



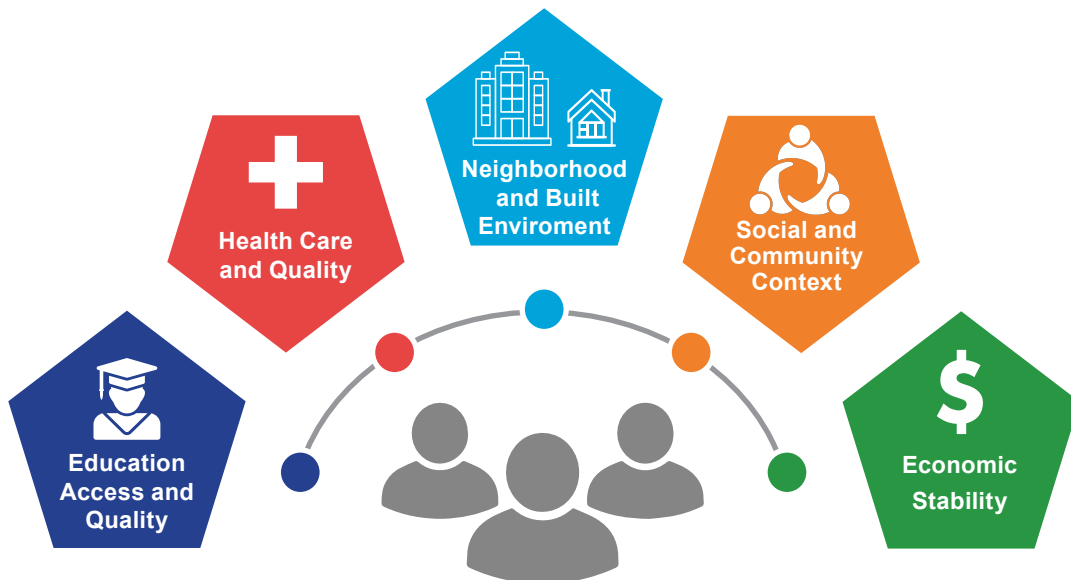
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Week Four 2023

Department of Mental Health Community Investments: Focus on Equity and Recovery from Pandemic Challenges

The Department is currently supporting a broad range of community investments intended to strengthen community resilience, health equity, and improve social and political determinants of health across the state.

What are the Social Determinants of Health?	What is Health Equity?
<p>The CDC describes this as, “The conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.” Having access to housing, food, and employment are all protective factors that may determine the ability for an individual to experience wellness.</p>	<p>Health equity is achieved when every person has the ability to reach their full potential for optimal health and wellness, and when individuals aren't hindered from achieving this potential due to social, political or environmental circumstances.</p>



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Community Resilience Programming:

Abenaki Cultural Training and Mental Health Supports to Abenaki Bands in VT:

The Department is aware of the many strengths, as well as historical and intergenerational trauma, that impact overall wellness for the Abenaki people. Lack of cultural awareness, data, and engagement challenges also impact our system of care's ability to support this population.

To that end, the Department recently provided multiple endeavors specific to the Abenaki community:

A Working Toward Understanding Lunch and Learn for Agency of Humans Services staff

Indigenous Historical and Intergenerational Trauma presentations were delivered to both State of Vermont staff and community partners in healthcare fields

In addition, each of the four Abenaki tribes and two Abenaki non-profits in VT will each be provided \$13,000 in funding to help them address historical and intergenerational trauma in their communities.

Total awarded: \$106,000 to Vermont Care Partners



Language Access Videos

The Department funded a project to create videos about mental health developed in 15 most used languages for refugees and immigrant populations across the state, including in American Sign Language.

Total awarded: \$50,000 to the Vermont Language Justice Project

Cultural Liaisons:

The Department is currently funding Cultural Liaison positions the Howard Center, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, and the Association of Africans Living in Vermont. Liaisons work to reduce cultural barriers for members of the refugee, immigrant, and resettled community in need of services for mental health, substance use disorders and/or intellectual disabilities, working across home, community, school, and office settings. This position provides outreach, support, and service coordination to address needs associated with wellness and resettlement.

Total awarded: \$801,000 (\$267,000 per agency)

Early Childhood Mental Health

The Department funds a variety of activities supporting early childhood mental health which include activities to treat children and youth with Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED). This funding is provided to Building Bright Futures, an organization working to promote mental health resources and develop partnerships within regional early childhood providers that support children with SED in order to improve emergency response and to increase provider understanding of mental health needs for this population.

Total awarded: \$30,000



Peer Support for Parents and Caregivers

The Department provided grant funding to assist parents of children who meet the criteria for Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED) by providing those parents with peer support. This support is intended to aid in identifying and navigating support for their children at the State and community level. In addition to helping parents navigate Coordinated Service Plans(CSPs), the peer support will also assist with delivering education, identification of resources and advocacy for their assigned families.

Total awarded: \$70,000 to Vermont Family Network

Substance Use and Mental Health supports for justice involved adults:

A collaboration between the Department of Corrections (DOC), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), and the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), and Pathways Vermont works to enhance treatment for individuals involved in the criminal justice system. This assistance will come through the evidence-based Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) practice, which is recognized by the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health and Services Administration (SAMHSA) as having shown success in treating individuals with mental health and/or substance use challenges and who are considered at risk of re-offending.

FACT will help to reduce the likelihood of individuals being incarcerated again, and increase productive, safe, and structured time in the community where they will be provided resources for housing, employment, and opportunities to build social connections.

Total awarded: \$1,000,000 grant

Community Investments: Improving Provider Capacity and Workforce Development

COVID Relief Funds: Healthcare Provider Stabilization Funding :

The purpose of over \$1,700,000 in funding allocated was to stabilize the Designated and Specialized Service Agency (DA and SSA) workforce due to significant turnover exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding assisted direct services staff in the following areas:

- 24/7 Residential Direct Services Staff
- Emergency Services Clinicians
- Crisis Bed Direct Service Staff

This effort was subsequently extended to include over **\$12,050,000** in Premium Pay for Agency workforce recruitment and retention

Community Investment Housing grants:



The purpose of the total **\$4,000,000** funding is to make existing housing and community- based service facilities providing mental health services more accessible, safe, and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act or to expand capacity in community settings. Examples of the types of projects this funding currently supports includes weatherization of buildings, upgrading heating and cooling systems, and renovations to make buildings ADA compliant. The grants were awarded to organizations that demonstrate the greatest ability to respond immediately to the need for housing. Additionally, at least one grant was awarded to a peer run or peer-directed housing organization.

Wellness Supports for First Responders:

The Department provides training and wellness supports for frontline health care workers to help them meet Vermont residents' current mental health needs, such as training for emergency department personnel responding to an increased demand for crisis services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and training on trauma-informed and trauma-specific care for mental health professionals responding to the surge in mental health treatment needs.



Awarded amount: \$150,000

Emergency Outreach Grants:

The Department disseminated grants to community organizations for emergency outreach services to address COVID-19- related needs. Of these funds, the Department allocated \$150,000.00 to a mental health peer-support organization (Vermont Psychiatric Survivors) and \$150,000.00 to an organization supporting the needs of LGBTQ youth (Outright Vermont)

Total awarded: \$300,000

Case Management Services:

The Department provided funds to the designated community mental health agencies enabling them each to hire an additional case manager to provide case management services to Vermont residents who may not previously have been part of an agency's caseload but whose lives had been significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and who were urgently in need of these agencies' supports.

Total awarded: \$850,000 (85k per Designated Agency)

Community Investments: Crisis System of Care

988

On July 16, 2022, Vermont, along with the rest of the nation, transitioned from the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to the 9-8-8 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Currently, Vermont is responding to calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is building capacity to respond to chats and texts.



The Vermont Department of Mental Health is working to create a 9-8-8 system that serves the unique needs of our residents, with the goal of providing equitable services to all Vermonters, including People of Color, Native Americans, new Americans, and the LGBTQ+ community.

While initially the work to build capacity and implement 9-8-8 was funded through grants with Vibrant, the SAMHSA designated administrator for 9-8-8, with the support of Vermont Governor, Phil Scott, the State has now allocated state funds to sustain 988 operations.

Mental Health Urgent Care

The Department is partnering with community providers to stand up Mental Health Urgent Care Centers. These programs will create an alternative space for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis to receive support services. These centers aim to divert individuals from the hospital emergency departments and limit police involvement whenever possible.

The Living Room Model: The model is designed to feel like a warm, welcoming living room where guests feel safe and not overwhelmed. The model uses multidisciplinary teams, including peer support workers to provide a safe space for those experiencing a mental health crisis. **Awardees include:** Counseling Service of Addison County (CSAC), Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS) - Caledonia, Essex, Orleans Counties, and Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMH).

Psychiatric Urgent Care(PUC)/Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK): The model provides a space for individuals (and their family members) experiencing a mental health crisis that need an urgent response to meet with mental health clinical staff. Individuals can stay onsite for as long as they need during weekday daytime hours and even return the following days if they can be safe at home overnight. The program will offer access to peer and respite supports, safety planning, crisis de-escalation and clinical assessment. **Awardees include:** Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Vermont (HCRS) of Windsor and Windham Counties, Lamoille County Mental Health Services (LCMHS), United Counseling Services of Bennington County (UCS), and The Howard Center (HC) of Chittenden County.



Burlington CARES

Burlington CARES is a multidisciplinary mobile response team of mental health and emergency medical services. This program will be offered through a partnership with The City of Burlington and the Burlington Police Department. The CARES team will provide a therapeutic response in lieu of police intervention when someone is in crisis. The CARES team will provide trauma-informed de-escalation, screening, assessment, referrals and service coordination.

Mobile Crisis Response

The Department is implementing a new statewide Mobile Crisis Response program to Vermonters. Two-person mental health response teams will be providing 24/7 coverage across the state, meeting people in the community

who are experiencing a crisis. This program will incorporate peer support workers and harm reduction efforts for substance misuse, and seeks to divert individuals in crisis away from emergency departments and law enforcement by meeting with them in their own environment. The Department has awarded Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS), a Designated Agency, as the recipient for Community Mobile Crisis Services. HCRS will be sub-contracting with the additional nine Designated Agencies across the state to provide mobile crisis services statewide. This initiative is expected to begin its rollout by the end of 2023.

DMH is inspired by the existence of the first State Youth Council

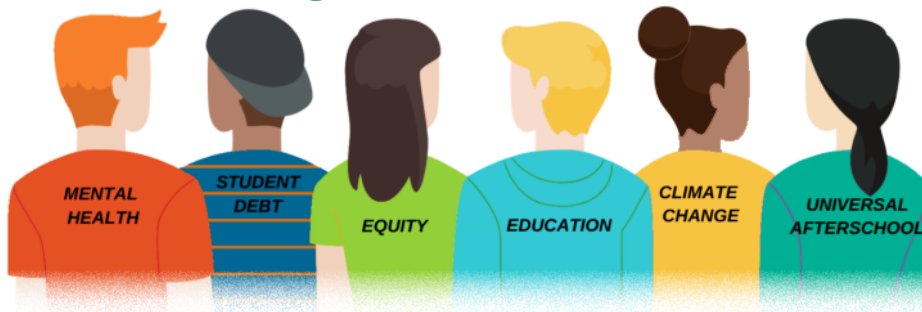
As described by Vermont Afterschool:

We believe young people make a better Vermont. They enrich our communities, they are eager to be engaged, and they have a right to be heard and respected.

It was the work of the 2020 State Youth Advisory Group that informed the writing of H.293, a Vermont State Legislature bill signed into law by Governor Scott, which established the State Youth Council—a diverse group of 28 Vermont youth from each county responsible for advising the Governor and General Assembly on the policies that impact young persons today. Vermont’s Youth Services Advisory Council selected members of the first State Youth Council in the fall of 2022 from a pool of 200 applicants. The State Youth Council held its inaugural meeting December 13, 2022, in Montpelier.

We look forward to seeing the positive impact Vermont’s State Youth Council will have on generations of Vermonters

Youth Have The Right To Be Heard And Respected



to come!

For more information please visit: <https://vermontafterschool.org/youthcouncil/>