



GRANTS TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Grants to Improve Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Outcomes

Application Deadline: March 30, 2022

Time frame is 12 months:

- Grants will be announced May 2022.
- Program activity will begin June 2022.
- Grant period concludes May 2023.
- Final report due July 2023.

Purpose: The Request for Proposals (RFP) will be issued to health, community, and social service organizations to address the substance use disorders (SUDs) epidemic in West Virginia.

SUDs are complex disorders affecting the wiring of the brain when exposed to addictive substances. Susceptibility and severity of SUDs are contributed to by complex genetic, environmental, and life experiences. Addiction, an outcome of SUDs, is now understood to be a chronic, treatable brain disorder from which one can recover. SUDs, when left untreated, can result in serious medical complications (e.g., infectious diseases, cirrhosis), accidents, and death. Alcohol is the most common SUD resulting in death (typically from chronic medical complications), followed closely by opioid overdose. SUDs are, however, treatable and many people can and have achieved long-term sustained recovery.

We find ourselves in an overdose epidemic within a pandemic. West Virginia leads the nation in the rate of overdoses and the increase year over year is alarming. Between 2019 and 2020, the rate climbed by 45%. Every day, 3.5 West Virginians lose their lives to overdose, affecting children, families, employers, and communities. But this doesn't have to be our future.

Many in our state are heroically involved in prevention, treatment, overdose rescue, and support for long-term recovery – but these services need support.

The Highmark WV Charitable Fund for Health will award a total of \$500,000 in grants to organizations that implement or have existing programs that address the SUD epidemic in West Virginia. The minimum grant awarded will be \$50,000.

Use of funds: Grants may be used to initiate effective SUD health programs and services or expand existing services that offer viable approaches to prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and support for long-term recovery.

Potential projects: School-based preventive education, harm reduction approaches and naloxone distribution, support for pregnant women and families struggling with SUDs and recovery, addressing the psychological needs and grief process for children who have lost a parent to an overdose, or programs that address health disparities and improve health equity in vulnerable populations.

Building capacity

- Availability of SUD programming in communities
- Facilitating virtual care opportunities
- Building capacity within health care and social service agencies

Education/outreach

- School-based educational programs
- Harm reduction education in communities
- Community education on substance use disorder and anti-stigma campaigns

Access to care

- Promoting access to harm reduction activities and services in communities across the state
- Connecting at-risk individuals to care access points (telemedicine capacity, transportation, and technology)

Measuring success/outcomes

- Reduce overdose
- Increase individuals engaged in treatment
- Increase persons taking part in drug and harm reduction education

The Highmark WV Charitable Fund for Health, a fund of the Highmark Foundation, is a private, charitable organization of Highmark Inc. that supports initiatives and programs aimed at improving community health. The Highmark WV Charitable Fund for Health's mission is to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for individuals who reside in West Virginia. We are proud to support charitable organizations that are a good fit with our mission statement. To be eligible for a grant, an organization must meet the following criteria:

- Be a nonprofit defined as tax exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and as a public charity under section 509 (a). The Foundation does not support third-party or fiduciary arrangements.
- Be located in one of the 55 counties in West Virginia.

This RFP is available at highmarkwvfund.versaic.com.

For questions or additional information regarding the RFP or application process, call the Foundation at **1-866-594-1730** or email cathy.mcalister@highmarkhealth.org.

For more information, visit the Highmark Foundation website at highmarkfoundation.org.