



Grantee Accomplishments

Peer Workforce Investment (PWI) and Expanding Peer Organization Capacity (EPOC) Grant Closeout Celebration

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Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. (AHP)

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Community Services Division



Introduction

This document is a compilation of notable accomplishments self-reported by grantee organizations. When asked to reflect on their time as a PWI or EPOC grantee, made possible through Behavioral Health Workforce Development (BHWD) funding, they submitted the following responses. This document reflects only a snippet of the many successes these organizations achieved over the course of their time as PWI and EPOC grantees.

BPSR Escondido Clubhouse (EPOC)

- ★ With funding from Round 1, we successfully transformed our space into a more dignified, inviting environment that better supports our Work-Ordered Day model.
- ★ In Round 2, we achieved Clubhouse International accreditation, supported by grant funding that covered the cost of essential training and outreach materials needed for effective distribution.
- ★ Webinars and implementation plans enabled our program to set and achieve goals while addressing any barriers along the way. Some of the smaller but impactful milestones included identifying, purchasing, and implementing a new database that better aligns with our model and meets our tracking needs, contributing significantly to our larger accomplishments.

Cal Voices (PWI)

- ★ Cal Voices was able to purchase equipment to build a recording studio. Funding also paid for staff time to record trainings for the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification, Continuing Education Courses, podcasts, and other digital media.
- ★ Cal Voices was able to revamp the WISE U peer training academy to align with the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Training core competencies and curriculum requirements. With these updates, Cal Voices was able to apply for and was approved to be a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Training provider through CalMHSA.
- ★ Cal Voices was able to launch the California Association of Peer Professionals, a membership-based program that provides services and benefits to both certified and non-certified behavioral health peer professionals in California, with an emphasis on education, practice guidelines, professional standards, working conditions, career development, and competent supervision. The Association has over 675 members at this time.

California Clubhouse (PWI)

- ★ We completed the strategic planning and budgeting for the 2024 - 2025 Fiscal Year as a whole clubhouse.
- ★ The Clubhouse created a fundraising plan for the new year. The team consisted of advisory board members, board members, clubhouse members, and staff.
- ★ Everyone is excited about the plan and feels responsible for our shared goals!

California Peer Parent Network (EPOC)

- ★ Developed a strong network of Peers.
- ★ Taught Peer Parents how to advocate for themselves in their communities.

Central California LGBTQ+ Collaborative dba CalPride (EPOC)

- ★ The amount of peer success stories that are directly tied to the funds from EPOC are countless. Here is a brief review on a couple of the most memorable. We had two transgender peers that came in needed services. After seeing the atmosphere that we provide both began volunteering and eventually working on staff. Both of these employees have moved on to new opportunities due to the experience and references we were able to give them. We partnered with Amazon to help with job placement in our communities. One of our unhoused peers was able to secure a job there and eventually get housing.
- ★ We were able to get all of our peer support staff and a majority of all staff through the state peer support class. We believe that this is going to benefit our peers tremendously.
- ★ While we have not yet accomplished getting Medi-Cal billing set up at our site we are much closer and have a plan in place to get it accomplished in the near future. This will provide us a new revenue stream and help us offer more to the community we serve.

Community Veteran Justice Project (CVJP) (EPOC)

- ★ CVJP successfully expanded its reach to assist even more clients!
- ★ We have brought on exceptional staff dedicated to our mission of supporting all veterans with suicide prevention, mental health services, comprehensive care, case management, legal assistance to divest from the criminal justice system, and re-entry services. CVJP offers tailored solutions that empower our clients to succeed and thrive through individualized support.
- ★ Our staff and volunteers have completed Peer Support Certification to further enhance their skills.

Community Whole Health Alliance (EPOC)

- ★ Our staff consists of almost all people of minority backgrounds, specifically LGBTQ+ and physically disabled.
- ★ We have maintained a working relationship with Valley View supportive housing for 2 years and provided ongoing peer support groups, empowering the community with self-compassion, creativity, meditation, dance, and more.

Compatior, Inc. (PWI)

- ★ Bilingual Support Groups: We are thrilled to announce the establishment of bilingual support groups that cater to a variety of communities. These groups ensure effective communication and foster understanding among participants, creating a welcoming environment for all.
- ★ We enthusiastically provided guidance and support to our hired coaches, ensuring they received the necessary educational resources and assistance. This empowerment enabled them to gain the qualifications needed to thrive and succeed in their roles within this dynamic and rewarding field.
- ★ Expanded Knowledge About “Peer Recovery” Services: We are excited to report a significant increase in awareness and understanding of “peer recovery” services throughout South East Los Angeles. This enhancement strengthens community support and expands available resources for those in need.

Consumers Self Help Center (PWI)

- ★ Successfully had 10 staff complete the certified peer specialist training to prepare to take the certified [Medi-Cal] Peer Support Specialist exam.
- ★ Created and have maintained partnerships with at least 10 agencies to improve advocacy coordination and services within Sacramento County.
- ★ Created and conducted a wellness summit with listening sessions with partnerships made through the PWI contract.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance California (PWI)

- ★ We have hosted hundreds of vital peer-facilitated support groups. We have recruited, trained, and mentored several dozen peer mentors from across the state.

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- ★ We have hosted numerous social, creative arts, and educational events designed specifically to empower [and] inform members of our community and our allies.
- ★ We have established partnerships and grown our network of allies to include a vast array of mental health professionals, creative artists, and a variety of advocacy and service agencies.

Dual Diagnosis dba Healthcare Integrated Services Inc. (EPOC)

- ★ Several dedicated team members have earned their Peer Support Specialist Certification, along with the prestigious [California Department of Health Care Access and Information] Wellness Coach Certification. These accomplishments not only strengthen our service capabilities but also promote a culture of continuous learning and career advancement.
- ★ We are proud to announce the successful development and implementation of a series of mental health activities tailored specifically for students. These activities include, but are not limited to, the “Bliss Challenge” and “Daily Check-Ins.” These initiatives were carefully crafted to address the unique challenges faced by young individuals, promoting mental resilience, emotional intelligence, and overall well-being within our educational settings.
- ★ In our commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive community, we developed and launched a unique activity designed to bring together students, staff, and parents involved in our program. This initiative was crafted to strengthen connections not only among students, staff, and parents but also between each individual and our program as a whole. By uniting all participants, we aim to create a cohesive, supportive network that empowers students both academically and emotionally.

FIND: A Friend in Deed (EPOC)

- ★ The Ventura County Behavioral Health Quality Improvement department started a Quality Consultant initiative following years of advocacy to bring people with lived experience into the evaluation process earlier than just checking off on already decided options.
- ★ The founding coordinator of FIND (Elizabeth R. Stone, MA) was one of a select group invited to the initial meeting to represent the voice of service users among the small group of stakeholders. The County Manager who started the program announced its

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creation was a direct (albeit belated) response to points for which Ms. Stone had been advocating.

- ★ Materials that had been shared by FIND about engaging with “difficult to engage” individuals experiencing long-term homelessness were incorporated as an addendum to a Guide to Supportive Services for Supported Housing providers created by the Ventura County Continuum of Care.

Gateway Mountain Center (PWI)

- ★ Fulfilling our goal of hiring, training, and certifying ten Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support [Specialists].
- ★ Reopening of our community 4Roots Youth Wellness Center, generating over 600 opportunities for youth connection and support.
- ★ Having our Peer Team facilitate Connect Groups for middle and high school students, where students experiencing similar life challenges received social, emotional, and substance use prevention awareness support.

Healthy Hearts Medical Association (HHMA) dba Health Care Integrated Services (PWI)

- ★ HHMA had about 10 new staff members complete the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification. We also onboarded interns and completed [adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)] training for peers and staff. We are currently training staff in Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention.
- ★ HHMA made substantial progress in securing long-term sustainability through strategic contracts and grants, including a contract with LA Care for Asthma Remediation and [enhanced care management (ECM)] for 6 populations of focus, and submitted applications for other significant grants like Youth Access, BHCIP, and [the Health Resources and Services Administration]. The Health Heroes fundraising campaign was initiated, with major events planned to raise funds for expanding the community clinic and supporting long-term operational goals. We are also awarded COVID-19 R3 Mitigation through early 2025, contract pending execution.
- ★ HHMA actively engaged in community outreach, participating in back-to-school events to promote mental health services and conduct ACEs screenings. Mentees

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were involved in summer services, gaining hands-on experience in behavioral health interventions.

Heart and Soul, Inc. (PWI)

- ★ Completing a survey of resources for participants.
- ★ Heart & Soul Inc. worked on enhancing our funding strategies for the organization.
- ★ Sharing knowledge gained through trainings with staff.

Kings View, Porterville (PWI)

- ★ We have had great success since being part of this program. We were able to offer additional jobs for Peer Supports to gain skillsets and be part of the bigger Warm Line Team.
- ★ As we had additional staff we were able to have more phone coverage 24/7 for callers as well as having a specialized team to go out and do Outreach and Engagement and Presentations throughout Tulare County and Kings County spreading the word on the services we offer for the community. Warm Line was also able to present numbers for call volumes and contacts increased so negotiations with Tulare County and Kings County went well.
- ★ The County has given us a new contract with additional staff for both Counties with additional funding for salary increases and a year of funding which at that time we will revisit to see about including some Medi-Cal billing to the program.

Kings View, Tulare (PWI)

- ★ I am honored to announce that since we have been with the program we were able to create more job openings for Peer Supports to gain the skillsets to continue growing within the company to be able to move into other positions.
- ★ We successfully grew our footprint within Tulare County reaching more of the rural areas saturating and engaging people to services and all resources in the communities. We have been steadily assisting between 200-400 people per quarter. Helping about 50 of them all the way through getting housed and out of homelessness.
- ★ In response to the work that has been done, we received an offer from Tulare County to expand the [Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness] Outreach

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Team contracted by Tulare County opening up more positions and being funded for an additional year which will absorb the current PWI staff and promote them to Outreach Specialists becoming financially stable.

Los Angeles Recovery Connect (LARC) (EPOC)

- ★ Thanks to our newly hired Development Director, [LARC] applied for 8 Foundation Grants and has [a letter of intent] in for a Government Grant. We were awarded 3 of the foundation grants.
- ★ At our 3rd annual LARC LIFE Community Event our LARC team connected with and brought in potential board members & volunteer service providers for our LARC Community.
- ★ LARC is expanding its Programs/Workshops. [Specifically,] we've trained and educated 2000+ people to reverse an overdose and distributed 5000+ doses of naloxone. Due to the hire of our Development Director we were able to find and secure the [Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative (NSI)] Exploratory Grant in Collaboration with The Happier Life Project. Together our orgs are exploring the most effective way to provide grief support to those who have lost a loved one to substance use related death.

Maternal Mental Health NOW (EPOC)

- ★ In Round 1, we were able to hire and train a peer supporter allowing us to have the capacity to provide peer support in both English and Spanish Monday through Friday. Now with two certified Medi-Cal peer supporters we are able to better meet community needs in a culturally congruent manner.
- ★ We have also seen a large increase in callers as we have partnered with other community-based organizations and entities in Los Angeles County, offering ourselves as a free non-clinical option to birthing people and their families. This includes formalizing relationships via [memoranda of understanding].
- ★ At the end of 2023, we launched our free weekly support group for queer parents in Los Angeles County. Initially, we had a slow start of enrolling folks to the group, but over the course of eight months we have grown our support group and built our community to 17 individuals. As the group continues to grow, it has been requested to expand the group to have in-person meet-ups starting in 2025. Our first in-person gathering will be in February and we aspire to hold quarterly gatherings to connect, share resources and build community.

Mental Health Association in Santa Barbara County dba the Mental Wellness Center (PWI)

- ★ Brought in a teaching artist for the members. She has been teaching weekly fiber arts classes to our members. She has on average 4-7 members each week learning or continuing an art project.
- ★ We were able to give all of the team an annual raise. We used the past webinars as guidance [especially] around writing accurate job descriptions and having staff performance evaluations.
- ★ We were able to have all of the staff take the California Peer Certification class. All but one staff have completed and passed the state exam. We are proud to say 5 staff are certified and we are working with the one staff who still needs to complete some of the requirements.

Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHASF) (PWI)

- ★ Our [Zuckerberg San Francisco (ZSF)] General Hospital program is now fully funded by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SF DPH). Our partnership with ZSF General's psychiatric units was an initial pilot project funded by the Round 1 PWI grant award.
- ★ In this program, two Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialists provide 1:1 and group support to patients on the psychiatric units. Upon discharge from the hospital, the Peer Support Specialists are available to provide emotional support, goal-focused peer counseling, and field-based case management support to former patients referred to this program component.
- ★ MHASF is working with SF DPH to make the post-discharge support component of the program Medi-Cal reimbursable after the Round 2 PWI grant award period is complete.

Mental Health Client Action Network (PWI)

- ★ Created a peer training program, which is being modified to be presented as valuing peer-run lived experiences and multiple pathways to recovery from mental health and substance use challenges. We learned about the whole Medi-Cal billing fiasco,

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and did not support this approach, which literally focuses more on money issues and not healing issues.

- ★ Focusing on our strengths as a peer-run organization gives us grateful empowerment and resilience, which cohesively occurs when we stop insisting, “Peer Support Everywhere” when the most valuable place for it is within each and every peer.
- ★ We created new peer-run groups and invested in a transportation program to be able to safely take our members to appointments, court, child custody visits, etc.
- ★ We developed grant writing tools and collaborated with other community non-profits that inspired participation at Santa Cruz County’s yearly Equity Expo. We all contributed our creativity and pictures for the mural that was presented.

Merced County Rescue Mission - Mission Merced - N St (PWI)

- ★ We have expanded our employees by double.
- ★ We were able to expand [our] client base from 32 beds to 38 beds.
- ★ We were able to get 5 staff trained as Community Health Workers.

Merced County Rescue Mission - Mission Merced - Pinnacle Drive (PWI)

- ★ We were able to expand our staff from 2.5 workers to 4 full time workers.
- ★ We were able to up our contract from 8 funded beds from probation to 32 beds.
- ★ We were able to start [ECM] service in this department. This will bring in additional revenue for our organization.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) California (PWI)

- ★ During Round 1 of the grant period we successfully held over 10 NAMI Signature Programs trainer trainings for four of our programs. Each training produced up to 10 new state trainers for our organization, but it also helped NAMI Fresno bring back some of the programs that had slowed down during the pandemic. Now, NAMI Fresno regularly holds both Connections and Family Support Groups for the Fresno community. Occasionally they also have Peer to Peer and Family to Family educational classes available as well.

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- ★ Through the PWI grant, NAMI California, in close partnership with NAMI Fresno worked on developing and launching the Post Psychiatric Discharge Support Pilot Program. As of April 2024, the Post Psychiatric Discharge Support Pilot Program was launched and serves clients exiting from partnered Behavioral Health Systems of Care to pair with a Certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist from NAMI Fresno to work on beginning their recovery process.
- ★ [In] October 2024, NAMI Fresno attended NAMI California's annual conference as a workshop presenter for Peer Support Services. NAMI Fresno presented information about the Post Psychiatric Discharge Support Pilot Program and received a lot of attention from other organizations and media about the program.

NAMI Contra Costa County (PWI)

- ★ We've advanced our work for African Americans with our continued advocacy for an African American Holistic Wellness Hub. Our staff members have spoken at county meetings and joined decision-making committees, leading to an allocation of \$8.5 million. We are continuing advocacy efforts at Board of Supervisor and Equity Committee meetings to ensure our goal is met.
- ★ All PWI African American Uplift Peer Counselors are Peer-Certified and have been taking courses to receive the required [continuing education] credits, as well as many supplemental classes/certifications.
- ★ We've made major progress on our goal of restructuring the board and honoring term limits so that we are more reflective of the communities we serve. [Two] non-reflective board members have recently left the board and have been replaced. Both new members meet our goal of being more reflective, one as he is much younger than the current members and the other as she is an African American woman. One additional [Black, Indigenous, and people of color] person is being vetted along with one younger individual who is a peer. The consultant hired to do the [diversity, equity, and inclusion] training has begun working with the board and is also making great progress.

NAMI Sacramento (PWI)

- ★ We brought 1-on-1 [Peer Support Specialists] to our affiliate for the first time in history.

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- ★ The graduation rate for our Mentorship Program has improved to 76%, of whom the eligible clients have completed the steps towards stronger recovery from mental health conditions.
- ★ We have high satisfaction and healthy recoveries for those that participated.

NAMI San Francisco (PWI)

- ★ The PWI grant funded 3 new peer positions. The addition of these 3 Cultural Liaisons allowed us to translate our materials, website, resource guides, and training materials to reach diverse communities. The growth of these programs allowed us to secure funding from our county to continue providing culturally congruent services.
- ★ The PWI grant funded the development and implementation of a Salesforce database that allows us to collect more reliable and comprehensive participant and outcome data. This has improved program delivery and will help us with future grants and donors.
- ★ The PWI grant funded 6 intern positions. These positions allowed us to increase the number of participants we were able to serve. It also created a valuable learning opportunity for peers interested in careers in mental health. Over the course of this grant funding we have graduated 14 interns.

NAMI Santa Cruz County (NAMISCC) (PWI)

- ★ With BHWD/PWI funding, NAMISCC was able to strengthen our free mental health services for peers by hiring peer volunteers, thus creating a new paid Peer Leader position at our organization. Through this new employment pathway, peers receive compensation, job support, leadership training, and mentorship. Several Peer Leaders joined NAMISCC's Ambassadors program, in which they speak to the community about mental health issues and provide guidance and hope to peers early in their recovery journey. NAMISCC now has 14 Peer Leaders facilitating peer programs in English and 2 Peer Leaders facilitating programs in Spanish.
- ★ With support from BHWD/PWI funding, more than 615 peer support group sessions were held during the grant period. Peer support groups in English were held 3 times each week, and in Spanish once weekly. All groups continue to meet and participation continues to grow. With help from BHWD/PWI, NAMISCC also started a new program, Peer Meetups, a space for peers with a mental health condition to

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socialize with one another while enjoying a fun activity in the community. This group is coordinated by Peer Leaders and continues to meet monthly.

- ★ With support from this BHWD/PWI grant, NAMISCC served 44,815 people from July 1, 2021, to December 31, 2024!

NAMI Solano County (PWI)

- ★ Our organization was able to partner with the Solano County Diversion Courts and implement Case Management for over 75 clients who were placed in Mental Health Diversion but didn't have residency in our county and therefore could not receive case management from our county.
- ★ Our case managers were able to serve with professionalism and to a greater level than those served in our county. The case loads for our Probation offices were in excess of 250 clients at any one time. Our case managers were able to be more engaged and involved in service/support for our clients helping 25% to achieve completion of their diversion.
- ★ We have been asked to support future initiatives in our county including [Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE)] Act implementation in our county as a result of the strong positive relationships we have made with those involved.

NAMI San Mateo County (PWI)

- ★ We have been able to greater initiate, grow, and continually improve our service delivery to the Latinx and [Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI)] populations of San Mateo County. These populations represent the majority of our county yet have been historically underserved—we were able to provide more culturally appropriate outreach, programming, and participation.
- ★ We have been able to grow our Youth Services programs to provide a more targeted approach to persons ages 13 to 25 in our county, this includes forming a youth advisory committee and increasing the team's capability in our programs.
- ★ We have been able to expand our geographic footprint to ensure coverage of North and South County populations that are currently more underserved. By the end of the PWI grant period, we anticipate having new offices across the county.

Nate's Place, A Wellness and Recovery Center (EPOC)

- ★ In October 2024, *People* magazine published a powerful article on our organization. It highlights the journey of Nate Rhoades (our son) whose legacy lives on through organ transplants that have profoundly impacted another life, as well as the creation of Nate's Place, A Wellness and Recovery Center (our organization). Nate's parents, the Nate's Place Co-founders, . . . in a moment of healing and connection, met the man who now carries the heart and the liver of their beloved son.
- ★ Funds from EPOC have supported our capacity to improve our messaging, communications, and networking, resulting in opportunities like this *People* magazine article.
- ★ We are so grateful for the feature in *People* magazine, as we know this will spread the word of our mission, our services, and will further de-stigmatize mental health and substance use. We also hope this generates new awareness and donations to our organization. <https://people.com/nate-rhoades-died-in-crash-parents-bond-with-man-who-got-his-heart-liver-exclusive-8733004>
- ★ In April 2024, Nate's Place was awarded a \$400,000 grant to expand our services. This additional funding has been instrumental in our sustainability. EPOC was our first big grant, and without those foundational funds, we would not have been able to go after bigger funding opportunities. Now, we are able to plan for long-term sustainability and accomplish our goals of providing cost-free mental health and substance use services to marginalized youth and young adults in Ventura County. We are also on track to become Medi-Cal certified.
- ★ Recently, Nate's Place has received exceptional community support. This summer, Senator Monique [Limón] visited Nate's Place, shared compassion for our mission, and even provided a letter of support for a grant we applied for. Additionally, Dr. Loretta Denering, the board-appointed Director for Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) visited our center and has expressed support for helping our success. Ventura County has consistently expanded support for our organization during our time as an EPOC grantee by renewing and expanding our service contracts.

Norooz Clinic Foundation (PWI)

- ★ We relaunched our Unlocking Stigma Fair and broadened our outreach efforts. Since receiving the grant in 2021, we have educated and reached 19,919 community members and participated in & hosted 414 events.

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- ★ We expanded our services to include peer support, now offering 10 peer support groups covering a wide range of topics, including anxiety, depression, anger management, trauma, post-divorce, and addiction recovery. We have also partnered with various peer-led groups, most notably Peer Voices United. Together, we co-founded the Peers and Clinicians Collaborative Alliance, which focuses on training both peers and clinicians to collaborate effectively.
- ★ We expanded our clinical services to reach more individuals and, since 2021, we have provided 7,725 affordable therapy sessions. We saw a 71% increase in therapy sessions from 2021 to 2023. In 2024, we are already nearing the total number of therapy sessions we provided in all of 2023, with two months still remaining!

One New Heartbeat – Sacramento (PWI)

- ★ Expansion of Peer Support Workforce and Community Outreach: We have made considerable progress in training and deploying Certified Peer Specialists across multiple counties, including underserved areas like Tehama and Ventura. Through tailored [Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)] and peer support group offerings, we have equipped peers with trauma-informed, de-escalation, and conflict resolution skills. This has strengthened our outreach, with measurable impacts in empowering individuals and increasing community engagement. The positive feedback from participants and community members is a testament to the program's impact.
- ★ Enhanced Access to Mental Health Recovery Resources: By developing and expanding our online curriculum, including Family and Parenting Program (EBPP) and Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD) support groups, we have broadened our reach significantly. Online access has helped us connect with diverse populations and provide timely, supportive interventions that accommodate varying schedules and regions. The feedback and graduation ceremonies have showcased the program's influence on families and individuals, offering sustainable wellness tools and connecting people across different regions.
- ★ Building Sustainable Partnerships and Training Networks: One of our core achievements has been establishing partnerships with organizations like Turning Point and Star Vista, bringing peer support training directly to community-based organizations and behavioral health systems. These partnerships ensure a collaborative approach to wellness, allowing us to replicate successful peer support models within local communities. Through these collaborations, we have built a foundation for continuous growth and long-term sustainability, and we are proud to

see other organizations integrate and uphold these training programs within their own operations.

One New Heartbeat – Oakland (PWI)

- ★ Empowering Women in Treatment through Peer-Led Wellness Programs: In Alameda County, we have successfully launched tailored wellness and recovery programs specifically designed for women in treatment, providing a safe, supportive environment for their unique experiences. Through WRAP-based support and peer-led sessions, we have helped women build personalized wellness plans that address their physical, mental, and emotional health needs. Many participants have reported increased confidence, resilience, and a sense of community—empowering them to maintain recovery and foster sustainable, long-term well-being.
- ★ Building a Dedicated Peer Support Network for the Addictions Community: Recognizing the distinct needs within Alameda’s addiction recovery community, we have worked closely with local partners to create peer-led support groups focused on harm reduction, relapse prevention, and recovery tools. By training and certifying peers from within the community, we have provided those in recovery with relatable, ongoing support that resonates deeply due to shared lived experiences. This initiative has expanded access to critical resources, reduced stigma, and offered a compassionate support network that encourages recovery and empowerment.
- ★ Cross-County Collaboration for Comprehensive Behavioral Health Support: Leveraging our network, we have established a cross-county collaboration with Alameda and neighboring areas to bring integrated support services to individuals and families impacted by addiction. This initiative includes targeted training for peers on trauma-informed care and crisis intervention to support individuals during critical stages of recovery. We are particularly proud of the strides we have made in connecting women in treatment and those in recovery with essential resources, family support, and case management services. These connections have strengthened our reach and allowed us to provide holistic care, supporting individuals not only in treatment but throughout their entire recovery journey.
- ★ These successes reflect our commitment to inclusive, sustainable recovery programs tailored to meet the needs of communities in Alameda County and beyond, especially focusing on vulnerable populations such as women in treatment and those overcoming addiction.

Painted Brain (PWI)

- ★ Painted Brain became an approved Medi-Cal vendor and secured a contract with a Managed Care Plan for [ECM] services.
- ★ Painted Brain relocated our Community Center to a larger building and area with higher needs.
- ★ Painted Brain completed our renovations for [Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)]-accessible restrooms.
- ★ Painted Brain has purchased Exym as our Electronic Health Record [EHR] system and has onboarded the implementation team.

Peer Voices of Los Angeles (EPOC)

- ★ Partnerships: Peer Voices of Los Angeles has formed countless partnerships with organizations across Los Angeles County. This strengthens our resource capabilities and ensures the best of care for our clients.
- ★ Community: Peer Voices of Los Angeles has served a multitude of individuals (focusing on the underserved) in need of services and resources. Ignoring any competition concerns, our number one accomplishment has been serving the needs of the community by expanding our services and drawing upon the power of our collaborative efforts.
- ★ Opportunity: Peer Voices of Los Angeles has provided opportunity for volunteers, interns and staff to succeed in the peer workforce. Through our Peer Mentoring Program, we have supported many individuals on their journey into this meaningful work. Peer Voices of Los Angeles is focused on elevating individuals, not holding them back.

Peer Voices of Orange County (EPOC)

- ★ One of the key achievements of Peer Voices of Orange County has been the development of a strong, well-organized structure. Throughout the grant process, we have consistently learned from our experiences, using those lessons to refine and create new programs and policies. Recognizing that nearly all of our staff have lived experience and co-occurring disorders, we have placed a greater emphasis on fostering a supportive work environment. A notable example of this is our open-door policy, where supervisors actively listen and mentor staff, promoting both professional and personal growth.

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- ★ We have made significant strides in leveraging technology to improve our operations. By optimizing our data collection processes, we have enhanced our ability to track and measure program outcomes. These advancements not only increase efficiency but also position us for long-term sustainability, ensuring that we can continue delivering impactful services well into the future.
- ★ Transition to Sage Intacct for Financial Management: We are transitioning our financial management system to Sage Intacct. This cloud-based platform offers advanced financial reporting, real-time insights, and the ability to automate manual tasks by up to 90%. This integration allows us to easily handle complex, multi-entity financial management, providing transparency into the actual costs of our programs. The system's dashboards and multi-dimensional reporting help us identify where additional funding may be needed and ensure compliance with grant requirements.

Peer Professionals of California (EPOC)

- ★ We were able to achieve separation from fiscal sponsors and chapter affiliation and achieve our own independent status as a non-profit.
- ★ We were able to contract and partner with San Diego Workforce Partnership to become an internship training program for Peer Support Specialists.
- ★ We were able to contract with Neighborhood Networks/San Diego Wellness [Collaborative], allowing us to subcontract with Managed Care Plans and DHCS for Medi-Cal Community Health Worker billing.

Peer Wellness Collective (PWI)

- ★ Operations Manual.
- ★ New Organizational Chart.
- ★ With the support of this grant, we have full staffing and were able to hire significant leadership staff (Operations Manager, Human Resources).
- ★ We also launched a new website, rebranding of organization and launched a data collecting management tool.

Peers and Clinicians Collaborative Alliance (EPOC)

- ★ We have launched our Learning Management Software training on Circle.so.

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- ★ We developed our Peers and Clinicians Collaborative Alliance website.
- ★ We successfully implemented and started our marketing email campaign to invite users to subscribe.

Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery Services (PWI)

- ★ We engaged participants, staff, board, and community stakeholders in developing our organization's first five-year strategic plan. The process included refining our mission and vision statements and refreshing our core values as well as identifying strategic priorities to guide our leadership in the coming years.
- ★ We secured new funding for new programs, including launching a new service for older adults in Alameda County, the Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives (PEARLS), and a new WRAP for Reentry program in Alameda County, as well as a community-defined evidence practice contract to serve African American faith communities and Asian American transition-age youth and young adults in Contra Costa County.
- ★ We used our PWI grant to develop our staff, including supporting more than 20 of our staff through the process of Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification, holding several staff retreats to deepen relationships and skills—particularly around emotional intelligence, and training program staff to make some necessary pivots in response to changing conditions.

Progress House Inc. (PWI)

- ★ Progress House Inc. has become sustainable with the help of grant funds and county contracts.
- ★ Progress House has implemented team building/training events to support employee retention.
- ★ Progress House Inc. has remodeled a new residential treatment facility, and it is in the process of being licensed, which will add 20 new beds.

Project Return Peer Support Network (PRPSN) (PWI)

- ★ PRSPN has been able to improve outreach and support for underserved populations in their community by working to enhance their Warm Line infrastructure. They were

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able to expand their Warm Line operation by adding staff and opening on Sundays for eight (8) hours. This boosted Warm Line support and services to 7 days a week.

- ★ PRPSN has improved staff development by expanding their skills and competencies. As of August 2024, 80% of PRPSN staff have obtained their California State Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist (MCPSS) Certification (28 of 35).
- ★ Since the beginning of the [PWI] grant, PRPSN has met deliverables in a timely manner (never late, always in compliance) as outlined in the Statement of Work (SOW) including attending [training and technical assistance] events, reporting, project implementation, and invoicing.

Recovery Café San José, Inc. (PWI)

- ★ Over the last few years, two of our hired Peer Connectors have gone on to pursue careers in peer mentorship. They have done internships and additional certifications in the outside community. It has been amazing to see them learn and grow in these roles.
- ★ Many of our successes have been the connections within our community. Through the PWI grant, we have been able to help people get jobs and get into housing. Many small wins!
- ★ Our Peer Connector team has become leaders in our community. They help out without initial intakes and are go-to people for our newer members.

Sacramento Youth Center (EPOC)

- ★ We are proud to announce that this grant has significantly boosted our outreach efforts. Thanks to the funding, several hundred at-risk youth have been able to access valuable resources through the Sacramento Youth Center.
- ★ The grant enabled us to engage more at-risk youth in our programs, providing them with educational resources, mentorship, and a safe environment.
- ★ The grant allowed us to offer essential resources, such as mental health counseling, tutoring, and career guidance, helping youth achieve their personal and academic goals.

Safe Refuge (PWI)

- ★ We have been very successful in helping clients obtain Social Security cards and birth certificates. Even gaining access for vouchers for birth certificates for LA County's homeless individuals.
- ★ We have also been very successful in fixing Medi-Cal issues with clients who otherwise may not have taken care of it on their own because of the extent of calls that sometimes need to be made.
- ★ Our Peer Navigator has been able to give out referrals to clients that are interested in continued health care and what can help them move forward in rebuilding their life while receiving positive feedback regarding their Recovery Plans.

Schrank's Clubhouse (PWI)

- ★ We were able to increase our participant rate over 50% from the start of our first PWI Round 1 Grant.
- ★ Schrank's Clubhouse was able to get over 25 staff and volunteers to complete the Peer Support Specialist Training.
- ★ We were able to build a network partnership with over 200 community-based peer organizations, and leaders statewide.

Somos Familia Valle Central dba CalPride Valle Central (EPOC)

- ★ We were able to put on our first trans pride event, bringing together over 23 health and community-based organizations in providing resources for the trans community in our area.
- ★ We were able to help an undocumented trans woman from being trafficked in our area, and through our peer support they have been able to find stable housing, employment, and a vehicle.
- ★ We were able to help people who were still closeted feel safe and come out to their loved ones with our peer support. We have been able to help 4 individuals get their immigration documents in order and also helped one youth with suicidal ideation feel more confident of themselves and their gender identity. They have now been able to register for college on their own and move into their own space.

Teens4TeensHelp.org (EPOC)

- ★ We are proud that with this grant we have gone from having 13 videos on our online website to 135 and counting. These stories of recovery, informational videos, and teens demonstrating coping skills provide easy access to inspiration, education, and services to anyone with an internet connection.
- ★ Teens4TeensHelp started out with 5 youth board members and now have over 30 active members and have worked with over 155 teens and young adults during the EPOC grant. Our site has been seen in over 60 countries and used by schools, therapists, and treatment centers. We have gone from having a couple hundred views on our site and informational videos a month, to over 1600 views per month.
- ★ However, we are most proud of our impact. Teens have found us through Google, therapists, social media, and our healthy coping skills toolboxes. We love hearing from youth who have been inspired by our site, inspiring them to make it through treatment, or realized they were not alone, then reached out to us to join our youth board or share their stories of experience to help other teens. This is why we set out to create this nonprofit, a place where teens can help teens find resources, resiliency and recovery. And we also were nominated by teens to receive an international grant from Born This Way Foundation/Cotton On Foundation to further our youth board work.

The Happier Life Project (EPOC)

- ★ Building a peer workforce of diverse individuals in recovery.
- ★ Obtained a physical location for day-to-day operations and to build out a center.
- ★ We've supported and expanded awareness to over 15,000 individuals through individual peer support, support groups, and outreach.

The Net Family Support (EPOC)

- ★ Building a collaborative partnership to provide a peer respite camp in the community.
- ★ Organizing and presenting couples support groups and communication workshop.
- ★ Planning program expansion with community partner in 2025.

The Purpose of Recovery Inc. (EPOC)

- ★ Completed a reorganization to include peer leadership model.
- ★ Moved into a larger facility with expanded services and group support.
- ★ Updated EHR system, trained staff on usage and best practices.

The Race and Gender Equity (RAGE) Project (PWI)

- ★ The overall enhancement of our organizational capacity.
- ★ One of our key achievements was successfully onboarding new staff and interns. These roles became essential for managing and implementing projects and initiatives.
- ★ To further highlight the significant improvement in our organizational capacity over the past year, our team has actively engaged in various training sessions, webinars and meetings. This participation contributed to their professional development, knowledge sharing, and has strengthened our organization’s framework for enhancing the well-being of youth and young adults.

The Young People’s Foundation Inc. (TYPF) (PWI)

- ★ [TYPF] is now a certified Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program. Application for contract with Drug Medi-Cal is in process.
- ★ TYPF has onboarded three Peer Support [Specialists] of which two will complete the 80 hour training in December. The project coordinator was certified in May 2024.
- ★ TYPF has over 50 youth enrolled in its peer support services program.
- ★ TYPF is certified with DHCS as a community-based organization (CBO) and [has] started to bill Medi-Cal for [community health worker] services.

Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA), San Luis Obispo (SLO) (PWI)

- ★ Hiring 7 interns into permanent TMHA SLO roles, just during Round 2.
- ★ Partnering with SHARE! to provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist training to TMHA SLO employees.
- ★ Helping 17 TMHA SLO peers get Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certified.

TMHA, Santa Maria (PWI)

- ★ Surmounting the county-wide hiring challenges and hiring full cohorts of interns, some of whom have gone on to work full time for TMHA and achieve Medi-Cal [Peer Support Specialist] certification.
- ★ Partnering with SHARE! to provide Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist training to TMHA Santa Maria employees.
- ★ Helping 7 TMHA Santa Maria peers get Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certified.

Turning Point Community Program (TPCP) (PWI)

- ★ TPCP was able to train 25 Peer Support Specialists in Intentional Peer Support due to the PWI grant. Our team [utilizes principles] and philosophy from the training in the work they provide daily, which has increased satisfaction for the Peer Support Specialists and the [guests] we are privileged to serve.
- ★ PWI participation allowed TPCP to expand its census from a 4-bed to a 5-bed respite home. Additionally, the grant allowed us to improve the welcoming environment through updating the furnishings and modernizing appliances.
- ★ TPCP was able to partner with AHP to assist other grant recipients with learning how to become Medi-Cal Certified. This allowed TPCP colleagues to support other peer organizations and [communities] sustain pathways for peer services.

Unity Hall dba Solano Recovery Project (PWI)

- ★ Strengthening Organizational Leadership and Training Programs
 - Formation of a Peer-Led Board of Directors: We established a six-member board composed entirely of peer professionals, including a Chairperson with a Master of Public Administration (MPA). This leadership structure has empowered us to develop and implement a Peer Recovery Support Specialist (PRSS) training program.
 - Successful Training and Community Integration: Through our PRSS program, we trained 16 individuals who are now actively serving within the justice system, assisting peers in overcoming justice-involved mandated requirements.

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- Sustained Membership with ARCO: We maintained our membership with the Alliance for Recovery Centered Organizations (ARCO) and utilized the Recovery Data Platform (RDP), an evidence-based software, to enhance our service delivery.
- ★ Establishing a Recovery Café and Expanding Community Resources
 - Creation of a Stigma-Free Resource Center: We launched a Recovery Café that fosters a compassionate, judgment-free community culture. This center has served over 2,000 individuals, providing a therapeutic environment and essential resources.
 - Narcan Distribution Center: Recognizing a critical need, we distributed 360 units of Narcan within 90 days, resulting in 12 documented overdose reversals.
 - Educational Initiatives: To raise awareness about the fentanyl crisis, we hosted three public screenings of the student-created documentary *Fentanyl High*, educating both youth and parents.
- ★ Enhancing Community Outreach and Partnerships
 - Increased Community Engagement: Our outreach efforts, including tabling at local events, have facilitated personal connections and provided life-saving resources. For instance, a mother who lost her stepson to fentanyl expressed gratitude for our Narcan distribution, highlighting the impact of our work.
 - Life-Saving Interventions: A community member who received Narcan from our tabling event later used it to save a life, demonstrating the immediate benefits of our outreach.
 - Securing a Drug Court Contract: We established a contract with the local drug court, securing additional funding to enhance services and create safe spaces for the unhoused community.
- ★ These accomplishments underscore the transformative impact of the PWI funding on our organization’s ability to serve and support our community effectively.

Valley Health Associates (PWI)

- ★ Valley Health Associates has relocated, and our Peer Support Specialists are now able to utilize new wellness spaces as they work with clients.
 - Healthy Cooking Classes in the “Nutrition is Wellness” Kitchen classroom.
 - Community Food Pantry & Clothes Closet in the “Neighbor’s Nook.”

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- Mindfulness, Meditation, and Wellness Classes in the dedicated relaxation room.”
- ★ Peer Support Services have strengthened relationships with the Veterans Transition Center (VTC), resulting in a formal referral agreement. Darrel, a VTC graduate and Valley Health Associates peer shared his personal story, which was pivotal in establishing the agreement and highlighting the importance of Peer Support for veterans with substance use disorders.
- ★ Our team developed new publicity materials featuring compelling photos and testimonials that have significantly increased clients signing up to receive Peer Support Services. The brochure and rack card help clients visualize Peer Support Services’ role in their recovery.

Voices of Recovery San Mateo County (PWI)

- ★ During our time as a PWI grantee, we have been able to sustain full-time employment for four staff who were previously part-time. The increased hours improved retention and increased our organization’s availability to the community. We are able to provide services like individual peer mentoring during these hours and support increased outreach activities.
- ★ To date, our organization has prepared nine staff members for Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification. As a result, six current staff members are certified Peer Support Specialists. We continue to create opportunities for staff to pursue certification and increase capacity in the county for peer support in our community. Lessons learned during the training and preparation have benefitted our other programs and services, including our peer mentoring and support groups.
- ★ [Information technology] equipment purchased with grant funds enabled our organization to accomplish our mission while maintaining flexibility throughout the pandemic. The capabilities of laptop equipment compared to previous equipment made a positive impact on the quality of marketing and outreach materials. It has contributed to improved operational efficiencies and created opportunities for staff to grow in their technological competence.

Wind Youth Services, Inc. (PWI)

- ★ A major success story has been the remarkable outreach and community engagement events hosted by our PWI Coordinator. Prior to having a dedicated coordinator, Wind Youth Services held only a limited number of community

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engagement activities. Thanks to this grant funding, we now have the resources to print materials, supply tabling events, and dedicate the time and staff needed to increase our community presence significantly. Through these efforts, we have also established several informal partnerships within the community.

- ★ Another success story is the establishment of a robust workshop schedule at our Drop-in Center. Our coordinator developed a series of ongoing weekly workshops, empowering youth to bring forward their own topic ideas. This collaboration between youth and staff was so successful that we applied for a Youth Action Board (YAB) grant—and are now set to receive funding. The structure created by our coordinator provided a solid framework for the YAB, setting the stage for its future impact.

Yuba Harm Reduction Collective (YHRC) (EPOC)

- ★ Establishing and surviving as a young non-profit! The stability and resources provided by EPOC allowed our organization the ability to go from one person in Round 1 to 5 staff by this time. While not all our funding is through EPOC, the funding and resources provided allowed for critical support in this growth.
- ★ EPOC allowed me to join the YHRC staff, completely new to non-profit work as a peer hire, and gain the professional experience necessary to navigate this new field. The mentor program with Rachael McDavid helped YHRC (and me personally) succeed in communicating and showing the important work YHRC has achieved since Round 1 funding.
- ★ Through tools like the [Program Sustainability Assessment Tool] and [Implementation Plan], we were able to identify and address YHRC's vulnerable areas as an organization and quickly address them.