

CITY OF STAMFORD

Liberation Programs, Inc. - Grant Request 2016–2017

Agency & Address: Liberation Programs, Inc.
129 Glover Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06850

Tax ID Number: 06-0867006

Amount Requested: \$75,000

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Liberation Programs served 1,291 people through our inpatient and outpatient programs in Stamford in FY15.

We reached an additional 1,770 students and adults through prevention efforts.

LIBERATION PROGRAMS – Who We Are and How We Help

For over 44 years, Liberation Programs has been one of Fairfield County’s leading behavioral health organizations specializing in the treatment of substance abuse. The organization’s first service location was Liberation House in Stamford where we continue to offer services to the community. Liberation provides services for youth, adults and families that include two in-patient residential treatment programs, outpatient and intensive outpatient services, health education for older adults and people living with HIV/AIDS, treatment and resources for adolescents and their families, education, prevention and wellness efforts in the community, and permanent supportive housing for families. The agency currently has locations in Greenwich, Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport. Liberation Programs served over 2,000 individuals in the last fiscal year.

Liberation recently embodied a philosophy of treatment reflected in a “Staff Credo.” One section of the Credo states, “*We help each Recoveree, through our daily efforts, to re-discover their gifts, skills, strengths, abilities and purpose for living. We will search to unearth those positive qualities; we will seek opportunity to grow them through positive reinforcement.*” Working from an asset-based approach to treatment, Liberation focuses on the strengths within each person to help them achieve and maintain life long recovery. Liberation helps the people we serve through engagement. Recoverees must feel connected and invested in their recovery and we must work to meet their expectations. Along with meeting a recoveree’s expectations, each program has specific goals and outcomes for the people we are helping which we track, measure, and report to our Board of Directors.

Liberation Programs’ mission is to empower people and their families to be free of the disease of addiction by providing targeted solutions that restore lives and strengthen our community.

THE PROBLEM - Why We Need to Care about Substance Abuse in Connecticut

Unfortunately there is a major heroin crisis affecting Connecticut and Stamford is not immune. One only has to read a newspaper or watch a story on the news to recognize the impact this has on all of us. A sampling of headlines from Stamford alone reads:

- “*Three Charged in Stamford Heroin Bust,*” Stamford Advocate, Sept. 18, 2015;

- “*Stamford First Responders Save Young Man Who Overdosed*”, NBC CT, July 4, 2015;
- “*Stamford Doctor Sentenced for Illegally Prescribing Narcotics*,” Stamford Patch, Nov. 4, 2015;
- “*Stamford Teen Charged in Heroin Bust*,” Stamford Advocate, August 26, 2015.

Stamford’s close proximity to New York City exacerbates the problem. “*Approximately 35% of the nation’s heroin seized by the Drug Enforcement Administration was confiscated in New York, with New York City considered the nations heroin hub.*” Hometown Media, September 14, 2015.

Statistics from the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) paint an even bleaker picture:

- over 43,000 Fairfield County residents have a substance use disorder;
- an estimated 25,000 Fairfield County residents have a serious mental illness;
- approximately 18,293 suffer from both;
- an estimated 8,000 Stamford residents have a substance abuse disorder;
- over 3,000 Stamford residents suffer from both a serious mental illness and substance abuse, and;
- less than 15,000 individuals will actually seek and receive some type of help.

Addiction affects almost 10% of the population of our state where Connecticut residents rank in the top 10 percentile in substance abuse. A 2014 report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Behavioral Health Barometer of Connecticut found that in a single day in 2013 there were 33,267 individuals in Connecticut enrolled in substance abuse treatment which was an increase from 24,831 in 2009.

The disease of addiction has a direct effect on our recoveree’s ability to maintain employment and adequate housing for themselves and their children. As noted by the International Narcotics Control Board, substance abuse can “*deplete a users’ income leading to a lack of care for family and loved ones and other responsibilities.*” At Liberation, our programs help our clients rebuild their lives and reconnect in order to begin and maintain lifelong recovery.

KEY PROGRAMS IN STAMFORD

Liberation House – Residential Program for Men

Liberation House, located in Stamford, provides an inpatient treatment program for men with a capacity to serve 65 individuals at a time. Duration of treatment is up to 90 days during which time men focus on skills that will help them maintain their recovery as well as work on critical needs such as transitioning to employment and housing. Liberation initiated an internal employment program this past year called the Recovery Employment Program (REP) which was met with great success and enthusiasm by the men in treatment. Men are given the opportunity to work on various projects within the facility and are paid a stipend. This gives the men the chance to gain important work experience that will help them transition to employment as well as funds that can be used to secure housing once they leave the program. To date 32 men have benefitted from the program since it started.

Co-occurring disorders—substance abuse and mental illness—are common among the population that Liberation serves. We recently added a part-time APRN (Advanced Practice Registered Nurse) at Liberation House to provide evaluations and medication management for our clients. Often there was a wait time of up to three weeks for our recoverees to see a mental health provider which places their successful recovery in jeopardy. A timely evaluation and diagnosis with follow-up medication is critical in helping a recoveree with mental illness begin to stabilize and address their drug addiction. The APRN increases our capacity to respond to their needs and improve their chances of successfully completing treatment. The APRN also facilitates linking them with ongoing help once they leave the program.

Evaluation – How We Measure Success

While the specific plan goals for an individual are varied, Liberation Programs measures the primary outcomes below that we help our recoverees achieve during the duration of their treatment.

- Abstinence and retention
- Stability-Housing/Employment/Education-Achieve and/or improve ability to live self-sufficiently
- Access to services & Social Connectedness-Maintain links to support groups
- Crime & Criminal Justice-Resolve legal issues and be free of incidents.

In addition to these outcomes, Liberation Programs places strong emphasis on activities that support and foster lifelong recovery for our clients.

Last year, Liberation House served a total of 307 men up from 267 in FY 14. Successful program completion was achieved by 78%.

Outpatient Programs – Main Street Clinic in Stamford

Liberation’s Outpatient Programs provide treatment services that include individual and group counseling, family therapy, intensive outpatient treatment, medication assisted maintenance, and relapse prevention. From day one, services are focused on helping each person we serve achieve and maintain their recovery for life. For many this may include a medication or methadone maintenance program. Methadone treatment is based on best practices and is considered the gold standard in addressing opiate addiction by the medical community. Individuals are encouraged to cease drug use and improve their quality of life by making behavior changes such as re-connecting with family, stopping illegal activities, becoming gainfully employed and addressing health issues.

In FY15, Stamford’s Outpatient Clinic served 921 individuals up from 866 in FY 14,

Youth and Family Resources

The Problem Facing Youth

On a national scale, *HealthDay* reports that **25% of U.S. teens have abused prescription drugs**—a statistic that not only threatens the health and well-being of young people, it threatens their lives. Heroin is cheap and easy to get which is why it has garnered so much attention in the press and continues to contribute to growing numbers of over-dose deaths.

According to SAMHSA:

- from 2009-2013 an estimated 29,000 or 10.2% of all adolescents aged 12-17 per year in Connecticut reported using illicit drugs;
- about 88,000 people aged 12-20 or 20.3% per year of all people in the age group reported binge alcohol use; and,
- from 2009-2013 among adolescents aged 12-17 in Connecticut 15% started alcohol use while 8.0% began marijuana use.



This is why programs that provide education and focus on prevention are so vitally important.

The Program

As part of our Youth and Family Resources program, the importance of substance abuse education and prevention has taken on new emphasis for both youth and parents. This is a critically important endeavor considering the prevalence of drug and alcohol abuse among adolescents on a national scale and in particular those in Fairfield County.

Youth and Family Resources include:

- Support services for families
- Professional substance abuse counseling for adolescents
- Youth Serving activities
- Age-appropriate presentations on topics ranging from cyber-bullying, to substance abuse, peer pressure, social networking, parent-child relationships, grief and loss, anger management, healthy living, youth leadership and civic engagement
- Skill acquisition for students through role playing activities
- Facilitation of peer mentoring groups
- Access to speakers from the recovery community

Working directly with the schools, Liberation provides a variety of activities throughout the school year that are aimed at preventing substance abuse. Research has shown that science-validated programs, such as those described in the National Institute on Drug Abuse's (NIDA) publication, *Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents: A Research-Based Guide for Parents, Educators, and Community Leaders*, can significantly reduce early use of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs. Our approach has adopted many of the principles outlined by NIDA.

Goals & Methods

Our goal is to be there when we are needed and to provide the support and resources to address problems before they become critical and even life threatening. We want to reach as many youth as possible, engaging them in activities and discussion regarding the life-long impact substance abuse can have in order to achieve the following:

- Reduce incidences of alcohol and substance abuse among teens
- Foster continued education, self-esteem, resiliency and wellness in children of all ages
- Diminish youth involvement in the criminal justice system

Through workshops and support groups we equip parents with the skills they need to create open lines of communication with their children so that they can have what is sometimes a difficult conversation to begin. While the topics vary, the focus is always the same—helping improve communication and parent-child relationships. This is by far one of the most effective ways to deter substance abuse in teens. The annual report for 2013 from SAMHSA found that youth aged 12 to 17 who believed their parents would strongly disapprove of them using specific substances were less likely to use these substances than were youth who believed their parents would somewhat disapprove or neither approve nor disapprove.

Evaluation

Our prevention approach aligns with evidence-based best practices and national policy. Liberation Programs uses various evaluation tools to gauge the effectiveness of both the presentations and presenter and the impact they have on behaviors and attitudes.

In addition to presentations, students also have the opportunity to visit one of Liberation Programs' in-patient treatment programs where they hear personal stories and role-play with the clients.



In Stamford alone, we conducted 11 in school and community venues activities that reached 1,770 students and adults up from 1,645 in FY 14.

THE IMPACT OF SUPPORT FROM THE CITY OF STAMFORD

Liberation Programs has been serving Stamford since 1971 to help make recovery from substance abuse a reality for thousands of members of the community. Last year we were able to provide important services to those suffering from addiction and provide prevention services to youth make better choices in their lives.

Your continued support will help us maintain our Recovery Employment Program at Liberation House; provide mental health support services; and fund important prevention programs for our youth and families as well as help provide basic essentials for our residential programs, including everything from blankets and sheets to toothbrushes, soap and shampoo. Both the quality and quantity of what we are able to provide is dependent on the investment our community stakeholders make each day – not in Liberation Programs, but in the more than 2,000 people we serve each year.

At Liberation we truly appreciate and are grateful to the City of Stamford for the on-going support we have received over the years for the people in the community that we serve each and every day. That commitment has helped hundreds of individuals in Stamford “strive to make recovery an accessible reality.” Without the funding and support of community partners our work helping those in crisis would not be possible.

Libertion Programs, Inc.
Operating Budget Fiscal Year - 2015-2016

Budget FY16

Revenue

Total 1st and 3rd Party Revenue	4,634,810
Total Government Funding	3,876,546
Private Giving & Fundraising	-
<i>Stamford (CDBG - \$38,480; City of - \$70,000)</i>	<i>108,480</i>
<i>Greenwich, Darien, Bridgeport & United Ways</i>	<i>85,000</i>
<i>Corporate Foundations, Individuals, Special Events</i>	<i>412,900</i>
Total Private Giving & Fundraising	606,380
Total Miscellaneous Revenue	85,742
Total Contracted Fee for Services	38,280
Total Revenue	9,241,758

Controllable Expense

Total Salaries & Wages	5,232,597
Total Fringe & Benefits	1,401,511
Total Contract Labor	22,000
Total Administrative Support & Contracted Svcs	617,224
Total Lab & Medical Services/Supplies	112,000
Total Supplies	143,000
Total Rent	199,754
Total Utilities	316,739
Total Professional Fees (Legal, Accounting, Consultants)	230,000
Total Maintenance	157,000
Total Transportation	47,000
Total Food	254,433
Total Controllable Expense	8,737,258

Non-Controllable Expense

Total Business Insurance	107,250
Total Interest	51,000
Total Property and Other Taxes	11,750
Total Depreciation and Amortization	338,500
Total Non-Controllable Expense	508,500

Net Income / (Loss)	-
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