



Brighter Futures Initiative Programs

Adams County

Adams County Health & Human Services in partnership with CW Solutions have taken a three-pronged approach to increase resiliency and promote substance prevention in youth ages 12-20. The curriculum is based on the tools and concepts of The Life Ecology Organization. The three components of their prevention program are: 1. 6-8 hours of Learn & Empower Oneself (LEO) Programming for Middle and High School Youth, 2. Ongoing mentorship to assist participants with the implementation of the tools and strategies presented in the LEO course, and 3. Intensive mentorship for targeted middle school youth intersecting with Adams County. The LEO program is an evidence-based, interactive resilience building program that seeks to empower youth to understand their unique brains and quickly improve resilience, adaptability, and fearlessness in a rapidly changing world. By promoting higher-brain activation and resiliency through key tools, youth can reduce stress and anxiety, and improve memory, creativity, self-awareness, and overall quality of life – each of which are key factors in preventing substance use.

Contact: Nikki Holder, holder@changewithin.net

Website: <https://changewithin.net/programs/leo>

Ashland County

Ashland County Health & Human Services is implementing the evidence based “Icelandic Prevention Model” now known as the “Planet Youth Prevention Model”. This model engages the broader community to explore data regarding teen substance use with the purpose of assisting the community to implement prevention strategies. One grade (typically 9th or 10th) is surveyed with an instrument similar to the YRBS. The data from the survey is shared broadly with the community and focuses specifically on highlighting the risk and protective factors that correlate to increased or decreased substance use. Armed with this data the community can collaborate to make data informed decisions regarding prevention strategies. One significant intervention that has been implemented is an after-school and summer program for teens called SPARK (Student Pathways to Adventure, Resilience and Knowledge. The goal of the programming is to prevent youth ages 12-18 from using substances by fostering positive youth/adult relationships and youth development and creating positive outlets for expression and energy both in school and via after-school programs. SPARK includes activities such as art, skateboarding, music, video games, cooking, sports, mountain biking, snowboarding etc.

Contact: Scott Griffiths, Scott.Griffiths@co.ashland.wi.us

Website: <https://www.sparkashlandcounty.org/>

2026 Brighter Futures Initiative Grantees

Community Advocates, Inc.

Community Advocates Inc.'s Milwaukee Brighter Futures Initiative (MBFI) works with several networks of organizations and individuals who are devoted to creating effective prevention strategies. By contracting with direct service providers such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee, Milwaukee Christian Center, Neu-Life Community Development, Pathfinders, PEARLS for Teen Girls, The Parenting Network, and United Community Center, MBFI is working toward preventing and reducing the incidence of youth alcohol and other drug use for Milwaukee youth ages 12-21. Evidence-Based Programs being utilized include:

- Botvin LifeSkills Training
- One-to-One Mentoring Program
- Strengthening Families Program

Contact: Hannah Lepper, hlepper@communityadvocates.net

Website: <https://ppi.communityadvocates.net/>

Diverse & Resilient

Diverse & Resilient, in partnership with GSAFE, provides supports to LGBTQ youth and gay straight alliances (GSAs) in high schools through evidence-based interventions, site visits and phone consultations with teacher/counselor advisors, statewide conferences, adult advocate training, and LGBTQ youth leadership development. Further, community-based programs for teens are supported through health-related messaging to youth via social media, brief interventions at pride events, and semi-annual trainings for youth development specialists. The overall aim of the program is for LGBTQ youth to thrive living healthy and satisfying lives in safe and supportive communities.

Contact: Chris Allen, callen@diverseandresilient.org

Website: <http://www.diverseandresilient.org/>

Employ Milwaukee

Employ Milwaukee in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee (BGCGM) provides the Brighter Futures Milwaukee Program to serve at-risk students throughout Milwaukee County with primary focus in six high schools: Lynde & Harry Bradley Technology and Trade School, Bay View High School, Hmong American Peace Academy, Washington High School of Information Technology, Milwaukee Academy of Science, and Messmer High School. Brighter Futures Milwaukee offers a comprehensive and in-depth approach to preparing high school students from disadvantaged circumstances for graduation and post-secondary success with the goal of increasing adolescent self-sufficiency by encouraging high school graduation, vocational preparedness, improving social and other interpersonal skills, and responsible decision making.

Contact: Suzanne Reinstein, suzanne.reinstein@employmilwaukee.org

Website: <https://www.employmilwaukee.org/Employ-Milwaukee.htm>

Kenosha County

The Kenosha County Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in partnership with the Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) and Community Impact Programs (CIP), are providing evidence-based programming at Hillcrest School which houses two alternative educational programs – the Bridges and TIME Programs. Strategies include the Seven Challenges Program, Aggression Replacement training, Girls Circle and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support. The goals of Kenosha County's Brighter Futures Initiative are to reduce delinquent and violent behavior, reduce drug and alcohol use, and increase adolescent self-sufficiency.

Contact: Glenn Larson, glenn.larson@kenoshacountywi.gov

Website: <http://co.kenosha.wi.us/242/Brighter-Futures-Initiative>

La Causa Crisis Nursery & Respite Center

The mission of La Causa, Inc. is to provide children, youth and families with quality, comprehensive services to nurture healthy family life and enhance community stability. The primary goal of the Crisis Nursery and Respite Center (CNRC) is to secure the well-being of children and to prevent incidents of abuse and neglect. This worthy goal of preventing abuse and neglect is accomplished by providing shelter and quality care for children in a safe homestyle shelter environment as families experience episodes of crisis, high stress, and trauma. The CNRC also offers ongoing center-based respite care for families to utilize to assist in maintaining safe and manageable stress levels for safety of the entire family. The CNRC is a shelter care facility licensed by the State of Wisconsin, open to serve 24/7, 365 days a year and provided free of charge.

Contact: Karl Schoendorf, karls@lacausa.org

Website: <http://www.lacausa.org/programs/crisis-nursery-and-respite-center>

Portage County

Portage County Health and Human Service Department, in partnership with CW Solutions, have taken a multifaceted approach to prevent and reduce the incidence of youth alcohol and other drug use/abuse through interactive resilience-building educational opportunities and mentorship that seeks to empower youth to understand their unique brains and quickly improve resilience, adaptability, and fearlessness in a rapidly changing world. The four components of Portage County's evidence-based prevention program include: 1. Six modules of introductory Learn and Empower Oneself (LEO) classroom curriculum delivered to middle school-aged youth; 2. Eight modules of interactive classroom or one-on-one LEO curriculum to youth ages 14 through 20; 3. Intensive school-based mentorship for youth with heightened risk factors that may lead to experimentation with substance use; 4. Ongoing mentorship to assist to support youth with implementing LEO tools and strategies following participation in the LEO curriculum. Each component focuses on increasing resiliency and developing strategies to create a natural flow of dopamine that does not depend on external stimuli. In turn, it is expected that youth are less likely to experiment or regularly use addictive substances because there is no neurological or chemical void to be filled by external stimuli.

Contact: Nikki Holder, holder@changewithin.net

Website: <https://changewithin.net/programs/leo>

Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa along with a collaboration with inter-tribal departments are utilizing evidence-based curriculum from the Red Cliff Wellness School Curriculum and the Second Step Middle School Curriculum for the Brighter Futures Initiative program. This program will be taking place at the Bayfield School and the Red Cliff Boys & Girls Club. This program will work with youth ages 12-14 in grades 6-8th who reside in the Red Cliff Reservation and attend the School District of Bayfield.

Contact: Denise Carlson, denise.carlson@redcliff-nsn.gov

Website: <https://www.redcliff-nsn.gov/>

Running Rebels

Running Rebels operates a preventative Community Mentoring Program to address the social, emotional and educational needs of low-income, primarily African American, youth ages 12-17. The goal is to provide participants with the skills, resources, and support they need to make positive life choices that lead to educational and workforce success.

Contact: Stacey Lindsay, Stacey.Lindsay@RunningRebels.org

Website: <https://runningrebels.org/>

Sheboygan County

Sheboygan County Health & Human Services, in partnership with Elevate, provides evidence-based substance use prevention programming to youth ages 12 to 18 in Sheboygan County. Programming assists youth in achieving their fullest potential by using a community and strength-based approach to prevent and reduce the incidence of youth substance use. The programs also target parents and community members while unifying schools, community organizations, government agencies, and residents to build a coalition that develops strategies to prevent and delay the onset of youth substance use in the community.

Primary objectives include:

- Increasing access to evidence-based programming for middle and high school students;
- Increasing education for youth on risks of misusing prescription medications;
- Increasing youths' ability to evaluate high-risk choices pertaining to substance use;
- Increasing youths' motivation to change high-risk choices pertaining to substance use;
- Increasing parent/guardian skills around talking to their child about the dangers of misusing prescription medications;
- Increasing community awareness of the risks of youth misusing prescription opioids;
- Increasing community capacity to identify needs and resources related to youth misuse of opioids.

Contact: Jaclyn Moglowsky, jaclyn.moglowsky@sheboygancounty.com

Website: <https://elevateyou.org/>

Washington County

Washington County in partnership with Elevate provides substance use prevention programming in Washington and Waukesha counties. Their program assists youth in achieving their maximum potential by using a community-based positive youth development approach to prevent initiation and reduce the incidence of youth alcohol and other drug use.

Primary objectives include:

- Increasing parent-youth conversations, community awareness, and promoting action around prescription medication abuse;
- Decreasing access to prescription medications through promotion of medication security, collection and disposal;
- Increasing cross-sector collaboration to address youth substance use using coalition-building and data-driven methods;
- Increasing access to evidence-based education for middle school students;
- Increasing access to evidence-informed programming for high school students.

Contact: Coral Kline, coral.kline@washcowisco.gov

Website: <https://www.washcowisco.gov/>

Wood County

Wood County Human Services Department in partnership with CW Solutions have taken a four- pronged approach to increase resiliency and promote substance prevention in youth ages 12-20. The curriculum is based on the tools and concepts of The Life Ecology Organization. The four components of their prevention program are: 1. 8 hours of Learn & Empower Oneself (LEO) Programming for High School Youth, 2. Ongoing mentorship to assist participants with the implementation of the tools and strategies presented in the LEO course, 3. 6 hours of Learn & Empower Oneself (LEO) Programming for Middle School Youth, and 4. Intensive mentorship for targeted middle school youth at risk of, or currently using substances. The LEO program is an evidence-based, interactive resilience building program that seeks to empower youth to understand their unique brains and quickly improve resilience, adaptability, and fearlessness in a rapidly changing world. By promoting higher-brain activation and resiliency through key tools, youth can reduce stress and anxiety, and improve memory, creativity, self-awareness, and overall quality of life – each of which are key factors in preventing substance use.

Contact: Nikki Holder, holder@changewithin.net

Website: <https://changewithin.net/programs/leo>