



BOARDS OF EXCELLENCE IN PREVENTION:

Maximizing The Power of Prevention Through Capacity Building and Creating Systems-Level Changes

SILVER LEVEL

Request for Applications (RFA)

Application deadline: October 30, 2026, by 11:59 PM

Background and Intent

The Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (ODBH) has partnered with PreventionFIRST! and You Thrive Training & Consulting, LLC, to establish and administer the ***Boards of Excellence in Prevention*** initiative with a focus on strengthening the behavioral health prevention subject matter expertise by staff employed at Behavioral Health Board Authorities. As defined by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 340, Behavioral Health Board Authorities (hereinafter referred to as “Boards”) are responsible for overseeing and coordinating the planning, funding, and delivery of behavioral health services within their respective regions. These authorities play a key role in the state's efforts to address substance abuse, mental health, and prevention programs at the local levels. As such, it is imperative that public funders are committed to ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent effectively and responsibly. To fulfill these ethical obligations, public funders must engage in due diligence to ensure that the prevention programs they fund are grounded in prevention science and based on proven best practices, frameworks, and models that deliver measurable, sustainable outcomes for the communities they serve.

To amplify Ohio Boards’ workforce development in behavioral health prevention, the Boards of Excellence in Prevention (BEP) initiative is a competitive funding opportunity designed for Board employees to elevate their impact in the field of prevention. This initiative offers selected Boards the chance to earn incentives, including funding up to \$10,000 (see “Incentive Schedule”), as well as the prestigious designation of Silver Level "Board of Excellence in Prevention." This designation can be proudly displayed in public releases and marketing materials, showcasing the board’s commitment to subject matter expertise and leadership in the field of behavioral health prevention.

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is available to Behavioral Health Board Authorities in Ohio that have successfully completed all requirements of the Bronze Level Boards of Excellence in Prevention (BEP), have been formally

awarded the Bronze Level designation, and continue to meet all eligibility requirements to maintain their Bronze BEP status. Boards are not permitted to bypass the Bronze level of the BEP initiative. As the Silver level is being offered as a pilot during this initial iteration, participation in Bronze is required to ensure all Boards establish a consistent foundation of knowledge and practice prior to advancing. Additional eligibility requirements are noted below in the Scope of Work.

Scope of Work

The goal of this opportunity is to create learning and professional development opportunities through the Boards of Excellence in Prevention initiative that will build select Boards' capacity to make a greater impact on their community by understanding and applying best practices that are grounded in prevention science. Participating Boards will engage in a learning community with their peers and receive ongoing training, coaching support, and technical assistance that will strengthen their local efforts by building an effective infrastructure for overseeing and coordinating the planning, funding, and delivery of behavioral health prevention services.

Participating Board staff members can expect to participate in learning community activities that are focused on (1) developing the knowledge, skills, and competencies for enhancing the infrastructure and sustainability of prevention services through systems change efforts; (2) collaborating with peers to enhance prevention funding efforts; and (3) participating in professional development and leadership skill-building opportunities. Learning will be enhanced through a series of professional development opportunities, monthly coaching support meetings, and the practical application of skills learned to enhance overall prevention efforts.

The Silver Level of BEP supports Behavioral Health Boards in conducting a comprehensive assessment of their county's behavioral health prevention needs and translating those findings into a data-driven, systems-level prevention plan. The process is designed to move from assessment → analysis → prioritization → strategy development → system alignment. At the end of the Silver Level, participating Boards will:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of behavioral health prevention needs, including root causes and local conditions.
2. Assess prevention system capacity, including providers and community readiness.
3. Identify resource and service gaps impacting prevention effectiveness.
4. Complete a structured needs assessment that:
 - Includes strategic recommendations,
 - Establishes a framework for strengthening prevention infrastructure, and
 - Aligns funding with priorities.
5. Develop an ongoing approach to building prevention provider capacity.

To participate, Boards must meet the following requirements:

- Ensure a team of at least two and no more than three participants can fully and consistently participate in the initiative to ensure continuity as the learning materials build upon one another from one session to the next. A Prevention Supervisor must be included in the total number of three participants. This individual may be employed by the Board or serve in that role through another organization. Boards may also elect to include one additional Board staff member. The required roles and expectations are as follows:

- **Board Point of Contact** – Must fully participate in the initiative.
 - **Prevention Supervisor** – Must fully participate in the initiative.
 - **Additional Board Staff Member (optional)** – If included in your application, this individual must fully participate in the initiative.
- The Board Point of Contact must, at a minimum, hold a Registered Applicant (RA) certificate from the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board and be actively pursuing the Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist Assistant (OCPSA) certification. Regardless of his or her current level of prevention certification, the Board Point of Contact is expected to be working toward the next level of certification, including the OCPSA, Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist (OCPS), or Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant (OCPC) certification. It is this designated individual or individuals that are required to participate in the entirety of this initiative.
 - The Board staff member(s) who have obtained any level of prevention certification – with the exception of Ohio Certified Prevention Consultants (OCPCs) – must have a Prevention Supervisor who meets the qualifications outlined in Ohio Administrative Code. Specifically, this supervisor must hold an active Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist (OCPS) or Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant (OCPC) certification. This individual may or may not be employed by the Board and they must attend and fully participate in all learning community sessions related to this initiative.
 - Boards may choose – **and will be incentivized** – to have an additional staff member pursue their prevention certification as a part of this opportunity, but that is not required.
 - Complete a Pre- and Post-Evaluation Survey to assess the current levels of prevention knowledge and competencies prior to and at the completion of the initiative.
 - Attend three 3-hour virtual trainings on prevention best practices (see Schedule of Learning Community Sessions). Participants will be required to adhere to the Ohio Coaching and Mentoring Network's (OCAM) virtual training decorum requirements (found [HERE](#)), including having cameras on during all training sessions.
 - Attend two 1-day in-person training sessions and one 2-day in-person training session located in Columbus, Ohio (see Schedule of Learning Community Sessions). Lodging and mileage reimbursements will be provided through this opportunity.
 - Participate in monthly individualized coaching sessions with an assigned coach. These sessions are designed to provide coaching assistance related to the prevention certification process as well as to provide guidance on the practical application of knowledge attained through the learning sessions. All individuals identified in the Board's application to participate in this BEP initiative – including the Board Point of Contact, Prevention Supervisor, and an additional Board Staff member – must be in attendance during these sessions.
 - Complete a Boards of Excellence in Prevention Feedback Survey to provide information that will ensure quality improvement for future initiatives.
 - Demonstrate a commitment to applying the knowledge and strategies learned through the initiative by designing and presenting one Final Deliverable that reflects the ability to create and support more comprehensive and effective prevention programming in their communities.

This initiative provides a structured pathway for Behavioral Health Board Authorities to strengthen their prevention efforts, maximize the impact of their resources, and build lasting positive change in the communities they serve.

Schedule of Learning Community Sessions

Session #	Learning Content	Date	Time	Virtual or In-Person
Pre	<i>"Welcome to the Boards of Excellence in Prevention!"</i>	December 10, 2026	2:00-3:00	Virtual
1	<i>"Seeing the System: Mapping the Prevention Landscape"</i>	January 14, 2027	9:00-4:00	In-person
2	<i>"Understanding the Need: Data, Trends, & Contributing Factors"</i>	February 18, 2027	1:30-4:45	Virtual
3	<i>"Focusing the Work: Readiness, Priorities, & Gaps"</i>	March 11, 2027	1:30-4:45	Virtual
4	Day 1: <i>"Designing the Response: Strategies that Match Need & Readiness"</i> Day 2: <i>"Strengthening the System: Building Capacity for Impact"</i>	April 21-22, 2027	9:00-4:00 each day	In-person
5	<i>"Aligning the System: Strategy, Resources, & Decision-Making"</i>	May 18, 2027	1:30-4:45	Virtual
6	<i>"Congratulations Graduates! Presenting the Practical Application of Boards of Excellence in Prevention"</i>	June 24, 2027	9:00-4:00	In-person

Individuals who meet all participation requirements will receive 3 prevention Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for all virtual learning sessions, 6 CEUs for the one-day in-person sessions, and 12 CEUs for the two-day in-person sessions. The in-person sessions will be held in the greater Columbus, Ohio, area. Lodging and mileage reimbursement will be offered as a part of this opportunity, as well as breakfast and lunch on both days.

Board Staff Member Expectations

The following table clarifies Board staff member participation, including their role(s) and their required participation in the various aspects of this opportunity.

Participant	Role	Requirements
Board Point of Contact	Serves as the primary point of contact for the initiative. Will receive email correspondences throughout the initiative.	The Board Point of Contact must, at a minimum, hold a Registered Applicant (RA) certificate from the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board and be actively pursuing the Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist Assistant (OCPSA) certification. Regardless of his or her current level of prevention certification, the Board Point of Contact is expected to be working toward the next level of certification, including the OCPSA, Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist (OCPs), or Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant (OCPC) certification. The designated Board Point of Contact is required to attend all learning community sessions, all individualized coaching sessions, and to present the

		Final Deliverable.
Prevention Supervisor	Provides Prevention Supervision to the staff member pursuing prevention certification.	The Prevention Supervisor may or may not be a Board staff member. He or she must have an appropriate certification for supervising prevention professionals according to the Ohio Administrative Code. Specifically, they must have either an Ohio Certified Prevention Specialist (OCPS) or Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant (OCPC) certification. This individual is required to attend all learning community sessions and all monthly individualized coaching sessions.
Additional Participating Board Staff Members	Assigning additional Board staff members is permitted but optional. Staff who are interested in gaining knowledge and building competencies in conducting a comprehensive assessment of their county's behavioral health prevention needs and translating those findings into a data-driven, systems-level prevention plan are welcome to participate.	If a Board chooses to assign an additional staff member to participate in this opportunity, that staff member is required to attend all learning community sessions and individualized coaching sessions. The total number of participating Board members may not exceed three, including the Board Point of Contact, Prevention Supervisor, and an additional participating board staff member.
Board President / Executive Director	Provide support to all Board staff members participating in this initiative. Champion and provide authority for systems-level changes to the planning, monitoring, and distribution of prevention funding based on prevention best practice lessons learned through this initiative.	Not required to attend learning community sessions nor individualized coaching sessions, unless they are the designated Board Point of Contact or additional staff member participant.

Final Deliverable

Participants in this Boards of Excellence learning opportunity will be responsible for developing and presenting a comprehensive plan at the conclusion of the series that demonstrates how they will practically apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired. Throughout the initiative, participants will engage with a range of topics and resources designed to enhance their understanding and capabilities related to best practices for behavioral health prevention. In this final stage of the initiative, they will synthesize this information into a well-thought-out Final Deliverable that outlines specific strategies, steps, and goals for integrating what they have learned into their professional practices. This plan will not only reflect their deep engagement with the content but also their ability to apply the concepts in a real-world context.

Participants will present their plans to the group at the in-person session on **June 24, 2027**, fostering a collaborative environment where feedback and insights can further refine their approach. They will also be

required to submit this plan, in writing, to the Boards of Excellence in Prevention leadership team. This exercise is designed to ensure that the learning from the series has a lasting, practical impact.

Incentive Schedule

In addition to monthly professional development opportunities, Boards selected for this funding opportunity and who complete the required action items will be eligible to receive incentives. Boards may choose how to utilize these incentives; there are no requirements or stipulations tied to the cash incentives. Incentives will be released according to the following schedule:

Action Items	Incentive	Release Date of Incentive
Attendance at all six of the learning community sessions and all monthly individualized coaching sessions by the Board Point of Contact, the Prevention Supervisor, and all additional participating Board staff members.	\$1,000 per person for a maximum of \$3,000 (the Board Point of Contact, the Prevention Supervisor, and up to 1 additional Board staff member that has chosen to participate)	No later than July 2027
Board staff member(s) obtains an Ohio Certification Prevention Specialist Assistant (OCPSA) certification as approved by the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board	\$1,500 per person for a maximum of \$3,000 (the Board Point of Contact and 1 additional Board staff member who has chosen to participate)	No later than July 2027 contingent upon OCPSA application approval
Board staff member(s) obtains an Ohio Certification Prevention Specialist (OCPS) certification by successfully passing the Ohio Prevention Certification Exam through the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board or successfully obtains their Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant (OCPC) certification	\$2,000 per person for a maximum of \$4,000 (the Board Point of Contact and 1 additional Board staff member who has chosen to participate)	No later than July 2027 contingent upon receiving OCPS certification
Completion of the entire Silver Level Boards of Excellence in Prevention initiative referenced in this RFA	Designation as a Silver Level Board of Excellence in Prevention. A plaque signifying this designation and recognition that acknowledges the designation that can be used for communication purposes, such as in press releases and annual reports.	June 2027

The total cash incentives available to each participating Board under this Silver Level initiative will not exceed \$10,000. All incentive payments will be disbursed according to the payment schedule above.

Boards are encouraged to **consider providing incentives to Prevention Supervisors** who are not directly employed by the Board in recognition of the time and commitment required for them to participate in this initiative. While not required, incentives are strongly recommended to support the Prevention Supervisor's sustained engagement. As outlined in the incentive schedule above, the Prevention Supervisor's demonstrated

commitment to the initiative will be considered when determining the Board's eligibility for performance-based cash incentives.

Please note that participants may continue to pursue prevention certifications beyond this date and will remain eligible to receive the corresponding incentive associated with certification attainment as long as they have submitted their application to the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professional Board prior to the conclusion of the initiative.

Future Opportunities with the Boards of Excellence in Prevention Initiative

The Boards of Excellence in Prevention initiative is a multi-level process designed to recognize and support the ongoing development of boards in the field of prevention. Boards that successfully completed the first level were designated as a Bronze Level Board of Excellence in Prevention in December 2025. Those that advance to and complete the second level – the level referred to in this Request for Applications – will be awarded a **Silver Level Boards of Excellence in Prevention** designation, while boards that complete the third level will receive a Gold Level designation. Finally, boards that achieve the highest standards by completing four levels will earn the prestigious Platinum Level Board of Excellence in Prevention designation. Please note that to advance to each next level, Boards must continue to meet and maintain all requirements associated with the levels they have previously achieved.

Each level is designed to build upon the knowledge gained in the previous level, address different behavioral health prevention best practices, reflect a deeper commitment to excellence to those prevention practices, and demonstrate increasing proficiency, leadership, and impact in the field. The focus of each level is as follows:

- **Bronze** – Participants will receive prevention foundational knowledge substantiated by prevention science.
- **Silver** – Participants will assess the behavioral health needs of their Board areas and develop an individualized systems change prevention plan that is response to those behavioral health needs.
- **Gold** – Participants will create and administer an implementation plan and corresponding evaluation plan for the prevention systems change plan, all embedded within a change management approach.
- **Platinum** – Participants will actively participate in the Partners of Excellence in Prevention Learning Community to receive ongoing mentoring and support to ensure all systems change approaches are implemented successfully and with long-term sustainability.

Advancement to all future levels of the Boards of Excellence in Prevention levels is contingent upon the availability of ongoing funding and support.

Informational Session

An informational session will be held on **October 13, 2026** from **1:00-2:30PM** Eastern Standard Time for Boards to ask questions. To register, click [HERE](#).

Boards do not need to attend the informational session to be considered for this funding opportunity; however, to ensure fairness and equal opportunity for all applicants, we will not be accepting questions after this session.

We encourage all applicants to carefully review the guidelines, requirements, and expectations outlined in this Request for Applications, and to follow the Scoring Rubric closely to give their application the best

chance of success.

Application Deadline and Submission Information

Proposals are due **October 30, 2026, by 11:59 pm EST**. All Ohio Behavioral Health Board Authorities who have previously achieved Bronze status, and who meet the requirements required to maintain that status, are eligible to apply. Late applications will not be reviewed or considered.

Proposals must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document, using Calibri or Arial font in size 12, with 1-inch margins on all sides.

All proposals must be submitted via email to azepernick@youthriveconsulting.com with “Boards of Excellence in Prevention Silver application” listed in the subject line of the email.

Proposal Contents

Applicants must submit the following information:

1. Board Specific Information, including:

- Name of the behavioral health board and the county/counties served by the Board.
- Name, email address, phone number, and credentials of the Board staff member who will serve as the Board Point of Contact for this opportunity. Describe their role in the Board’s prevention planning and funding decisions.
- Name, email address, phone number, and credentials of the person who will be serving in the role as Prevention Supervisor to the Board Point of Contact. The only instance in which this would not be applicable is if the Board Point of Contact is an Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant (OCPC).
- Name, email address, phone number, and credential of an additional Board staff members will also be participating in the initiative. The total of all participating Board members, including the Board Point of Contact and Prevention Supervisor, may not exceed 3 individuals.
- Name, email address, and phone number of the Board’s CEO/Executive Director.

2. Prevention Certification Status.

- What level of prevention certification does the Board Point of Contact currently hold?
- Please provide a detailed description of the Board Point of Contact’s plan to achieve the next prevention certification level.
- For all other Board staff that currently have a prevention certification, provide their name, title, role at the Board, and whether they will be participating in the Silver Level Boards of Excellence in Prevention initiative.
- If applicable, also identify any additional staff members who will pursue prevention certification as part of their participation in this initiative. This is optional but allowed.

3. Statement of Interest. *Limit this section to 2,000 characters, including spaces.*

- Describe your Board’s interest in participating in this initiative. What do you hope to gain, and

how does this opportunity align with your current prevention priorities?

4. Use of Data in Decision-Making. *Limit this statement to 2,000 characters, including spaces.*

- How does your Board currently use data to inform prevention funding and strategy decisions? What data sources are utilized? What challenges do you face in accessing or interpreting data?

5. Commitment Statement. *Limit this statement to 1,000 characters, including spaces.*

- Describe how Board leadership (e.g., Executive Director, Board Members) will support this effort. Include how leadership will be engaged throughout the process and in decision-making related to prevention planning.
- Submit a commitment statement affirming your dedication to meeting all the requirements outlined in this funding opportunity. The statement should explicitly confirm your intent to comply with all guidelines, deadlines, reporting obligations, and any other expectations associated with the funding. By submitting this statement, the applicant acknowledges their responsibility to fully adhere to the terms and conditions set forth throughout the duration of the project. **This statement must include the signature of the Board's Executive Director,** signifying the leadership's full support for participation in the initiative, including any systems-level changes implemented as a result.

Scoring Guide & Rubric

Proposals will be scored using the following scoring rubric that emphasizes technical merit and how well each submission addresses the requirements outlined in this Request for Applications (RFA). This scoring process is designed to ensure that all applicants are evaluated consistently and equitably. Emphasis will be placed on the overall quality of the application and the applicant's ability to clearly articulate the need for their Board's participation in this initiative. The following scale will be used to evaluate the strength, clarity, and alignment of each application with the goals of this funding opportunity. **Applications can earn a total of 50 points with a maximum of 10 points per application section.**

Scoring Guide

<u>Score</u>	<u>Description</u>
9–10	Exceptional – The application exceeds expectations. It is thorough, well-organized, and clearly demonstrates a strong understanding of the initiative.
7–8	Strong – The application meets all expectations with minor weaknesses. It presents a solid commitment that aligns well with the initiative's goals and shows strong potential for success.
5–6	Adequate – The application meets basic requirements but may lack detail or clarity in key areas. The plan is generally feasible but could be improved with more specificity or stronger alignment with initiative goals.
3–4	Weak – The application does not fully meet expectations. It lacks detail or shows limited alignment with the goals of the initiative.
1–2	Poor – The application is incomplete or does not address core requirements. It lacks clarity, detail, and alignment with initiative goals.
0	Not Addressed – The application did not address the relevant section or question.

Scoring Rubric

***Note:** If you do not adhere to the character limitation requirements, you will automatically receive a zero (0) for that section of your application.

Criteria	Scoring Guidance
Board Specific Information <i>(Page 8 of this RFA)</i>	Does the application identify the name of the behavioral health board? Does the application identify the county/counties served by the Board? Does the application identify the name, email address, phone number, and credentials of the Board Point of Contact for this opportunity? Does the application include the Board Point of Contact's role in the Board's prevention planning and funding decisions? Does the application identify the name, email address, phone number, and credentials of the person who will be serving in the role as Prevention Supervisor to the Board Point of Contact? The only instance in which this would not be applicable is if the Board Point of Contact is an Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant (OCPC). <i>(Optional)</i> Does the application identify the name, email address, phone number, and credential of an additional Board staff member who will also be participating in this initiative? Does the application identify the name, email address, and phone number of the Board's CEO/Executive Director?
Prevention Certification Status <i>(Page 8 of this RFA)</i>	Does the application identify the Board Point of Contact's current level of prevention certification status? Does the application provide a detailed description of the Board Point of Contact's plan to achieve the next prevention certification level? Does the application provide information about all other Board staff that currently have a prevention certification, their name(s), title(s), role(s) at the Board, and whether they will be participating in the Silver Level Boards of Excellence in Prevention initiative? If applicable, does the application identify any additional staff members who will pursue prevention certification as part of their participation in this initiative. This is optional but allowed.
Statement of Interest <i>(Page 8 of this RFA)</i>	How well does the application describe the Board's interest in participating in this initiative, what they hope to gain, and how this opportunity aligns

	with their Board’s current prevention priorities?
Use of Data in Decision-Making <i>(Page 9 of this RFA)</i>	Does the application provide a clear description of how the Board currently uses data to inform prevention funding and strategy decisions, what data sources are used, and what challenges they face in accessing or interpreting data?
Commitment Statement <i>(Page 9 of this RFA)</i>	Does the application include a commitment statement affirming their dedication to meeting all the requirements outlined in this funding opportunity? Does the commitment statement explicitly confirm their intent to comply with all guidelines, deadlines, reporting obligations, and any other expectations associated with the funding and acknowledge their responsibility to fully adhere to the terms and conditions set forth throughout the duration of the project? Does the application include a signature of the Board’s Executive Director, signifying the leadership’s full support for participation in the initiative, including any systems-level changes implemented as a result?
Total Possible Points = 50	