

Transition Age Youth Advocacy Proposal

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Advocacy Goals

Overarching Goal

Ensure Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) priority populations have authentic, community-led representation that shapes behavioral health systems through sustainable leadership and ownership.

Advocacy

Support the population to identify their priorities, build strategies, and engage directly with decision makers.

Training and Education

Build knowledge of behavioral health systems; foster confidence, networks, and abilities to organize; educate peers; and participate in local and state decision-making.

Outreach and Engagement

Engage and build trust with the widest possible reach of vulnerable individuals; expand participation, foster connection, and reach new voices.

History of TAY Advocacy

- The Commission received funding in 2015 to support Transition Age Youth, defined as those aged 16-25.
- Three rounds of funding have been awarded as three-year contracts for \$670,000 per year (\$2,010,000 in total) in 2016, 2019, and 2023.
- Most recent grantee, the California Youth Empowerment Network (CAYEN), is a program of Mental Health America of California.
- CAYEN's work focused on event-based local advocacy in partnership with five regional partners and three annual statewide TAY-led 'TAY DAYS' at the State Capitol.



In Their Own Words ...

A lot of us don't have the ability to see what life is supposed to be about.

Happiness is when my life isn't a dead end.

Everyone needs a healthy habit, an outlet, something to look forward to.

Let's use funding to serve people.

Lack of systems knowledge is weaponized against us.

Everyone needs to feel welcomed.

When we advocate for others, it helps with our own life improvement.

Although we love social media, we really value in-person connection.

Advocacy is building community not exclusively government policies.

Community Engagement

1

Build Resiliency

- Available opportunities
- Links to resources
- Address at-risk populations
- Career-related resources and learning

2

Skill Building

- Readiness to elevate their voice
- Connections to trusted mentors
- Image/confidence building

3

At-risk TAY

- Safety nets
- Connection through partners
- Relevant resources

4

Peer Connection

- Credible connections
- Shared interests that lead to empowerment
- How to advocate vs. be an activist

Proposed Outline

TAY-Led Leadership Training

- Three cohorts with a final project that elevates TAY identified issues to a local/state decision makers
- Connections to Peer Specialist, Wellness Coaches, Certified SUD Counselor, and Community Health Worker Pathways
- Recruitment efforts to promote participation from those that identify as members of the BHSA priority populations

Planning and Evaluation Phases

- Six months Planning and three months for Evaluation
- TAY-led and developed

Data Collection and Evaluation

- Organization Capacity and Execution, Participant Growth and Engagement, Training and Curriculum, Advocacy Skill Building, Systems Exposure, Community Connection, and Influence

Cultural Responsiveness Report

- TAY-Led and developed
- Include lists of TAY resources statewide
- Include information on continuity of care

BHSA and the BHSA Priority Populations

▶ A percentage of participants in the program identify as part of the BHSA Priority Populations

Those with a serious mental illness (SMI), substance use disorder (SUD), and/or co-occurring SUD/SMI and

- chronically homeless or at risk of homelessness
- involved in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system
- re-entering the community from prison or jail
- in the child welfare system
- at risk of conservatorship
- at risk of institutionalization

▶ Equity Access Funds

- 10% of the contract will be allotted to provide supports for
- Participants to ensure their ability to participate in the
- Leadership Academy.
- Examples would be professional attire, transportation,
- equipment, internet services, etc.



Proposed Motion

That the Commission approve moving forward with the Request for Proposal for the TAY Advocacy Grant in the amount of \$670,000 for three years, totaling \$2,010,000.

