaces.
- By placing Narcan in accessible locations, the initiative helps strengthen local overdose prevention and harm-reduction efforts.

Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice:

Douglas County Jail – Medical Monitoring Sensors

Total award: \$68,447.89, Award period: 9/2025-6/2026

- Installed a medical monitoring sensor system in the jail to track inmate vital signs and detect potential medical emergencies, including overdose risks.
- The technology allows staff to monitor individuals in custody more closely, improving early detection of health concerns.
- This system enhances safety and supports timely response to medical or overdose-related incidents within the facility.
- The project strengthens the jail’s ability to protect the health and wellbeing of individuals in custody.

Douglas County Sheriff’s Office – Drug Detection Technology

Total award: \$29,975.00, Award period: 7/2024-12/2025

- Purchased a DetectaChem Raman Spectrometer, capable of identifying more than 24,000 controlled substances and chemical compounds.
- The device is used during field investigations and evidence processing to safely identify unknown substances without direct handling.
- The technology improves officer safety and supports more efficient drug identification during investigations.
- The equipment has also been used in community education and prevention presentations, helping increase public awareness of emerging drug threats.

Overall Key System Challenges Identified

- Lack of recovery housing and limited rental options for individuals with SUD.
- Transportation barriers, particularly evenings and weekends.
- Ongoing stigma related to substance use and mental health.
- Several projects are new and still ramping up, with greater impact expected in 2026.

Grant County Opioid Settlement Projects 2025 Progress Update

Prevention & Early Intervention:

Grant County Sheriff's Office – DARE Program

Total award: \$11,915.00, Award period: 9/2025-12/2026

- Implemented the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program to provide substance use prevention education for local students.
- A Grant County deputy completed 80 hours of DARE instructor training and began delivering the curriculum to 5th grade students in two school districts, serving more than 25 students.
- The program helps youth develop skills to resist peer pressure, make healthy decisions, and understand the risks of substance use, while encouraging students to discuss prevention and safety topics with their families.
- Schools and community members have provided very positive feedback, recognizing the value of early prevention programming.
- While scheduling conflicts and staffing shortages occasionally affected program delivery, the Sheriff's Office plans to expand the program to additional school districts in 2026 to reach more students with prevention education.

Horizon Public Health – Youth Media Campaign

Total award: \$11,856.00, Award period: 12/2024-12/2026

- Youth-led media campaign focused on opioid awareness, Narcan education, and youth mental health.
- Youth from across the region helped develop the campaign theme “Your Future Matters” and participated in listening sessions to identify key mental health and substance use issues affecting their peers.
- Students collaborated to create social media videos and digital content shared through platforms such as TikTok and programmatic advertising.
- The campaign generated hundreds of thousands of impressions and video views, helping increase youth awareness of opioid risks, Narcan, and available mental health resources such as CredibleMind.
- By centering youth voices in campaign development and messaging, the project strengthened youth leadership, increased knowledge of community support, and encouraged more open conversations about mental health and substance use.

Herman-Norcross School District – Community Improvements

Total award: \$11,000.00, Award period: 9/2025-12/2026

- Implemented a youth-focused recreation initiative designed to promote healthy lifestyles, positive social engagement, and community connection.
- Program funds were used to purchase GaGa Ball and pickleball equipment to create accessible recreational opportunities for students and community members.

- Approximately 50 youth participated in activities during fall 2025, encouraging teamwork, physical activity, and positive peer interactions.
- These activities help strengthen protective factors against substance misuse by providing safe, healthy outlets for youth engagement.
- While plans to expand programming were limited by the high cost of resurfacing the tennis court, the district is working to identify additional partners and funding to complete the project and host future community recreation events such as a pickleball tournament.

Harm Reduction:

Grant County Sheriff's Office – Medication Drop Box

Total award: \$1,575.00, Award period: 10/2025-6/2026

- Installed a secure prescription medication drop box in the vestibule of the Grant County Law Enforcement Center to provide residents with a safe disposal option for unused or expired medications.
- The drop box offers a convenient and discreet method to prevent misuse, accidental exposure, and diversion of prescription drugs within the community.
- Since installation, the drop box has been well utilized by community members, increasing safe medication disposal and supporting local prevention efforts.
- Collected medications are managed and properly destroyed through the Drug Take Back initiative, ensuring safe and responsible disposal.

Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice:

Grant County Sheriff's Office – Wellness Program

Total award: \$7,820.00, Award period: 10/2025-12/2026

- Implemented a department-wide wellness policy focused on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of law enforcement personnel.
- The program provides access to scheduled meetings with a licensed mental health professional, mental health training opportunities, and critical incident debriefings following stressful events.
- Approximately half of department staff have participated in wellness sessions, with positive feedback from employees and leadership reporting improved morale within the department.
- While stigma around mental health remains a barrier for some employees seeking services, the department continues to promote the program and encourage participation to strengthen officer wellbeing and resilience.

Grant County Sheriff's Office – Physical Fitness Program

Total award: \$10,650.00, Award period: 10/2025-12/2026

- Implemented a wellness policy that reimburses employees for fitness memberships to promote physical health, resilience, and overall wellbeing among law enforcement staff.
- The program encourages regular physical activity as a way to reduce stress, improve fitness, and support the demanding nature of law enforcement work.
- While initial participation was limited, interest from employees has increased as awareness of the program grows.

- The department plans to expand wellness efforts with additional training on stress management and de-escalation, further supporting employee health and job readiness.

Treatment & Recovery:

West Central Minnesota Communities Action – Housing Stability Program

Total award: \$35,000.00, Award period: 10/2025-6/2027

- Provides housing navigation, peer recovery support, and rental assistance for individuals affected by substance use disorder.
- In late 2025, the program assisted four households with housing stabilization, helping individuals maintain safe housing while working toward recovery.
- Participants also received connections to additional services such as health insurance enrollment, food assistance, and other supportive resources.
- Staff conducted community outreach and presentations and distributed Narcan and fentanyl test strips to increase awareness and improve overdose prevention efforts.

Overall Key System Challenges Identified

- Strong collaboration between law enforcement, schools, and community organizations.
- Increased youth prevention programming.
- Expanded opportunities for safe medication disposal.
- Greater attention to first responder mental health and wellness.
- Ongoing stigma around mental health.
- Housing barriers for individuals in recovery.

Pope County Opioid Settlement Projects 2025 Progress Update

Prevention & Early Intervention:

Horizon Public Health – Youth Media Campaign

Total award: \$11,856.00, Award period: 12/2024-12/2026

- Youth-led media campaign focused on opioid awareness, Narcan education, and youth mental health.
- Youth from across the region helped develop the campaign theme “Your Future Matters” and participated in listening sessions to identify key mental health and substance use issues affecting their peers.
- Students collaborated to create social media videos and digital content shared through platforms such as TikTok and programmatic advertising.
- The campaign generated hundreds of thousands of impressions and video views, helping increase youth awareness of opioid risks, Narcan, and available mental health resources such as CredibleMind.
- By centering youth voices in campaign development and messaging, the project strengthened youth leadership, increased knowledge of community support, and encouraged more open conversations about mental health and substance use.

Minnewaska Area Schools – Student Substance Use Prevention Program

Total award: \$90,000.00, Award period: 9/2025-9/2026

- Implemented a comprehensive school-based substance use prevention initiative focused on student mental health, early intervention, and substance misuse prevention.
- Activities included staff training on substance use awareness and naloxone administration, student screening and early intervention, individual and group counseling through school social workers, and Youth Frontiers workshops for students in grades 4, 7, 10, and 12.
- The district also introduced a new chemical health curriculum for 7th and 9th grade students to provide age-appropriate prevention education.
- Overall, the initiative reached more than 758 students and staff through prevention programming, education, and support services, helping increase awareness of substance use risks and available resources while strengthening collaboration between school staff, counselors, and community partners.
- While stigma and reluctance to seek help can make it difficult to reach some students and families, and late grant notification limited early planning time, the district plans to expand prevention efforts through a dedicated Substance Use Prevention Educator position to strengthen school and community programming.

Pope County Sheriff’s Office – DARE Program

Total award: \$5,000.00, Award period: 8/2025-8/2026

- Supported the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program for students at Minnewaska Area Schools to promote substance use prevention and healthy decision-making.

- Funding was used to purchase classroom materials such as student workbooks, name tags, and engagement tools used during DARE instruction.
- The program teaches students how to resist peer pressure and make safe, healthy choices related to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Approximately 100 fifth-grade students participated in the program during 2025, gaining increased awareness of substance use risks and prevention strategies.
- As students develop greater confidence in making healthy choices, the Sheriff's Office is exploring opportunities to expand the program to younger elementary grades, though maintaining classroom materials and supplies will require ongoing funding to sustain the program.

Treatment & Recovery:

Car Care Program – Transportation Stability for Recovery and Workforce Engagement

Total award: \$35,000.00, Award period: 8/2025-8/2027

- Program addresses transportation barriers that often prevent individuals in recovery from maintaining employment, attending treatment, and meeting probation or court requirements.
- During 2025, the program focused on launching the project and establishing the infrastructure needed to operate effectively, including referral partnerships, intake procedures, and documentation systems.
- Partnerships were developed with probation departments, treatment providers, workforce agencies, and other community partners to identify individuals who would benefit from transportation assistance.
- The program will provide vehicle repair and transportation support for residents impacted by substance use disorder in Douglas, Pope, and Stevens Counties, helping individuals maintain recovery stability, employment, and family connections.

West Central Minnesota Communities Action – Housing Stability Program

Total award: \$35,000.00, Award period: 8/2025-8/2027

- Provides housing navigation, peer recovery support, and rental assistance for individuals affected by substance use disorder.
- In late 2025, the program assisted four households with housing stabilization, helping individuals maintain safe housing while working toward recovery.
- Participants also received connections to additional services such as health insurance enrollment, food assistance, and other supportive resources.
- Staff conducted community outreach and presentations and distributed Narcan and fentanyl test strips to increase awareness and improve overdose prevention efforts.

Overall Key System Challenges Identified

- Strong collaboration between schools, law enforcement, and community organizations.
- Expanded youth prevention education and school-based support services.
- Increased coordination of housing and recovery resources.
- Continued stigma around substance use and mental health.
- Prevention programs require sustained funding to maintain materials and staffing.

Stevens County Opioid Settlement Projects 2025 Progress Update

Prevention & Early Intervention

Horizon Public Health – Youth Media Campaign

Total award: \$11,856.00, Award period: 12/2024-12/2026

- Youth-led media campaign focused on opioid awareness, Narcan education, and youth mental health.
- Youth from across the region helped develop the campaign theme “Your Future Matters” and participated in listening sessions to identify key mental health and substance use issues affecting their peers.
- Students collaborated to create social media videos and digital content shared through platforms such as TikTok and programmatic advertising.
- The campaign generated hundreds of thousands of impressions and video views, helping increase youth awareness of opioid risks, Narcan, and available mental health resources such as CredibleMind.
- By centering youth voices in campaign development and messaging, the project strengthened youth leadership, increased knowledge of community support, and encouraged more open conversations about mental health and substance use.

RUSC Kinship Mentoring – NEAR Presentations

Total award: \$720.00, Award: 8/2025

- Developed a community education initiative to provide NEAR (Neuroscience, Epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Resilience) presentations focused on the long-term impacts of trauma and adversity.
- The presentations aim to increase community understanding of how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) influence mental health, substance use risk, and long-term wellbeing, while highlighting the role of resilience and supportive relationships.
- Programming will be offered to human services staff, community partners, and other local organizations to strengthen trauma-informed practices and prevention efforts.
- The first presentation is scheduled for January 2026, beginning with Stevens County Human Services staff and community partners to build awareness and support broader prevention strategies.

Harm Reduction:

Stevens County Ambulance Service – Controlled Substance Security Upgrades

Total award: \$9,206.34, Award: 8/2025

- Implemented security upgrades to improve the storage and handling of controlled substances used by emergency medical services.
- Funding supported the purchase of secure lock boxes for ambulances and on-site medication storage, helping ensure medications are safely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel.

- The upgraded systems are used daily by EMS staff and help reduce the risk of medication diversion or misuse while maintaining compliance with medication security standards.
- As the program continues, remaining grant funds may be used to purchase additional securement devices for ventilators and other medical equipment to further enhance equipment safety and organization within ambulances.

Treatment & Recovery

Car Care Program – Transportation Stability for Recovery and Workforce Engagement

Total award: \$35,000.00, Award period: 8/2025-8/2027

- Program addresses transportation barriers that often prevent individuals in recovery from maintaining employment, attending treatment, and meeting probation or court requirements.
- During 2025, the program focused on launching the project and establishing the infrastructure needed to operate effectively, including referral partnerships, intake procedures, and documentation systems.
- Partnerships were developed with probation departments, treatment providers, workforce agencies, and other community partners to identify individuals who would benefit from transportation assistance.
- The program will provide vehicle repair and transportation support for residents impacted by substance use disorder in Douglas, Pope, and Stevens Counties, helping individuals maintain recovery stability, employment, and family connections.

Stevens Community Medical Center – Addiction Treatment Capacity

Total award: \$72,063.55, Award: 12/2023

- Invested in expanding local behavioral health and substance use treatment services by supporting staff training toward licensed addiction counselor certification.
- Funding also supported the purchase of TheraTapper devices used for EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) therapy, an evidence-based approach used to treat trauma and other behavioral health conditions.
- These investments strengthen the hospital’s ability to provide more comprehensive substance use and mental health treatment locally, improving access to care for residents.
- Although the certification timeline was delayed due to scheduling issues with training providers, the hospital continues to move forward with staff education to expand treatment capacity in the community.

West Central Minnesota Communities Action – Housing Stability Program

Total award: \$35,000.00, Award period: 8/2025-8/2027

- Provides housing navigation, peer recovery support, and rental assistance for individuals affected by substance use disorder.
- In late 2025, the program assisted four households with housing stabilization, helping individuals maintain safe housing while working toward recovery.
- Participants also received connections to additional services such as health insurance enrollment, food assistance, and other supportive resources.

- Staff conducted community outreach and presentations and distributed Narcan and fentanyl test strips to increase awareness and improve overdose prevention efforts.

Overall Key System Challenges Identified

- Increased collaboration between healthcare providers, community organizations, and emergency responders.
- Expanded prevention education and youth engagement.
- Improved infrastructure for secure medication handling and healthcare workforce development.
- Housing barriers for individuals in recovery.
- Some programs are early in implementation, with larger impacts expected in 2026.

Traverse County Opioid Settlement Projects 2025 Progress Update

Prevention & Early Intervention

Browns Valley Youth Voices Project – Safe Activity Spaces

Total award: \$9,800.00, Award: 7/2025

- Established a partnership between Browns Valley School, the local public library, and the City of Browns Valley to create safe, supervised spaces where youth can gather after school.
- Funding supported the purchase of student-selected activities and maker-space supplies, including art materials, sewing machines and crafts, puzzles, creative projects, and a 3D printer.
- These resources provide positive, engaging alternatives to substance use by encouraging creativity, skill-building, and healthy peer interaction.
- Students expressed strong interest in having a safe place to spend time with friends outside school hours, helping strengthen youth engagement and reduce risk factors associated with substance misuse.
- While some supplies were delayed due to shipping timelines, the project continues to build safe and supportive environments for youth in the community.

Browns Valley School – EmpowerU Resilience Program

Total award: \$10,348.00, Award: 7/2025

- Partnered with EmpowerU to provide a resilience and social-emotional learning program for middle school students.
- The program included classroom instruction and individualized coaching for students in grades 6–8, focusing on skills such as goal setting, stress management, healthy relationships, and reframing negative thought patterns.
- A total of 52 students enrolled in the program, with 48 completing the full curriculum.
- Program outcomes showed strong positive impact, with 93% of students making progress toward their personal goals and 91% reporting improved overall wellbeing.
- The program helps strengthen students’ coping skills, confidence, and resilience, supporting healthier decision-making and reducing risk factors associated with substance use.

Horizon Public Health – Youth Media Campaign

Total award: \$11,856.00, Award period: 12/2024-12/2026

- Youth-led media campaign focused on opioid awareness, Narcan education, and youth mental health.
- Youth from across the region helped develop the campaign theme “Your Future Matters” and participated in listening sessions to identify key mental health and substance use issues affecting their peers.
- Students collaborated to create social media videos and digital content shared through platforms such as TikTok and programmatic advertising.

- The campaign generated hundreds of thousands of impressions and video views, helping increase youth awareness of opioid risks, Narcan, and available mental health resources such as CredibleMind.
- By centering youth voices in campaign development and messaging, the project strengthened youth leadership, increased knowledge of community support, and encouraged more open conversations about mental health and substance use.

Wheaton Area Schools – STOPit Anonymous Reporting Program

Total award: \$1,500.00, Award: 7/2025

- Implemented the STOPit anonymous reporting system to allow students, parents, and community members to safely report concerns related to student safety, including substance use, bullying, or mental health issues.
- Reports are monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and forwarded to school administrators or law enforcement when necessary to ensure timely response and support.
- The program currently serves approximately 335–350 students in the district, providing a confidential way to share concerns and seek help.
- By allowing anonymous reporting, the system encourages students to speak up about safety concerns without fear of stigma or retaliation, strengthening trust between students and school staff.
- Ongoing education is provided to help students use the reporting system appropriately and reduce false reports, ensuring the tool remains effective for addressing real concerns.

Harm Reduction:

Wheaton Area Schools – AED & Narcan Safety Project

Total award: \$6,200.00, Award: 7/2025

- Strengthened school emergency preparedness by purchasing updated AED devices and emergency response equipment for school buildings and extracurricular activities.
- The equipment ensures staff and students have immediate access to lifesaving tools during medical emergencies, including potential overdose situations.
- While the devices have not yet been required for emergency use, their availability improves overall safety, preparedness, and response capability within the school and broader community.
- Some equipment delivery was delayed due to supply chain issues, but the district continues working to ensure all safety equipment is fully available and ready for use.

Overall Key System Challenges Identified

- Strong emphasis on youth prevention and school-based programming.
- Increased access to mental health and resilience education for students.
- Improved school safety and emergency preparedness.
- Small communities face limited resources for youth activities and prevention programming.
- Some projects experienced supply or implementation delays.