

# ANNUAL REPORT



**FY24**

**ADVISE**

**AMPLIFY**

**ADVOCATE**

**PREVENTION FIRST**   
EVERY DECISION MATTERS.

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## FY24 Board of Directors



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**Diana Derige**  
*Director, Health Equity  
 Strategy & Development*  
 American Medical Association



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**Rebecca Dieken**  
*Research Program Evaluation Manager*  
 National Highway Traffic Safety  
 Administration U.S. Department  
 of Transportation



### SECRETARY

**Mike Varlotta**  
*Labor Relations Director  
 & Special Employment Council*  
 Illinois Department of Transportation



### TREASURER

**Jill Grove**  
*Retired School Administrator*  
 Springfield Public Schools

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**Miguel Milet**  
*Professor*  
 City Colleges of Chicago



**Luigi Cabantog**  
 Illinois Army National Guard



**Gail Capps**  
*BBSS Support Leader*  
 Springfield District 186



**Adrienne Bitoy-Jackson**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
 Heuristics Marketing  
 Consultants, LLC



**Karel Homrig**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
 Prevention First

# LETTER from the Chief Executive Officer

## *Dear Friends and Supporters:*

Reflecting on the past year, we are proud to share the incredible achievements outlined in this Annual Report. Each success represents the passion and commitment of our staff, the trust and partnership of our funders, and the unwavering support of our community collaborators and stakeholders.

In FY24, Prevention First experienced tremendous growth and deepened its impact across Illinois. We expanded our services into new areas such as violence prevention, mental health, and substance use treatment and recovery—delivering training, resources, and technical assistance to organizations that serve some of our most vulnerable populations. We launched initiatives that empower youth, foster community collaboration, and improve access to critical support. From transforming vacant urban spaces into thriving community gardens to strengthening prevention networks through strategic coalitions like the Chicago Strategic Action Council, every initiative moved us closer to our vision of healthy and equitable communities.

We are especially proud of our strides in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging—embedding these values into our organizational culture and the design and delivery of all our programs and services.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated partners, funders, advocates, and allies. Thank you for believing in our mission and walking alongside us. Your support fuels our work and inspires us to build a stronger, healthier Illinois every day.

*With gratitude,*



Karel Homrig, M.S Ed.  
*Chief Executive Officer*



# About US

**MISSION** - Prevention First advances efforts to promote healthy behaviors and prevent substance misuse in every community through a variety of evidence-based and collaborative approaches, including training, support, and public awareness.

**VISION** - Prevention First is the leading organization for knowledge building and the dissemination of evidence-based prevention strategies. We believe that strategic approaches have most effective paths to building communities and proactively support health and well-being.



**Karel Homrig**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



**Lisa Andrew**  
*Chief Financial Officer*



**Kellie Rubbel-Henrichs**  
*Chief Program Officer*



**Heather Worth**  
*Chief Human Resources Officer*



**Pong Kowigai**  
*Chief Technology Officer*



**James Miletello**  
*Chief Development Officer*

**ADVISE** - We work with organizations that actively promote healthy behaviors so they can be effective in their missions.

**AMPLIFY** - Through training and ongoing education, we work with individuals who deliver prevention services, so they are equipped and confident to best support clients, schools, and communities.

**ADVOCATE** - We take an active role in addressing prevention areas of need through public awareness campaigns, resource centers, special initiatives, conferences, and networking events.



# Financials

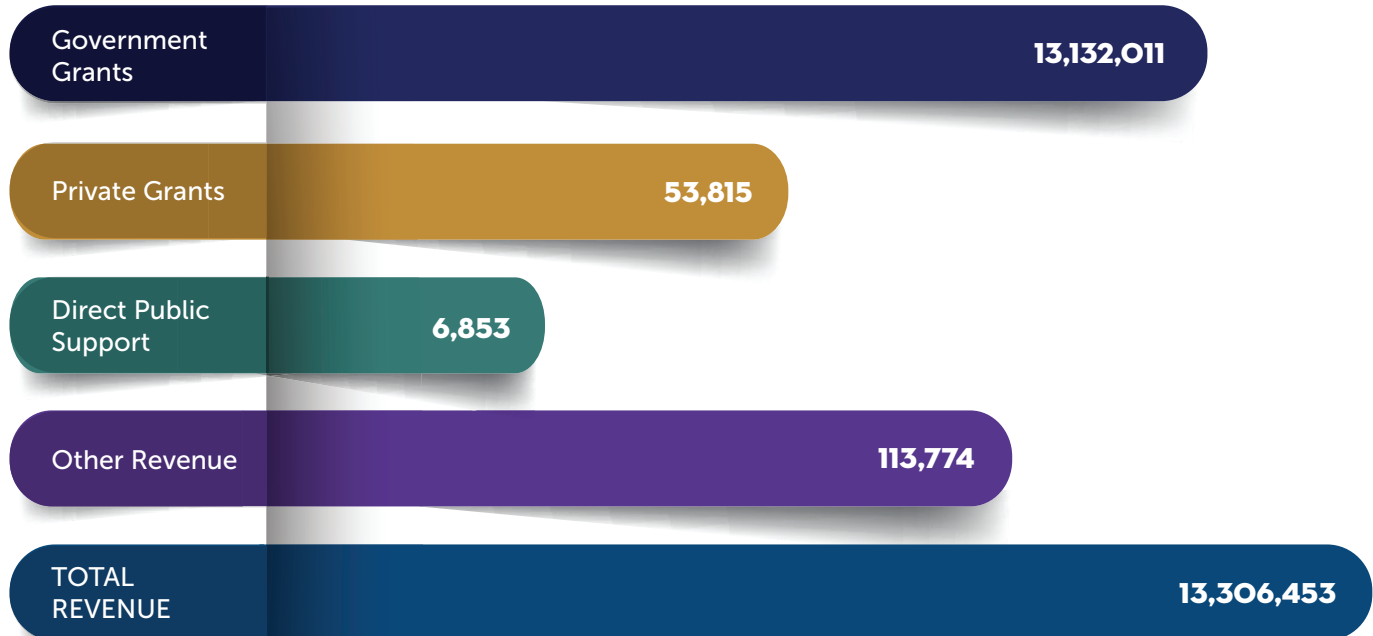


Lisa A.



Drew C.

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES

Substance Use Prevention Training & Technical Assistance **1,863,008**

Substance Use Treatment Training & Technical Assistance **1,494,372**

Cannabis Public Awareness Campaign **3,062,563**

Resource Centers **1,159,307**

Substance Abuse Training to Department of Corrections **226,265**

Opioid SOR Campaign **1,549,854**

Teen Pregnancy Prevention **19,723**

COVID-19 Mitigation **944,436**

Community Garden Project **528,853**

Suicide Prevention **18,808**

RSPA Youth Development Training, TA, and Support **506,012**

Management and General **1,913,331**

Other Supporting Activities **133,906**

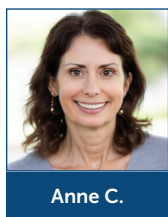
**TOTAL EXPENSES 13,420,438**

Our financials show that expenses were greater than revenues. Prevention First ended FY24 with a decrease in net assets of \$113,985 due to timing issues in the reimbursement of indirect costs from the State of Illinois.

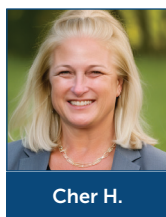


# SUP TTA

## Substance Use Prevention Training and Technical Assistance



Anne C.



Cher H.



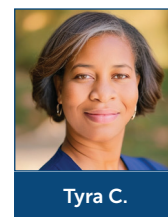
Pam Z.



Jessica R.



Tamitra G.



Tyra C.

In FY24, Prevention First's SUP TTA team provided various training and technical assistance (TA) services to improve substance use prevention efforts. They evaluated training satisfaction, short-term, and intermediate outcomes, and provided detailed data on their training programs and TA services.

### • Training Programs and Participation

Prevention First provided a range of training programs and networking events to over 1800 participants. The overall satisfaction score for all training events was 3.5 while the overall satisfaction score for networking events was 3.67 on a 4-point Likert scale.

### • Training Evaluation and Outcomes

Post-training evaluations showed that 90% of participants achieved a post-test score of 80% or higher, with 88% of training events meeting this benchmark.

### • Technical Assistance Services

Prevention First provided TA services to 12 organizations, with 100% satisfaction reported by survey respondents.

**PREVENTION FIRST**  
Substance Use Prevention Professional Development



## NOTEWORTHY SERVICES AND RESOURCES IN FY24

■ **Orientation Support:** 97 New Worker and 14 New Supervisor sessions were held with 100% reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with the orientation.

■ **Power Hour for Peers:** Eight calls were held with nearly 100 SUPP professionals participating. Topics areas were specific to prevention strategies (i.e., Communication Campaigns and Youth Advisory Committees), prevention support (i.e., community engagement and self-care), and National events (i.e., National Prevention Week and Drug Take Back Day).

■ **SUPP TTA Advisory Board:** The Advisory Board is a diverse group of SUPP-funded professionals from all IDHS regions, community types, age groups, experience levels, genders, and races. The purpose of this advisory board is to provide input and feedback on the direction, development, and implementation of Prevention First's training and professional development services to help ensure programs are relevant and responsive to the needs of the Illinois substance use prevention field. During FY24, the SUPP TTA Advisory Board met quarterly, assisted with communication campaigns and training reviews,

facilitated Power Hours, and served as panelists for IISUP I.

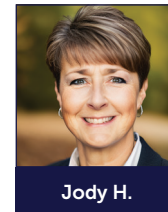
■ **ISBE Project:** Prevention First collaborated with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to develop three comprehensive resource guides for Louie's Law, ensuring user-friendly resources for educators, parents, and community stakeholders.



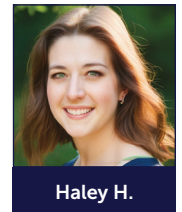


## Alcohol Policy Resource Center

Prevention First's **Alcohol Policy Resource Center (APRC)** provides training, education, resources, and tools on evidence-based alcohol policy strategies to municipalities, local officials, law enforcement, and community coalitions focused on underage drinking in communities throughout Illinois. FY24 was a year of expansion for the APRC, with an increased presence at conferences and trainings while continuing to provide up-to-date resources to prevention professionals.



Jody H.



Haley H.

## CONFERENCES

The APRC expanded its nationwide presence in FY24. This expansion included presenting a workshop at the National Prevention Network (NPN) Conference in partnership with the Illinois Liquor Control Commission's Division of Enforcement. This partnership continues to grow through additional conference presentations and hosting 10 law enforcement trainings. The APRC presented at four additional conferences throughout Illinois and exhibited at seven conferences, including the NPN Conference in Birmingham, Alabama.

## TRAININGS AND WEBINARS

The APRC continued its tradition of high-quality webinars with national experts in the field, facilitating four this fiscal year. This fiscal year, the APRC was a featured webinar expert discussing how to conduct environmental scans. The APRC Environmental Scan Toolkit was the showcased resource of the webinar, which was co-facilitated in partnership with Counter Tools. The **four FY24 APRC webinars** included:

- Environmental Scans for Alcohol Policy Change
- Changing Patterns of Alcohol Use By Girls and Young Adult Women
- Alcohol Misuse as a Risk Factor for Gun Violence
- Deaths From Excessive Alcohol Use on the Rise in the US



The APRC partnered with the Cannabis Policy Resource Center to host a one-day training workshop featuring Jermaine Galloway for nearly 200 coalition members, enforcement officers, and other prevention-based providers.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

The APRC has partnered with the Illinois Liquor Control Commission Division of Enforcement to provide Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board-Certified (ILETSB) Alcohol Compliance Check training to law enforcement throughout Illinois.

**APRC/ILCC trained 134 officers this fiscal year.**

## UPDATED RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Resources and tools allow the APRC to deliver capacity-building information directly to municipal leaders, law enforcement and coalition members. Resources and tools are available on the APRC website, distributed at meetings and conferences and uploaded into webinars. Resources and tools developed and updated in FY24, include:

- Alcohol Compliance Check Fact Sheet - Spanish language version
- Strategic Prevention Framework Resource Guide - Spanish language version
- Environmental Scanning Toolkit - Spanish language version
- Alcohol Compliance Check Investigations training participant guide
- Monthly APRC Newsletter - distributed to over 7,000 people worldwide

## LOOKING FORWARD

The APRC is an Alcohol Policy Advisory Board member for a University of North Carolina CDC-funded grant project. We have also cultivated a strong partnership with the Illinois Liquor Control Commission's Enforcement Division, utilizing their expertise to facilitate Alcohol Compliance Check law enforcement training. This partnership also facilitated the creation of a toolkit for officers to use when training youth who conduct compliance checks.



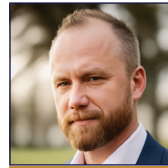
# Communications



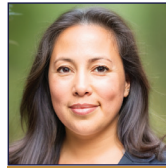
Kim Z.



Lauren B.



Jonathan L.



Claudia D.



Amanda C.

In Fiscal Year 2024, our **Communication Department** experienced substantial impact and growth in digital media engagement. This was primarily driven by a more strategic approach to social media planning and paid advertising. By investing in boosted posts and ads, we **grew our reach by 805%**.

In response to the alarming increase in unintentional pediatric cannabis poisonings in Illinois, Prevention First launched the state's first comprehensive **Safe Storage Initiative** under the *Let's Talk Cannabis Illinois* public awareness campaign. The initiative introduced lockable containers specifically designed to securely store edibles. Educational materials to promote safer storage solutions for cannabis edibles were included. This effort was supported by public education campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the risk of accidental cannabis ingestion by children.



FY24 saw a significant expansion of the initiative. This year, **98 partners**—including dispensaries, emergency departments, hospitals, community-based organizations, and police departments—helped distribute more

than **63,500 safe storage bags** across Illinois.

Key partners in prioritizing equitable distribution included the *Cannabis Equity Illinois Coalition* and dispensaries with social equity licenses.



Additionally, we refined our strategy on LinkedIn to focus on more professional and research-based content, aligning with LinkedIn's role as a professional network.

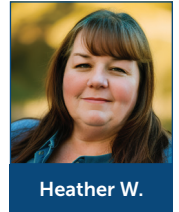


Finally, the Prevention Connection newsletter reaches a broad audience, with over **7,900 subscribers** and an **open rate of 25-30%** (is notably high within the nonprofit sector.)



# COVID-19 Mitigation Program

With funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support **COVID-19 mitigation efforts**, DHS launched a project to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in community mental health centers (CMHC) and various substance use treatment and recovery settings. Prevention First administers this project that supports the purchase and distribution of COVID-19 abatement supplies to Department of Mental Health (DMH) providers and Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) funded and licensed organizations.



Heather W.

PREVENTION FIRST [Home](#) [Catalog](#) [Contact](#)



**Products**

Filter: Availability Price Sort by: alphabetically, A-Z 15 products

- Air Filter for Moduly Air Purifier - 2 Hours \$92.00 USD
- Air Purifier \$149.00 USD
- Blotch - 1 case (3 gallons) \$51.00 USD
- COVID-19 Home Test Kit (2 tests per kit) \$18.00 USD
- Disinfecting Wipes - (Package of 80 Wipes) \$5.79 USD
- Disinfectant Spray \$7.00 USD
- Disposable Isolation Gowns (Bag of 15 Gowns) \$5.00 USD
- Disposable Surgical Mask - 50 Masks per Box \$15.00 USD
- Face Shields - Pack of 50 \$16.00 USD
- Hand Sanitizer - 16 oz Pump Bottle \$7.50 USD
- N95 Mask - Package of 20 Masks \$15.00 USD
- Non-Latex Gloves - Large (Box of 100 gloves) \$10.00 USD

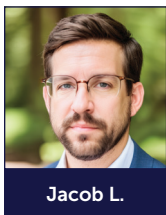
IDHS decided to allow an open ordering system for FY24 instead of using set allocations for each provider. Removing these limits proved to be successful. The ordering system opened to providers on October 31st, in the second quarter. In FY24, Prevention First processed 315 orders placed by 139 organizations.

We distributed approximately \$735,798.00 worth of supplies to DMH (\$378,413) and SUPR (\$357,385) providers throughout Illinois. About 60,126 packages of COVID-19 abatement supplies were shipped out. We exhausted all available resources by April 19th and had to close the online ordering system for the remainder of the fiscal year.

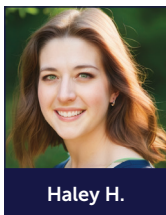


# CPRC

## Cannabis Policy Resource Center



Jacob L.



Haley H.

Prevention First's **Cannabis Policy Resource Center (CPRC)** provides education, training, expert-led webinars, resources, and tools on data-supported policies and strategies to prevent youth cannabis use, reduce youth access to cannabis, and promote healthy behaviors in communities.

FY24 was a busy year for the CPRC, with many milestones in providing training and resources.

### THE CPRC HOSTED THREE TRAININGS AND WEBINARS:

#### → **Alternatives to Suspension for Cannabis Vaping:**

Presented by Dr. Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, this webinar examined the best practices for early intervention in school-based cannabis vaping. Highlighting the research for avoiding punitive policies, the webinar described an evidence-based school program.

→ **High in Plain Sight:** Presented by Jermaine Galloway, this day-long workshop focused on conducting environmental scans of the alcohol and cannabis landscapes within communities. It highlighted other trending substances and described a process for identifying concerning products.

→ **Collaborating with Key Stakeholders:** Updated for FY24, this online, on-demand course focuses on skills in building relationships and collaborating with key community stakeholders.



### NEW FY24 CPRC RESOURCE

The Cannabis Environmental Scan Toolkit features full guides for implementing dispensary, on-premise, and marketing scans in communities, with electronic forms that can be tailored to individual needs.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The CPRC is available to provide one-on-one assistance to municipalities, coalitions, and law enforcement agencies working on cannabis policy. In FY24, the CPRC provided technical assistance on cannabis in the workplace, impaired driving and marketing policy, point-of-sale education, and cannabis-derived/synthesized cannabis products.

In FY24, the CPRC presented and/or exhibited at 6 Illinois conferences, which were great opportunities to both share information and gather new resources through networking.

The CPRC looks ahead to FY25 with an increased capacity to inform policy choices for positive change.

### FY24 MUNICIPAL UPDATES

Several municipalities have implemented local policy on cannabis-derived intoxicating products - in most cases, either banning sales completely or establishing age restrictions. Ordinance examples have been posted to the municipal ordinance directory on the CPRC webpage.

### MUNICIPAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The CPRC also contracted with teenyBIG to conduct a needs assessment of municipal officials involved in cannabis regulation. Between interviews and surveys, around 50 municipal officials were represented. Using these findings, resources, and training for this audience will be developed in FY25.



## Illinois Department of Corrections CADC Training Program

Since 1989, Prevention First and the **Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)** have worked together to provide the Certified Alcohol and Other Drug Counselor (CADC) Training Program as an option for IDOC staff who want to become better clinicians for their IDOC caseload, gaining the knowledge and skills needed to perform their jobs effectively. The program offers training (classroom and online) on the 12 core functions of counseling, with the objective of completing all the training and taking the exam to become a CADC. The program also improves staff's ability to provide drug education programming where it can be most impactful and track individuals in custody flagged as in need of substance use services.



Anne C.



Lisa L.

This longstanding partnership has provided training and resources for hundreds of IDOC staff members, who can then use their knowledge and skills to impact justice-involved individuals within the IDOC.

In FY24, the IDOC CADC Training Program provided four training sessions. Two hundred IDOC staff attended these sessions. The program successfully presented the training **Racial Equity and Inclusion in Substance Use Disorder Treatment** for the first time. This new topic is now required for CADC certification.

The CADC Training Program has two online courses that IDOC staff utilize to begin their program journey. In FY24, 24 people enrolled in the CADC Training Program and completed the introductory training course **IDOC Overview of Substance Use Programming**, and 17 people also completed **History and Theories of Substance Use Disorder**. Once IDOC staff members pass the CADC exam and become certified counselors, they are eligible to attend one of two conferences each year to maintain their CADC certification. In FY24, 27 IDOC staff attended the fall conference, and 17 attended the spring conference.

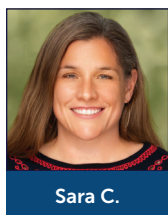


This program embodies the Prevention First mission by providing evidence-based training to IDOC staff. The staff will, in turn, use the knowledge and skills learned in each training to help justice-involved individuals with their treatment plans for healthier future behaviors.

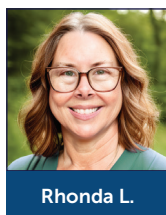
**PREVENTION FIRST** 

Illinois Department of Corrections Substance Abuse Counselor Training Program (IDOC)

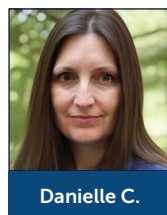
# Instructional Design



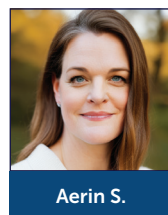
Sara C.



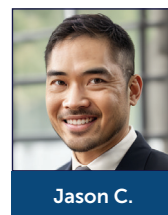
Rhonda L.



Danielle C.



Aerin S.



Jason C.

The **Instructional Design** team is committed to using best practices to develop effective and engaging training that is consistent, aligns with our brand, is accessible for all, and is inclusive of all individuals, cultures, and populations.



Training content is developed for several programs at Prevention First, including SUP Training and Technical Assistance, Reimagine Youth Development, and SUPR Treatment and Recovery Training. Training development support is also provided to the resource centers. In FY24, **twenty projects** were completed, which included new training

and updates to existing training events. Additionally, we maintained a training content catalog for **over 40 titles** designed for classroom settings, virtual classroom settings, and online (asynchronous) settings to support those invested in improving the health and well-being of communities throughout Illinois.

## NOTABLE IMPACTS OF OUR WORK IN FY24 INCLUDE:

We developed a new online training course, **Adverse Childhood Experiences and Strategies for Trauma-Informed Care**, to support prevention professionals working with young people throughout the state. Given that an estimated 38% of Illinois youth have faced one or more adverse childhood experiences, this training gives prevention specialists the knowledge and tools to effectively support young people impacted by trauma.

1

We redesigned our flagship training, **Illinois Introduction to Substance Use Prevention: Welcome to Prevention**. This update includes six podcast episodes that feature substance use prevention advocates and experts from across Illinois and provide the most up-to-date information about evidence-based substance use prevention among youth.

2

We developed the first online course for substance use disorder treatment providers in Illinois: **Introduction to IDHS-SUPR**. This online course is the first of many to follow that supports the work of the substance use treatment and recovery field.

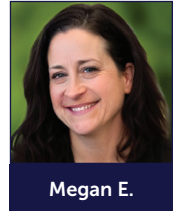
3





# Leadership Center

The **Prevention First Leadership Center (PFLC)** team promotes evidence-based practices in substance use disorder (SUD) and overdose prevention. We collaborate across the care continuum, partnering with SUPR-funded programs, ROSC Councils, criminal justice initiatives, community coalitions, and other organizations to address SUD and prevent overdoses.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF FY24 INCLUDE:

### RECOVERY-EMPOWERED LANGUAGE WEBINAR SERIES:

- ➔ Recovery-empowered Language on an individual basis (1/31)
- ➔ Recovery-empowered Language within organizations and professional workplaces (2/14)
- ➔ Recovery-empowered Language in the public and media (2/28)

**Developed the Harm Reduction ECHO** Prevention First Leadership Center (PFLC) Harm Reduction ECHO focuses on harm reduction issues and community-based strategies to prevent substance use-related overdoses, deaths, or other harmful impacts, including decreasing the stigma surrounding harm reduction.

#### **SERIES ONE** (quarters 1 & 2) included six sessions:

- Looking at the Landscape
- Harm Reduction 101
- Shifting Perceptions: Stigma
- Engaging People with Lived Experience
- Rural vs Urban Harm Reduction
- Building Communities of Support

#### **SERIES TWO** (quarter 4)

- **Session One:** Veterans and Harm Reduction (4/29)
- **Session Two:** Cultural Humility and Harm Reduction (5/20)
- **Session Three:** LGBTQ+ and Harm Reduction (6/24)
- Additional sessions in FY25

### PREVENTION FIRST LEADERSHIP CENTER: SHARING RESOURCES

The PFLC website was finalized to enhance user access and ensure that data on evidence-based resources, curricula, and other information is in one logical, user-friendly space. The goal of the PFLC webpage remains to be a one-stop source for SUD and overdose prevention information.

We have distributed the Leadership Center Network Guide at the conferences of the Illinois Association of Behavioral Health (September 6-8, 2023) and Illinois Municipal League (September 21-23, 2023). The guide has received positive feedback, and those requesting it have appreciated its applicability to networking with various groups.



# MHRC

## Mental Health Resource Center



Yoli H.



Randy W.



Jacob L.



Bryant L.

The Prevention First **Mental Health Resource Center** was a collaborative between Prevention First and the National Alliance on Mental Illness Illinois and their local chapters. Programming focused extensively on providing training sessions and resources to organizations and providers in Illinois and beyond.

In FY24, training and support services were provided in **26 Illinois counties** reaching diverse audiences. These include:

- » **6 NAMI On-Campus Clubs** received support.
- » **194 NAMI Support groups** received assistance, and groups included those offering support to teens, LGBTQ+, perinatal, suicide loss, dual diagnosis, parent BIPOC, Spanish speaking, Family, and specialty court audiences.
- » **7 conferences** attended to exhibit and provide participants with mental health resources and training opportunities.
- » **Narcan add-on training** was offered at training events facilitated by Prevention First.



The MHRC at Prevention First approach is based on various evidence-based and collaborative approaches to building healthy communities and supporting better decision-making. We are proud to help provide mental health resources for the communities we serve.

## RYD TTAS

Reimagine Youth Development  
Training & Technical Assistance & Support

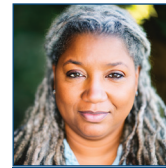
Anne C.



Kimberly T.



Daniela A.



Gigi M.



Leslie L.

The Prevention First **Reimagine Youth Development Training and Technical Assistance and Support (RYD-TTAS)** Team provides services to organizations funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services.



Throughout fiscal year 2024, RYD-TTAS consistently supported the IDHS Office of Firearm Prevention and worked closely with grantees of the newly funded Reimagine Public Safety Act (RPSA). We recognized our partners' deep commitment to revitalizing their local communities and disrupting violence. Through collaboration, our organizational assessments revealed that the lack of substantial and sustainable funding streams resulted from historical marginalization. RYD-TTAS built a partnership with community members to strengthen the grantees' capacity for a successful and sustainable RPSA system by engaging providers and providing empowering training and technical experiences.



With 75 years of collective experience in community-based human services and working closely with Chicago and Greater Illinois communities, Prevention First's RYD-TTAS services strive to effectively transform local communities by introducing and integrating capacity-building activities and practices into community organizations.

RYD-TTAS is committed to cultivating strong relationships with organizations and building healthy communities and successfully facilitated **15 virtual classroom training courses, 16 live and 9 recorded webinars, 9 learning community opportunities**, and held various Power Hour Lunch and Learns for a total of **58 trainings** in FY24.

“The training was great. It allowed you to sit, think, and process.”

Standing by the Reimagine Public Safety Act's requirement for a trauma-informed and racial equity lens approach, the RYD-TTAS team challenged its own experiences and biases in FY24 and engaged with Dr. Shawn Ginwright's influential research on Black youth development in "The Four Pivots: Reimagining Justice, Reimagining Ourselves" gaining deeper insight

into how we can best support Youth Development Specialists, Violence Prevention Coordinators and general community members. RYD-TTAS also focused on enhancing overall client and technical assistance skills and introduced the framework of Elena Aguilar's "Coaching for Equity: Conversations that Change Practice" into partner and audience relationships.

**PREVENTION FIRST**   
Reimagine Youth Development  
Training & Technical Assistance



# SU Crisis Training



Topaz L.

The **Substance Use (SU) Crisis Training** program provides training, education, and resources on responding to substance use crises and the connection between mental health and substance use. We are dedicated to improving crisis worker training and the understanding of substance misuse and disorders in crisis situations while promoting best practices and reducing stigma for individuals who use substances.

During fiscal year 2024, the SU Crisis Training team made significant strides in the development of a comprehensive training program for Illinois Crisis Workers. In collaboration with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the

Substance Use Crisis training program addresses a critical gap between substance use and substance use disorder crisis response training. SU Crisis training aims to provide crisis workers with essential knowledge and skills to:



## ENHANCE

understanding of substance use crises and co-occurring disorders.



## IMPROVE

effective and ethical crisis response when substances are involved.



## PROMOTE

more holistic care for individuals in crisis.



## EQUIP

crisis workers to better support people where they are.

For this training, we have developed IDHS-approved content outlines for E-learning modules 1-10 and have worked closely with Subject Matter Experts, Yukon Learning Instructional Design Consultants, and Ninja Tropic Animation Studio to create animated case study videos and video excerpts.

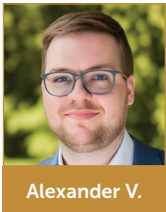
Through this initiative, we are committed to amplifying crisis work, empowering crisis workers, and ultimately improving outcomes for individuals and communities in Illinois facing substance use-related crises.



# SUPR Treatment Program

## Substance Use Prevention and Recovery Treatment Program

The **Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) Treatment Program** at Prevention First significantly enhances the capabilities of treatment and recovery providers funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services.

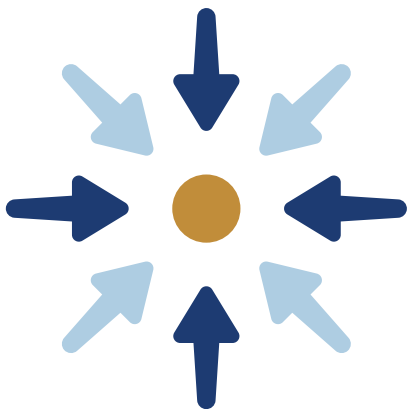


In fiscal year 2024, SUPR successfully increased our professional development outreach and engagement by *coordinating 87 virtual training events, nearly reaching 1,200 IDHS-funded providers*, and implementing a *QR code system* for monthly training updates, *attracting 300 new subscribers*.

▶ Through these training sessions, providers strengthened their knowledge by covering a diverse range of topics, including updated ASAM criteria, Seeking Safety, Suicide Risk Assessment and Management, and Treatment of Co-Occurring Disorders.



**SUPR Treatment Program** also expanded its online training offerings by publishing Prevention First’s first online training: **“Introduction to IDHS-SUPR,”** with three additional training courses set to launch at the end of fiscal year 2025. In leveraging virtual and online platforms, we are ensuring that treatment and recovery professionals have access to the latest knowledge and best practices available.



These initiatives demonstrate our growing impact in continuous education and skill development in the field of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery and Treatment to improve the quality of care for individuals seeking treatment and support across Illinois.



# Tobacco Enforcement Program



Kathy M.

In FY24, Prevention First provided three **Tobacco Enforcement Program (TEP)** training events to law enforcement agencies that offer tobacco compliance checks within their communities. Three newsletters promoting training and program updates were developed and sent out, and 60 individuals attended the training events.

# Teen Pregnancy Prevention

In FY24, the **Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP)** program hosted training events to equip Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grantees with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to implement evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention curricula. Two new courses were offered to TPP programs: Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma-Informed Care and Adolescent Brain Development.



Kathy M.

This year, the program introduced Power Hours for Peers, which allowed PREP grantees to connect and network, increasing their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

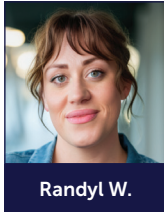
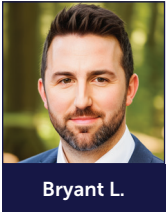
Topics included classroom management and completing a memorandum of understanding. Twenty training and event opportunities were presented, with 67 participants attending the training and event sessions.





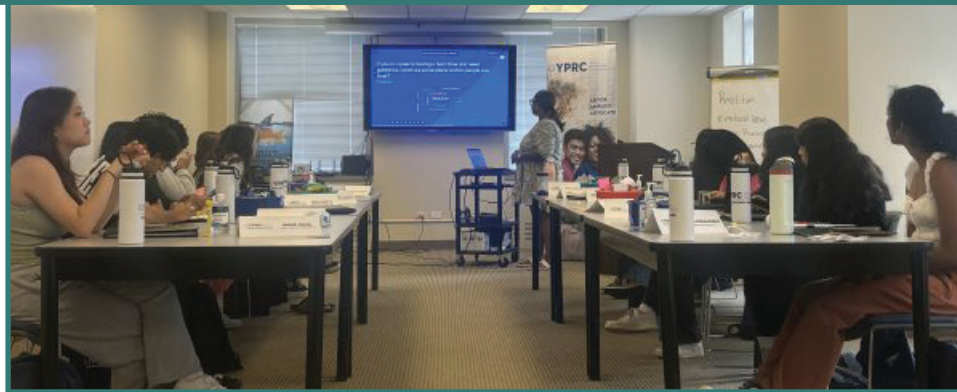
# YPRC

## Youth Prevention Resource Center



At Prevention First, our work with youth is paramount. Through our **Youth Prevention Resource Center (YPRC)**, we employ a holistic approach that ensures youth voices are heard and respected. YPRC offers on-site and virtual training courses, webinars, tip sheets, and general resources on topics and issues facing youth today.

To support healthy decision-making among young people, we collaborate directly with youth, educators, parents, local law enforcement, and community members who have an essential role in youth lives.



Because young people's perspectives are integral to our work, we believe in partnering with youth in local communities. We value their expertise on their peers, and our Student Advisory Board (SAB) exemplifies our commitment to youth engagement. SAB members are selected through an application process and are facilitated by YPRC. They actively contribute to resource development and identify solutions to their peers' issues. SAB members are given the opportunity to undergo training and have access to connect with various stakeholders that impact our shared work. This year, they served as Subject Matter Experts, developed social media campaigns, and guided YPRC's goals.

Influenced by the SAB, we produced and disseminated various youth-focused resources



for the fiscal year 2024 and successfully achieved 100 external downloads from our website of YPRC materials. We added 4 new on-demand training courses to our webpage and expanded our content offerings to include resources from the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration,

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The YPRC engages with our audience through many forms of media. We hosted **3 webinars** and connected with **92 attendees**. Our newsletter **reached 885 people**, and our social media engagement **reached 15,800**. Recognizing the importance of mental health, we provided 2 in-person Mental Health First Aid trainings and 3 virtual Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) trainings to youth and adult impactors.



## FY2024 IMPACT of the Community Gardening Initiative (CGI)

The **Community Gardening Initiative (CGI)**, launched by Prevention First in FY2024, has made remarkable strides in urban agriculture, youth engagement, and community empowerment. With a \$600,000 special appropriation, CGI transformed vacant urban spaces into thriving gardens, providing fresh, locally grown food, hands-on agricultural education, and workforce development opportunities. CGI represents an empirically-proven approach to using gardening as a tool to advance prevention as well as community development outcomes.

Throughout the year, CGI engaged over 150 youth participants, fostering intergenerational collaboration and empowering young people to take ownership of local food production. The



initiative improved food access in underserved Chicago neighborhoods by converting underutilized spaces into green hubs that serve hundreds of families.

Pictured are youth from the Grand Boulevard Prevention Services Garden.

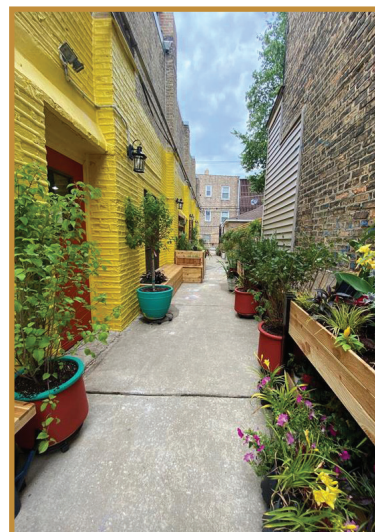
The **four key partner sites** in Chicago neighborhoods: GAP Community Center (Austin/Hermosa), Grand Boulevard Prevention Services @ Mount Carmel Baptist Church (Grand Boulevard and Bronzeville), Le Penseur Youth and Family Services (South Chicago), and Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center (Hermosa).

CGI also implemented training and technical assistance sessions on topics from soil management and sustainable agriculture to grant administration and outreach. Prevention First's long-term vision for CGI includes scaling efforts to expand food production, enhance sustainability practices, and transition toward a self-sustaining social enterprise model.

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



Pictured are before/after photos from Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center's gangway garden.





# CSAC

## Chicago Strategic Action Council

The **Chicago Strategic Action Council (CSAC)** was launched in 2020 as a collaborative coalition to transform substance use prevention services for youth and families in Chicago. CSAC aims to drive systemic change through collective impact, emphasizing cross-sector collaboration, shared goals, and coordinated action. The CSAC is a collaborative coalition of **over 20** prevention leaders, funders, and community organizations.

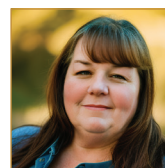
During FY 24, the CSAC focused on planning and preparation, holding monthly meetings to facilitate collaboration, data sharing, and strategy development. The CSAC developed a Theory of Change, a framework to achieve long-term improvements in Chicago's prevention ecosystem. The framework envisions a transformed system of care with unified prevention providers, flexible and equitable funding, community-centered services, and racial equity at the core of all efforts.

In the next fiscal year, the CSAC will launch workgroups to pursue progress in four focus areas: improved quality of prevention services, funding policy and strategy alignment, coordinated prevention network, and culturally responsive prevention services.



# Human Resources

In FY24, **Human Resources** developed a clear people strategy to guide our plan for attracting, retaining, developing, and engaging the people we need to succeed now and in the future. We dedicated ourselves to enhancing the employee experience through engagement, wellness, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. This effort has significantly contributed to employee well-being, productivity, and retention.



Heather W.



Beth G.



Cindy D.

## KEY INITIATIVES IN FY2024 INCLUDED:

- ✓ **15 employees** trained in Leadership Skills through a workshop series.
- ✓ **16 staff** updated their Individual Development Plans.
- ✓ **9 new staff members** completed the New Hire Orientation, which included training on the RightPath Assessment and our Prevention First culture.
- ✓ **13 employees** participated in RightPath team workshops to understand workstyles and improve teamwork.
- ✓ **3 workshops** (public speaking, feedback, and time management) were developed and implemented.
- ✓ **Provided leadership** to the People & Culture workgroup addressing organizational development.
- ✓ **Facilitated** the DEI Professional Development Program strategic plan workgroup.
- ✓ **Implemented** employee engagement surveys and initiatives.



THESE INITIATIVES UNDERSCORE OUR COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING A SUPPORTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT.







All headshots are AI generated


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