

Colorado Project AWARE Grant

Health Education Services Office



COLORADO
Department of Education

Overview

Colorado's Project AWARE aims to build a comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated school-based mental health services system. To support communities and schools to increase access to school- and-community-based mental health services, Project AWARE increases collaboration between state, local, and building-level stakeholders to increase coordination of state and local policy, improve systems integration, strengthen cross organizational resources, and ensure the sustainability of programs and funding.

The model is based on a multi-tiered system of support behavioral health framework. To build alignment and state-level coordination of training, service provision, and resource development CDE has partnered with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Office of Suicide Prevention, CDPHE's Office of Violence Prevention and Mental Health Promotion, and Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration. Project AWARE leverages these partnerships to improve mental health awareness and response in Colorado school communities.

In addition to broader, statewide activities, Project AWARE has partnered with six local education agencies (LEAs) and one tribal education agency (TEA) to build district/community infrastructure and capacity and support best practices for school-based mental health.

Those partners are:

- [Archuleta School District](#)
- [Colorado Springs Schools D11](#)
- [Ignacio Public Schools](#)
- [Littleton Public Schools](#)
- [Poudre School District](#)
- [The Southern Ute Education Department](#)
- [Westminster Public Schools](#)

Funding/Context

As a former grantee of project AWARE (2014 - 2019) [The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) continues to award funding to state and local education agencies to expand the capacity for school-based mental health support nationwide. Colorado has two concurrent iterations of funding—one awarded in October 2020 and the other in December 2022.

AWARE 2020 Goals:

- Enhance the current state infrastructure for a coordinated, culturally responsive approach to meet the behavioral health needs to students, families, and communities.
- Increase the implementation of efforts within selected LEAs to improve or expand upon evidence-based behavioral health programs, services, and interventions for school-aged youth and families.
- Increase the capacity of LEAs through building behavioral health awareness and literacy of those who support school-aged youth and families to recognize behavioral health needs and connect them to appropriate services.

AWARE 2022 Goals:

- Enhance school-based mental and behavioral health infrastructure to develop an aligned and coordinated effort within Colorado Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for a coordinated, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and equity-based approach.
- Increase the mental health awareness and literacy of school-aged youth and individuals who interact with them to promote and foster well-being and detect the signs and symptoms of mental illness, substance use/misuse, and co-occurring disorders.
- Increase the capacity for and quality of implementation of evidence-based, mental health services and suicide prevention efforts that are culturally responsive and trauma-informed in Colorado school communities.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

To learn more about Project AWARE, use the QR code.

Contact: Chauncey Stephens at stephens_c@cde.state.co.us or 720-355-3026

