

# Town of Hopkinton

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention Coalition Awarded \$625,000 Federal Drug- Free Communities Grant

HOPKINTON -- Town Manager Norman Khumalo and Hopkinton Youth & Family Services Director Dawn Alcott-Miller are pleased to announce that the Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention (HOP) coalition has been awarded a \$625,000 grant from the [Drug-Free Communities \(DFC\) Support Program](#).

The grant will be distributed over five years, during which time HOP will receive \$125,000 in funding annually. At the end of the five years, HOP will have the opportunity to apply for additional funding from the program.

The DFC Program, which is directed by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, provides grants to community coalitions across the country that work to prevent and reduce substance use among youths. The grant aims to provide HOP with funds to strengthen relationships with local community partners and implement different

strategies and programs that are designed to reduce youth substance use rates.

"The Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention coalition is so fortunate to have received this funding, and it could not have been made possible without the hard work of coalition members, including Director Alcott-Miller," said Town Manager Khumalo. "I would like to thank everyone involved in the grant process, and I look forward to seeing the positive effects that this funding has on our youth for many years to come."

HOP was founded by Youth & Family Services in 2015 with the goal of empowering the youth to live a healthy, substance-free life through the provision of resources, education and support.

"This grant funding positions our coalition to better serve the youth in our community, and we are so grateful for it. Over time, grant activities will help prevent substance use before it starts," said Director Alcott-Miller. "Research suggests that those who start using substances young are more likely to develop substance use disorders later in life. This funding will help educate teens so that they lead healthy lives from a young age."

HOP plans to use a portion of the funding to hire a full-time coalition coordinator who will oversee programming, activities and grants.

Additionally, grant funds will be used toward cultural competency and substance prevention training, establishing a middle school prevention group, targeted education for students and parents and more.

Long-term, the grant aims to help expand youth involvement in reducing community substance abuse through strategies shown to be effective through research.

"This award exponentially expands HOP's ability to provide educational programs and introduce initiatives concerning behavioral health," said HOP Chair Gale Levine. "It's exciting to think about how much the Hopkinton community will benefit from the possibilities this grant allows. I am hopeful and confident that additional resources will give parents and their children the tools necessary to address these challenges."

HOP has active participation from representatives from 12 sectors of the community including: youth; parents; law enforcement; schools; businesses; media; youth-serving organizations; religious and fraternal organizations; civic and volunteer groups; healthcare professionals; state, local, and tribal agencies with expertise in substance

abuse; and other organizations involved in reducing substance abuse.

As a part of the grant, HOP must conduct regular community assessments in order to implement data-driven, community-wide strategies that address social issues, as well as environmental prevention strategies that aim to prevent and reduce youth substance abuse.

"I am thrilled to learn of the \$625,000 Drug-Free Communities Support Program grant awarded to the Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention coalition," said U.S. Rep. Jake Auchincloss. "HOP does invaluable work in Hopkinton – empowering our youth and families to make healthy decisions while using an effective, culturally competent approach to drug prevention strategies."

Hopkinton Organizing for Prevention was one of 106 coalitions across the country that were recently awarded the grant. Approximately \$13.2 million in funds were allocated to support these coalitions.

*To learn more about HOP and get involved, please contact Youth and Family Services at 508-497-9781.*

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**A message from the Town of Hopkinton**