



Application Overview

Community Options – Meaningful Life-Meaningful Love

Grant: Pilot Projects to Support Self-Advocacy

Award Amount: \$98,118; (\$33,242 Match)

Contract Period: October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020

Community Options is proposing to train individuals with I/DD to be empowered and maintain safe, healthy romantic relationships by utilizing the curriculum Meaningful Life/Meaningful Love. Up to 8 individuals with I/DD, and 8 social services professionals will become trained Sexuality Educators, which will allow them to serve as peer mentors, become leaders in their communities, and share their experiences on the importance of knowing and having safe and healthy romantic relationships among people with disabilities. The program will take place in Maricopa and Pima Counties, and is targeting 40 individuals with I/DD.

Meaningful Life/Meaningful Love is a best practice research curriculum developed by Katherine McLaughlin, M.Ed. She is a certified sexuality educator by the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists, She is also the founder of Elevatus Training, LLC and she has direct personal experience in this field as a person who became a permanent wheelchair user as a result of spinal cord injury. The curriculum is person-centered based and topics include how to cultivate and sustain healthy romantic relationships, types of relationships, sexual health, crisis prevention lessons and techniques, and how to communicate their needs with their partners, peers, family members and staff.

Components of the training:

1. Targeting 40 age young adults*

Community Options replied in their third clarification that high school youth will be a smaller participant group and any high school student who participates must be 18 years of age or older. The AZ Association of Providers for People with Disabilities will assist in recruiting the target group for the classes.

2. Partnering with AZ Association of Providers for People with Disabilities to recruit social services providers to participate in the 2 day Sexuality Educator Trainings and weekly Meaningful

Life/Meaningful Love classes. N=8 (although clarification responses differs from statement in the original proposal)

3. Partnering with local schools (no letters of support by schools/ schools named in third clarification response) to recruit young adults to participate in the 2-day Sexuality Educator Trainings and weekly Meaningful Life/Meaningful Love classes. N=8

4. The 2 day Sexuality Educators Trainings will take place at Tempe Public Library and Pima County Public Library. In turn, after the completion of the training, teams of the service professionals and self-advocates will co-lead up to 8 sex education classes, serving up to 40 people with I/DD residing in both Maricopa and Pima Counties.

5. Sexuality Educators will tailor the instruction to the 40 participants that are recruited and may extend or repeat curriculum lessons if necessary. This is a year-long project, which will be implemented in two-11 week sessions.

6. Community Options stated all trainers selected for the program must pass the DES Central Registry Background Check.

7. Evaluation will include the following:

- * Community Options uses an internal self-assessment form for the 8-hour training with an evaluation form created by Elevatus Training, to determine if the 16 trainers learn and retain the 2 day training information;
- * Leadership Team will convene bimonthly during the first quarter, then monthly during second and fourth quarters to discuss participants' progress and make any program adjustments;
- * Leadership Team will have quarterly conference calls with Elevatus Training, LLC to allow program staff to share about their experiences, ask questions, discuss/resolve problems etc.
- * Community Options will distribute 3 surveys to gage participants' knowledge regarding key topics in the curriculum.

8. Sustainability plan – Community Options will encourage the Self-Advocate Sexuality Educators to donate time to teach program classes to additional students; Community Options will donate their office space for classroom instructions; and they will seek other sources of funding based on the outcome data they will collect.

9. Michigan is the only other state that has utilized this curriculum (see second clarification response for numbers served).