

NCHS Resilient Youth Initiative

proven programs to support social-emotional learning & substance use prevention



NCHS RESILIENT YOUTH INITIATIVE

North Central Health Services (NCHS) is committed to providing health care and promoting healthy communities for the benefit of the citizens of Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Warren, and White counties. Since 1999, NCHS has awarded over \$50 million in grant funding to more than 190 organizations.

Beyond its Community Benefit Capital Grant program, NCHS also initiates strategic partnerships with coalitions, funders, nonprofits, and other entities to directly address the most critical community health needs identified by the NCHS and River Bend Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment. These NCHS-initiated Community Benefit Partnerships fund the launch, expansion, or strengthening of programs and services that improve health outcomes and develop healthy communities.

As a funder that prioritizes grant impact in the areas of mental health improvement and substance abuse, NCHS seeks to assist schools in developing youth resiliency through social-emotional competency, drug resistance, and mental wellbeing.

NCHS is announcing a new grant opportunity, the Resilient Youth Initiative, to support the identification, implementation and long-term sustainability of proven social-emotional learning (SEL) and substance use prevention programs. We recognize schools need support to find the SEL or prevention programs that work best for them, prepare for effective implementation, and develop plans for sustaining their programs. The Resilient Youth Initiative will give school leaders the opportunity to access funding and technical assistance to effectively and sustainably implement proven programs and set youth on paths for success.

Evidence-based SEL and prevention programs help students avoid substance use and improve other outcomes:

66%

LESS LIKELY TO USE HEROIN, CRACK OR COCAINE*

28%

LESS LIKELY TO SMOKE LONG TERM**

51%

HIGHER MATH SCORES ON STATE TESTS***

41%

MORE LIKELY TO ATTEND COLLEGE*

32%

DROP IN DELINQUENCY**

26%

DROP IN FIGHTING**

15%

LOWER ABSENTEEISM***

*Pax Good Behavior Game, **LifeSkills Training, ***Positive Action

Resilient Youth Initiative Goals

- Alleviate barriers schools face identifying evidence-based social-emotional learning and substance use prevention programs
- Provide the support schools need to effectively implement these programs
- Help students develop prosocial-emotional behaviors, drug resistance, and mental wellbeing
- Improve youth mental health measures and reduce youth substance use

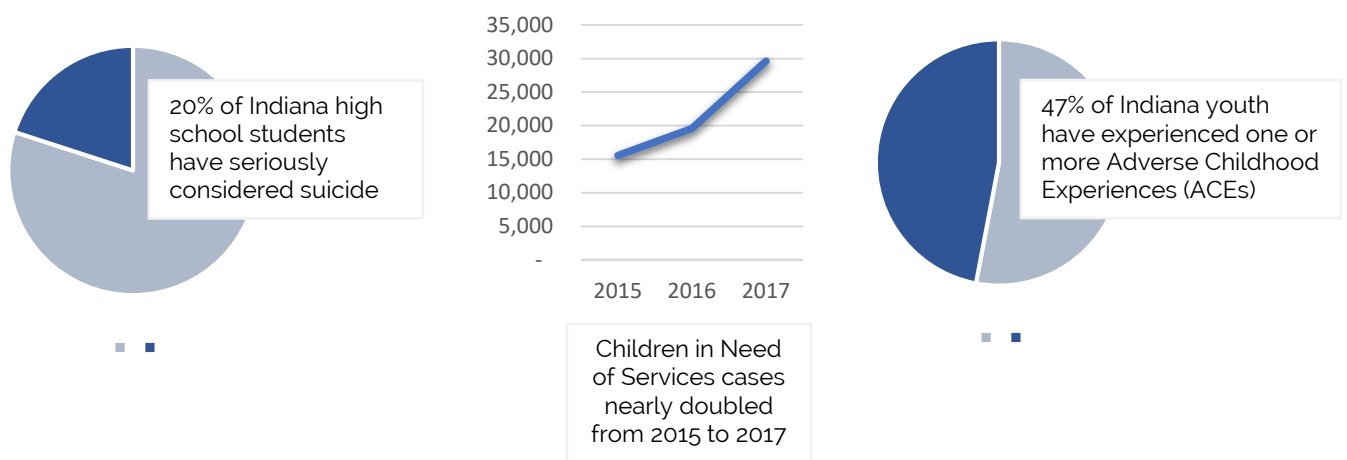
BACKGROUND

Resilient Youth

The World Health Organization defines sound mental health as a state of wellbeing in which individuals realize their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and are able to make contributions. Perhaps no other group is better informed about the mental health needs of children in our communities than the teachers, counselors, and school administrators who serve them every day.

Local youth face rising trends in suicide attempts, substantiated incidents of child abuse and neglect, and parental substance use. Youth in Indiana reporting at least one major depressive episode in the past year rose 71% from 2011 to 2017. Nearly 17% of Indiana high school students in 2015 reported they had abused a prescription drug. In 2015, nearly 20% of Indiana high school students seriously considered suicide – the third-highest rate in the nation.

Stressed brains do not have the same learning capacities as those that feel safe, can emotionally regulate, and can feel connection.



School-Based SEL and Prevention Initiatives

Evidenced-based social-emotional learning (SEL) and substance use prevention programs exist and, when implemented well, can substantially improve students' self-management and social skills and lower substance use. Given how much time youth spend in the classroom, school-based programs are uniquely positioned to address mental health and substance use issues early on before they become more serious. As students learn emotional management, drug resistance, and interpersonal skills, studies show the programs can also result in schoolwide improvement in classroom behaviors and academic achievement.

A 2017 meta-analysis of the results for 97,500 students in 82 schools shows that 3.5 years after their last social-emotional learning intervention, students fared markedly better academically than their peers in control groups, by an average of 13 percentile points. Regardless of race, socioeconomic background, or school location, students showed significant positive benefits post-intervention. Additionally, researchers saw that conduct problems, emotional distress, and drug use were much lower for students with social-emotional learning exposure than those without.

Defining Evidence-Based Programs

“Evidence-based” SEL and prevention programs are those with high-quality research showing short- and, in some cases, long-term reductions in substance use and aggressive behaviors and improvements in social-emotional competence. This research goes beyond measuring whether students acquired specific knowledge or skills, toward measuring actual changes in behavior and student outcomes. Researchers use randomized controlled trials, the “gold standard” in measuring program impact, and similar approaches. Studies show that evidenced-based social-emotional learning interventions produce an average return on investment of \$11 for every dollar spent, with benefits in reductions in child aggression, substance abuse, delinquency, and violence; lower levels of depression and anxiety; and increased attendance and performance in core academic subjects.

Ineffective Programs and Ineffective Implementation

Some programs do not have strong evidence of effectiveness though they may be commonly implemented in schools. While programs that deliver powerful messages through videos or one-hour convocations may be appealing, they have little or no evidence of reducing substance use and positively impacting other important student outcomes long term. Evidenced-based prevention programs are an opportunity for schools to better equip students with skills that have been proven to reduce rates of substance use and improve academic outcomes and social and emotional well-being.

Implementing evidence-based programs as designed and with fidelity is also critical to achieving those proven, substantial and sustained impacts on student outcomes. Straying from the prescribed lesson plan, implementing the program for a different group of students than was intended, or adapting the program in other ways will likely lead to diminished results.

Examples of Evidence-Based Programs

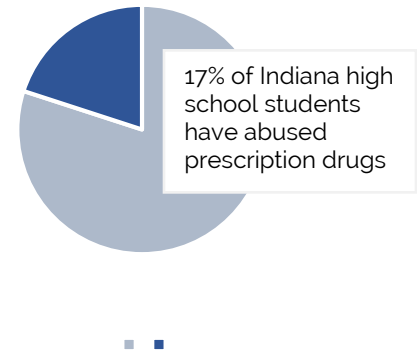
Below is a description of four sample SEL and prevention programs and their impact:

Good Behavior Game

Good Behavior Game, or GBG, is a classroom-behavior management strategy for elementary school, generally first or second grade, designed to reduce aggressive, disruptive behavior. The program is delivered through a classroom game played ten minutes each day. Studies of the program find reductions in aggressiveness and disruptive classroom behavior, especially for highly aggressive males. These reductions persist into middle school. By middle school, students who received the program have also been shown to be 66 percent less likely to initiate use of heroin, crack and cocaine. Longer-term studies find that by the time students who participated in the program in first or second grade were 19-21 years old, they were 50 percent less likely to have drug abuse or dependence disorders, 68 percent less likely to smoke and, among initially aggressive males, 32 percent less likely to engage in violence or criminal behavior. When enhanced with additional components related specifically to academic achievement, the program has been found to increase the likelihood of graduating high school by 18 percent and attending college by 41 percent.

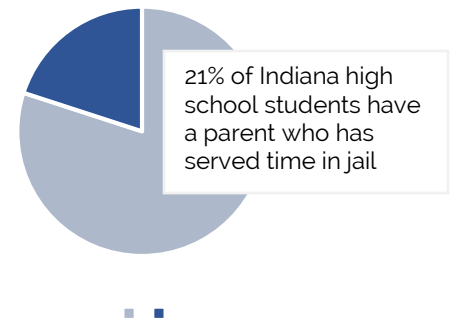
LifeSkills Training

LifeSkills Training, or LST, is a classroom-based program for middle school students. It teaches personal self-management skills, social skills and resistance skills specifically related to substance use and is taught in 30 classroom sessions of 30-45 minutes over three years. Multiple studies, across a variety of school settings, find consistent impacts on substance use and other behaviors. One study found students who participated in the program were 28 percent less likely to smoke after a six-year follow-up, 66 percent less likely to use marijuana after a three-year follow-up and 50 percent less likely to report binge drinking in one and two-year follow-ups, relative to similar students who did not participate in the program. Long-term impacts have also been shown for methamphetamine use, hallucinogen use and illicit drug use, including use of narcotics like heroin and misuse of prescription drugs, as well as risky sexual behaviors and risky driving.



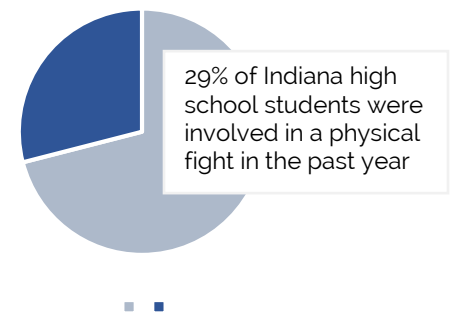
Positive Action

Positive Action is a curriculum-based program for elementary and middle school that teaches self-control, communication and decision-making strategies and is designed to improve academic achievement, school attendance and problem behaviors like substance use, aggression and dropping out. It requires 15 minutes per day to deliver. Studies across multiple settings have found the program leads to not only reductions in substance use outcomes but also improvements in academic outcomes. For example, one study found that by fifth grade, students who received the program saw 15 percent lower absenteeism, 21 percent higher performance on state reading tests and 51 percent higher performance on state math tests, in addition to 47 percent reductions in tobacco use, 47 percent reduction in alcohol use and 73 percent reduction in use of illegal drugs like marijuana and cocaine. These studies find substantial impacts on bullying, violence and disciplinary referrals and suspensions as well.



Second Step

Second Step is a universal, classroom-based program designed to increase school success and decrease problem behaviors by promoting social-emotional competence and self-regulation. The Second Step program consists of a skills-focused, social-emotional learning curriculum that emphasizes skills that strengthen students' ability to learn, have empathy, manage emotions, and solve problems. The elementary school program is delivered through approximately 20 weekly lessons of 20-40 minutes each. The middle school program is delivered in approximately 15 weekly 50-minute lessons or biweekly 25-minute lessons. Studies show significant improvements in social-emotional competence and behavior made by children who started the school year with skill deficits in these areas. One study found sixth-graders in schools that implemented Second Step were 42 percent less likely to report they were involved in physical aggression compared to sixth-graders in schools that did not implement the program.



RESILIENT YOUTH GRANT OPPORTUNITY

NCHS is offering the Resilient Youth Initiative grant opportunity to assist Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Warren, and White county schools in (1) developing plans for implementation of evidence-based social-emotional learning (SEL) and/or substance use prevention programs and (2) effectively implementing these programs.

For the purposes of the grant opportunity, “evidence-based social-emotional learning and substance use prevention programs” include the programs listed on the Indiana Prevention Resource Center’s *Evidence-Based Programs Guide*, available at nchsi.com/resilient, which have high-quality evidence of effectiveness. These programs are generally curriculum-based, take place over multiple classroom sessions, and teach students decision-making, communication, self-regulation and other skills designed to help students make good choices.

Note: for this initiative, NCHS will only consider proposals to implement evidence-based programs as designed. Although NCHS believes innovation is important, this particular initiative is limited to programs that, when implemented with fidelity, are already proven to be effective.

The Resilient Youth Initiative includes two stages: *a noncompetitive planning grant stage and a competitive implementation grant stage:*

Planning Grant recipients will receive funding and technical assistance so that school personnel can learn more about evidence-based SEL and prevention programs and develop detailed plans for effective implementation in their school(s).

Implementation Grant recipients will receive funding for three years of implementation in their school(s). Only planning grant recipients will be eligible to submit implementation grant applications.

NCHS anticipates awarding up to a total of \$2 million in planning and implementation grant funding. The number and total dollar amount of planning grants awarded will depend upon the number of eligible planning grant applications received. The number and total dollar amount of implementation grants will depend upon the amount of planning grants awarded, the number and quality of implementation grant applications received, and the amount of funding requested in the implementation grant applications.

All public (traditional, charter and innovation network) and accredited private K-12 schools in Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Warren, and White counties in Indiana are eligible to participate and should apply under one of the following categories:

School corporations.

Charter school networks and private school organizations representing more than one school site, including private and religious school organizations. *An individual charter, private, or innovation network school operated by a school network operating more than one school in the NCHS service area may not apply separately for a grant. Instead, a school network that operates multiple schools must file a single application on behalf of all the schools in the NCHS service area it operates.*

Individual, single-site schools that are not part of a school corporation, charter school network, or private school organization.

RESILIENT YOUTH GRANT CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

In preparing planning and implementation grant applications, schools are encouraged to consider the following guidelines:

Eligibility. Only K-12 schools located within Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Tippecanoe, Warren, and White counties in Indiana are eligible for the Resilient Youth Initiative. Because evidence-based prevention programs for schools are generally oriented toward traditional K-12 students, schools that serve adult populations are not eligible for funding as part of this initiative.

Technical Assistance Providers. Planning grant recipients are required to engage with the initiative's technical assistance providers during the planning process. NCHS has selected these technical assistance providers due to their expertise assisting schools in implementing evidence-based programs with fidelity. The technical assistance is being offered free-of-charge to help schools select the program that best fits the needs of their students and teachers and to plan for successful program implementation. Technical assistance providers will reach out to all planning grant recipients to identify recipients' technical assistance needs and develop plans to address those needs. Technical assistance will involve a combination of group meetings and one-on-one consultation. Technical assistance providers will not write schools' grant applications.

Program Selection. Schools will work with technical assistance providers to review the provided list of approved evidence-based programs and select the program that best meets the needs of their school(s).

Pilot vs. School-/Corporation-Wide Program Delivery. In deciding the scope and timing of implementation, applicants should consider the following:

Because evidence-based SEL and prevention programs are designed for specific grade levels, schools are not obligated to develop plans serving all grade levels. Rather, they should identify the grade level(s) they wish to reach with programming and select an evidence-based program appropriate for the grade level(s).

Similarly, school corporations should consider whether they wish to implement prevention programs in a single grade across the corporation or among a select number of grades in a select number of schools. This decision will be based in part upon which program is selected.

Applicants may also decide to implement their prevention program in a phased manner, expanding the program's delivery to increasing numbers of students and schools over the three-year implementation grant period.

Within the implementation grant application, applicants should provide the rationale for the grade levels and schools to receive the SEL and/or prevention program, and any phased approaches to expanding the program's delivery over the grant period.

Applicants will also be asked to identify how they would reduce the scale of their plans if they received less implementation grant funding than they are requesting.

Community Partners. Applicants should consider whether outside organizations such as mental health providers, health systems, nonprofit groups, higher education providers or health departments can help implement sustainable, evidence-based SEL and prevention programs. If such a partnership is

established, the implementation grant application must still come from the school, school corporation or school network. The application must also include a letter from each committed partner describing the nature of the existing or new partnership, their capacity to support a partnership, and the resources they will commit to help implement the program with fidelity.

Partnering with Other Schools and School Corporations. If, during the planning grant stage, two or more schools, school corporations, charter school networks or private school organizations determine they could implement a program more effectively and sustainably by collaborating, they may submit a joint implementation grant application. The joint application must still present an per-student program cost as described in the “Resilient Youth Implementation Grant Process” section.

Evaluation Criteria. Implementation grant applications demonstrating the following will be given special consideration:

- Commitment to implementing an evidence-based social-emotional learning and/or substance use prevention program.
- Commitment to implementing the program with fidelity, including selecting a program appropriate for the students who will receive it, properly training teachers or others to teach the curriculum, and ensuring all components of the curriculum are presented to students.
- Commitment to working with NCHS and technical assistance providers to develop a strategy to evaluate whether the program is effectively implemented and has an impact on outcomes of interest. This may include conducting “fidelity checks” to ensure the SEL or prevention program is being delivered as designed and/or collecting data on substance use, disciplinary referrals, classroom behavior, academic performance, or other outcomes.
- Creation of and commitment to a feasible plan to sustain the program beyond the three years of implementation grant funding from NCHS. This may include efforts to incorporate additional sources of funding beyond NCHS during the three-year implementation grant period.

Information contained in the Resilient Youth planning and implementation grant applications will not be shared beyond NCHS or its agents.

RESILIENT YOUTH PLANNING GRANT PROCESS

Application Deadline December 10, 2018 1:00 PM

Resilient Youth Planning Grants will allow applicants to determine whether to pursue an Implementation Grant and, if so, to develop their implementation grant application. Planning grant funds may cover time for teachers, leaders and other staff to work with technical assistance providers to select the most appropriate evidence-based social-emotional learning (SEL) and substance use prevention programs and identify how to incorporate the programs into their school schedules and curriculums.

Planning grants may cover costs such as:

- hiring consultants to assist in the process (e.g., grant writing assistance)
- meeting with parents and other community members to discuss evidence-based SEL and/or substance use prevention programs
- site visits to schools already effectively implementing an approved evidenced-based program

Planning grants are non-competitive for eligible schools. However, final decisions will be at the sole discretion of NCHS.

To apply for a Planning Grant, applicants will complete the Resilient Youth Planning Grant application downloadable at nchsi.com/resilient. The application will request the following information:

- Issues concerning substance use, social-emotional competence, delinquency, aggression, bullying, violence, suicide, risky sexual behaviors, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and/or related mental health concerns among the applicant's student population that the applicant might address through an SEL and/or prevention program. Such data may be available via the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System and the Indiana Youth Survey. Applicants may also request planning grant funding to research this student-level information if little or no data exists.
- If the applicant is currently implementing SEL or prevention programs, description of these efforts, areas where the applicant would like to improve its SEL or prevention efforts, and current barriers to improving the applicant's SEL or prevention efforts.
- Discussion of strategies, individuals or organizations, and activities to be supported by the planning grant, including the school leaders, other school personnel, students, parents, and community partners who will be invited or have agreed to participate in the planning process. Applicants should consider the necessary approval processes to implement new curriculums when determining which school personnel to involve in the planning process.
- Discussion of the applicant's commitment to working with an NCHS-approved technical assistance provider in selecting a program, developing a sustainable plan for implementing the program as designed, and any additional planning support the applicant will seek from the technical assistance provider during the planning period.
- Planning grant amount requested. Planning grant amounts will be based on the applicant's organizational structure and enrollment as follows:

School corporations may request up to \$30,000.

Charter school networks or private school organizations representing more than one school site may request up to \$20,000.

Individual, single-site schools not part of a corporation, charter school network, or private school network may request up to \$15,000.

If planning grant funds remain following the submission of an implementation grant application (or if no such application is submitted), schools will have until December 31, 2019 to expend those funds for purposes that enhance the applicant's social-emotional learning or substance use prevention programs. A report on the activities pursued during the planning grant process and an accounting of how the planning grant funds were used will be due to NCHS by January 31, 2020.

- Line-item budget and budget narrative tied to the proposed grant activities, including personnel, stipends, professional development, conferences, travel, external consultants, curriculum resources, and technology.
- Letter of support or endorsement from the superintendent, principal, or other relevant school leader.

Planning grant applications are due by 1:00 p.m. on December 10, 2018.

NCHS will notify applicants of planning grant approvals in December of 2018.

RESILIENT YOUTH IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROCESS

Application Deadline May 31, 2019 at 1:00 PM

NCHS expects that each Resilient Youth Planning Grant recipient will use their grant to help decide whether to apply for an Implementation Grant, and if so, to prepare the Implementation Grant application. *Only Planning Grant recipients may apply for implementation funding.*

Resilient Youth Implementation Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. Successful applications will describe a feasible plan for implementation of an evidence-based social-emotional learning (SEL) and/or substance use prevention program and a detailed and reasonable plan for sustaining the program beyond the three years of NCHS funding.

Implementation grants will cover three years of program implementation. Implementation grants must be used during the grant period, July 2019 through June 30, 2022.

To apply for an Implementation Grant, eligible applicants must complete the Resilient Youth Implementation Grant application, available for download at nchsi.com/resilient in January of 2019. The application will request the following information:

- Discussion of your planning grant activities and outcomes.
- Expenditures during the planning period, compared to the line-item budget provided in your planning grant application.
- Discussion, including rationale, of the evidence-based SEL and/or prevention program(s) chosen for implementation.
- Discussion of plans to launch the program(s), including the start date for program implementation, grade levels served by the program(s) in each year; whether the program(s) will be offered to all students in the selected grade levels or a targeted population of students; the teachers and other staff who will be responsible for implementing the program(s); required upfront and ongoing staff training; and a description of when the program(s) will be offered to students, including frequency and duration of sessions.
- Identification of any community partners or external organizations that will be involved in implementation and descriptions of their roles and responsibilities. Any community partners identified must provide a letter of support affirming their commitment.
- Description of plans to ensure the program is implemented with fidelity according to established design parameters.
- Description of plans to ensure the program is sustained following the three years of NCHS grant funding.
- Description of plans for evaluating the program's implementation and its impact on outcomes. This should include discussion of what the applicant hopes to learn through the evaluation (e.g., whether the program is being effectively implemented, impact of the program on student

outcomes, ways to improve effectiveness) and what data the applicant might collect (e.g., administrative data on academic outcomes or disciplinary referrals, surveys of teachers or other staff regarding their impressions of the program, surveys of students).

- Implementation grant amount requested. NCHS anticipates the amount requested in the application will reflect the applicant’s selection of an evidence-based SEL and/or prevention program that best meets the applicant’s needs. *Applicants should give strong consideration to an appropriate per-student program cost that can be sustained beyond the three years of NCHS support.* Applicants will be asked to identify how they would reduce the scale of their plans if they receive less implementation grant funding than the amount requested.
- A detailed line-item budget and budget narrative tied to the proposed activities, formatted for each of the applicant’s fiscal years throughout the implementation grant period, including personnel, stipends, professional development, conferences, travel, external consultants, curriculum resources, and technology.
- Letter of support or endorsement from the superintendent, principal or other relevant school leader of each school implementing the program.
- Any statements from community representatives or other stakeholders that demonstrate their support for the proposal and affirm any resource commitments they are making to help implement and sustain the activities described in the proposal.

Implementation grant applications are due by 1:00 p.m. May 31, 2019.

NCHS will notify applicants of implementation grant approvals by July 2019.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Resilient Youth Initiative, visit nchsi.com/resilient. We encourage you to contact us with questions about the grant opportunity at Virginia.Vought@nchsi.com or (765) 423-1604.

APPENDIX I References

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