

# Better WaysTo Cope.org

**Prevention | Harm Reduction | Treatment | Recovery**

**Better  
WaysTo  
Cope.org**



**MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH & HUMAN  
SERVICES**

## **Better Ways to Cope for Families Grant Application Guidelines**



**In partnership with  
Hope House of Milwaukee**

**Application Launch: October 07, 2026  
Application Deadline: November 19, 2026**

# APPLICATION BACKGROUND

On December 15, 2021, the Milwaukee County Board approved Resolution 21-1127 which authorized Corporation Counsel to enter into a Settlement Agreement. As a result, Milwaukee County will receive \$102 million over 18 years to address the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) epidemic.

In 2023, the County Board of Supervisors approved allocating \$11 million in SUD settlement funds to support 15 Milwaukee County programs over the next three fiscal years. All Milwaukee County departments were invited to submit proposals requesting SUD settlement funds to initiate programs and program to decrease SUD deaths and increase access to harm reduction, prevention, treatment and recovery resources. One of those proposals included using a participatory approach to regranting settlement dollars to community agencies focused on reducing SUD-related overdose deaths, preventing substance misuse disorder and increasing healthy coping choices.

Community conversations were held soliciting input on how the regranted funds should be invested. As a result of the feedback gathered during community conversations, the Better Ways to Cope (BWTC) Campaign Grant Application was created.

In this grant application, the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human program (DHHS) is extending its Better Ways to Cope campaign to now include regranting of Opioid Settlement Fund dollars, as well as funds from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Since 2021, Better Ways to Cope has regranting substance abuse prevention funds to local community-based programs. We are pleased to build upon the values and track record of Better Ways to Cope to meet the serious challenge presented by our county's SUD crisis with a specific focus on families.

Milwaukee County invites nonprofit and for-profit agencies to join the Better Ways to Cope Campaign by proposing initiatives that focus on providing services to help reduce SUD-related overdose deaths, preventing substance misuse disorder and increasing healthy coping choices for families.

# APPLICATION VALUES

In this grant application, Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human program (DHHS) area is extending its Better Ways to Cope campaign to now include regranting of both Opioid Settlement Funds and TANF dollars. Since 2021, Better Ways to Cope has regranting substance abuse prevention funds to local community-based programs.

We are pleased to build upon the values and track record of Better Ways to Cope to meet the serious challenges presented by our county's SUD crisis. Milwaukee County DHHS is committed to championing transformative programs that increase access to life-saving resources and reduce the likelihood that people will die from an overdose or suffer other harmful effects of substance use. As you embark on the application journey, we invite you to reflect deeply on the following values:

**Commit to What's Proven:** We champion strategies, programs and approaches that have proven effective in reducing overdoses and preventing or addressing addiction. We aim to duplicate such efforts when necessary and also to leverage them to create additional strategies, programs and approaches that have not been implemented before.

**Inspire Action:** A compelling initiative transcends beyond filling a gap—it ignites a movement. We are searching for proposals that tackle critical issues and mobilize community members to take action. A successful program will catalyze change, sparking widespread participation and engagement, thereby forging a collective force for good.

**Create Tangible Results:** Concrete achievements are anchored in measurable results. We seek to support programs that promise discernible, substantial outcomes—those where the impact is not just anticipated but can be demonstrated and evaluated.

**Be Innovative:** Innovation is an important element of sustainable change. We encourage you to approach conventional challenges with an inventive mindset. Your proposal should present bold strategies or methodologies that offer fresh solutions to old problems.

# BWTC CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS

For the past three years, Better Ways to Cope (BWTC) has been a community-centered harm reduction and substance misuse prevention campaign. It reaches Milwaukee County residents through its four campaign components, social and mass media platforms, sharing health and wellness resources, providing free training and regranting funds to community organizations.



## MEDIA

**Using social and mass media** platforms to promote program, engage the community and educate residents across Milwaukee County.



## COMMUNITY

**Regranting funds to community organizations** with prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery programs.



## RESOURCES

**Collecting health and wellness resources** to share with community members and organizations.



## TRAINING

**Equipping health professionals and community members** with the skills to cope in a better way via online and in-person training.

## FUNDING PRIORITIES AND AWARDS

| FUNDING CATEGORIES                                                     | AWARD TERM | NUMBER OF AWARDS     | ANNUAL TOTAL |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|--------------|
| PREGNANT WOMEN LIVING WITH A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER                    | 12 Months  | Guaranteed 2 up to 3 | \$100,000.00 |
| FATHERS LIVING WITH A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER WHO HAVE MINOR CHILD(REN) | 12 Months  | Guaranteed 2 up to 3 | \$100,000.00 |
| MOTHERS LIVING WITH A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER WHO HAVE MINOR CHILD(REN) | 12 Months  | Guaranteed 2 up to 3 | \$100,000.00 |

# IMPORTANT APPLICATION DATES

| ENGAGEMENT                  | PURPOSE                                                                                                                                                                                                       | DATE              | TIME      |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| APPLICATION LAUNCH          | The public will gain access to the application via the Better Ways to Cope website. They must download the Information Packet (PDF), Application (Word Document) and Budget Template (Excel) to apply.        | October 07, 2026  |           |
| VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION | Interested parties will learn how to complete the application and have an opportunity to ask questions.                                                                                                       | October 22, 2026  | 2:30 p.m. |
| APPLICATION DUE DATE        | Applications should be emailed to Shamika May, Hope House Executive Director at <a href="mailto:shamikam@hopehousemke.org">shamikam@hopehousemke.org</a> . Application submitted after 5pm won't be reviewed. | November 19, 2026 | 5:00pm    |
| SELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT      | An independent review panel will rank each application using objective criteria and announce which agencies are receiving awards. Awardees will be notified via email.                                        | January 25, 2027  | 5:00pm    |

# IMPORTANT POST AWARD DATES

Please hold the following dates on your calendar before your agency is granted an award.  
If selected, your organization will be required to attend all of these meeting dates without exception.

| ENGAGEMENT                                | PURPOSE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | DATE                                            | TIME               |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>IN-PERSON<br/>KICK-OFF MEETING</b>     | Applicants, program partners and community members will celebrate the start of each program. Grant recipients will present their programs and identify opportunities to collaborate. TANF Funding-related updates, important dates and requirements will be provided. Grant recipients will review and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Hope House. | Thursday, January 28, 2027                      | 9:00 am – 11:30 am |
| <b>IN PERSON<br/>CHECK-IN MEETING</b>     | The Milwaukee County DHHS and Hope House representative will provide Settlement and TANF Funding-related updates, important dates and requirements. Grant recipients will share program updates and identify opportunities to collaborate.                                                                                                                 | Monday, April 5, 2027<br>Monday, August 2, 2027 | 9:00am – 11:00am   |
| <b>IN-PERSON<br/>CAMPAIGN CELEBRATION</b> | Applicants, program partners and community members will celebrate the impact made via each program.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Monday, December 6, 2027                        | 9:00am – 11:00am   |

# BWTC APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION

## Please remember:

- ✓ There is no guarantee that every category will be funded.
- ✓ Your budget should not exceed the maximum award for your category.
- ✓ If awarded, you must attend all meetings and meet all deadlines indicated in the mandatory campaign meeting schedule.
- ✓ Applications will not be accepted if they are incomplete or are submitted after the application deadline.
- ✓ You are allowed to apply for more than one category, but each category necessitates its own distinct application.
- ✓ Applications submitted after November 19<sup>th</sup> at 5pm will not be reviewed.

## Important Documents

For an application to be considered complete, the following documents must be emailed to Shamika May, Hope House Executive Director, at [Shamikam@hopehousemke.org](mailto:Shamikam@hopehousemke.org) : Due **November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 5pm**

- Most Recent Form 990 full return (note that Form 990-N will **not** be accepted) or,
- If there is no Form 990, submit Agency Financials that include:
  - The most recent Agency Balance Sheet from within the past 12 months, **and**
  - The Total Agency Budget that includes both revenue and expenses for the current or prior year
    - You may utilize the Total Agency Budget (Excel template) to detail agency revenue and expenses or your own Income Statement
- Application (Word Document) that includes a completed cover page
- BWTC Program Budget Template (MUST use the provided Excel template)
- Corresponding Program Budget Narrative

# POPULATION AND PROGRAM

Determine which population you will target and indicate the program you will provide. You must be prepared to explain how you will implement each service you will provide and why the target population needs it.

## Pregnant Women Living with a Substance Use Disorder

- ☐ Peer support (including parent peer support)
- ☐ Basic living skills
- ☐ Family education and support
- ☐ Parenting skills
- ☐ Education/job skills
- ☐ Family-focused SUD treatment

## Fathers Living with a Substance Use Disorder with Minor Child(ren)

- ☐ Peer support (including parent peer support)
- ☐ Basic living skills
- ☐ Family education and support
- ☐ Parenting skills
- ☐ Education/job skills
- ☐ Family-focused SUD treatment

## Mothers Living with a Substance Use Disorder with Minor Child(ren)

- ☐ Peer support (including parent peer support)
- ☐ Basic living skills
- ☐ Family education and support
- ☐ Parenting skills
- ☐ Education/job skills
- ☐ Family-focused SUD treatment

# PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

Here is a list of programs you are allowed to offer to the population you are seeking to serve:

**Peer Support:** Peer support encompasses a wide range of activities that are shared between two individuals who have a similar experience of being diagnosed with a substance use disorder, mental health disorder, or both. Peer support services, provided by an individual who is both formally trained and on a recovery path that lends to their ability to be in an effective helping role, can offer levels of understanding and validation not always found in other traditional services. Peer support programming includes assisting individuals increase engagement in SUD services, develop appropriate coping strategies, and access aftercare and assertive continuing care.

**Basic Living Skills:** The grantee will provide or arrange for training and ongoing support for individuals, when needed, to participate in Activities of Daily Living (ADL) or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL). Activities of daily living refer to an individual's daily self-care activities. Instrumental Activities of Daily Living are the specific skills that enable an individual to live independently in the community. Some of the skills that may be addressed include: personal hygiene, cleaning/maintaining one's household, managing money, use of public transportation, nutrition/food preparation, shopping for groceries, community safety, and socialization/leisure skills.

**Family Education and Support:** The grantee will establish a family team for each participant. Family members should receive basic SUD prevention information and support skills, especially in relapse prevention, family dynamics and communication. The grantee shall link the families to community support networks, the faith community, and/or natural supports for ongoing assistance in family education and support.

**Parenting Skills:** The grantee will assure that all participants receive training in early childhood development, proper nutrition and medical care for children, and substance exposed infants and other parenting skills. These programs may be provided on the agency premises, provided in the participants' home, or the participant may be transported to other locations. The grantee will also connect the parent with support networks in the community that provide ongoing support and education to the parent and children.

**Education/Job Skills:** The grantee will assist the participant to attend GED classes, receive job-training/readiness skills, or actively seek employment. The grantee should provide support to participants in finding a job and continued support as needed to retain employment. The grantee may also coordinate employment and job skill programming with Wisconsin Works (W-2) agencies in Milwaukee.

**Family-Focused SUD Treatment:** A family-centered approach to SUD treatment provides a comprehensive array of clinical treatment and related support services that meet the needs of each member in the family, not only the individual requesting care. Treatment programs may include outpatient treatment, day treatment, medically monitored residential treatment, transitional residential treatment, medication-assisted treatment for addiction, recovery support programming, and continuing care. Funds under this grant may not be used to pay for hospital-based inpatient treatment. The treatment model should be able to address the appropriate level of care based on ASAM Criteria. First priority for treatment program must be given to pregnant women who inject drugs per Wis. Stat. § 51.42(3)(ar)4m.

# APPLICATION SCORING STRUCTURE

The application will guide you in discussing each area in the order they are presented below.

| Application Section              | Possible Points   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Statement of the Problem         | 20                |
| Target Population                | 15                |
| Program                          | 35                |
| Collaboration                    | 20                |
| Organization Capacity            | 20                |
| Measuring Implementation Success | 25                |
| Budget                           | 15                |
| <b>Total:</b>                    | <b>150 Points</b> |

# APPLICATION NARRATIVE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The narrative section of the application is the opportunity to convince reviewers that the service(s) you will provide meets the selection criteria outlined in the application. Below are some general recommendations to help guide description of the program in a way the reviewers will find compelling and persuasive.

1. Lead from the program strengths and be explicit. Do not try to stretch or change the program description to fit funding priorities described in the application.
2. Be clear and succinct. Do not use jargon or boilerplate language. Describe clearly what the program will do and how the program responds to the selection criteria.
3. Avoid circular reasoning. The problem should not be defined as the lack of the program's solution.
4. Avoid simply stating that the service is needed. Explicitly describe how the service will meet your audience's needs. Don't make assumptions.
5. Do not assume the reviewers know anything about the service, partners, or beneficiaries. Avoid overuse of acronyms.
6. Use an impartial proofreader. Before applying, let someone who is completely unfamiliar with the program read and critique the narrative.

# PROBLEM, POPULATION AND PROGRAM

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. Describe the program's goal(s) and objectives
2. Identify the problem and any relevant trends related to the problem your program seeks to address. Describe how the problem impacts your target population. When possible, use data to back up your points. The program, should be clearly responsive to the community problem.

## TARGET POPULATION

1. What are your target population's demographics and unique characteristics and/or geographic area? Why have you chosen to serve this population and geographic area?
2. Describe how the program will engage and/or identify individuals who require this program.
3. Describe how the program will ensure the priority populations identified will be or are being served.

## PROGRAM

1. Describe how the program will be accessed by people who will be using the program.
2. Describe what a "great program" would look like to someone in need of this program.
3. Describe the hours of operation for facilities that may be used to provide programming. Your response may need to include information pertinent to whether you are currently operating a program for these program or if the agency will be / is developing a new program.
4. If you are already providing these programs, also provide information regarding how the program will improve, enhance or expand programming, improve service quality, etc. if granted an award.

# COLLABORATION AND CAPABILITY

## COLLABORATION

1. Please describe your existing collaborations relevant to the program as well as any new collaborations that will be established as part of this program.
2. If funded, grantees will be part of a cohort that will, at times, attend meetings and trainings together to build skills, share peer support, and learn together. Please describe your willingness to participate and how these connections might benefit your organization and/or program.
3. Describe any potential contractors or partnerships that will be used to provide the program. Include:
  - The extent of the program the contractor will be providing.
  - Discuss whether the contractor/partner relationship has already been established.
  - If the program of the contractor/partnership have not been established yet, describe how your agency plans to identify potential contractors/partners for the work to be performed and whether those agencies will have capacity to perform the work required.Provide copies of any Memoranda of Understanding or Letters of Support from providers for any necessary service components.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

1. Describe your organization's mission, brief history, leadership, and overall program. Ensure it is clear how the program is part of the overall organization.
2. Describe how your organization is qualified to succeed at the program. How has your past experience as an organization prepared you to succeed at this? If the program will be part of an ongoing program, describe that program.
3. Describe your staffing plan for the program, clarifying who will have oversight over the grant management, who will implement the work, who will submit grant progress reports, etc. Include job titles and brief descriptions.

# APPLICATION NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

4. Describe your organization's past experience and capabilities to take in and manage grant funds, including fiscal management, tracking performance measures, submitting grant reports, etc. If you are a newer or lower-capacity applicant, describe what technical assistance or mentoring might be useful to ensure capacity for effective grant management, and how you see your organization developing in this regard.

## MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS

Milwaukee County seeks to regrant opioid settlement and TANF dollars to businesses and nonprofits whose initiatives include an increase in protective factors in the lives of Milwaukee County residents with substance use dependencies and their families. We ask that you answer the implementation success questions and use the table provided in the application to indicate your activities, the results you hope to see and the Milwaukee County outcome you think best matches your initiative.

## Milwaukee County Outcomes

**Economic Stability:** Participants have the ability to afford health-supporting purchases such as food and housing.

**Education Access and Quality:** Participants have the ability to obtain high-quality education.

**Health Care Access and Quality:** Participants have the ability to obtain high-quality physical and mental health care program.

**Neighborhood and Built Environment:** Participants have the ability to live safely and avoid danger.

**Social and Community Context:** Participants have the ability to have positive relationships with the people around them.

# APPLICATION NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

## MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS QUESTIONS

1. **Effectiveness/Outcomes:** This refers to the specific outcome, impact, benefit, or results (the “what”) that the program is designed to achieve from a particular service or activity rather than the activity itself. This would include participant symptom reduction and improvements (reduced occurrence of substance use or legal involvement, improved family functioning, physical and mental health, reunification with children, obtain housing, employment and/or education, development of community support system, etc.). Data should also include completion rates and fidelity with a best practice approach.
2. **Improvement and Satisfaction:** Client or participant satisfaction with the program, events, or activities using Likert scales and questions such as, “In general how satisfied were you with...” or “Are the program you are receiving right for you?” or “I like the program that I receive.”
3. **Grant Efficiency Measure:** This refers to the efficient use of grant funding. Provide a Grant Efficiency Measure that is calculated by dividing the total dollar amount of the grant request by the annual number of people to be served as a result of your development or planning program identified above.

## Reporting Standards

The grantee and/or their subcontractors shall collect and report the following data semi-annually:

- Number of clients served (female, male, transgender)
- Number of families served
- Number of pregnant women served who inject drugs
- Number of pregnant women served; and
- Number of children served

# APPLICATION BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

## BUDGET

The budget will be scored based on clarity/thoroughness, cost-effectiveness, and adequacy and appropriateness for accomplishing the program. The budget should enable reviewers to assess and understand how each line item was calculated (for example, “3 carts @ \$70 per cart”). All costs needed for a program, including direct and administrative expenses, should be included in the BWTC Budget Template.

The funding period for awards made as part of this program is for a 12-month period from 1/01/27 - 12/31/27. It is expected that awardees will complete performance objectives related to their program for the entire award period.

In preparing budget and budget narrative submissions, applicants must submit documents matching the budget and accompanying budget narrative.

Any funds that are not used within the 12-month period will lapse and revert back to the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services.

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- ☐ Application (Word Document) that includes a completed cover page
- ☐ BWTC Program Budget Template (MUST use the provided Excel template)
- ☐ Corresponding Program Budget Narrative

### For programmatic questions, contact:

Daive Donaldson, SUD Service Manager

[Daive.Donaldson@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Daive.Donaldson@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

### For administrative and funding questions, contact:

Shamika May, Executive Director at

[Shamikam@hopehousemke.org](mailto:Shamikam@hopehousemke.org)