



City of Valparaiso Receives Grant to Address Substance Abuse

The City of Valparaiso has been awarded a grant of \$211,335.07 through the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's (FSSA) Division of Mental Health and Addiction to help fund a Community Recovery Care Coordinator for people looking to receive treatment for a substance abuse disorder. The FSSA grant was secured by the City through a competitive, comprehensive, state-wide evaluation process with only two successful applicants in northwest Indiana. The new position was an idea that came out of the Opioid Solutions Forum hosted by the Valparaiso City Council in January, as well as a follow-up work group, designed to create long-term solutions to the challenge of substance abuse.

"When we assembled our first opioid solutions forum back in January, we were looking to make a positive long-term difference with community-wide benefit. As a result of community input and convening experts, we designed this position. The new counselor will make it exponentially easier for folks to access treatment," said Peter Anderson, Valparaiso City Councilman and organizer of the initial Opioid Solutions Forum. "We all know someone who has been affected by addiction and we see how it decimates families and creates a burden for law enforcement and communities. In Valparaiso, we're working toward solutions," he said.

"We're so pleased to see ideas that we've initiated come to reality, helping individuals, families and the Valparaiso community. In studying the impact of addiction, we see that those with addictions can see recovery as insurmountable. This new recovery coordinator will link people with resources so that treatment and recovery become realistic," said Mayor Matt Murphy.

The City of Valparaiso's new Community Recovery Care Counselor will be administered through Porter County PACT. The grant will support the position for a two-year period. If successful, the position will be perpetuated with future funding and ongoing grant opportunities.

The grant made to the City of Valparaiso to make this position possible is part of \$19 million to support evidence-based prevention, treatment, recovery and harm reduction services. Funding for this grant through FSSA is part of a national settlement with Johnson & Johnson, AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson. Indiana's share of the settlement is approximately \$507 million, to be divided among all communities over a period of years. The City of Valparaiso's submission was one of 78 proposals submitted, with 30 selected, representing 28 counties statewide. Valpo's grant was one of just four awarded to local governments.

The new community recovery care coordinator project begins July 1 and will provide a means for the City of Valparaiso and PACT to increase accessibility to treatment and recovery support, reduce the negative stigma associated with addiction and, most importantly, reduce the loss of Valparaiso community members due to overdose.