

conversation starters

FALL 2025

The newsletter of PreventEd

Navigating Uncertainty

By Jenny Armbruster



Jenny Armbruster
Executive Director

In my first year as Executive Director, there were questions and growth I anticipated around settling into the new position and vision for PreventEd in the coming years. One question that I did not expect (and has been asked most frequently) is “Has your funding been impacted with all the changes at the federal level?”. I am not sure if most non-profits could have truly

forecasted how much uncertainty would exist in 2025 for our funding and our work. Of course, there has been some impact on our funding. PreventEd has been fortunate that the funding we receive from the federal level, both directly and indirectly, has not been terminated with new executive orders or funding structures. We have been able to continue services under existing contracts.

This does not mean the impact is not significant. While current contracts are maintained, there have not been as many additional options for new or ongoing funding applications available from federal departments. Several of our current contracts are set to expire in 2026. New opportunities that were released have updated criteria to navigate and often smaller allocations than past versions. The ripple of changes can also be seen at the local level. PreventEd receives county-level funding in our region through local sales tax initiatives. Annual awards through these funding sources have started to be reduced as local economies face lower revenues from sales tax. As I write, we are currently in the early days of the government shutdown with uncertainty about how long it will last. This presents a new obstacle to address at the end of the year.

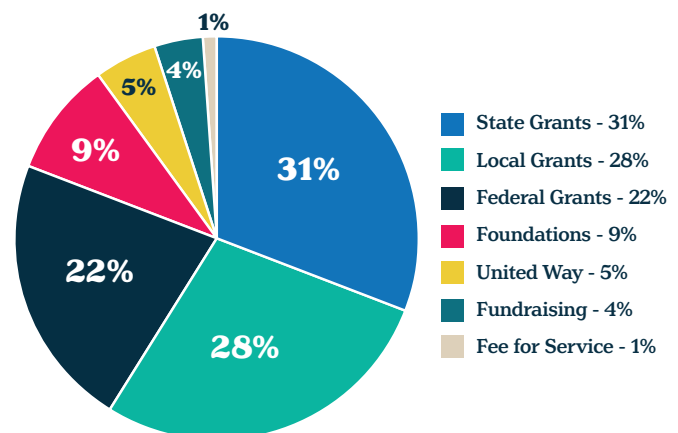
Most political and financial experts predict that funding will only get tighter in the years to come, with rising costs and less revenue. We know there are challenges ahead, and we also know that our work at PreventEd remains necessary in our communities. As the world continues to ebb and flow, young people still must be educated and empowered to make healthy

decisions regarding substances, communities can be supported to provide caring environments, and individuals needing resources need to be connected to people to walk with them in their journey.

We know we will remain steadfast in our mission to prevent and reduce the harm of substance use. To not have interruptions to services and be able to sustain our programming, we must be able to fill in gaps and have the flexibility to allocate resources where they are needed most. We know we cannot do this without the support and dedication of our donors, partners, and funders. Our fundraising efforts will be as important as always with specific asks and focused on program sustainability. With your continued support, we can ensure PreventEd’s vital work continues to make a lasting impact in our community. 🗨️

“
We know there are challenges ahead, and we also know that our work at PreventEd remains necessary in our communities.”

PreventEd’s Funding Breakdown



Prevention Has Evolved—And It's Working

By Kelly Wieser



I grew up in the '80's. We are talking Duran Duran posters, a wardrobe of hand-me-downs, mullets, playing outside until dinner, and learning to type on a typewriter. A Google search yearning for simpler times will yield a variety of threads meaning very different things depending on your culled algorithm. Being on the other side of 50, I have started looking in the rear view mirror occasionally thinking about when things felt simpler, safer, and sans smartphones. Childhood years worked for many of us.

One thing that didn't work for most kids growing up in that era was the egg and frying pan analogy. The "Just Say No!" public service announcements fed to us between cartoons and cereal commercials on Saturday mornings were meant to give us the tool to stay drug free. Some kids were scared away from drugs and alcohol because they were terrified that their brains would end up like the egg sizzling in the frying pan. Unfortunately, a multitude of kids ignored or laughed at the messaging or took it as a challenge. While well-intended, the messaging was not effective at preventing substance misuse.

No catchy slogan is the perfect anti-drug. Visuals alone cannot convince a young person who is wired to rebel, push boundaries, impress others, and experiment with the world around them to make healthy choices with alcohol and other drugs. What has proven to be effective is unbiased information and having trustworthy adults who listen, set boundaries, and role model healthy behaviors.



That is what prevention educators provide each time we walk into a classroom. We explain that PreventEd is an organization that cares about kids and their communities. We want them to have the information and tools they need to live long, healthy, happy lives. We are driven to reduce or prevent harms caused by substances. Our lessons are evidence informed, rooted in brain science, unbiased, destigmatizing, and accurate information, rather than a litany of anecdotes, opinions, or scare tactics. While parents/guardians are still the most powerful anti-drug, we enter classrooms as another adult who cares about them and their futures. We do not tell them what to do but rather encourage them to use what we share in class to help them make informed choices.

Our prevention educators have huge hearts. Working in schools with children requires you to get on a stage every day, performing at your highest level to engage, inform, and inspire. As a non-profit, we will never be able to pay our educators what they are worth, and yet, they show up and deliver results daily. Their efforts pay off as communities and families avoid/circumvent paying for the harms caused by alcohol and other drugs. A recent study found that over \$7,000 is saved when effective prevention education programming is implemented in schools and communities.¹

By teaming up with coalitions, concerned citizens, health officials, teachers, counselors, coaches, and family members, our efforts are making a difference. But due to fluctuating sale tax revenues and changing expectations in how we apply for funding at the



state and federal level, non-profits and the services they provide the public are at risk. While our funding is secure this year, what lies ahead is less certain.

As prevention educators one of the lessons we teach is about control and how successful people spend their time trying to adjust things within their control. Despite funding uncertainty, non-profits must continue to deliver the best possible services and outcomes to the public while putting their best applications for funding forward. Our educators are committed to quality lessons. We show up and perform at our best each time we enter the classroom, building rapport, resilience skills, and expanding knowledge and understanding with our students. As an organization, we will continue applying for the types of funding that make sense for PreventEd, our students, our clients, and the communities we serve.

While many other aspects of our lives may feel like we are on a rollercoaster, one area in which parents, educators, and community leaders should be able to agree upon is doing our best as adults to prevent the ills that could befall our children

and future generations, substance misuse being one of them. We should all want kids to live long, healthy, happy lives.

I can assure you PreventEd's educators are delivering programming to support our youth in their foundational years while leadership at PreventEd is committed to being the best stewards with each dollar that comes through our doors. 🗨️

“

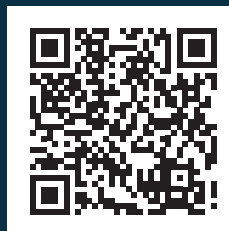
As a non-profit, we will never be able to pay our educators what they are worth, and yet, they show up and deliver results daily.

1. Dr. Nora Volkow, *Investing in Prevention Makes Good Financial Sense*
<https://nida.nih.gov/about-nida/noras-blog/2022/04/investing-in-prevention-makes-good-financial-sense>



PrevenTable Season 5 Is a Wrap, but the Conversations Live On.

Another season of the PrevenTable is in the books! This year, we welcomed an incredible lineup of guests and explored a wide range of topics—from current drug trends and the opening of The Collective to honest conversations about cannabis with college, high school, and middle school students, and much more. Stay tuned for Season 6 premiering early next year!



Scan the QR code to listen the PrevenTable today!

COALITION SPOTLIGHT

Living With Purpose



Living With Purpose is a St. Louis-based nonprofit dedicated to empowering individuals and families through housing, education, behavioral health, and community engagement. Founded in 2012, LWP

provides residential and supportive services for adults with developmental disabilities, helping them live independently and thrive within their communities, hence earning the title “Community Resource Hub.” Their mission drives them to go beyond the issue of housing, focusing on the whole individual and the community at large.

In their organizational vision, LWP shares that “We strive to increase the quality of life by fostering stability, connection, and opportunity, ensuring that neighborhoods are strengthened and all people have the support they need to flourish.” For the past 13 years, LWP has done just that. They address broader health and social needs across the region through a variety of events, programs and partnerships. LWP offers mental health and substance use prevention and support, workforce development programs, and community integration activities that promote stability and self-sufficiency as well as overall community health and wellness.



From fun youth events like the Back to School Extravaganza; Halloween Trunk or Treat; and the Dream and Design Youth Kick Back, to powerful community programs like Sharing Hope: Empowering Mental Health in St. Louis, Healthy Hearts Strong Communities heart health event, and the Men’s Health and Resources Expo, LWP shows up year-round to support and strengthen the community. They also serve as a hub of partnership and collaboration by housing the local Baden Community Coalition. Through compassion, advocacy, and education, Living With Purpose works with energy and passion to make our communities safer and healthier places to thrive.

Have questions or want to get involved? Learn more about Living With Purpose by visiting www.lwpstl.org

YOP Tax Credits Available

PreventEd has been awarded YOP tax credits by the Missouri Department of Economic Development to support our in-school prevention education programs. With a YOP Tax Credit, you can pay less in Missouri state income tax while supporting PreventEd’s youth prevention education programs! Anyone with a Missouri Tax Liability and a donation of \$1,000 or more to PreventEd is eligible.

Federal Tax Bracket	32%			
	with YOP	without YOP	with YOP	without YOP
Investment Amount	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500
Federal Tax Savings (32%)*	(\$800)	(\$1,600)	(\$400)	(\$800)
MO Tax Savings (6%)	(\$300)	(\$300)	(\$150)	(\$150)
MO Tax Savings YOP	(\$2,500)		(\$1,250)	
Out-of-Pocket Cost	\$1,400	\$3,100	\$700	\$1,550

*only 50% of YOP eligible deduction can be claimed on federal return

HOW IT WORKS

Make your contribution of \$1,000 or more to PreventEd. Be sure to indicate your desire to apply for tax credits on your donation (check or online from memo line). We will send you an acknowledgment and brief instructions on how to fill out the tax credit application.

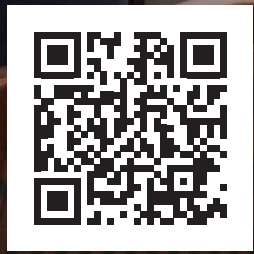
**PreventEd advises you to consult your tax advisor to find out how much you can personally benefit from tax credit programs.*

For more information, contact J.P. Johnson at jjohnson@prevented.org or call 314.886.6778



It starts with you.

What if your donation could change a life? Even the smallest gift can help us prevent and reduce the harms of alcohol and other drug use. **Scan the QR code to give.**



Walking Together One Last Time

The 2025 Stomp Out Addiction Walk was a success! On Sunday, October 12th, supporters gathered at Faith Oakville for the last time to walk two miles to raise awareness and support people who are struggling with substance misuse. We are so grateful for a community full of individuals who believe in our mission. Thank you for walking with us, and thank you to Faith Oakville for putting on a great event over the years. Together with our donors, sponsors, and resource partners, our community truly came together to make a difference!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Please visit our website for the most up-to-date event information and registration: prevented.org/events

