



Passaic County Community Resource Development Funds Background and Rationale, Fiscal Year 2022-2023

The NJ Children’s System of Care (CSOC), Passaic County, and Circle of Care for Families and Children of Passaic County (COC), are interested in expanding services and programs for youth in the county with mental health, behavioral health, intellectual disabilities, and substance use needs.

This one-time funding of \$68,678.46 (less may be applied for) must be utilized in full by June 30, 2023 and will become unavailable to the awardee(s) after that date. Proposals submitted must either be a one-time initiative that can have a sustained impact or serve as seed money to initiative a new resource. Applicants must commit to working in partnership with Circle of Care for Families and Children of Passaic County (COC), other system partners, and community-based resources. They must embody the values of the NJ Children’s System of Care.

There have been noted gaps and needs in quality, community-based mental health services, as evidenced by system-wide surveys and needs assessments, including the 2020 Passaic County HSAC-DCF Needs Assessment, ongoing discussions at community roundtables such as CIACC, PHC Violence Intervention Roundtables, Paterson Alliance meeting, internal polls at Circle of Care and state and county specific data dashboards.

The following are the most prominent needs as identified in above outlets:

- COVID -19 impact on families with children: as of December 2021, an average of 21% of households with children who have lost income due to COVID-19, close to 22% are facing eviction or foreclosure. An estimated 8% of households with children report not have enough food to eat. In over 50% of households with children under age 12, childcare arrangements have been disrupted due to the pandemic. Disruptions to in-person learning and academic loss are reported in over 70% of households across the state, with presumably higher rates in the county of Passaic (KidsCount Data Center)
- Community Safety Prevention and Intervention: only 33% of 2020 DCF Needs Assessment respondents indicated feeling safe in their communities, and identify a lack of resources to prevent crime and engage youth before they have entered the juvenile justice system. There is a significant lack of programming that provides formal or informal mentoring, enrichment classes and other opportunities for development and enhancement of social skills, that accessible to children and families in urban areas (Passaic, Paterson) and upper county (West Milford)
- Substance Use Disorder and Prevention Services: data collected by United for Prevention in Passaic County reveal increased use of vapes, marijuana and e-cigarettes in teens and young adults, as well as increasingly reporting marijuana use viewed as “not harmless” and more socially accepted among young people.



- Job and Career Readiness and Financial Literacy: there is also a marked need for services that look to improve job training and career readiness for teens, to support successful transition into adulthood, as it is noted that the rate of teens not working and not in school is higher in our county than it is for the whole state of NJ (KidsCount data).
- Inclusive services for youth with developmental disabilities: long waitlists for I/DD specific services, staffing challenges, ease of access for specialized services through CSOC are among challenges reported by system partners and advocacy entities (SPAN Legislative Comments on the CSOC)

The priority needs for funding identified are (no specific order):

- Prevention programs and community-based mentoring accessible without system (DCPP, CMO, legal) involvement for at risk youth.
- After-school programs that provide recreational, psycho-education and socialization opportunities, through the arts, sports, and other enrichment outlets both for neurotypical youth and youth with developmental disabilities.
- Programming that supports teens in their efforts to transition to adulthood, such as college and career readiness, financial literacy, entrepreneurship.
- Programming that targets the prevention of substance use while engaging both youth and parents

**The barriers and needs have been collected from various sources: including the 2020 Passaic County Department of Human Services - DCF Needs Assessment, COVID -19 Dashboard, CIACC Dashboard, data pulled from KidsCount data center and internal surveying of COC staff.*

All applications will be reviewed and scored via a panel consisting of COC Community Resource Manager, representatives from COC leadership and staff, and various members of the Passaic County Children's Interagency Coordinating Council (CIACC), including parents.

Thank You,

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