

## CALIFORNIA TO INVEST AN ADDITIONAL \$41 MILLION IN YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION

**SACRAMENTO** – The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has made more than \$41 million in grant funding available to tribal and community-based organizations to expand youth substance use prevention programs. Organizations can apply for grants up to \$1,000,000 to implement the Elevate Youth California (EYC) program in low-income communities of color, prioritizing organizations with a demonstrated track record of effectively and equitably serving individuals in these communities.

“Elevate Youth California is a funding opportunity designed to overcome programming gaps and focus on youth from communities of color and other marginalized populations impacted by the war on drugs, criminalized for substance use, and with historically low access to prevention services,” said **Jacey Cooper, State Medicaid Director and DHCS Chief Deputy Director for Health Care Programs**. “With each round of funding, DHCS continues to expand the number of youth and young adults receiving youth empowerment, mentoring, and peer support services.”

**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:** This funding opportunity is part of DHCS’ broader plan to strengthen California’s substance use prevention programs. EYC aims to empower community-based and tribal organizations throughout California to use evidence-based and community-driven practices for substance use disorder prevention among youth and young adults ages 12 to 26.

To date, DHCS has awarded nearly \$206 million through 290 grant awards. This [Request for Application](#) marks the fifth consecutive year of funding to support widespread implementation of the EYC program. Applications are due by August 28 at 1 p.m. (PDT). Once awarded, EYC program grantees will be funded from November 16, 2023, through November 15, 2026.

### **COMMUNITY IMPACT OF GRANTS:**

- “Elevate Youth California has enabled us to provide the desperately needed healing spaces for our youth and young adults, who are often left out of critical programming after age 18,” said **Ami Admire, Executive Director of For the People**. “We are extremely thankful to Elevate Youth California for providing the resources, supporting the work, and sharing in our vision for healed youth and families in California’s tribal communities.”

- “Elevate Youth California funding has created a transformational opportunity for our organization to grow in our ability to support authentic youth engagement and partner with youth to lead efforts that support community healing and the prevention of youth substance use disorder,” said **Daisy Lopez, Senior Director of Program Services of California Health Collaborative**. “The impacts have trickled throughout our organization, providing the support and training to engage our teams statewide to lead culturally rooted youth development efforts that promote youth voice and youth agency.”

**SERVICES SUPPORTED BY EYC GRANTS:** The EYC program provides DHCS-funded grants to youth-serving tribal and community-based organizations with records of effective and equitable service delivery that will:

- Empower youth to create policy and system changes through civic engagement, specifically in communities disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs.
- Implement culturally and linguistically proficient youth development, peer support, and mentoring programs that are healing-centered and trauma-informed.
- Prioritize harm reduction and public health solutions that create resiliency and prevent substance use disorder.

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND:** EYC began in 2019, and DHCS has since announced and awarded four funding rounds. Four cohorts were awarded through the standard track program focusing on policy, system, and environmental change through youth activism, mentorship, and peer-led support. Three cohorts were awarded through capacity building grants, with a focus on strengthening the operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational structure of youth-serving community-based and tribal, grass roots organizations. One cohort was awarded through the innovation track, with a focus on evaluating youth-serving entities with innovative approaches to policy, systems, and environmental change through appreciative inquiry. These grants are made possible through funding from the Proposition 64 Youth Education, Prevention, Early Intervention, and Treatment Account of the California Cannabis Tax.

EYC creates access to healing-centered, culturally proficient programs in rural and urban communities that have historically been impacted by the war on drugs. In fiscal year 2023-24, DHCS has invested more than \$100 million in funding to support statewide substance use prevention programs, with approximately \$57.8 million in primary prevention funding allocated to county behavioral health agencies through the [Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant](#), \$1.6 million in funding to support statewide implementation of the [California Friday Night Live](#) program, and more than \$41 million in the EYC program.

For more information about the EYC program, visit [www.elevateyouthca.org](http://www.elevateyouthca.org).

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