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Friday, May 1, 2020

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## **SDE to fund youth suicide prevention at Idaho college or university**

(BOISE) – Reducing youth suicide rates and addressing students’ emotional and mental health needs are among the most important issues in Idaho education, and the need doesn’t end when students graduate from high school.

The State Department of Education is inviting the state’s colleges and universities to apply for a \$40,000 grant to implement early intervention and suicide prevention activities next year as part of a federal grant program that has already established Sources of Strength in more than 100 Idaho middle and high schools.

This time, Garrett Lee Smith grant funds will help a non-profit Idaho college or university implement a project for early intervention and suicide prevention activities for students up to age 24.

“It is important that we provide continuity of compassion, expertise and resources as our students move on to college and university,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra said. “This latest program is an essential part of our efforts to promote early intervention, assessment, referral and follow-up for our teens and young adults.”

Applications for the Idaho College/University Early Intervention and Suicide Prevention Strategies Grant must be received by midnight May 29, and all the particulars for applying can be found in the [Request for Proposals](#).

No less than 85 percent of the total grant award must be used for direct services, with up to 15 percent used for indirect charges, data collection and outcome analysis. Delivery of services under the grant is expected to begin by Oct. 1.

Applicants must describe the extent of the need for suicide prevention programs within their 24-and-under student body, provide a realistic timeline and describe how they will implement the required activities.

The successful applicant will, among other things:

- Integrate young adult suicide prevention strategies across multiple sectors of the college or university;
- Increase access to early intervention services for young adults attending the college or university;
- Implement age-appropriate and culturally appropriate, evidence-based suicide prevention programs on campus.
- Collaborate with the Idaho Lives Project to modify existing campus policies and protocols and develop new ones to address suicide prevention, intervention and “postvention.”
- Ensure that behavioral health clinicians or graduate-level interns who work with students are trained in suicide risk assessment and treatment. Free training will be provided through the State Department of Education and its Idaho Lives Project.
- Monitor, evaluate and report on programs, policies and services, including outcome metrics.

In the most recent Idaho Youth Risk Behavior Survey, about 22 percent of surveyed students said they had seriously considered attempting suicide, the highest level in 10 years. And more students reported feeling sad or hopeless (39 percent) than at any time in the past decade..

Sources of Strength and other efforts are helping to increase communication and reduce youth suicide in the state, but there is still much work to be done, Superintendent Ybarra said.

[The Idaho Lives Project](#) is a collaboration of the State Department of Education and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The Garrett Lee Smith grant is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Sources of Strength has been established in 105 Idaho middle and high schools since the state implemented the peer-based youth suicide prevention project in 2013.

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