

September 1, 2020

Re: Funding opportunity for LifeSkills Training High School program

Dear Colorado School Administrators:

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is writing to inform you of a wonderful opportunity to provide, at no charge to your district, a year of Botvin's LifeSkills Training (LST) to all of your 9th graders. The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) at the University of Colorado is offering this program to school districts in Colorado at no cost.

This funding opportunity comes at a critical time when COVID-19 has impacted budgets and demanded social-emotional competencies and healthy coping strategies. It is also an opportunity to address the recent concerns about availability of substances like marijuana, alcohol, and e-cigarettes among youth. According to the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, in 2017, Colorado's high school students vaped at a rate of twice the national average. Student vaping in Colorado held steady through 2019. Colorado students are also experiencing greater levels of sadness and hopelessness (increase to 35% in 2019 from 31% in 2017). With a focus on healthy decision-making, social-emotional competencies, and guidance on how to integrate vaping topics into relevant lessons, the LST High School program shows great promise to help address vaping and other risk-taking behaviors in late adolescence.

The LST High School program is built upon the LST Middle School program, which is recognized as having the highest evidence base to improve youth behavioral health by various government and private agencies, including the Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development registry based at the University of Colorado Boulder. A study in the *World Journal of Preventative Medicine* found that LST High School program cuts drug abuse in half by helping adolescents navigate the challenges of their high school years and preparing them for the independence and responsibilities that they will encounter as young adults. Both the Middle School and High School LST programs are widely implemented around the country, including Colorado, so conducting a high quality evaluation of the High School program to ensure positive results is crucial.

CSPV has supported the successful replication of the LST Middle School program in nearly 1,000 schools across the country, including Colorado, and now has the opportunity to expand prevention programming into high schools using the LST High School program. This program involves 10 sessions delivered at least once per week during a standard class period. The grant will allow CSPV to provide one year of training and program materials to eligible schools and districts, and the accompanying evaluation will assess whether the LST High School program generates strong positive effects on students' social and emotional skills, drug and violence resistance skills, and risky behaviors, like vaping. If the effects are positive, a funder that has been supporting implementation of the LST Middle School program for a decade has indicated interest in continuing to support the LST High School program in Colorado.

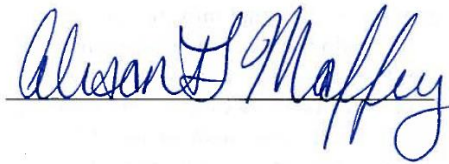
CSPV will provide training, all curriculum materials for teachers and students, and cover costs surrounding the one-day trainings, including the cost of providing substitute teachers or a teacher stipend. The school/district is only required to identify an employee to serve as the coordinator. CSPV will be available to provide technical assistance to schools that participate in this program.

The final deadline for districts to submit applications is December 20, 2020.

We know this is a challenging time and urge you to take advantage of this opportunity, which will begin fall 2021 for half of the schools and 2023 for the other half. If you are interested in participating in this initiative or have any questions, please contact, Diane Ballard, at diane.ballard@colorado.edu or via phone at 303-735-4164.

For more details about this initiative, including the application, please visit <https://cspv.colorado.edu/what-we-do/initiatives/lst-grant/>. Please note that while the deadline for schools/districts to submit applications is not until December 20, 2020, we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



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