



Sunflower Foundation

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MEDIA CONTACT

Brett Riggs

briggs@sunflowerfoundation.org

785.232.3000 Ext. 113

KU Center for Public Partnerships and Research to lead statewide needs assessment of substance use disorder systems

Results will guide long-term investment strategies of Kansas Fights Addiction Board

TOPEKA, Kan. – Sunflower Foundation is pleased to announce that it has selected the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (CPPR) to conduct a year-long, comprehensive statewide needs assessment of substance use disorder (SUD) systems and related work in Kansas that will be used to guide the future, long-term investment strategies of the Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board.

The board oversees the KFA Grant Program, which provides funding to eligible state agencies, governmental entities and nonprofit organizations that deliver services in Kansas aimed at preventing, reducing, and treating substance abuse or addiction. In 2023, the KFA board awarded more than \$10 million for projects across the state using money recovered by the Kansas Attorney General’s Office through legal settlements with pharmaceutical companies, distributors and related firms that have fueled the addiction crisis.

Sunflower Foundation, as administrator for the grant program, has been tasked with coordinating completion of the needs assessment.

One of the founding centers of the Achievement and Assessment Institute at KU, CPPR partners with agencies and organizations to improve the lives of children, youth and families. Through this partnership with the foundation, CPPR is tasked with conducting a needs assessment that will provide an in-depth view of the state’s SUD system across the lifespan and including all sectors, from early childhood and prevention through treatment and long-term recovery.

Through the needs assessment, the KFA board seeks to gain a better understanding of SUD system needs and identify where innovation is both necessary and possible to further reduce substance abuse and addiction, save lives, and improve systems of care.

“We are honored and humbled to be selected by Sunflower Foundation to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment in support of the Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board and its long-term investments in prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and other strategies,” said CPPR Executive Director Jackie Counts. “Having seen the glaring signs of the opioid crisis through work helping children, youth, and families overcome systemic challenges, we are eager to partner with Sunflower Foundation to delve deeper into the devastating legacy and evolving fallout of the opioid epidemic.”

While previous system assessments have provided a solid foundation of data and helped jump-start the KFA grant program, a more complete, cross-systems analysis is necessary. To that end, CPPR will be looking to engage stakeholders and the public at the community level in search of new, innovative strategies that are succeeding in reducing SUDs and improving systems of care.

“Looking across the lifespan at all sectors and systems is essential to provide a roadmap for the KFA board and our state as they work to create a more comprehensive, innovative and multi-pronged strategy for identifying transformative solutions to the substance use disorder crisis in Kansas,” said Billie Hall, president

and CEO of Sunflower Foundation. “Sunflower Foundation is eager to provide the results of this needs assessment to the KFA board as it seeks to gain a more thorough understanding of the way connections across systems influence substance use disorders.”

The foundation welcomes CPPR’s extensive experience in empowering communities to identify and create systemic change and believes it aligns well with the objectives set out for the KFA Needs Assessment.

“At CPPR, we know that those closest to the problems are best positioned to generate solutions. We believe it is our job to listen to what communities want and need, then equip them with the best research and supports available to generate solutions and deliver services,” Counts said. “We are excited for the work ahead and the opportunity to help communities envision and realize a better tomorrow.”

Sunflower Foundation and CPPR anticipate work on the KFA Needs Assessment will take at least 12 months to complete.

To maximize its effectiveness, the needs assessment will require intensive and broad engagement and input from Kansans and subject matter experts across the state and all disciplines. Anyone interested in providing input as part of the assessment process, or who would like to receive updates regarding the assessment and its results, can share their name, contact information and suggestions by going to <https://sunflowerfoundation.org/kansas-fights-addiction/> and clicking on KFA Needs Assessment.

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ABOUT CPPR

The University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (CPPR) partners with communities, government, and nonprofit organizations across the country to optimize the well-being of children, youth, and families. CPPR empowers people to overcome systemic challenges through innovation and sustainable partnerships with their multidisciplinary team of researchers, data scientists and systems-thinkers, to catalyze change and make measurable improvements. In addition to depth of experience, CPPR is valued for contributing a broad array of unique resources and for applying strategic foresight in areas like early childhood care and education, public health, youth development, child and family well-being, and future-focused leadership. For more information, visit www.cppr.ku.edu.

ABOUT SUNFLOWER FOUNDATION

Sunflower Foundation was established in 2000 as a statewide health philanthropy with a mission to serve as a catalyst for improving the health and well-being of all Kansans. The foundation believes that a thriving, sustainable nonprofit sector contributes to healthy communities, and we are committed to investing in mission-aligned nonprofits through grants, education, advocacy, collaborative learning, and capacity building. To learn more, visit www.SunflowerFoundation.org.