

2026 HFI FUNDING REQUEST

REQUESTING ORGANIZATION

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

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SIGNATORY

Megan Sanders

MISSION STATEMENT

Purdue Extension enriches Indiana communities through comprehensive programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources, promoting sustainable practices; Health and Human Sciences, enhancing well-being; Community Development, fostering economic growth; and 4-H and Youth Development, empowering the next generation. We deliver practical, research-based information that enhances lives and livelihoods.

PROJECT:

To address the Core Public Health Service of Maternal and Child Health, this project will implement a comprehensive approach to improve perinatal mental health education in DeKalb County and across Indiana. The key activities will include: 1. Training Healthcare Providers and Community: Offering educational sessions to equip professionals and community members with the skills to identify and support perinatal mental health challenges. 2. "Train the Trainer" Program: Preparing Purdue Extension Health and Human Sciences educators to deliver sustainable, statewide training on perinatal mental health. 3. Conference and Public Awareness: Hosting a conference to engage stakeholders, including individuals with lived experience, and increase awareness on the importance of mental health during the perinatal period. These activities will build local capacity to address maternal and child health issues, particularly perinatal mental health, with a long-term focus on prevention, early intervention, and support.

TARGET POPULATION:

The primary target population for this project includes individuals and communities in DeKalb County, IN, and throughout the state of Indiana, with a specific focus on: 1. Expectant and New Parents: Individuals who are pregnant, in the postpartum period, or recently gave birth, as they are at a higher risk for perinatal mental health issues such as postpartum depression and anxiety. 2. Healthcare Providers and Professionals: Including obstetricians, gynecologists, pediatricians, mental health professionals, social workers, nurses, and other healthcare providers who play a vital role in identifying, treating, and supporting individuals with perinatal mental health concerns. 3. Community Leaders and Support Groups: Local community members, leaders, and facilitators of support groups will be engaged to help promote awareness and offer support for individuals impacted by perinatal mental health issues. 4. Families and Caregivers: Family members and caregivers of new parents who are often essential in

providing emotional and practical support during the perinatal period. Train the Trainer Component: A key aspect of the project will be a "Train the Trainer" program designed specifically for Purdue Extension Health and Human Sciences educators. These educators will be trained to deliver perinatal mental health education and training to others, including healthcare professionals, community members, and local support groups. By training these educators, the project will ensure that the knowledge and skills needed to address perinatal mental health are widely disseminated throughout Indiana, creating a sustainable and scalable model of support. Number of Individuals to Reach/Serve: • Direct Education & Training: The project aims to directly engage 100 individuals through educational workshops, training sessions, and resources focused on perinatal mental health, targeting healthcare providers, community members, and expectant/new parents in DeKalb County and surrounding regions during the grant cycle. • Train the Trainer Program: At least 10 Purdue Extension Health and Human Sciences educators will be trained through the "Train the Trainer" program, equipping them with the skills to facilitate perinatal mental health education across the state. • Conference Attendance: The perinatal mental health conference is expected to attract 100 attendees, including professionals, individuals with lived experiences, and community members. • Statewide Collaboration: Through statewide partnerships and the expanded network of trained Purdue Extension educators, the project aims to reach 500 individuals across Indiana, further amplifying the education and support available for perinatal mental health during the grant cycle. In total, the project aims to reach approximately 710 individuals directly and indirectly, with a focus on ensuring the sustainability of perinatal mental health education through trained local experts across Indiana.

OUTCOMES:

The project's expected measurable outcomes include: 1. Increased Knowledge: At least 100 individuals, including healthcare providers, community members, and expectant/new parents, will complete educational sessions on perinatal mental health, demonstrating improved knowledge through pre- and post-training assessments. 2. Trained Educators: A minimum of 10 Purdue Extension Health and Human Sciences educators will complete the "Train the Trainer" program, with each educator expected to train at least 20 individuals within the first year. 3. Conference Impact: The conference will engage 100 attendees, with 80% reporting increased awareness and understanding of perinatal mental health issues. 4. Statewide Reach: Through statewide partnerships, the project aims to expand training and awareness to reach at least 500 individuals, ultimately fostering sustainable community-based support for perinatal mental health across Indiana.

HEALTH EQUITY STATEMENT:

This project seeks to address significant health disparities in maternal and child health by enhancing access to perinatal mental health education and support, particularly in underserved and underinsured communities across Indiana. A critical component of this initiative is responding to the growing shortage of labor and delivery services in rural areas, which exacerbates existing barriers to care. As of 2025, approximately 42% of rural hospitals in Indiana have ceased providing labor and delivery services, contributing to the creation of maternity care deserts. This trend has been driven by factors such as low Medicaid reimbursement rates, staffing shortages, and financial losses associated with obstetric care (Indiana Capital Chronicle, 2025). Consequently, many expectant and new parents in these regions face increased travel times—often exceeding 30 minutes—to access essential maternity care (March of Dimes, n.d.). Untreated perinatal mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, and psychosis, are among the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth, affecting approximately 1 in 5 women in the U.S. (PMID, 2021). These conditions can lead to severe maternal morbidity, including hypertensive disorders, cesarean sections, preterm births, and low birth weight infants (PMID, 2021).

Moreover, mental health disorders, including suicide and overdose, account for nearly 23% of maternal deaths in the U.S. (Innovation District, 2023). In response to these challenges, this project will implement a comprehensive approach to improve perinatal mental health education and support: 1. Training Healthcare Providers and Community Leaders: Offering educational sessions to equip professionals and community members with the knowledge and skills to identify and support perinatal mental health challenges, enhancing local capacity. 2. "Train the Trainer" Program: Developing a program for Purdue Extension Health and Human Sciences educators to disseminate perinatal mental health education across Indiana, ensuring the sustainability and scalability of these efforts. 3. Conference and Public Awareness: Hosting a conference to engage stakeholders, including individuals with lived experience, to increase awareness of mental health issues during the perinatal period. Expected Outcomes The project anticipates reaching approximately 710 individuals directly and indirectly, with a focus on underserved populations. By enhancing mental health literacy, expanding access to training, and fostering community engagement, the project aims to create a more equitable healthcare landscape for perinatal mental health in Indiana. Conclusion This initiative aligns with Indiana's commitment to improving maternal and child health equity. By addressing systemic barriers and enhancing access to perinatal mental health education and support, the project will contribute to the state's efforts to reduce health disparities and promote the well-being of all mothers and children. References Indiana Capital Chronicle. (2025, April 21). They cared about us more: Rural Indiana communities losing access to labor and delivery services. <https://indianacapitalchronicle.com/2025/04/21/they-cared-about-us-more-rural-indiana-communities-losing-access-to-labor-and-delivery-services> Innovation District. (2023). Maternal mental conditions drive climbing death rate in U.S. Children's National. <https://innovationdistrict.childrensnational.org/maternal-mental-conditions-drive-climbing-death-rate-in-u-s> March of Dimes. (n.d.). Maternity care report: Indiana. <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/assets/s3/reports/mcd/Maternity-Care-Report-Indiana.pdf> PMID. (2021). The impact of untreated perinatal mental health conditions on maternal and child health. PubMed Central. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10213085/> State of Indiana. (n.d.). Health First Indiana: Where We're Starting. <https://www.in.gov/healthfirstindiana/where-we-are-starting/#:~:text=/30/2023.-,Tobacco%2>

BUDGET REQUEST:

\$20,000.00

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:

Total Funding Requested: \$20,000 Proposed Budget Breakdown: 1. Training and Educational Materials: \$4,500 o Development and printing of training materials, manuals, and resources for healthcare providers and community members. 2. "Train the Trainer" Program Costs: \$4,000 o Costs associated with developing and conducting "Train the Trainer" sessions, including facilitator fees, training materials, technology costs, and lunch for participants. 3. Conference, Public Awareness Campaign, and Outreach: \$7,000 o Venue rental, speaker fees, logistics, marketing, promotional materials for the perinatal mental health conference, community engagement efforts to increase awareness and participation, and lunch for conference attendees. 4. Miscellaneous Costs: \$2,000 o Contingency, supplies, travel expenses, and other unforeseen costs, including evaluation tools and assessments. Total Proposed Budget: \$20,000

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN:

The sustainability of this perinatal mental health education program will be ensured through strategic integration into the Purdue Extension system, leveraging its existing infrastructure, resources, and

networks. Beyond the duration of the grant, the program will continue to thrive by focusing on the following key areas: 1. Integration into Purdue Extension's Ongoing Educational Efforts: The perinatal mental health education program will be fully incorporated into Purdue Extension's suite of health and human sciences programming. By embedding this initiative into Purdue Extension's established educational framework, we will ensure its long-term viability. The program will become part of the Extension's regular training offerings, reaching diverse communities across Indiana, particularly underserved and rural populations. 2. Capacity Building through "Train the Trainer": The "Train the Trainer" model developed through this project will serve as a critical mechanism for the program's sustainability. Purdue Extension educators will be equipped with the tools to train future cohorts of professionals and community leaders. This will create a self-perpetuating cycle of training and knowledge dissemination, ensuring that perinatal mental health education remains accessible and relevant to communities long after the grant period ends. 3. Partnerships and Collaborations: Purdue Extension will leverage its strong network of local organizations, health providers, and community leaders to sustain the program. Partnerships with local hospitals, health systems, and community-based organizations will ensure that the program continues to receive support and resources. Additionally, collaborations with state and national organizations will strengthen the program's long-term impact and reach. 4. Incorporating Program Funding into Existing Budgets: Once established, the program will seek to secure ongoing funding through Purdue Extension's budgetary processes, as well as through new grants, corporate sponsorships, and public-private partnerships. Extension staff will actively pursue funding opportunities to support the continued operation of the program, including seeking funding through the state and federal sources for maternal and child health, as well as local philanthropy. 5. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement: Continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms will be built into the program to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Purdue Extension will utilize both formal and informal assessment tools to track program outcomes and identify areas for improvement. By embedding evaluation into the program's structure, we can make data-driven decisions to ensure that the program remains aligned with community needs and health outcomes over time. 6. Community Engagement and Awareness: Ongoing outreach and community engagement efforts will ensure that the program maintains its visibility and impact. Purdue Extension will continue to foster relationships with key stakeholders in the community, including healthcare providers, policymakers, and local leaders. Additionally, Extension will utilize its communications platforms (website, social media, newsletters) to maintain awareness of the program, share success stories, and recruit new participants. By embedding the program within the Purdue Extension system and fostering partnerships, capacity building, and continued funding efforts, the project will have a lasting impact on perinatal mental health education in Indiana, ultimately contributing to the long-term health and well-being of mothers, children, and communities across the state.

DIGITAL SIGNATURE:

Angela Sorg