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November 8, 2024

## **Albany County Legislature**

### **RE: Albany County Improvement Initiative Grant Opportunity**

The Albany County Legislature, in conjunction with the Albany County Department of Mental Health, Albany County Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Albany County Executive's Office has announced the availability of \$150,000 in funding to support anti-bullying and youth violence prevention programming. This funding is specifically targeted toward schools, after-school programs, and community-based organizations serving and engaging youth within Albany County.

Bullying and youth violence remain persistent issues across educational environments and places where young people gather. These behaviors have long-term implications for the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of youth, affecting not only the victims but also the perpetrators. A culture of bullying and violence fosters a toxic environment in schools and neighborhoods, impacting the quality of life and educational outcomes.

The consequences of bullying and violence in schools are severe. Victims often experience depression, anxiety, decreased academic performance, and long-term emotional trauma. Long-term exposure to such hostile environments can also result in emotional trauma that lasts well into adulthood. Perpetrators, meanwhile, are at increased risk of future unconventional behavior, perpetuating cycles of unconventional behavior/violence within communities.

It is important to stop these behaviors and create safer spaces for all youth. Whether it's on the school playground, at a local basketball court, or within the broader community, it is imperative to work with the youth, educators and community leaders in our neighborhoods to fight the rise in peer on peer violence.

Individual grant awards will be up to \$40,000, depending on the scope and quality of the proposals submitted.

Applications should be submitted to the Albany County Legislature via email to Elena Cenko, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at [Elena.Cenko@albanycountyny.gov](mailto:Elena.Cenko@albanycountyny.gov).

#### **Submission Timeline:**

- Applications to be accepted starting Friday, November 8, 2024
- Application acceptance ends Close of Business (COB) Friday, November 22, 2024

#### **Application Process**

The application process for the Albany County Improvement Initiative Grant is multi-step:

- 1) Proposal Submission: The Albany County Legislature solicits applications from eligible project sponsors. Applications must include:
  - a) An executive summary detailing the program;
  - b) A breakdown of anticipated expenses;
  - c) A benefits statement as to how the project will help with preventing bullying or peer to peer violence, including projected impact;
  - d) An overview highlighting the need for assistance; and
  - e) How this program will fit into a larger curriculum related to evidence-based intervention and elimination of bullying.
  
- 2) Review and Scoring: Each proposal is reviewed and scored by staff of the Albany County Legislature, Albany County Department of Mental Health, Albany County Department of Children, Youth and Families, and the Albany County Executive's Office.
  
- 3) Funding Recommendations: Based on the reviews of the designated graders, the Albany County Legislature will make recommendations on which projects should be funded. There is no guarantee that applications received by Albany County Legislature will ultimately be awarded funding.

### **Eligible Criteria**

1. Public school districts and charter schools within Albany County applying for funding to:
  - o Implement evidence-based curricula targeting bullying;
  - o Develop educational campaigns aimed at fostering inclusivity; or
  - o Create media awareness campaigns that can reach children and young adults (utilizing Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Snapchat, Threads, etc.).
2. Private individuals, non-profits organizations, community-based organizations, BOCES, and other non-public entities may also apply.

### **Project Criteria**

Programs must demonstrate that they will provide at least one of the following:

- (a) Education designed for school-age children and young adults on recognizing and preventing bullying and violence;
- (b) Counseling services regarding the use of verbal and/or physical violence;
- (c) Programs that address prevention and intervention methods for various types of harassment, bullying, violence;
- (d) Training for teachers, health professionals, and community members to recognize and respond to bullying;
- (e) Activities to teach children and young adults how to stop bullying, how to identify and report situations; or
- (f) Programs that are designed to educate the youth and completely eliminate bullying behaviors.

Additionally, all respondents must:

- (g) Submit a completed application meeting all requirements; and
- (h) Demonstrate the capacity to administer and implement the program effectively.