

Amplify Annual Report

2019~2020



Amplify



2019–2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

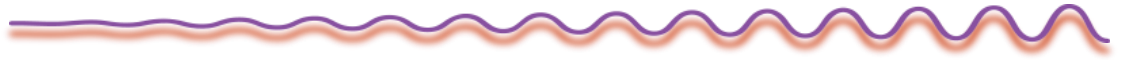
- **Eileen Swan, Chairperson** Children’s Advocacy Services for Education
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- **Jane Theriault** Accountant

OUR STAFF:

- Marcia DuFore, Executive Director
- Melisa Luginbuhl, Deputy Director
- Wende Cooper, Prevention Coordinator
- Allyson Nadeau, Outreach and Evaluation Coordinator
- Marie Raynor, interim Ryan White Coordinator
- Marlene Schempp, Way to Go CT Program Director
- Sounthaly Thammavong, Ryan White & Outreach Coordinator
- Quyen Truong, Special Projects Manager

For information: contact Executive Director Marcia DuFore at 860-667-6388 or mdufore@amplifyct.org

OUR MISSION



Forging partnerships with people with behavioral health needs, families and our communities to influence best practices, policies and access to resources

To strengthen the ability of our region to assess needs, develop plans, and advocate for strategies and resources to advance healthy communities.

As we close out FY 2019-20, we find ourselves especially grateful for being able to work for over 45 years and the very grassroots level and in partnership with many of you to improve behavioral health services and promote the growth of healthy inclusive communities.

Amplify serves as the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization for North Central CT. As such, Amplify is a unique catalyst, leading and uniting community leaders, residents, and partners with the behavioral health resources and prevention strategies they need the most. We bring together a wide range of voices to work toward a single-minded goal: build the most effective and responsive system of behavioral health promotion and support services that will improve the lives of all.

We welcome your involvement in Amplify's programs and initiatives. More information about how to become involved can be found on our website: <https://amplifyct.org/get-involved/>.

Amplify serves the North Central Region comprised of 37 thirty-seven towns in North Central Connecticut. Clusters of towns in this area are combined into six Catchment Areas that receive behavioral health services as a unit. Catchment Area Council (CAC) membership is comprised of town residents who are living with behavioral health challenges, family members, concerned citizens as well as behavioral health providers. This group reviews and evaluates current behavioral health services, identifies gaps based on town needs, and recommends changes that will serve the region.

Thirty-four Local Prevention Councils (LPCs) work at the grassroots level to raise awareness of substance misuse and offer early intervention plans and evaluation. While members might come from all walks of life, they share a passion and commitment to find ways to make a difference in the behavioral health of their community. With grants funded by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Amplify works with each Local Prevention Council to offer guidance, resources, and encouragement so that members come together to clear paths toward positive changes in their towns.

CAC and LPC members are key partners helping Amplify to understand, communicate and address the priority needs of North Central CT residents. Several years of Annual, Priority and Evaluation Reports can be found on our website: <https://amplifyct.org/publications/>.



Our Major Initiatives to Improve Services

EDUCATING

News of the Week:

Through our “News of the Week” and social media communications, Amplify informs communities about resources, educational events, forums, advocacy opportunities, legislation, etc. that impact community members with behavioral health concerns.

Please e-mail us at mdufore@amplifyct.org to be added to our distribution list.



Addressing Problem Gambling

Thanks to funding from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Problem Gambling Unit, Amplify provides leadership for a team of consumers and professionals to raise awareness about problem gambling and connect them with resources that can help. Amplify Ambassadors lead training workshops for organizations, tailored to meet their unique needs, including:

- The PAWs Program, in which teens are helping each other notice the warning signs of gambling and learn that it isn't just a risk-free game.
- The Congregation/Community Assistance (CAP) Program, which is specifically designed for faith communities and civic groups.
- The Asian American Pacific Islander Ambassadors (AAPIA) Program, where Asian Ambassadors hold community conversations designed specifically for Asian Americans and for other minority groups. In response to the pandemic, ambassadors are converting all of their sessions to on-line forums with presentations translated into Chinese Mandarin, Chinese Cantonese, and Laotian.



To get involved with gambling awareness efforts , please contact mluginbuhl@amplifyct.org.

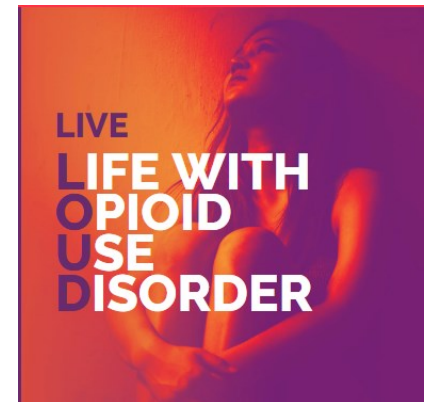
Addressing the Opioid Epidemic:

In October 2015, Governor Malloy reconstituted the CT Alcohol and Drug Policy Council in response to a frightening increase in opioid-related overdose deaths. The Council is charged with developing and implementing a strategic plan for responding to CT's Opioid Crisis. Amplify is an appointed member of the Council and the Treatment and Recovery Support Subcommittee.

Amplify has joined forces with many committed partners working at the state and regional level on strategies to **stem the tide of Opioid crisis**. Strategies to date include:

- **public forums and marketing campaigns** to raise awareness (2 such campaigns are Change the Script and Live Loud (pictured to the right))
- expanding access to life-saving **NARCAN** and medication-assisted treatment (MAT) programs,
- developing on-line resources for **navigating treatment**, inpatient bed availability, and prescriptions for NARCAN.

Amplify gave out \$70,000 in mini-grants during FY 2019-20 for local coalitions to implement substance abuse prevention and behavioral health promotion initiatives within their communities. To date, we have conducted over 40 **NARCAN trainings** (now accompanied by suicide prevention training) and given out over 1300 **NARCAN kits** to community members. Please contact mdufore@amplifyct.org for more information or request training.



Preventing and Responding to Suicide

You've seen the headlines: suicide rates have increased 33% since 1999 in the US according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These deaths cut across all demographic groups – no segment is immune. But we are not powerless – there are ways to help.

Amplify coordinates the Regional Suicide Advisory Board. This regional coalition provides the local infrastructure to build capacity and to promote suicide prevention activities in support of the vision of the CT Suicide Advisory Board and as outlined in the CT State Plan. Activities include training in how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis, intervention and postvention best practices (promoting healing and reducing risk after a suicide), and grief support resources.

While suicide can feel like an individual act, it doesn't happen in vacuum and its ripple effect can be profound.

To get involved with suicide prevention efforts and/or join our Regional Suicide Advisory Board, please contact mluginbuhl@amplifyct.org

For suicide prevention information and resources, please visit [Prevent Suicide CT](http://PreventSuicideCT.org).



Our Major Initiatives to Improve Services

ADVOCATING

Legislative Advocacy

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the suspension of the 2019-20 Legislative session and the cancelation of the Amplify Legislative Breakfast. Amplify staff testified in support of the Policy Accountability and Telehealth bills that were passed during this year's Special Legislative Session; additionally, testimony was provided in support of Committee Bills for Peer Support Services and funding for behavioral health and housing supports, and in opposition to outpatient commitment.



Health Reform

For the past 6 years, CT has been working with the CT Office of Health Strategy (OHS) on the design and implementation of healthcare reforms that will improve population health and access to care while reducing healthcare costs. Amplify, Quyen Truong, has provided consulting services to the OHS Consumer Advisory Board (CAB) and supports CT's efforts to ensure consumer voices are heard in OHS Health Reform initiatives. For more information about CT's Consumer Engagement Plan, go to:

<http://www.healthreform.ct.gov/ohri/site/default.asp>

Greater Hartford Ryan White Part A Planning Council

The *Greater Hartford Ryan White Part A Planning Council* unites funders, healthcare providers, and people living with HIV/AIDS under a common goal: to help those with HIV/AIDS improve their health and quality of life. This legislatively mandated Council reviews data, conducts research, assessments, and focus groups. Members educate and provide resources to individuals with HIV in an attempt to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS. Through these efforts, the Council identifies gaps in care and recommends how to best allocate federal Ryan White grant funds to the Transitional Grant Area.



Serving Hartford, Tolland, and Middlesex counties, the *Ryan White Part A Planning Council* meets regularly and is supported by Amplify staff, Sou Thammavong. For more information about the Planning Council meeting times and its activities, please visit the Ryan White Hartford Website: www.RyanWhiteHartford.org.

Health Equity and Racial Justice

Thanks to funding from the CT Health Foundation, Amplify has continued to work with the Ministerial Health Fellowship (MHF), an **advocacy coalition** comprised of over 30 Black faith leaders and their congregations who address health equity concerns and state healthcare policy that impact people of color. Initiatives include the promotion of Community Health Workers and protection of Medicaid and Medicare funding. MHF's third legislative breakfast, held in April 2020, was a great success this year—attended by over 187 passionate advocates including 12 legislators and/or aides. In partnership with the MHF, Amplify held two community forums, attended by over 200 participants, to gather community feedback about how to address behavioral health during the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism. For more information, please see the forum recording and recordings and report at <https://amplifyct.org/publications>.



Way To Go Connecticut

Amplify's Way to Go CT program **promotes coordination and marketing of transportation options** for people with disabilities, older adults, and Veterans in North Central Connecticut. Our Mobility Manager works closely with individuals and communities to address gaps and barriers in transportation options. We are a **"One Stop Shop"** where individuals can find solutions to their transportation challenges.

Resources available via Way to Go CT include a comprehensive web-based and hard copy of the "Transportation Resources for North Central CT" guidebook, a transportation navigation website: www.waytogoct.org, and an on call-center for individual assistance. We conduct regular and ongoing outreach to older adults, persons with disabilities, and veterans.



Our website is fully ADA compliant, translatable into more than 195 languages and compatible with accepted screen reader programs for the visually impaired. Hardcopy resource guides have been translated into Polish and Spanish and are available in braille.

Please feel free to connect with our Mobility Manager, Marlene Schempp for information or assistance by calling 860-667-6388 or emailing mschempp@waytogoct.org.



Our Major Initiatives to Improve Services

EVALUATING

Youth Anxiety Review:

In FY 2019-20, Amplify conducted a review of anxiety experienced by youth. This was precipitated by reports from school and Local Prevention Council (LPC) personnel who participated in our Annual Priority Planning Process and noted increasing rates of anxiety among youth. More research was recommended to identify root causes and effective strategies. Results aligned with the CT Youth Risk Behavior and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Surveys. Given the rising concern for understanding the mental health impact of COVID 19, youth mental health and suicide are areas of need. Youth focus group participants expressed appreciation for our interest in their health and concerns.

“It’s comforting that you’re asking about this. Thank you for asking us about this and listening to our points of view. And knowing that you’re going to use it to help.”

Major Findings:

- According to youth, the most common reasons that lead to anxiety are **uncertainty or fear of the unknown** and the **pressure to perform**.
- Youth actively navigate stress or worry on a routine basis; it perpetuates as unresolved.
- Youth grieved the loss of in-person school and extra-curricular activities (i.e. sports, clubs) while some youth felt that social distancing helped to decrease their stress.
- Over a third (39%) of youth surveyed indicated they experienced feeling anxious, “almost always” or “always” with the remaining 61% saying it was at least “some of the time.”
- Discussions with youth aligned with survey results and highlighted significant stress related academic performance, especially for students unsure of post high-school plans.
- Social media has both negative and positive influences.
- Youth feel that many of the things that bring them joy, are the very things that are becoming increasingly measured and promoted as competition.

“School and social activities aren’t the problem. The problem is that many of the things that make us happy are constantly compared or graded.”

Recommendations:

- Increase school mental health resources (including those that are trauma-informed)
- Offer non-clinical support services to all youth regardless of system involvement
- Improve collaboration and promote mental health screening with families, youth services, and primary care & behavioral health providers
- Offer space in school that can be used for telehealth or to serve as a calming space
- Maintain/increase access to telehealth services for youth
- Continue youth focus groups/surveys and start the conversation sooner
- Promote peer-leadership opportunities with students focused on behavioral health
- Normalize stressful situations to help youth understand that their feelings make sense
- Set specific times during the day to turn technology off and unplug from social media
- Consider positive ways for youth to use social media (mental health apps)

For a copy of the full report please see our website <http://www.amplifyct.org/publications> or contact anadeau@amplifyct.org

Priority Planning:

Every two years, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) Planning Division carries out a statewide needs assessment and priority planning process in order to capture needs and trends on the local, regional, and statewide basis. Information gathered is used to inform the DMHAS Mental Health Block Grant and DMHAS biennial budgeting process as well as the planning and priority setting process for each Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization (RBHAO). Every other year, the previous year's report is updated and a crosswalk to review state policy response is completed. For a complete summary of the process, reports, and associated data sources, please see our website: <http://www.amplifyct.org/publications>.

2018/2019 Priority Issues:

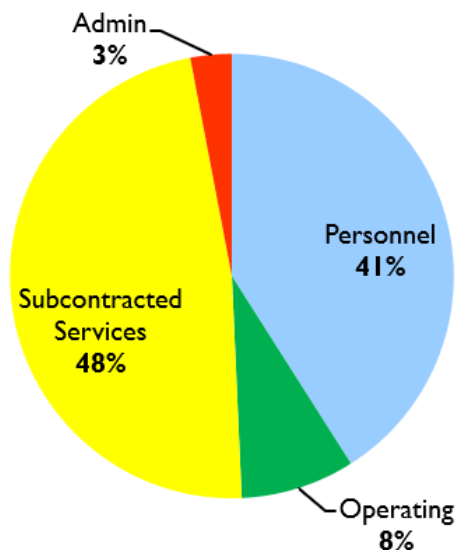
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the behavioral and overall health of our residents
- Explosion in use of electronic nicotine devices (ENDs)
- Increase in accidental overdose deaths (substances laced with Fentanyl)
- High rates of anxiety among youth
- Overlap between computer gaming, sports betting, and problem gambling
- Concern over loss of CAC consumer engagement & monitoring roles in new RBHAO structure
- **Resources, strengths, assets:**
 - Connecticut's (CT's) commitment to developing and maintaining recovery support services
 - Integration of behavioral health and overall health, and promotion of wellness activities
 - Increase in offerings of Medication Assisted Treatment ("MAT")
 - Decrease in CT youth facing alcohol dependence and abuse
 - Problem gambling awareness and treatment programs in Region IV
 - GIZMO's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health Curriculum was piloted in Region IV schools
 - Geriatric Behavioral Health services offered at two hospitals in Region IV
- **2019/20 Updated recommendations:**
 - Address the digital divide to improve access to services
 - Continue efforts to reduce opioid-related deaths with a focus on highest-risk communities (including impact of COVID-19 pandemic , mobile and tele-health options, early release for incarcerated individuals)
 - Address gaps in the continuum of care for supportive, supported, and residential housing for individuals with mental health and addiction challenges to prevent rehospitalizations
 - Promote inclusion of problem gambling in recovery support specialist training
 - Develop culturally-responsive treatment, especially in light of events of police and other violence against individuals of color in our communities
 - Increase in funding/support for Mobile Response services for people in emotional distress, and decrease reliance on law enforcement as the first line of defense for crisis calls



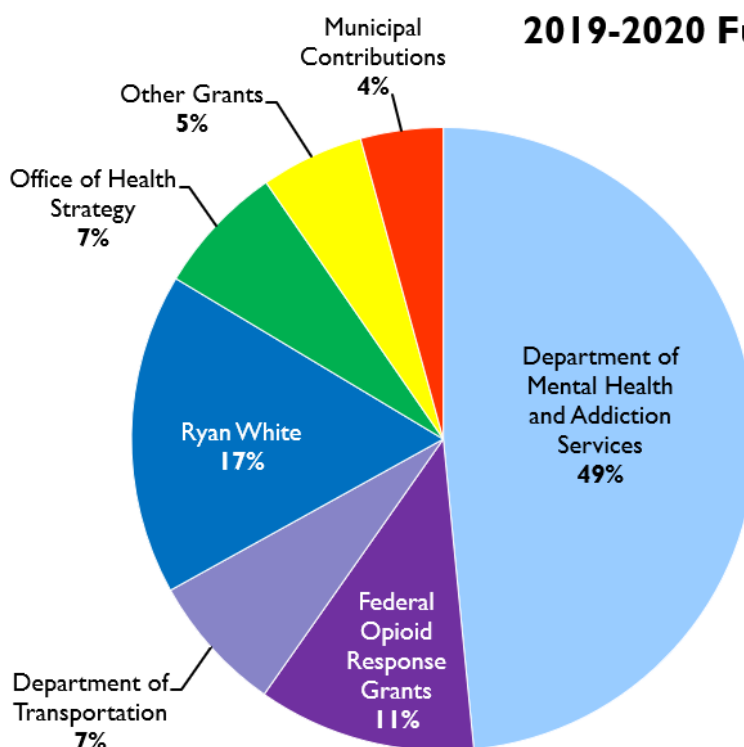
Our Major Initiatives to Improve Services

FINANCIALS

2019-20 Resource Allocations



2019-2020 Funding



Amplify gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, organizations, public & governmental agencies for investing in our work and our communities during FY 2019-2020:

<u>INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS/ DONORS</u>	<u>ORGANIZATIONS & FOUNDATIONS</u>	<u>MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS</u>
Kathy and Joe Braga Sheryl and William Breetz John and Nancy Calderbank Adam Cohen Judith Cohen Susan and Wendell Coogan Denise Dauray Kathleen Douglass Marcia and Thomas DuFore Anita Ellis Karen Futoma Denise Hart Jennifer Henry Mary and Peter Hess Alaina Lasnier Dennis and Mary Keenan Geralyn Laut Maggie McCarroll June O'Leary Luis and Jane Perez Larry Pittinger Gayle and Howard Renker Mary Roche-Cronin Judith Shaw Marsha Tomlinson Quyen Truong & Laura Suroviak Anita Zakrzewski Cheryl Zeiner	-Advocacy Unlimited -Benevity Fund -Catholic Campaign for Human Development -Connecticut Health Resources, Inc. -CT Council for Prevention Professionals -Connecticut Health Foundation -Cross Street Training and Academic Center -CT Community for Addiction Recovery -CT Council on Problem Gambling -Hartford Foundation for Public Giving -Network for Giving Foundation -Sorrell Family Foundation -Schwabb Charitable Foundation -UConn Health Disparities Institute -United Way (Anonymous Donors)	Andover Avon Berlin Bloomfield Bolton Bristol Burlington Canton East Granby East Hartford East Windsor Ellington Enfield Farmington Glastonbury Granby Hartford Hebron Manchester Marlborough New Britain Newington Plymouth Rocky Hill Simsbury South Windsor Southington Stafford Suffield West Hartford Wethersfield Windsor Windsor Locks
<u>LOCAL BUSINESSES</u>	<u>STATE & FEDERAL AGENCIES</u>	
-B & M Tree Service -Communities 4 Action -Hockanunum Valley Community Council	-Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services -Department of Transportation -Greater Hartford Ryan White Planning Council -Office of Health Strategy -Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	



Amplify, Inc.
151 New Park Ave., Suite 14A,
Hartford, CT 06106
860-667-6388