

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

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**ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

1200 W. 7TH STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90017

DATE: October 10, 2023

TO: LA's YouthSource System

FROM: Gerardo Ruvalcaba, Assistant General Manager
Workforce Development System

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Ruvalcaba', is positioned to the right of the 'TO' and 'FROM' fields.

**SUBJECT: PEER-TO-PEER SOLUTION: CITY OF LOS ANGELES CERTIFIED
PEER COUNSELOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

EFFECTIVE DATE

This bulletin is effective upon date of issuance.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this information bulletin is to notify City's YouthSource Center (YSC) Directors of upcoming requests for agency involvement in the development of the City of Los Angeles (City) Certified Peer Counselor Demonstration Project.

BACKGROUND

We are in the midst of an unprecedented national youth mental health crisis. Exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic, economic and political instability, substance abuse, and social media, America's youth are suffering in ways too often unseen and unheard. Over the past two decades, and especially in light of this shortage of care, the youth mental health movement has recognized that additional, developmentally appropriate modalities must complement traditional medical model interventions. The Peer-to-Peer (P2P) model is an evidence-based approach to providing effective and efficient care that young people actually embrace. Peer support workers complement the roles of therapists and case managers by drawing on their own lived experiences to inspire hope, perseverance, and validation. They offer a level of acceptance, understanding, validation, and connectedness that can be hard to achieve in other professional relationships.

The City and its partner agencies in LA County have recognized the potential role of P2P in their service array and have assembled resources to support the 2023-2024 pilot project implementation. In partnership with Public Works Alliance (PWA), West Coast Children's Clinic, LA Unified School District, and El Centro de Ayuda, the City will implement a Peer Mental Health Specialist Demonstration Project in fourteen Youth Opportunity Centers throughout the city. Seventy to ninety youth will be hired, trained, and paid a living wage to provide P2P mental health services to youth ages 18 to 24. **The pilot is in its final planning phase, and training is projected to launch in January 2024.**

Program Goals

Objective 1

Hire, train, and support 70-90 young people ages 18-24 to complete 100 hours of paid training and to deliver 200 hours of paid peer-to-peer, culturally relevant, mental health support to at least 280 youth participants at the City's 14 YSCs. Successful completion of the 300 hours of work will lead to a Peer Mental Health Specialist certification by California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA).

Contracts with specific program deliverables are forthcoming, with an expected release in early November 2023.

Objective 2

Generate knowledge and materials to support the future refinement and replication of the program model, including curriculum, onboarding, supervision, training, documentation, and brokerage policies and procedures.

ACTION REQUIRED

- Share program bulletin with case managers to ensure consideration of the P2P opportunity while program participants are developing their individualized plans for 2023-2024. Program sign-up period is planned to begin November 1, 2023.
- Identify case managers who are interested in contributing to co-designing some of the implementation details of the program through participation in a virtual focus group discussion. There will be two opportunities to participate in these focus group discussions: Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 1:00pm–3:00pm and Friday, September 29, 2023, 1:00pm–3:00pm Please R.S.V.P. at the following address: <https://bit.ly/LACityP2P>.
- Attend program meeting for YSC Directors and case managers on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, 10:00am–11:00am to discuss outcomes, staffing logistics, and launch timelines.

Any questions or concerns regarding the program can be directed to Kofi@publicworksalliance.org or Bryson.Gauff@lacity.org with “**P2P Solution**” indicated in the subject line.

GR:MV:BG:kt:cg