



Foundation *for* Opioid Response Efforts

FORE Awards \$2.1 Million in New Funding to Support Workforce Development and Innovative Approaches to Treatment and Prevention of Substance Use Disorder

NEW YORK (March 27, 2025) – The [Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts \(FORE\)](#) today announced grant awards totaling \$2.1 million to four organizations dedicated to strengthening the behavioral health workforce and addressing critical gaps in substance use disorder care. The funded initiatives expand the work supported under FORE’s Innovation Challenge program, and will focus on expanding peer support networks, culturally grounded treatment models, and novel approaches to workforce development and training to better serve populations at high risk.

“FORE launched its Innovation Challenge program in 2022 to support new solutions to some of the most difficult issues related to the opioid and overdose crisis,” said Karen A. Scott, MD, MPH, President of FORE. “By investing in innovative programs that expand peer support, integrate culturally responsive care, and build a more sustainable behavioral health workforce, we are helping to create lasting solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities.”

Establishing Peer Support for People with Opioid Use Disorder Who Are Homeless

HELP USA, Inc., a national homeless services provider, is receiving \$598,726 to implement a counselor and peer support program for unhoused individuals with opioid use disorder living in HELP-operated transitional housing. The initiative will train staff and shelter residents to facilitate access to treatment, harm reduction, and recovery supports. Credentialed staff will run support groups in New York City’s Wards Island shelters, while shelter residents who will be trained as recovery peers will provide one-on-one support. Peer mentors will receive stipends for their contributions, helping to create a sustainable, lived-experience-driven support system.

Strengthening the Opioid Response: A Call to Action for Formalizing Behavioral Health Paraprofessionals

The Bowen Center for Health Workforce Research at Indiana University School of Medicine is receiving \$592,338 to develop a national framework for training, credentialing, and sustaining the behavioral health and substance use paraprofessional workforce. Through a 50-state survey, key informant interviews, and labor market analysis, the initiative will provide actionable recommendations for standardizing education, regulations, and reimbursement models across states.

Equine and Culturally Grounded Treatment for Substance Use Disorder

The Center for Indigenous Health at Johns Hopkins University is receiving a \$563,632 grant to tailor the Lakota Equine-Assisted Therapy program for Indigenous adolescents and young adults at risk for or in recovery from opioid use disorder. Up to 30 youth from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in South Dakota will participate in weeklong camps that integrate equine therapy with traditional healing practices, such as drumming and storytelling. The project will evaluate its impact on mental health, resilience, and cultural engagement while assessing the financial feasibility of scaling the program to other indigenous communities.

Expanding Faith-Based Support Specialist Training

The Agency for Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP) is receiving \$400,000 to expand its Faith-Based Support Specialist (FBSS) training in partnership with state health departments and faith-based organizations. The two-day training program equips faith leaders with the knowledge and tools to better support individuals with substance use disorders and connect them to local resources. ASAP will continue offering the training in Alabama while initiating expansion into new states.

Driving Innovation in Opioid Response

“These grants reflect FORE’s commitment to supporting innovative, evidence-based solutions that address opioid-related harms and improve outcomes for all individuals, families, and communities,” said Ken Shatzkes, PhD, Program Director at FORE. “By funding these innovative programs, we are helping to build a stronger, more sustainable response to the opioid and overdose crisis.”

About the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE)

Founded in 2018, [FORE](#) is a national 501(c)(3) grant-making foundation dedicated to addressing the nation’s opioid crisis. Through strategic grantmaking, convening stakeholders, and developing informational resources, FORE supports patient-centered, innovative solutions that drive long-term change. To date, FORE has awarded 118 grants totaling \$47.5 million to 101 organizations. Follow us on [X](#) (Twitter) and [LinkedIn](#) for updates.

Contact:

Myrna Manners

mmanners@mannersdotson.com

718-986-7255