

Lead Priority: FASD Prevention Grants

(more information on back)

BILL #: HF 2160/SF 2090

Proof Alliance is advocating for an increase of \$500k annually for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) prevention programs that support pregnant and parenting women with histories of alcohol use disorders. This grant program provides evidence-based and culturally appropriate recovery support services. The program not only supports women during pregnancy but prevents future alcohol-exposed pregnancies by providing wraparound services to increase stability and maintain recovery.

The proposed increase will expand the FASD Prevention Grants to additional geographical regions of Minnesota to increase our reach to underserved communities.

Support Priorities:

In addition to the Proof Alliance leading legislative priority, we support the following priorities led by partners including, but not limited to, The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCDD) and Coalition for Children with Disabilities.

Support Priority: Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Families

Proof Alliance supports anticipated legislation by the Minnesota Department of Health to provide quality improvement efforts for perinatal healthcare professionals to increase knowledge and skills to improve the health outcomes of pregnant people and their infants.

Support Priority: Higher Education Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

Proof Alliance supports legislation expanding access to inclusive higher education to help young adults with an FASD explore college opportunities, earn meaningful credentials and obtain knowledge to secure employment at competitive wages.

Support Priority: Equitable Schools for Children with Disabilities

Proof Alliance supports legislation that creates equity in schools for children with disabilities by decreasing exclusionary discipline practices. We support the decrease of suspensions and expulsions for students with disabilities and seek to reduce disciplinary practices such as withholding recess for students with disabilities.

Support Priority: Increasing Support for School Paraprofessionals

Proof Alliance supports legislation to increase funding for paraprofessionals to receive paid professional development to enhance skills to support students with disabilities. Paraprofessionals play a critical role in the success of students with an FASD.

Lead Priority: FASD Prevention Grants – Rationale

Prevention grants support grantee organizations in providing community-based long-term recovery support services for women that are pregnant or parenting with histories of alcohol-use disorders and substance-use disorders to:

- Reduce the incidence rates of FASD and other drug-related effects in children in Minnesota.
- Prevent future alcohol-exposed pregnancies by providing wraparound services to women in recovery and their children, increasing their ability to maintain sobriety.
- Monitor children of mothers enrolled in the programs for developmental delays.

Current Reach and Impact:

The current reach of these grant-funded services includes:

- *The five-county metro area and Benton, Stearns, Olmsted and Winona counties*
- *On average, 93% of babies born to women participating in the program are born without prenatal alcohol exposure. In fact, during the last reporting cycle, 100% of the babies were born without prenatal alcohol exposure.*

Opportunity to Reach More Families in More Communities:

These grants only reach a small fraction of those who would benefit from the services.

- In Minnesota, 13.1% of pregnancies are exposed to alcohol. This means that an estimated 8,755 babies are born with prenatal alcohol exposure each year in Minnesota.
- According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of alcohol-exposed pregnancies has risen from 1 in 9 in 2019, to 1 in 7 in 2022.
- A study by RAND Corporation reports that alcohol consumption has risen sharply during the pandemic, and heavy drinking by women has increased by 41%. We expect that these factors will result in an exponential increase in alcohol-exposed pregnancies.

What would an increase from \$750k/year base to \$1.25M/year make possible?

More grants can be awarded to organizations in more geographical regions and to targeted populations. Bottom line: Increasing our footprint will serve more families in more communities across Minnesota and increase our reach to underserved communities.

An increase of \$500K is a smart investment for Minnesota because:

- 1) Prenatal alcohol exposure is the leading cause of preventable birth defects in the U.S.
- 2) Families of children with an FASD have nine times the healthcare costs, and
- 3) Economic cost is an additional \$22,810 per year per family impacted

**To reference all of our FASD research and findings, visit proofalliance.org/sources.*