



Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc.

**Request for Proposals – Community Postvention Pilots**

**Project Title:** Regional Pilots to Improve Community Response to Suicide Loss (Community Postvention Pilots)

**Date of Request:** April 23, 2024

**Informational Session:** May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm  
**Registration:** <https://www.vpqhc.org/postvention>

**Proposals Due Date:** June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, at 4:30 pm Eastern Standard Time

**Contact:** Bonnie Collins  
bonniec@vpqhc.org

**A. Summary of Funding Opportunity:**

The Vermont Program for Quality in Healthcare (VPQHC), in partnership with the Vermont Departments of Health and Mental Health and the Four Pines Fund, is offering free training, technical assistance, and incentive funding to support regional pilot projects focused on improving community resources and support for individuals, families, groups and organizations affected by a suicide loss (i.e. suicide “postvention”). Through this *Request for Proposals*, up to five regional organizations will be selected to participate in a 12-month planning and implementation project to improve postvention capacity in a specific region (e.g. county, Designated Catchment Area, Hospital Service Area) in Vermont. Selected organizations will be eligible to receive free training and technical assistance from subject matter experts to support the development and implementation of a regional plan to improve postvention capacity in the designated region. Incentive funding of up to \$5,000 will also be available to each pilot project to support associated expenses.

The due date for proposal applications to participate in this project is listed above.

**B. Background**

The term “postvention” refers to the organized response after a suicide or other unexpected death that aims to facilitate healing from grief and distress, mitigate the effects of exposure to suicide, and prevent suicide among those at high risk. Postvention support for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities following a suicide death is a key element of Vermont’s approach to addressing the issue of suicide. As stated by the noted Dr. Thomas Insel, former director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), each suicide “creates 11 victims: the person who died and the 10 caregivers/family/friends who are at risk themselves,” and effective postvention can help to



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prevent future suicide deaths.<sup>1</sup> Postvention support strengthens suicide prevention, destigmatizes the tragedy, provides guidance during the confusing aftermath, and promotes caregiver recovery.

In an effort to better understand and improve postvention supports in Vermont, in 2022 the Center for Health and Learning and the Department of Health worked with a *Postvention Advisory Group* comprised of suicide loss survivors and representatives from different community organizations that provide support following a suicide death (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Designated Agency Crisis Teams, First Responders) to complete a [state-wide assessment](#) of postvention capacity and needs in Vermont. This assessment found that while there were examples of regions and organizations providing coordinated, evidence-based postvention support for members of their communities affected by suicide loss, there were many gaps and needs throughout the state. In response to these identified needs, the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) has partnered with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Four Pines Fund, and the Vermont Program for Quality in Healthcare to develop a 12-month *Community Postvention Pilot* program to help Vermont communities improve their capacity to provide coordinated support and resources following a suicide death. The Vermont Program for Quality in Healthcare will oversee and coordinate the pilot program with support from VDH, DMH and the Four Pines Fund.

Following the completion of this pilot program, VDH and DMH will use the results and lessons learned from this program to plan statewide expansion and sustainability of postvention supports in the state.

### C. Request for Proposals

The Vermont Program for Quality in Healthcare (VPQHC) is soliciting applications from community organizations to lead the development and implementation of a regional plan to improve postvention support and response in a specific geographic area of Vermont (E.g. county, service catchment area). Selected organizations will be eligible to receive free training and technical assistance from subject matter experts to support development and implementation of the regional plan, and incentive funding of up to \$5,000 will also be available to each pilot project to support associated expenses. Eligibility, requirements, and expectations for participation in this pilot project are as follows:

#### *Eligibility*

Eligible applicants include private not-for-profit (501c3) organizations, coalitions, health and mental health care programs, municipalities, institutions of higher education, and other entities that are qualified to ensure performance of the work. Statewide and regional entities, including coalitions, may apply provided they have the capacity to carry out the RFP requirements and focus on improving postvention supports in a designated region.

#### *Requirements and Expectations*

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Selected organizations will be expected to engage with relevant regional and local partners (e.g. first responders, loss survivors, mental health providers, schools) to support a 12-month planning and implementation project to improve postvention response in their region. Activities will include:

- Assessment of community postvention needs and gaps (if a needs assessment has not already been completed in the last several years).
- Identification of one or more postvention improvements based on their community postvention assessment and best practice models (see below).
- Development and implementation of a community suicide postvention plan.
- Participation in training and consultation from subject matter experts, as appropriate.
- Working with an independent evaluator to identify and collect simple evaluation measures to document effectiveness of implementation activities.
- Attending quarterly progress meetings with other pilot projects to support networking, coordination of work across pilot sites, and sharing of lessons learned and evaluation findings with state leadership and other stakeholders.
- Sharing accomplishments, lessons learned, and sustainability planning at the conclusion of the pilot project.

Selected organizations will be asked to identify a designated regional coordinator who will oversee regional pilot activities, provide monthly updates to VDH and DMH leadership, and participate in networking activities across various regional pilots.

#### *Implementation of Postvention Best Practice Models, Protocols and Programs*

Following the completion of a community postvention needs assessment (if needed), participating pilot organizations will be expected to identify one or more postvention best practices that will be adopted or expanded in their region. Examples of activities to implement postvention best practices include:

- 1) Implementation of Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors ([LOSS](#)) Teams
- 2) Utilize the [Connect Program](#) to: a) develop and implement a comprehensive suicide postvention plan and/or b) develop a cadre of certified postvention trainers
- 3) Increase access to postvention support groups and one-on-one support (e.g. AFSP's [Healing Conversations](#)) in their region.

Other examples of best practices can be found at the Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <https://sprc.org/effective-prevention/a-comprehensive-approach-to-suicide-prevention/provide-for-immediate-and-long-term-postvention/>.



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## D. Application Guidelines

Interested organizations should submit a proposal application via email to VPQHC with the following information:

- A. *Name of Organization*
- B. *Primary Contact for the Proposal: Name, Email, and Phone Number*
- C. *Region/Geographic Area (e.g. county, service area) that will be the focus of the pilot activities*
- D. *Proposal*
  1. *Regional Capacity, Strengths, and Needs: Provide a brief description of any existing postvention capacity, strengths, and activities, as well as gaps and needs, that exist in the identified region that will be the focus of pilot activities.*
  2. *Postvention Partners:*
    - a) *Current Partners: Provide a summary of any community partners you are **currently** working with to plan and/or provide postvention support in Vermont.*
    - b) *Future/New Partners: Provide a summary of any additional community partners you would include when planning and implementing postvention improvements through this pilot program.*
  3. *Best Practice Models: Indicate your level of interest in implementing any of the following best practice models:*
    - a) *LOSS Teams*
    - b) *Connect Community Postvention Plan*
    - c) *Connect Cadre of Postvention Trainers*
    - d) *Expanding AFSP Programs (please describe)*
    - e) *Other (please describe)*

*Note: The level of interest indicated in your proposal will be used for project planning and is not binding - participating programs will not be required to make their final selection of best practice model(s) until a community assessment has been completed.*

Letters of Support: Letters of Support from other regional partners are not required but may be submitted as attachments with the application.

Supporting Documents: If your organization has existing postvention-related documents that are relevant to your application (e.g. regional postvention assessment plan, regional postvention protocols



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or MOU's), those may be included as attachments, but applicants are not required to include any supporting documents with their application.

**Page Limits:** Applications (Sections A – D) should not exceed 3 pages in length using 12-point font (New Times Roman). *Letters of Support* and *Supporting Documents* can be included as attachments and do not count toward the 3-page limit.

**Selection of Proposals:** VPQHC reserves the right to solicit additional information from applicants to aid in the selection of organizations for the Community Postvention Pilot program. Organizations will be selected based on the quality of their proposal.

**Questions:** Please direct questions to Bonnie Collins ([bonniec@vpqhc.org](mailto:bonniec@vpqhc.org)). All answers will be provided, via email, within 3 business days of submission. Organization's may also request a copy of all questions submitted and VPQHC's responses via this email address.

**Information Session:** VPQHC, VDH and DMH will host an informational session to provide an overview of the RFP and respond to questions. For more details about the informational session and registration, go to: <https://www.vpqhc.org/postvention>.

**Anticipated project period:** August 1, 2024 – July 30, 2025.

**Award Notification Method:** Selected applicants will receive notification via email from VPQHC within 21 days of the RFP due date.

**Proposals should be submitted via email to VPQHC, no later than the due date and time listed on page one of this RFP. Email submission should include the name of your organization and the following text in the subject line: "Community Postvention Pilot RFP"**