



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: August 21, 2024

SUBJECT: Approval to apply for COHC BH 2023 Shared Savings Investment Grant

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move approval to apply for COHC's Behavioral Health 2023 Shared Savings Investment Grant.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The Central Oregon Health Council (COHC) is a nonprofit public and private community governance organization, which partners with communities to guide and align vision, strategy and activities across industries for a healthier Central Oregon.

COHC's Behavioral Health 2023 Shared Savings Investment opportunity is intended to invest in programs that address behavioral health in youth. Deschutes County Health Services (DCHS) requests Board approval to apply for \$391,287 of funding to support the Healthy Schools program in fiscal year 2026 (FY 26).

The Healthy Schools program focuses on improving school-wide usage of effective prevention and health promotion practices to target multiple adolescent health outcomes, listed below. These efforts strongly align with the Youth Substance use Disorder (SUD) Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Programs focus of the Shared Savings Investment Grant.

- Increase student belonging
- Increase Positive Youth Development
- Reduce suicide-related ED visits
- Reduce 30-day substance use
- Reducing violence, bullying, and bias incidents
- Reducing sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancies
- Reducing disparities for the above outcomes by race/ethnicity, sexual orientation/gender identity, low-income and rural areas, and disabilities

Healthy Schools embeds Deschutes County Public Health staff into public schools. Program staff work full-time in two to three public schools as dedicated on-site Public Health Specialists (PHS). Public schools are one of the best settings to reach the vast majority of

school-age youth and families with prevention, health promotion, and health care services. Public schools are also in great need of qualified support inside their buildings on a daily basis to effectively respond to the high levels of critical adolescent and community health issues emerging in their school buildings. These are often societal and public health issues that come into the building with students, families, and staff that become barriers to teaching and learning. Educators and the education system do not have the training or expertise, nor is it their mission, to be able to address these societal and public health issues effectively.

Healthy Schools is seeing positive program outcomes now which is energizing as the program works toward long-term change. For example, the percent of middle and high school students feeling depressed, stressed, or anxious decreased from 52 percent to 47 percent from 2022 to 2024, respectively. Similarly, Healthy Schools increased the proportion of behavioral health care referrals that have resulted in appointments, from 52% to 60% in just one year. Furthermore, from 2021 to June 2024, the proportion of Deschutes County suicide-related Emergency Department visits for ages 11-17 significantly decreased for zip codes with Healthy Schools (from 69% to 58%). Healthy Schools notably improved prevention education with 100% of teachers now using effective, skills-based mental health promotion and suicide prevention curriculum (up from 6%), reaching 5,154 students last year alone.

Healthy Schools expenses are covered through a 50/50 cost share between DCHS and Bend-La Pine Schools (BLS), and the proposed COHC grant application reflects this partnership. Currently, the DCHS contribution is sourced from a combination of County General Funds and state grants. If awarded, DCHS intends to use the funding to cover staff expenses, which will help offset continued increases to the County General Fund contribution in FY26. A portion of the grant funds will also offset the BLS contribution, helping to offset increases to BLS' funding sources in FY26. During the grant year, DCHS aims to complete the fall 2025 (FY26) outcome evaluation and further establish a long-term funding structure with a goal of reducing County General Fund reliance. The total request is \$391,287 of which \$362,587 will cover 2.0 FTE in Healthy Schools, additionally \$28,700 will support 0.15 FTE Public Health's Epidemiologist that assists with data tracking and evaluation for Healthy Schools. COHC does not fund indirect costs, so these would be covered by existing Healthy School resources.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

\$391,287 revenue in FY 26

ATTENDANCE:

Jessica Jacks, Public Health Program Manager