



# PTTC

Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

## **PTTC Network Request for Supplemental Funding for Youth & Young Adults - COVID-19 Adapted Prevention Practices for Better Behavioral Health (Y-CAP)**

### **Summary:**

The PTTC Network is poised to cultivate and implement emerging promising practices that can decrease the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on youth and young adults by identifying promising prevention practices and programming that can be adapted to the current COVID-19 conditions.

Only two years since its formation, PTTCs have already demonstrated success in promoting effective prevention practices. The PTTC Network has had nearly 30,000 participants in events, and 92% of those participants indicated that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the events in post-event surveys. Over half of event participants expected that the PTTC event they participated in would benefit their professional development and/or practice.

We are requesting supplemental funding for each existing PTTC cooperative agreement. This additional funding will allow us to increase our capacity to respond to COVID-19 related issues impacting youth and young adults. It will also allow us to focus on the important deliverables outlined in the original PTTC Network Cooperative Agreements (funding cycle 2018 – 2023).

**Identified Need:** The COVID-19 pandemic is negatively impacting youth (ages 4 – 18) and young adults (ages 18 – 25) in the US. Mitigation measures, such as social distancing, have caused significant disruptions to youth and young adults' daily routines. These disruptions have resulted in a lack of access to resources for these age groups, likely exacerbating negative social and emotional situations that have resulted from economic uncertainty and stress during this time.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, early indicators suggest that the pandemic and lockdown may negatively impact these age groups' mental health and increase their substance misuse.<sup>2</sup> Many states relaxed alcohol-related off-site consumption laws, resulting in changes to access to alcohol.<sup>3</sup> Further, alcohol sales have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic increasing the risks associated with

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, J. (2020). Mental health effects of school closures during COVID-19. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(6), 421.

<sup>2</sup> Guessoum, S. B., Lachal, J., Radjack, R., Carretier, E., Minassian, S., Benoit, L., & Moro, M. R. (2020). Adolescent psychiatric disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. *Psychiatry research*, 113264.

<sup>3</sup> NIAAA. (April 2020). State Alcohol-Related Laws During the COVID-19 Emergency for On-Premise and Off-Premise Establishments as of April 13, 2020. Retrieved [https://alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/sites/default/files/static/apis\\_covid-19\\_memo\\_4.22.20\\_508c\\_\(3\).pdf](https://alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov/sites/default/files/static/apis_covid-19_memo_4.22.20_508c_(3).pdf)

alcohol use.<sup>4</sup> Early evidence suggests that adults with children were 1.6 times more likely to report increasing alcohol consumption, highlighting the need for evidence-based prevention interventions with youth, their caregivers, and young adults.<sup>5</sup> Stressful life events such as extended home confinement, grief and loss, intrafamilial violence, overuse of the Internet, and social media use can lead to detrimental health effects in youth and young adults, making healthcare and other social systems adaptations essential.<sup>6</sup> For example, a recent national survey assessing mental health, substance use, and suicidal ideation during the pandemic found that the young adult population (ages 18 – 25) is experiencing serious behavioral conditions. There was an increase in suicidal ideation, anxiety, and depression, symptoms of trauma- and stressor-related disorder (TSRD) related to the pandemic.<sup>7</sup> There was increased reporting of having started or increased substance use to cope with stress or emotions related to COVID-19.<sup>8</sup> Minority young adults were found to have higher suicidal ideation rates, further underscoring youth and young adults' risk in traditionally marginalized populations.<sup>9</sup> America's vulnerable youth cannot wait for the pandemic to subside before we intervene with programs and practices to mitigate their risk.<sup>10</sup> We must quickly adapt community-level prevention efforts, including but not limited to school-based efforts, to support youth and young adults.<sup>11</sup> We must also adapt proven frameworks and the prevention evidence base, such as the Social Development Strategy (SDS), to work within the COVID-19 environment.<sup>12</sup>

### **Proposal:**

The PTTC Network proposes to respond to COVID-19 related issues and the implications of COVID-19 on youth and young adults as described below. The list of possible activities is dependent on the amount of supplemental funding that would be allotted to the PTTCs.

- The PTTC Network will identify emerging promising prevention practices best suited for youth and young adults in the COVID-19 age by:

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<sup>4</sup> NIAAA. (2020). Alcohol Sales During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/surveillance-covid-19/COVSALES.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Knell, G., Robertson, M. C., Dooley, E. E., Burford, K., & Mendez, K. S. (2020). Health behavior changes during COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent “stay-at-home” orders. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(17), 6268.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Czeisler, M. É., Lane, R. I., Petrosky, E., Wiley, J. F., Christensen, A., Njai, R., ... & Czeisler, C. A. (2020). Mental health, substance use, and suicidal ideation during the COVID-19 pandemic—United States, June 24–30, 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(32), 1049.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Cohen, R. I. S., & Bosk, E. A. (2020). Vulnerable youth and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Pediatrics*, 146(1).

<sup>11</sup> Czeisler, M. É., Lane, R. I., Petrosky, E., Wiley, J. F., Christensen, A., Njai, R., ... & Czeisler, C. A. (2020). Mental health, substance use, and suicidal ideation during the COVID-19 pandemic—United States, June 24–30, 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(32), 1049.

<sup>12</sup> Catalano, R. F., Hawkins, J. D., Kosterman, R., Bailey, J. A., Oesterle, S., Cambron, C., & Farrington, D. P. (2020). Applying the Social Development Model in Middle Childhood to Promote Healthy Development: Effects from Primary School Through the 30s and Across Generations. *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology*, 1-21.

- Conducting regional needs assessments and environmental scans to identify the knowledge, skill, and implementation gaps relative to implementing prevention in the COVID-19 environment utilizing a common instrument and protocol
  - Expanding and adapting universal, secondary, and tertiary prevention approaches for youth and their caregivers to increase parental engagement and involvement in promoting healthy decision-making and behaviors amidst the social conditions created by the pandemic
  - Identifying ways to engage schools (K -12), colleges/universities (two-year degree programs and job training technical schools), coalitions, and communities in adapted prevention activities to maintain and increase youth and young adult access to evidence-based prevention services amidst the pandemic
  - Examining the effects of policy changes on access to substances, such as alcohol and cannabis, to support the workforce in minimizing long-term negative health impacts on youth and young adults
- The PTTC Network will adapt these prevention practices into distillable formats for a variety of settings by:
    - Creating new, easy-to-disseminate products that describe the identified prevention practices, such as checklists, mobile-friendly web pages, and brief "just-in-time" online learning modules
    - Assisting prevention practitioners in enhancing or modifying data surveillance and collection methods
    - Collaborating with existing prevention program developers to identify best practice considerations in response to virtual program delivery
  - The PTTC Network will develop the prevention workforce on COVID-19 adapted prevention practices and interventions by:
    - Conducting Project ECHO or ECHO-like clinics and/or other online learning collaboratives
    - Developing implementation guides for conducting Evidence-based Practices (EBPs) and strategies in the COVID-19 context
    - Creating and implementing models for the provision of intensive technical assistance services, including the effective utilization of technologies in implementing prevention interventions (similar to telehealth)
    - Developing programming to support transitional age youth in college and non-college settings (i.e. school to work transition support)

**Conclusion:**

Youth and young adults have been hit hard by COVID-19. As a nation, we have the opportunity to intervene to mitigate and/or prevent mental and substance misuse issues in this population that may arise because of the pandemic. The PTTC Network, through supplemental funding, can meet this challenge by building the capacity of the prevention workforce to respond to COVID-19 related issues, especially those that impact youth and young adult population. Such efforts by PTTCs will be responsive to the urgent issues confronting our country and our field in this

pandemic. They will also lay the groundwork for prevention practices that may be crucial in the "new normal" post COVID-19; thus having a long-term impact on youth and young adults' behavioral health. Finally and importantly, supplemental funding focused on the COVID-19 context for prevention will allow the PTTCs' original scope of work to remain undiluted as we continue to support implementation of effective prevention programs and interventions critical to all the substance use issues our country has faced, and will continue to face once the current coronavirus crisis is controlled.