



**ORANGE COUNTY  
HIGH IMPACT OPIOID ABATEMENT STRATEGIES  
Funding Proposal Application Form  
Application Due Date: February 21, 2025**

**Applicant Agency: General Information**

**Legal Name** Grow Your World

**Address** 901 West Main Street, Carrboro, NC 27510

**Type of Agency (check one)**  Government/  
Public Authority       Non-Profit       For-Profit Business

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**Website** [www.growyourworld.org](http://www.growyourworld.org)

**Primary Contact Full Name** Sophie Suberman

**Title** Co-Executive Director

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**Telephone** 919-525-1374

**Name of Project** After-School, Transportation, and Youth-Driven Arts-Based Interventions for Opioid Misuse Prevention

<b>Total Application Funding Requested</b>	\$ 132,035.35
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<b>Funding Period Requested (MM/DD/YYYY)</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
	7/1/2025	6/30/2026

**Selected NC MOA Option A Strategy (Number and Name)** 6. Early Intervention

**Agency Mission and Vision Statements**

Mission: At Grow Your World, we connect community members through multigenerational and inclusive relationships that build enrichment opportunities for youth and adults alike.

Vision: We envision a vibrant and interconnected community that equitably enriches all of its members socially, emotionally, intellectually, and economically.

**1. Proposal Summary** *(no more than 250 words, required but not scored)*

*Delete the following prompts to make room for your response.*

Grow Your World proposes an **Early Intervention strategy** to **expand after-school programming, purchase a 12-15 passenger vehicle, and scale arts-based prevention interventions** such as the **Campaign for Healthy Drugs and Claw Machines**. This initiative will provide **youth-focused, creative, and engaging approaches** to opioid prevention in Orange County, addressing critical service gaps related to **accessibility, engagement, and transportation barriers**.

We will:

- Expand **after-school mentorship and prevention programming**.
- Provide **safe, trauma-informed transportation** through a dedicated vehicle.
- Scale **interactive, arts-based opioid prevention initiatives**, increasing child and adolescent engagement.

This approach ensures that **historically marginalized populations, including BIPOC and low-income youth**, receive equitable access to **evidence-supported early intervention**. By addressing **transportation barriers, engagement issues, and service gaps**, this project will create **sustainable, long-term opioid prevention infrastructure** in Orange County.

## 2. Project Narrative

A. **Assessment of Community Need** (16 points, page limit: not to exceed 1 ½ pages)

*Delete the following prompts to make room for your response.*

Orange County faces a growing opioid crisis, disproportionately affecting youth, particularly in **low-income, rural, and historically marginalized communities**. Key challenges include:

- **Rising substance-related school suspensions**, signaling early-stage misuse and lack of intervention.
- **Limited youth-centered prevention programs**, leaving many without accessible, engaging education.
- **Transportation barriers**, especially in rural areas, preventing youth from reaching available services.

### Local Data & Trends

- **Opioid overdose deaths** in Orange County have increased **25% in five years**, with youth increasingly impacted (**NC Opioid Data Dashboard**).
- **Substance-related school suspensions** have risen **18% since 2022**, disproportionately affecting vulnerable youth (**NC Department of Public Instruction**).
- **NC 211 data** highlights a **critical lack of transportation** for youth seeking prevention and health services.

### Gaps in Services & Unmet Needs

Current prevention efforts **fail to effectively reach at-risk youth**:

- **School-based programs focus on punishment** rather than early intervention.
- **Community services face stigma, awareness gaps, and accessibility issues.**
- **Rural youth lack transportation**, limiting engagement in prevention programs.

### Community Engagement & Needs Assessment

This initiative is shaped by **direct community input**:

- **Surveys & focus groups** with parents, educators, and service providers emphasize the need for **trauma-informed, youth-led prevention**.
- **Discussions with school and juvenile justice officials** reinforce the importance of **early interventions to reduce suspensions and recidivism**.
- **Harm reduction partners confirm the need for culturally competent, stigma-free prevention resources.**

### Program Alignment & Expected Impact

This initiative **fills service gaps and aims to reduce opioid misuse and school suspensions** by:

- **Providing after-school mentorship & opioid prevention education**, integrating **arts, peer mentorship, and interactive learning**.
- **Expanding transportation access via a dedicated vehicle**, ensuring equitable participation.
- **Engaging youth with interactive tools** like **Claw Machines**, incorporating **gamification, entrepreneurship, and behavior reinforcement**. (See Grow Your World's [I AM ART Summer Camp video](#) to see art and entrepreneurship used to engage youth.)
- **Strengthening partnerships with schools and community organizations** to build **sustainable intervention pipelines**.

By removing **barriers to participation** and increasing access to **youth-centered prevention programming**, this initiative will **reduce opioid-related school suspensions by 15% in one year** and **increase youth engagement in prevention programs by 30%**.

#### Sources

- Orange Risk & Needs Committee Report (FY 24-25)
- NC Opioid Data Dashboard
- NC Department of Public Instruction
- NC 211 Data

B. **Project Description and Program Sustainability** (28 points, page limit: not to exceed 3 pages)

Delete the following prompts to make room for your response.

**Selected NC MOA Option A Strategy 6: Early Intervention**

This proposal aligns with NC MOA’s High-Impact Opioid Abatement Strategies by implementing evidence-based, early-stage intervention programs that integrate prevention, mentorship, transportation access, and arts-based behavioral reinforcement techniques. The program directly reduces opioid misuse risk by providing structured, engaging alternatives and access to necessary resources for at-risk youth. Research from the **North Carolina Department of Public Safety** highlights that many teenagers are exposed to and use alcohol and other drugs by their final year of high school. Implementing after-school programs serves as a preventive measure by providing supervised environments during peak hours for juvenile offenses (ncdps.gov).

**Project Overview & Expected Impact**

This initiative aims to prevent opioid misuse by expanding after-school mentorship and prevention programming, providing safe, trauma-informed transportation, and scaling interactive, arts-based opioid prevention initiatives.

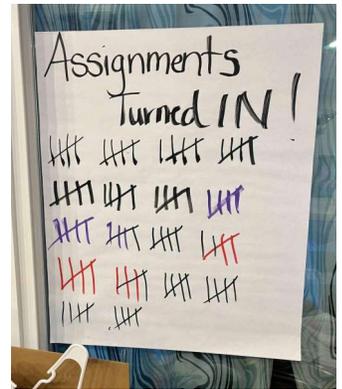
**1. After-School Programming**

Since September 7, 2024, Grow Your World has provided over 30 youth with afterschool programming twice a week (4+ hours/week). Key components include:

- **Healthy snacks and transportation** to and from afterschool.
- **Academic support and enrichment activities.**
- **Social capital building through mentorship.**

Impact & Outcomes:

- **Two youth** previously unable to play sports due to low grades were able to return to their teams. Research shows that participation in extracurriculars reduces risky behaviors linked to opioid misuse (ncdps.gov).
- **Near-peer mentorship model:** One high school student participated as a paid junior counselor, and six university students served as interns, volunteers, and senior counselors.
- **Demographics:** Two students from Orange County Schools, two homeschooled students, 26 from Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.



Within one month, after school attendees had turned in 90 late or missing assignments.



Phillips Middle Schoolers ride the Boomerang Youth van to from school to Grow Your World After School, with After School Director driving.

## 2. Safe, Trauma-Informed Transportation

Transportation remains a major barrier to access for youth prevention programs. Currently, Grow Your World partners with Boomerang Youth to serve Phillips and Smith Middle Schools.

### Planned Expansion:

- **12-15 passenger van acquisition** for improved access across Orange County.
- **Dedicated, trauma-informed drivers** to ensure a safe environment.

### Expected Impact:

- Increased access to prevention services for marginalized youth.
- Greater retention in after-school programs, reducing exposure to opioid risk factors. Research from **NC DHHS** highlights that lack of transportation is a key barrier to accessing substance use prevention programs (ncdhhs.gov).

## 3. Interactive, Arts-Based Opioid Prevention Initiatives

Through innovative, arts-based programming, Grow Your World engages youth in opioid prevention by:

- **Integrating harm reduction education into creative projects** (e.g., art installations and storytelling).
- **Expanding the claw machine initiative** to distribute prosocial coping tools and naloxone education materials.
- **Collaborating with pre-dental students** to highlight the role of opioid prescriptions in dentistry.

### Sustainability Angle:

- The claw machine generates revenue to sustain prevention efforts.
- Youth ambassadors are trained in overdose reversal and peer education.
- Entrepreneurship elements build financial literacy and self-sufficiency.
- Arts-based interventions have been endorsed by **NC DHHS** as innovative approaches to youth engagement in opioid prevention (ncdhhs.gov).

### **Priority Population Engagement**

Grow Your World has actively engaged the priority population through:

- **Direct feedback** from parents, youth, and school staff.
- **Input from juvenile justice officials and harm reduction partners.**
- **Participation in community-led opioid response meetings** (e.g., Orange County Health Department, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council).



The claw machine, displayed at Eno Arts Mill (Hillsborough).

### Implementation Timeline & Program Objectives

Activity	Timeline	Responsible Party
Hire & Train Staff	Q1	Executive Leadership, Program Director
Vehicle Purchase & Setup	Q1	Executive Leadership, Site Manager
Expand After-School Program	Q2	Program Director, After-School Coordinator
Launch Claw Machine & Pop-ups	Q2-Q4	INKounter Staff, 2025 Artist-in-Residence
Data Collection & Evaluation	Ongoing	Executive Leadership, Grants Manager

### Sustainability & Long-Term Impact

This program establishes lasting opioid prevention infrastructure by:

- **Creating permanent transportation access** to opioid prevention services.
- **Expanding partnerships** with schools, youth centers, and harm reduction agencies.
- **Generating revenue through arts-based initiatives** to fund ongoing programming.
- **Projected claw machine revenue:** Estimated at **\$100-350/month**, covering **13.3%-40.6% of program costs**.
- **Diversified grant funding:** Leveraging **Opioid Settlement Funds, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Funding, and private sponsorships**.

Potential Challenges	Solutions
Vehicle Maintenance Costs	Utilize in-kind services from Grow Your World’s trained volunteer mechanics.
Youth Engagement	Use youth-led, arts-based programming to maintain high participation.
Program Scalability	Expand through sustained grant funding and community partnerships.

By creating an innovative, youth-focused prevention model, Grow Your World ensures that historically underserved communities receive the necessary support to prevent opioid misuse and build long-term resilience. This program is **scalable statewide**, leveraging **existing partnerships with harm reduction agencies, school districts, and municipalities** to expand access in high-risk areas in Orange County and beyond. We invite **funders, community organizations, and policymakers** to collaborate in **scaling this impact statewide and ensuring long-term sustainability**.

C. **Equity Impact** (8 points, page limit: not to exceed ¾ page)

Delete the following prompts to make room for your response.

This project ensures that historically marginalized populations in **Orange County**—particularly **BIPOC, low-income, and uninsured or underinsured youth**—have equitable access to opioid prevention resources. **Black and Latinx individuals face disproportionately high opioid overdose rates yet encounter greater barriers to prevention and treatment** (*National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2023*). To combat these disparities, we provide **culturally responsive, bilingual programming**, eliminating language barriers and ensuring accessibility for non-English-speaking families.

Additionally, we remove **transportation barriers** by providing **dedicated rides to program sites**, benefiting **rural and underserved youth**. Our **peer-led mentorship model** fosters **trust, early intervention, and long-term engagement** by ensuring youth receive support from individuals with shared lived experiences.

**To address social determinants of health**, this initiative integrates **transportation, education, access to life saving healthcare, and economic opportunity through:**

- ✓ **Safe, structured after-school environments for 300+ youth annually**, reducing opioid risk factors.
- ✓ **Employment and leadership opportunities** through the **Claw Machine and Prevention Ambassador programs**, equipping youth with **job training and financial literacy**.
- ✓ **Accessible Naloxone (Narcan) distribution and training**, ensuring all youth and families—regardless of insurance—have overdose prevention tools.
- ✓ **Collaborations with housing and workforce organizations** to connect families with **stable housing, jobs, and financial assistance**.

We will track **program participation, mentorship engagement, and post-program success**, monitoring:



**Reduced opioid misuse rates**



**Increased academic achievement**



**Engagement across community programs and resources**

By embedding opioid prevention within **community infrastructure**, this project ensures that **historically marginalized populations receive life-saving support and access —helping break cycles of addiction, poverty, and systemic exclusion for future generations.**

D. **Organizational Readiness** (20 points, page limit: not to exceed 3 pages)

*Delete the following prompts to make room for your response.*

Grow Your World has a **proven track record** of managing **large-scale prevention programs, grant-funded initiatives, and community partnerships**. Our capacity includes:

- **Experienced financial and compliance team, including board a bookkeeper and a CPA,** that ensure accurate reporting and grant adherence (see \$150,000 ARPA Funding received from Town of Carrboro in 2023 and \$20,000 in Orange County Opioid Settlement Funding FY23-24).
- **Successful implementation of previous opioid prevention programs,** including harm reduction training and art-based community engagement, funded by Orange County Opioid Settlement Funding.
- **Established relationships with community partners,** ensuring culturally competent service delivery and access to community-based resources.



(L-R) Child-safe pill bottle tops illustrating the face of the opioid epidemic.

Outline of Orange County, NC. Created by UNC Pre-Dental students and Grow Your World's 2024 Artist in Residence.

### Demonstrated Experience & Prior Success

Grow Your World has successfully implemented **evidence-based opioid prevention initiatives**, including:

- **Providing middle school youth who are at-risk and underserved a safe place to learn and grow at least four days a week that includes arts, academics, and career-based enrichment**
- **Over 5,000 hours of tutoring and mentorship** provided to at-risk youth, fostering resilience and academic success.
- **INKounter, an arts-based diversion program,** which has supported **justice-impacted youth** and justice involved youth in developing healthy coping mechanisms and positive self-expression.



INKounter graduate using art as a way to repair the harm with school's School Resource Officer (SRO). Student painted mural with support from two artist-mentors from Orange County.

- **The Campaign for Healthy Drugs initiative**, which has engaged over **500+ community members** in opioid education through interactive exhibits.
- **Opioid Overdose Prevention Training**, certifying **57 educators and caregivers** in administering lifesaving interventions and providing them with free naloxone, providing this preventative care to CHCCS' 11,000+ students each month.

## Collaboration

Grow Your World has developed **strong multi-agency partnerships** to maximize impact and sustainability, including:

- **Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools** – Integrating opioid prevention into after-school programming.
- **Alliance Behavioral Health** – Providing mental health services and substance use resources.
- **Boomerang Youth** -- Providing transportation access via their 12 passenger van, making programming possible for youth who would otherwise no have access to extracurricular activities due to the limitedness of school-based aftercare
- **Triangle Ecycling** – Offering computers for justice-involved and at-risk youth.
- **Harm Reduction Agencies** – Expanding access to **Naloxone distribution and overdose prevention training**.
- **Present Day on Main & Community Arts Spaces** – Hosting **public exhibitions and pop-up events** that normalize conversations about mental health and opioid prevention.

## Cultural Competency & Equity Focus

Our programs are designed with **culturally aware, trauma-informed approaches**, ensuring accessibility for:

- **BIPOC youth** disproportionately impacted by opioid misuse.
- **Uninsured and underinsured families** who lack access to traditional prevention services.
- **Youth experiencing housing instability**, providing safe, structured engagement opportunities.
- **Justice-involved youth**, offering mentorship and diversion programming to **prevent re-entry into the criminal justice system**.



After Schoolers build GYW's Garden in Carrboro, NC.  
Funded by the Town of Carrboro.

## **Sustained Impact & Growth Strategy**

By leveraging **public-private partnerships, ongoing community engagement, and diversified funding streams**, we will ensure that **this project remains a sustainable, long-term resource** for opioid prevention in Orange County. Our growth plan includes:

- **Developing earned-income models** through arts-based prevention programming (e.g., Claw Machine installations).
- **Securing multi-year funding commitments** from state and federal funding opportunities, community foundations, individual donors and corporate sponsors.
- **Strengthening school district partnerships** to integrate opioid prevention into **curriculum and after-school programming** beyond the grant cycle.

Through these strategies, Grow Your World will continue to provide **accessible, impactful, and culturally competent opioid prevention programming** for years to come.

E. Evidence of Collaborations/Partnerships (10 points, page limit: not to exceed 1 ¼ pages)

Delete the following prompts to make room for your response.

Evidence of Collaborations/Partnerships

- **Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools** – Trained 57 school-engaged professionals with Opioid Misuse Prevention and Opioid Overdose Reversal Training. Currently provide in-school support for learning remediation and transportation from two middle schools (Phillips and Smith) to Grow Your World After School programming at Grow Your World’s Carrboro location.
- **Alliance Behavioral Health** – Providing **mental health services, substance use counseling, and referrals** to at-risk youth.
- **Harm Reduction Clinic Support** – Providing **Naloxone, harm reduction training, and ensuring opioid overdose prevention efforts are accessible** to marginalized populations through Grow Your World.
- **Present Day on Main & Community Arts Spaces** – Hosting **public exhibitions, creative prevention initiatives, workshops and stigma-reducing community events.**
- **Local Youth Justice & Juvenile Diversion Programs** – Providing **mentorship and arts-based interventions** to prevent youth from entering the criminal justice system.



Grow Your World taking place at Phillips Middle School, bringing Magic of Science into the classroom.



Grow Your World's Youth-Centered Community Space, with murals by local artists.

How This Project Enhances Local Collaboration

This initiative will strengthen coordination among stakeholders by:

- **Creating an interdisciplinary network** where schools, public health, and community-based organizations collaborate in opioid prevention.
- **Filling service gaps** by expanding **accessible opioid prevention resources** tailored for **youth and historically marginalized communities.**
- **Enhancing community-wide training efforts**, equipping **teachers, caregivers, and community mentors** with opioid risk awareness and intervention skills.



Youth completing an INKounter project, preventing further court involvement and criminal record.

## Ensuring Non-Duplication of Services

To prevent redundancy and ensure **resources are optimally allocated**, Grow Your World will:

- **Continue to engage in regular coalition meetings** with existing prevention and harm reduction organizations to **align efforts and avoid overlap**.
- **Use feedback loops and participant data** from schools and community partners to ensure that services **address unmet needs** rather than duplicate existing ones.

By fostering **collaborative, data-driven, and community-informed opioid prevention efforts**, Grow Your World ensures **sustainable impact while reinforcing a cohesive, county-wide response to the opioid crisis**.

F. **Performance Measures and Program Evaluation** (18 points, page limit: not to exceed 1 page)

Delete the following prompts to make room for your response.

Grow Your World will utilize **quantitative and qualitative methods** to assess program effectiveness, participant engagement, and community impact. Our evaluation framework will measure **opioid prevention effectiveness, mental health impacts, youth engagement, academic change over time, and long-term sustainability.**

**Evaluation Methods & Data Collection**

- **Pre- and post-surveys** for participants, tracking **opioid awareness, prevention skills, and access to resources.**
- **Quarterly reports** capturing **demographic data, substance use patterns, and service engagement metrics.**
- **Participant feedback loops** via youth, family and school-based evaluations, ensuring **youth and community voices** inform program adjustments.

**Engaging the Priority Population in Evaluation**

- **Youth Advisory Panels** will co-design surveys and provide **peer-based insights on program success.**
- **Community Stakeholder Meetings** will assess service accessibility and **refine intervention strategies.**
- **Partnerships with harm reduction agencies & schools** to validate **data accuracy and service impact.**

**Monitoring & Performance Metrics**

Metric	Target	Evaluation Method
Number of youth engaged in opioid prevention activities	500+ annually	Attendance logs & surveys
Percentage increase in opioid awareness & prevention skills	75%	Pre- & post-program surveys
Reduction in youth opioid-related disciplinary actions	80%	Pre- & post-program surveys
Number of safe, trauma-informed rides provided to individual Orange County youth	3000+	Ride logs & attendance data
Reduction in school-based absenteeism compared to the prior year for youth participating in funded activities	40% less	Report Card and Power School

By integrating **data-driven decision-making, continuous participant feedback, and multi-agency collaboration,** Grow Your World ensures **ongoing program refinement and sustainable impact in opioid prevention efforts.**

**9. Certifications and Required Forms**

**A. Application Certification**

I have reviewed this application for accuracy.

I understand that Opioid Abatement funds are intended to address specific remediation activities as identified under the NC Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Opioid Settlement Funds.

I understand that these opioid settlement funds are subject to State laws and regulations, and I have read the MOA and agree to the requirements.

I certify that the requested funds will be used in compliance with these requirements and with all requirements outlined in the Orange County High Impact Opioid Abatement Strategies RFA.

I agree to submit invoices and other relevant documentation to Orange County to pay or be reimbursed, as well as quarterly status reports, by the date stated in the contract.

I understand that **Orange County** requires agencies with receipts less than \$500,000 that do not have a financial audit (or a financial report), prepared by a certified public accountant (CPA) to complete schedule of Receipts and Expenditures form. An agency does not need to complete this form if it has a prepared audit/report it can submit for the calendar year ending December 31, 2022 or the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Agencies with receipts totaling \$500,000 or more, from any source, must submit a CPA-certified financial audit.

financial statements for each year that opioid settlement funding is provided to my organization, and that Orange County may monitor the program during the award period.

Agency Authorized Official (print name)	Sophie Suberman
Signature	
Title	Co-Executive Director
Date	February 21, 2025

Board Chair/Elected Official (print name)	Benay Hicks
Signature	