



## **Behavioral Health Student Support Services Act Project Summary**

The Tri-City Mental Health Authority (TCMHA) Behavioral Health Student Support Services Act (BHSSA) project aims to increase access to collaborative, coordinated, culturally-relevant, family-driven, school- and community-based services to high-risk youth in Pomona, Claremont, and La Verne. Goals include:

- Increasing service provision for children, youth, and young adults;
- Improving behavioral and physical health and functioning for individuals served;
- Providing person- and family-centered, trauma-informed care;
- Optimizing all available funding/support sources to facilitate clients' positive outcomes; and
- Maximizing behavioral health and school personnel workforce's clinical capacity and culturally relevant competencies.

BHSSA grant funds are used to strengthen partnerships with local school districts—Pomona Unified, Claremont Unified, Bonita (La Verne) Unified— and charter school (The School of Arts and Enterprise), higher education, law enforcement, health providers, and community agencies to leverage resources that help students succeed. This BHSSA project partnership creates an accessible and inclusive mental and behavioral health system rooted in youth-centered planning and cultural understanding, competency, and compassion to remove discriminatory barriers and to incorporate accommodating and uplifting approaches to care.

TCMHA's BHSSA project supports youth and family recovery, assists clients with obtaining mental and behavioral health services, and creates rapid access-to-care pipelines and linkages to available resources. It provides timely access to services for underserved populations and high-risk youth and young adults that include foster youth, youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, and youth who have been expelled or suspended from school. Staff provide mental and behavioral health care services tailored to an individual's identity, culture, and lived experience. Project personnel provide triage services to determine the appropriate level of care, connect with providers, and complete referrals, as necessary. Staff provide youth with mental and behavioral health services on school campuses, as appropriate, in early intervention, suicide prevention, drop-out prevention, evidence-based mental/behavioral health practices, and the development and coordination of service plans to address ongoing needs. Services and activities include:

- A short screening tool for partners and community members to identify at-risk youth who could benefit from early intervention;
- Offers and linkages to therapeutic outpatient services;
- Case management;
- Prevention and early intervention;
- A community-wide campaign to increase mental health awareness, to reduce discrimination against people with mental illness, and to end mental health stigma; and
- Training for BHSSA project staff and community members to recognize signs of mental illness and substance use disorders, to provide initial support to youth who may be experiencing a problem, and to help connect them to appropriate care.

A new effort of TCMHA's BHSSA project is to increase access to and awareness of both school-based and community-based substance use disorder supports, including resource linkage and navigation within TCMHA's behavioral health continuum of care through the expansion, enhancement, and extension of three existing BHSSA program components: 1) training/professional development, 2) school and community partnerships (via sub-grant opportunities), and 3) a community campaign.