



Community Action Plan 2024



WILSON AREA
COMMUNITIES THAT CARE COALITION



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Table of Contents

3	2024 Wilson Area Communities That Care Partners
4	About
4	What is the Wilson Area Communities That Care Coalition?
4	Our Vision Statement
5	Priorities and Goals
6	Executive Summary
9	Community Profile
9	Purpose and Use of the Plan
9	Prevention Science Overview
9	Community Involvement
10	The Community Plan
10	How the Information was Collected and Drafted
11	How to Use the Plan
11	Data Collection Efforts
12	Prioritization Process
13	Resource Assessment
16	Planning Results
16	Community-Level Outcomes
17	Selected Programs and Practices
19	Community Building and Partnerships
20	Goals for Community Board Development
21	Goals for Promoting the Social Development Strategy
22	Summary of Key Findings
23	Recommendations for next steps
23	Funding Partners
24	Additional Resources



Coalition Partners



WILSON
AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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About

What is the Wilson Area Communities That Care Coalition?

The Wilson Area Communities that Care (CTC) Coalition is a group of youth, families, community leaders, business members, and residents from Wilson Area School District and surrounding communities. The coalition consists of a key leader board, to provide group guidance and organization; coalition members, to raise community concerns and develop possible solutions; and work groups that put the plan into action. The Wilson Area Communities That Care Coalition is a collaborative project of public and private health, education, human service and civic organizations; local businesses; and citizens.

Our Vision Statement

Wilson Area is an inclusive and nurturing community that provides opportunities for success, purpose and well-being to empower our youth to become respectful, confident and healthy adults, who contribute positively to society.

The Communities That Care model focuses on promoting positive youth development and preventing problem behaviors by assessing predictors both of problem behaviors and of positive youth outcomes. Risk and protective factors have been identified in research in many fields, including for problem adolescent behaviors.



Priorities and Goals

Community Action Plan Priorities

We have identified the following risk factors as our priorities. In addition, our goal is to increase the protective factor, Community Rewards for Prosocial Involvement.

Our Risk Factor Goals			
Change in What?	As Measured By?	Baseline or Starting Point?	How Much Change by 2025?
Low Neighborhood Attachment	2021 PAYS Survey	51%	Decrease to 45%
Perceived Risk of Drug Use	2021 PAYS Survey	56%	Decrease to 50%
Depressive Symptoms	2021 PAYS Survey	41%	Decrease to 35%
Parental Attitudes Favorable Toward Antisocial Behavior	2021 PAYS Survey	53%	Decrease to 43%

The percentage change numbers for risk and protective factors are based on the 2021 Pennsylvania Youth Survey Data and may be updated after the 2023 numbers are made available to the coalition.





Executive Summary

This plan describes the ways to address the priority risk factors identified in the Wilson Area Communities That Care effort. The Communities That Care system is a way for members of a community to work together to promote positive youth development. The system was developed by the Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington. Their research has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life.

The Wilson Area Coalition developed its outcome-focused plan after the Risk- and Protective-Factor Assessment workgroup identified four risk factors as priorities for community planning: low attachment to neighborhood, perceived risk of drug use, depressive symptoms, and parental attitudes toward antisocial behavior. In addition, they identified the protective factor, community rewards for prosocial involvement as a priority. The Resource Assessment and Evaluation workgroup then completed an assessment of the youth-development and prevention resources that target these risk factors in the Wilson Area community in August of 2023.

The drafting of this document, the Wilson Area Community Action Plan, was the next step in the Communities That Care process. In September and October members of the Community Board attended the Community Planning Workshops. They drafted community-level outcomes to help define the desired changes for the Wilson Area community and measure the progress toward those outcomes. Community-level outcomes include risk-and protective-factor outcomes.

The following systems-change strategies were selected by the Wilson Area Communities That Care Coalition to help facilitate the implementation of the selected programs and address gaps, issues and barriers in the community:

- New funding streams will be found to help the expansion of tested, effective resources addressing the priority risk factors.
- Wilson Area CTC will expand and enhance existing tested, effective resources that address the priorities Low Attachment to Neighborhood and Rewards for Prosocial Involvement to reach a greater number of youth to encourage community engagement.

Executive Summary

4 Risk Factors of Focus



Low attachment to neighborhood

Higher rates of drug problems, delinquency, violence, and drug trafficking occur where people have little attachment to the community.

01



Perceived risk of drug use

A number of scientific studies have identified a link between mental health problems, such as depression, and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATODs) during adolescence.

02



Depressive symptoms

Important mental health habits—including coping, resilience, and good judgment—help adolescents to achieve overall wellbeing and set the stage for positive health in adulthood.

03



Parental attitudes toward antisocial behavior

Children who experience unclear expectations for behavior or are given excessively severe, or inconsistent punishment are at a higher risk of problems with drug use, delinquency, violent behavior, and dropping out of school.

04

Community rewards for prosocial involvement

There are currently no recreation centers in the Wilson Area School District Community and many of the resources for involvement are not widely known.

05

1 Priority Protective Factor

Executive Summary - Selected Programs

Community Board members selected preliminary programs, policies and practices at the Community Planning Workshops and finalized their selections at a meeting in December of 2023. Program-level outcomes were also finalized at these meetings. These consist of implementation goals, which will measure the way in which the programs will effect change, and participant outcomes, which will measure the extent of the desired change.

Perceived risk of drug use



Guiding Good Choices

A family competency training program for parents of children in middle school that gives parents the skills needed to reduce their children's risk for using alcohol and other drugs.



Parenting Wisely

A parent training program that aims to reduce behavior problems in at-risk children by teaching effective parenting skills to families.

Depressive symptoms



CBITS/Bounceback

A school- and group-based program designed to improve symptoms of post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety among children with posttraumatic stress symptoms.



The Shanthi Project

A pioneering nonprofit that builds human connections to reduce isolation, enhance health and well-being, and improve quality of life.

Parental attitudes toward antisocial behavior



Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America

A community mentoring program which matches a volunteer adult mentor to a child or adolescent to delay or reduce antisocial behaviors; improve academic success, and attitudes and behaviors



Strengthening Families

A group parenting and youth skills program that aims to promote good parenting skills and positive family relationships

Low attachment to neighborhood and Community rewards for prosocial involvement



STAR Social Development Strategy Program

A method to actionize the Social Development Strategy in order to teach students skills, demonstrate how they can benefit the community, and offer them rewards for prosocial involvement

Community Profile

Purpose and Use of the Plan

Wilson Area CTC presents its 2024 - 2025 Community Action Plan. This plan describes the results of the work completed thus far in the Wilson Area Communities That Care effort. It will describe the changes we want for our community, the programs, policies and practices that will be implemented to address the community's identified priority risk factors, and the outcomes that will measure progress toward our community's vision.

Wilson Area implemented the Communities That Care process to help achieve the community's vision for a compassionate, accepting community where all people work together to create a safe and healthy environment for all.

Prevention Science Overview

In the Fall of 2021, Wilson Area began implementing the Communities That Care system which helps community members work together to efficiently and effectively promote positive youth development. The system was developed by Dr. J. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard F. Catalano of the Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington, Seattle. It is based on their research, which has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life.

Community Involvement

The Wilson Area Community Board is comprised of community members from public and private institutions including local government, education, health, law enforcement, local businesses, private social services, and parents and youth.

Key Leaders who have been involved in the Communities That Care process for the Wilson Area include the Mayor of Wilson Borough, the Chair of the Williams Township Board of Supervisors, the Wilson Borough Chief of Police, the Northampton County Deputy Director of Human Services, and a Community Affairs Officer from the Pennsylvania State Police, among others.





The Community Plan

A key goal of the Communities That Care process is to develop a Community Action Plan that builds on the data-based assessment of a community's priorities, strengths and resources. This plan focuses on priority risk factors and draws on community resources and strengths. It also addresses resource gaps, issues and barriers by recommending new tested, effective programs or systems-change strategies.

The Wilson Area plan accomplishes this goal by identifying specific desired outcomes for each selected program, policy or practice; for the priority risk and protective factors on which the plan is focused; and for adolescent health and behavior problems. It describes how each selected program, policy and practice will work to bring about desired changes in the Wilson Area youth and presents preliminary recommendations for how these programs will be implemented in the community. Finally, it discusses systems-change strategies that will help with implementation.

How the Information was Collected and Drafted

Wilson Area developed its outcome-focused plan after the Risk and Protective Factor Assessment workgroup identified four risk factors as priorities for community planning: low attachment to neighborhood, perceived risk of drug use, depressive symptoms, and parental attitudes toward antisocial behavior. The workgroup also identified a priority protective factor, community rewards for prosocial involvement.

Wilson Area first drafted community-level outcomes, which consist of risk and protective factor outcomes. Community Board members drafted these outcomes at the Community Planning Workshops in July 2023. Program selection also took place at workshops, with the Wilson Area Community Board members selecting several programs to address the identified priority risk and protective factors.

Work was next focused on drafting program-level outcomes, which consist of implementation goals and participant outcomes. Implementation goals describe how the programs will be delivered in order to match the program design; participant outcomes describe the desired changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills or behaviors that the program will produce for participants. Community Board members drafted participant outcomes and implementation goals at the Community Planning Workshops in August and September 2023. Various members of the Community Board drafted the plan in December 2023 presenting their finished work in January 2024.

How to Use the Plan

The Community Action Plan is intended to help guide participants at the Implementation Planning Workshop, the Evaluation Planning Workshop and the Funding Workshop to develop implementation, evaluation, and budgeting plans for the selected programs, policies and practices. Participants developing these plans should use this plan to develop:

- Funding strategies by tying funding plans to outcomes and reevaluating funding priorities as outcomes are monitored.
- Implementation plans for the programs identified in the plan.
- Evaluation plans for programs by first monitoring the short-term program-level outcomes and then longer-term community-level outcomes.

Data Collection Efforts

The Risk and Protective Factor Assessment workgroup collected and analyzed data on the Wilson Area School District Community which includes Wilson Borough, West Easton Borough, Glendon Borough, and Williams Township. Then, with input from the community board and key leaders, they identified priority risk factors to address, as well as community strengths to build on. The Community Assessment Report details the results of this work.

The assessment was completed using the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) and existing public data sources. PAYS is a primary tool in Pennsylvania's prevention approach of using data to drive decision-making. By not looking at just the rates of problem behaviors but also at the root causes of those behaviors, PAYS allows schools and communities to address reasons rather than symptoms. This approach has been repeatedly shown in national research studies to be very effective in helping youth develop into healthy and productive members of society.



Prioritization Process

Based on the analysis of the data and input from the community, the following risk factors were identified as priorities for community attention:

- Low attachment to neighborhood
- Perceived risk of drug use
- Depressive symptoms
- Parental attitudes toward antisocial behavior

These risk factors were selected as priorities for prevention action primarily because data indicated that they are significantly elevated throughout the Wilson Area. The workgroup also identified a priority protective factor, community rewards for prosocial involvement. It was prioritized because of a sharp and sudden decline from 2017 to 2021.

The Community Board further decided to focus prevention efforts to impact youth in the late elementary and middle school age range. They determined that the transition from late childhood to adolescence provides multiple challenges to our youth, and at the same time is a time when effective prevention can make a huge difference in the quality of these youths' lives. Additionally, the data show a steep increase in youth health & behavior problems from 6th to 10th grade and the Community Board is determined to reduce that increase.





Resource Assessment

Existing Resources

Based on the assessment information, the Resource Assessment and Evaluation workgroup reported that:
Depressive symptoms

There are several resources in the Wilson Area that address the risk factor depressive symptoms.

Gaps, issues, and barriers

The workgroup also reported that:

- **Affordability and Insurance Coverage:** Mental health care can be costly, and many individuals do not have adequate insurance coverage or financial resources to access the necessary treatments and medications. In Wilson, many parents work in New York or New Jersey and their company insurance will only cover counseling services in those states. Even if the counseling is covered by certain insurance providers, co-pays can sometimes be very high.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Barriers:** Cultural factors and language barriers can prevent individuals from seeking help or hinder effective communication with mental health professionals. It is crucial to consider cultural contexts and provide culturally sensitive and language-appropriate mental health services. In Wilson, we have an increasing number of families that speak Portuguese, Chinese, Korean, and other languages that require translation services which have not historically been provided in the area.
- **Prevention and Early Intervention:** While significant progress has been made in treatment approaches, there is still a need for greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention. Promoting mental health, identifying risk factors, and providing timely support can help prevent the development of more severe mental health conditions.

Identified Needs in the Wilson Area

- Additional available mental health beds
- Parent education concerning suicide awareness and mental health first aid
- A community based prevention strategy is also an emerging need.



Existing Resources

Based on the assessment information, the Resource Assessment and Evaluation workgroup reported that:

Perceived risk of drug use

There are tested, effective resources in the Wilson Area working to address the priority risk factor perceived risk of drug use.

Gaps, issues, and barriers

The workgroup reported that:

- There is an increase of acceptance of marijuana use, especially in the vaped form.
- There are no local inpatient treatment programs for kids who use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Existing Resources

Based on the assessment information, the Resource Assessment and Evaluation workgroup reported that:

Low attachment to neighborhood

Parental attitudes toward antisocial behavior

Community rewards for prosocial involvement

There are **no tested, effective resources in the Wilson Area working to address low neighborhood attachment or parental attitudes toward antisocial behavior.**

Gaps, issues, and barriers

The workgroup also reported that:

- Currently there are no community resources that address the risk factor *Low Attachment to Community or Parental Attitudes Toward Antisocial Behavior* that are tested and proven effective. There are a few community programs in the Wilson Area that provide community based involvement.



Engagement

Identified Needs in the Wilson Area

- Recreation centers in Wilson, West Easton, Glendon, and Williams Township.
- A community pool in the area served by the district.
- Assistance with increasing cultural and language barriers.
- No cost athletic programs that are widely communicated.
- Encouraging the growth of scouting programs and youth programming in the faith communities.
- Transportation for Wilson students to attend programming at the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Easton Community Center, or sharing of resources with other recreation centers.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the community assessment, the workgroup recommended that:

- The Wilson Area Communities That Care Coalition help to put additional tested and effective programs in place in order to offset the gaps identified in our resource assessment.
- Utilize the local organizations that are available to provide tested and effective evidence based programs to address our priority risk factors.
- Work together to provide additional community building prosocial activities to increase protection from risk factors in our community.



Planning Results

Community-Level Outcomes

Risk-factor outcomes are meant to identify the changes the Wilson Area needs to make in its priority risk factors to achieve behavior changes. The following risk-factor outcome were developed to describe this desired change:

- ↓ 6% decrease in low neighborhood attachment
- ↓ 6% decrease in perceived risk of drug use
- ↓ 6% decrease in depressive symptoms
- ↓ 10% decrease in parental attitudes favorable toward antisocial behavior

Protective-factor outcomes specify the desired changes the Wilson Area coalition wants to make in protective factors, based on the community assessment. The coalition has set a goal to increase in rewards for prosocial involvement in the community



Selected Programs and Practices

Program	Program Description	Selection Factors	Outcomes	Budget
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Lehigh Valley	Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Lehigh Valley is a structured mentoring program typically targeting youth ages 6 to 18. The core of the program is the matching of a mentor and youth for one-on-one interaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk factors addressed by the program. • Costs • Resources included in the program. • Current tested, effective resources in Wilson that will facilitate implementation of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves youth's commitment to school, measured by 1st and 4th quarter attendance, attitude and grades. • Decreases youth's initiation of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs measured by pre and post survey. 	No cost
Strengthening Families 10-14	SFP is for parents and youth 10 to 14 years of age. It is a family-focused intervention designed to reduce adolescent substance use and other negative behaviors by improving youth building skills, parenting skills, and strengthening family relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk factors addressed by the program. • Costs • Resources included in the program. • Current tested, effective resources in Wilson that will facilitate implementation of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent teen substance use and other behavior problems. • Prevents violent and aggressive behaviors at home and at school. • Increases academic success. • Strengthens parent/youth communication skills. 	No cost
Parenting Wisely	Parenting Wisely is an interactive online course designed to help parents with tips and tools to help their children through hard situations. Parents learn constructive skills to help with problem solving and deal with family conflict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk factors addressed by the program. • Costs • Resources included in the program. • Current tested, effective resources in Wilson that will facilitate implementation of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in family relationships. • Decrease in teen and maternal depression. • Reduction in preteen and teen drug and alcohol abuse. • Reduction in preteen and teen violent behavior. • Improvements in parenting self-efficacy and parenting satisfaction • Improvement in parenting knowledge 	No cost

Selected Programs and Practices

Program	Program Description	Selection Factors	Outcomes	Budget
CBITS and Bounce Back	Evidence-based programs delivered in a school setting with a trained mental health counselor. The students attend 10 small group sessions. The sessions are aimed at relieving symptoms of general anxiety, depression, and PTSD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk factors addressed by the program. • Costs • Resources included in the program. • Current tested • <u>effective</u> resources in Wilson that will facilitate implementation of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower scores of PTSD symptoms after a 3 month follow up. • Lower scores of depression. 	No cost
Shanthi Project	<u>Shanthi</u> Project provides after school and summer programs, school-based mindfulness programs, trauma informed yoga, activities, and art.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk factors addressed by the program. • Costs • Resources included in the program. • <u>Current tested, effective</u> resources in Wilson that will facilitate implementation of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase pro-social and coping skills. • Knowledge: learning mindfulness. • Attitude: Positive social emotional response. • Skills: mindfulness strategies, compassion, and resilience. • Behavior: increased focus, stress management, self-awareness, social skills, and self-regulation. 	Cost covered by current coalition grant funding

Two additional programs are under consideration for implementation after the first phase of implementation.

- To address the risk factor low attachment to community and the low protective factor of rewards for prosocial involvement, Wilson Area CTC selected the STAR Social Development Strategy Program, which is a method to operationalize the Social Development Strategy.
- To address the risk factor perceived risk of drug use and depressive symptoms, Wilson Area CTC selected a parent training program called Guiding Good Choices.

Community Building And Partnerships

In addition to our tested and effective evidence based programs, our coalition is also concentrating its efforts on partnering with organizations and entities and building community in the Wilson Area.

LINCS Family Center, has partnered with CONCERN Behavioral Health and the Wilson Area School District to provide the services of a Family Navigator to the residents of the district. Through a Northampton County Community Development Block Grant, a licensed social worker has helped Wilson Area families connect to housing, healthcare, financial assistance, legal services, clothing and food resources, and mental health services.

The LINCS Summer Playground Program fills a need for a summer recreational program for elementary age students and has been operating for many years at Wilson Borough Elementary School. Thanks to the coalition work, state funding has been made available to expand the program to include 5th and 6th grade students in 2024, an age group that is also in need of supervised activities but often left out of free organized programming.

Our Coalition Mixers will continue monthly in 2024 and provide an opportunity for families to socialize and join in engaging conversation without having to worry about making dinner or finding childcare. Our recent mixers provided overviews of the coalition's goals and community mapping exercises to identify third places in Wilson.

Touch a Truck and Photos with Santa were our two highly successful large community service events which were either no or low cost. The attendance at both demonstrated a need for family activities that create positive interaction with trusted adults. The backpack and school supply distribution at the Touch a Truck event also offered parents an opportunity to provide these items to their children at a time when food and housing costs are increasing.



Board Development Goals

We plan to increase the number of persons actively engaged with Communities That Care (both on the Community Board and specific workgroups). Specifically, we are seeking residents of the three boroughs and the township, parents of children in the Wilson school district, district alumni and staff, business owners and professionals that serve the Wilson community, civic and service organizations, members of houses of worship, state and local social service agencies, and other community stakeholders.

We hope to increase representation from the 24-35 year old population. Other priorities for recruitment include individuals with grant writing and fundraising experience, marketing expertise, and connections to both state and local government.

We plan to identify collective knowledge gaps and look for opportunities to train our coalition members in these areas. Plans are in the works for the Communities That Care Phase Five workshops which focus on implementation, fidelity, funding, and evaluation.



Social Development Strategy Promotion

A key element of our CTC effort is to build protection community-wide by promoting the Social Development Strategy. During this action plan period, we are planning two activities to do this:

1. SDS Community Conversation Speakers Bureau. We will create a ‘speakers bureau’ to be trained to deliver the Community Conversations Social Development Strategy presentation. This group will work with the Outreach and PR Workgroup to develop a list of community audiences to engage in the Community Conversation, and will successfully deliver the presentation to at least 5 different audiences each year. For example, businesses, churches, PTAs, service clubs, public employees, school staff, etc.

2. Local municipal Youth Recognition Program. We’ll work with the district to develop a system for nominating youth for the recognition and collaborate with our local municipalities to design a program which offers a public platform for presenting awards.

We also will explicitly apply the Social Development Strategy to our own Board functioning, ensuring that Board members have opportunities to use their skills, and are recognized for their contributions.





Summary of Key Findings

Wilson Area CTC identified four priority risk factors and one priority protective factors to address as part of this action plan and the initial goals of the coalition.

- Low attachment to neighborhood
- Perceived risk of drug use
- Depressive symptoms
- Parental attitudes toward antisocial behavior
- Rewards for prosocial involvement

These risk and protective factors were selected as priorities for prevention action primarily because data indicated that they are significantly elevated (or reduced in the case of the protective factor, rewards for prosocial involvement) throughout the Wilson Area.

The following are the programs, policies and practices selected:

- To address the risk factor perceived risk of drug use Wilson Area CTC selected a parent training program called [Guiding Good Choices](#) as well as a secondary online option called [Parenting Wisely](#).
- To address the risk factor parental attitudes favorable toward antisocial behavior and depressive symptoms, Wilson Area CTC selected two programs: [Big Brothers/Big Sisters of the Lehigh Valley and Strengthening Families 10-14](#).
- To address the risk factor depressive symptoms, Wilson Area CTC selected two programs: [CBITS/Bounceback](#) and The Shanti Project.
- To address the risk factor Low Attachment to Community and the low protective factor of rewards for prosocial involvement, Wilson Area CTC selected the [STAR Social Development Strategy Program](#).



Implementation

CBITS/Bounceback and Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Lehigh Valley were implemented in the 2023/2024 school year. The Shanthi Project was implemented in the 2023 summer program at the intermediate school and will return again in 2024.

Implementation of Strengthening Families 10-14 will occur in the 2024-2025 school year. Guiding Good Choices and the STAR Social Development Strategy Program will begin when funding is received.


Systems-Change

The following systems-change strategies were selected by the Wilson Area Communities That Care Coalition to help facilitate the implementation of the selected programs and address gaps, issues and barriers in the community:

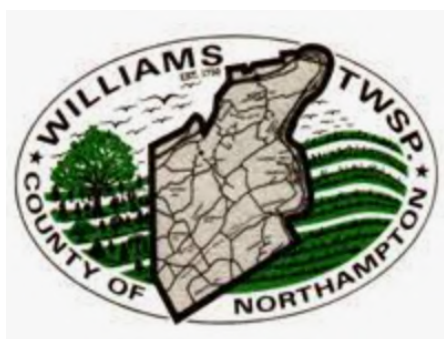
- New funding streams will be found to help the expansion of tested, effective resources addressing the priority risk factors.
- Wilson Area CTC will expand and enhance existing tested, effective resources that address the priorities Low Attachment to Neighborhood and Rewards for Prosocial Involvement to reach a greater number of youth to encourage community engagement.

Recommendations for Next Steps

The following are recommendations for next steps that need to be taken by those responsible for implementing, budgeting and evaluating programs in Phase Five of the Communities That Care effort:

- Develop detailed implementation plans to deliver each program with fidelity.
 - Develop specific evaluation plans to monitor program delivery and participant outcomes.
 - Identify future sources of funding, including local, state and federal funding streams.
 - Identify facilitators to lead Guiding Good Choices.
 - Schedule program trainings for community staff who will be administering Guiding Good Choices.
 - Recruit community members to teach specific skills such as gardening, knitting, or juggling as part of the STAR Social Development Strategy Program.
 - Schedule the 2 Day STAR training with the Center for Communities That Care.
 - Recruit and train observers to assist in monitoring program delivery.
- 

Thank you to our Funding Partners!



Additional Resources

- **Prevention Learning Portal**

<https://plp.psu.edu/>



- **The Centers for Communities That Care**

<https://www.communitiesthatcare.net/programs/ctc-plus/>



- **EPIS: Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center**

<https://epis.psu.edu/>



- **Commonwealth Prevention Alliance**

<https://paprevention.org/>



- **Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)**

[https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Pages/Pennsylvania-Youth-Survey-\(PAYS\)-2023.aspx](https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Pages/Pennsylvania-Youth-Survey-(PAYS)-2023.aspx)



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