



▶▶ **LACDMH Anti-Racism, Inclusion, Solidarity & Empowerment (ARISE) Division**

**MHSA Annual Update FY 23/24 – UsCC Capacity Building Projects**  
**Mirtala Parada Ward, LCSW**  
**ARISE Division – Lead Manager**



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**DEPARTMENT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH**  
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## ▶▶ Presentation Content

- UsCC Strategies to Reduce Mental Health Disparities
- UsCC Capacity Building Projects FY 23/24 Overview

# ARISE Division: Underserved Cultural ▶▶ Communities (UsCC) – Program Description

One of the cornerstones of MHSA is to empower underrepresented ethnic populations. In June 2007, LACDMH established the Underrepresented Ethnic Populations (UREP) Unit to develop a stakeholder platform for historically underserved ethnic and cultural communities in LA County. Subcommittees were established to work closely with the various underrepresented/underserved ethnic and cultural populations to address their specific needs. In 2017, the UREP became the Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) and two (2) additional subcommittees were implemented.

## **UsCC Subcommittees:**

- Access for All (formerly known as Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, and Physical Disabilities)
- American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)
- Asian Pacific Islander (API)
- Black/African Heritage (BAH)
- Eastern European/Middle Eastern (EE/ME)
- Latino
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQIA2-S)



# ▶▶ ARISE Division: Underserved Cultural Communities

Each UsCC subcommittee is allotted one-time funding to focus on CSS/POE-based capacity-building projects. This unique opportunity draws on the collective wisdom and experience of community members to determine the greatest needs and priorities in their communities. Project proposals are created and submitted via a participatory and consensus-based approach.

## **Intended Outcomes:**

- Increase mental health awareness to all communities within the LA County
- Identify and address disparities faced by target populations
- Reduce stigma and discrimination by educating and empowering communities to understand the importance of mental health care
- Increase access to care for mental health services provided by LACDMH and contracted providers



# ARISE Division: Underserved Cultural ▶▶ Communities

These projects are not intended for the delivery of mental health services but to increase access to care by unserved, underserved, and inappropriately served populations who are uninsured/uninsurable and across age groups (children, TAY, adult, and older adults) consistent with the language and cultural needs and demographics of those communities.

The UsCC capacity-building projects are community-based and include culturally effective outreach, engagement, and education, as well as responses to historical and geographic disparities and barriers to services. They are one-time funded and are under \$100,000 each.



# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs –

## ▶▶ Access for All UsCC

### **African American Family Mental Health and Disability Awareness Project**

Black babies and mothers experience disproportionately high rates of death upon birth and birthing. This project integrates the topics of mental health and disability into current African American infant and maternal mortality prevention efforts in Los Angeles County. The project identifies and engages 24 community-based organizations serving African American families exposed to chronic stress and racism. Staff and volunteers at twelve organizations are receiving presentations, training 48 participants, and reaching 240 African American community members with relevant information and resources during home visits, outreach activities, coalition meetings, and local events.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ American Indian/Alaska Native UsCC

## **Suicide in Native Communities Toolkit**

Los Angeles County is home to the highest concentration of American Indian/Alaska Native people in the United States. Diverse Native communities experience disproportionately high rates of suicide. The aim of this project is to develop a resource guide (toolkit) and accompanying video for American Indian/Alaska Native individuals experiencing the aftermath of a suicide in the family or community. Included in the Toolkit is culturally specific information on cleaning services, coroner/funeral arrangements, low no-cost legal services, traditional mental health and spiritual healing providers, and community support resources. Roundtable discussions with 100 participants elicit community input on what to include in the content of the toolkit and how to most effectively present the information.

## **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

This project focuses on increasing awareness and reducing the disproportionate rates of homicide of Native girls and women in Los Angeles County, where violence is a leading cause of premature death. The contracting organization is strategically engaging 10 American Indian/Alaska Native women to develop, produce, and distribute a series of five videos to highlight the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and share relevant culturally specific community violence prevention resources.



# ▶▶ **ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – American Indian/Alaska Native UsCC**

## **American Indian/Alaska Native Elder Gathering Project**

The purpose of the AI/AN Elder Gathering Project is to reduce mental health access barriers for AI/AN elders by engaging in conversations about the role of cultural traditions in mental health and healing. Gatherings enable AI/AN elders, who are often underserved and marginalized, to access mental health services for themselves and encourage their families, friends, and neighbors. This project engages 75 American Indian/Alaska Native older adults through a series of five community gatherings focusing on storytelling, plant medicine, history, songs, food, and cultural traditions.

## **American Indian/Alaska Native Community Garden Project**

The purpose of the AI/AN Community Garden Project is to reduce mental health access barriers through conversation and classes about traditional food and wellness. This project convenes 60 AI/AN adult participants in a series of six gardening classes and facilitated culturally specific food sustainability learning activities, increasing cultural identity and community for mental health.



# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ American Indian/Alaska Native UsCC

## **American Indian/Alaska Native Cooking for Wellness Project**

The AI/AN Cooking for Wellness Project engages 60 AI/AN adults in a series of six cooking classes and conversations about wellness, nutrition, food insecurity, and associated mental health challenges. The AI/AN population is often underserved and marginalized; this project seeks to increase access to mental health services among participants and community members. The Cooking for Wellness Project creates community, reduces social isolation, strengthens cultural identity, and facilitates opportunities for healthy cooking and eating.

## **American Indian/Alaska Native Youth Graphic Novel Project**

This project facilitates creative self-expression and reinforces Indigenous cultural identity and mental wellness among 15 transitional-age youths (16-24) over the course of five group graphic novel development and production sessions. During the creative art sessions, mental health stigma in the AI/AN community is discussed while participants learn various techniques such as graphic novel, comic book art, writing, drawing, manga, and anime.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ Asian Pacific Islander UsCC

## **Filipino Comic Book**

The purpose of this project is to educate, empower, and heal the rising generation of Filipino-American youth through storytelling and illustration. Through collaboration with community agencies, 15-20 Filipino American youths (ages 16-24) will be recruited and engaged in six workshops on comic book development and production. They will design, write, and produce their own comic book illustrating how mental health issues impact their lives. The project increases community and cultural identity as youths participate in workshops on art as a medium for healing, consciousness, creative wellness, and comic book protagonists.

## **Recovery Talk**

This project aims to reduce culturally specific shame and stigma of mental health challenges; and consists of a series of recorded group mental health discussion sessions with a total of 125 API adult community members. Topics include depression, anxiety, bipolar, schizophrenia, PTSD, substance misuse, and community resources. Languages include Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Khmer. Recordings will be distributed on social media, including YouTube and WeChat.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ Asian Pacific Islander UsCC

## **Storytelling Theater for Healing and Social Justice**

This project focuses on API immigrant experiences and mental health challenges. An API theater consultant recruits and engages five API community members with lived experience in mental health issues to develop, produce, and stage an empowering play to be performed 12-16 times, at five venues, with an audience of 160 community members and a cast of 12-16 members, addressing stigma, anti-immigrant discrimination, and healing.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ Black/African Heritage UsCC

## **Prevention Works 4 Communities Toolkit**

DMH aims to engage diverse cultural groups in services and stakeholder activities. This project focuses on African immigrants in Los Angeles County. Prevention Works 4 Communities develops a community survey tool, a wellness outreach strategy, a comprehensive wellness toolkit, and an informative PowerPoint presentation on stress reduction, mindfulness, self-help, mental health, and culturally specific wellness resources to be presented to 100 Pan-African (West African, Caribbean, and other Black African) immigrant community members.

## **ReFRESH (Finding Restoration, Self-Help)**

This project is designed for Black justice-involved and/or formerly incarcerated individuals to bring training and mentoring opportunities to the community. It seeks to reduce stigma and increase access to care among 15-20 formerly incarcerated Black/African American men with lived experience in mental health, by providing a 14-hour training program to become community facilitators. Community facilitators reach up to 400 of their peers with messages and resources on trauma, mental health services, job opportunities, financial wellness, and mentoring.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs –

## ▶▶ Black/African Heritage UsCC

### **Youth and Young Adult Drug Prevention**

In Los Angeles County, Black youth and adults are less likely to use Fentanyl; yet those who do are more likely to die from a Fentanyl/opioid overdose than other groups. This project responds to this crisis by focusing on culturally specific youth outreach and training. It aims to recruit and train 15 youths living in the underserved Antelope Valley/Palmdale area of Los Angeles County, to reach 100 of their peers with overdose prevention, Fentanyl/opioid awareness, harm reduction access, substance misuse resources, and mental health information.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶ Eastern European/Middle Eastern UsCC

## **Sharing Our Stories: Russian/Farsi Book**

This project engages 15-20 Russian and Farsi speaking adults in remembering, writing, editing, and sharing their stories of immigration, trauma, mental health, family, healing, and community. Participants' stories will be compiled into a digital book, which will be widely disseminated during community events and promoted through local Russian and Farsi-speaking media channels.

## **Parenting Seminars for the Armenian Community**

There are hundreds of thousands of Armenians living in the Greater Los Angeles County area. This community has experienced intergenerational trauma from the Armenian Genocide, including high levels of stress related to parenting and caregiving for older relatives. A series of 14 culturally and linguistically specific, in-person and online parent education courses will reach Armenian adults interested in reducing family stress and increasing peace in the home.



# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ Eastern European/Middle Eastern UsCC

## **Arabic Poetry Night**

Reading, writing, sharing, and discussing poetry in a group can be a healing experience for many people who have experienced social isolation, discrimination, oppression, and violence, including Arab Americans. A series of 20 culturally and linguistically specific poetry nights will be facilitated to increase community and reduce stigma and barriers to accessing mental health services among Arabic-speaking adults and older adults in Los Angeles County.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ Eastern European/Middle Eastern UsCC

## **Latina Power: Latinas as Community Leaders**

This culturally and linguistically specific project develops a comprehensive curriculum and provides a 10-week intensive course on Latina empowerment, reaching 60 Latina adults with group education and discussion on self-love, goal setting, immigration, gender roles, patriarchy, acculturation stress, parenting, boundary-setting, healthy communication, relationships, and cultural norms. The community-based contractor creates a safe space for participants to see themselves as leaders and to take action to improve individual and community health.

## **Culture and Mind-Body Health Education**

This project reaches 200 Latino community members with chronic disease prevention education and wellness education sessions. Topics include the connection between physical health and mental health, culturally specific nutrition, exercise, stress management, and self-care.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs –

## ▶▶ Latino UsCC

### **Breaking Bread Podcast**

This project engages system-involved transitional-age youths (ages 16-24) in the development, presentation, and dissemination of ten 45-minute podcasts and YouTube episodes on mental health topics of interest. Focus groups and surveys will be conducted to determine priority topics and messages. The community contractor will elevate the voices of participating youths to share their insights with the larger Los Angeles community, reduce the stigma of mental health challenges, and dismantle harmful stereotypes about justice-involved, foster-care youths.

### **Finding Balance: Sacred Mayan Ceremonies**

Los Angeles County is home to tens of thousands of indigenous Latin American community members who speak languages other than Spanish or English, and they are often overlooked and marginalized. This project engages 120 Mayan community members in a series of eight cultural ceremonies for peace and healing, and creates a safe space to discuss healing, housing, financial challenges, and mental wellbeing in community.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ Latino UsCC

## **Personalismo**

This project engages 45 Latino community members in a 12-hour training on mental health literacy and strategies for effective participation in promoting the public mental health system. Participants share information learned within their social networks, increasing information on how to effectively access the many resources of the local public mental health system.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ LBTQIA2-S UsCC

## **Neurodivergent Voices Album**

This project recruits 12 neurodivergent LGBTQIA2-S musical artists over the course of 12 sessions, in songwriting and performance, culminating in the development and dissemination of an original musical album celebrating mental wellness and community. Through making music together, participants will strengthen their confidence, self-acceptance, and mental wellbeing. The album will be widely disseminated throughout Los Angeles County, which will increase inclusion of neurodivergent artists.

## **Liberation Workshop Series**

This project creates a safe space for marginalized sex workers to experience community and healing through group art classes. It convenes 10 sex workers, ages 18+, and facilitates a series of five ceramics classes and an exhibit showcasing their artwork, with an audience of 75 community members. The project seeks to build skills, trust, inclusion, and creative self-expression in the diverse LGBTQIA2-S community.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs –

## ▶▶ LBTQIA2-S UsCC

### **Violence Prevention Lab**

LGBTQ+ community members in Los Angeles County experience high rates of violence and discrimination. This project convenes 18 LGBTQIA2-S adult community members over a series of workshops totaling 24 hours, to design, test, and present to decision-makers 6-8 innovative strategies to prevent interpersonal and community violence. These ideas will become violence prevention proposals for consideration by a wide range of decision-makers in Los Angeles County.

### **LGBTQIA2-S Housing Listening Sessions**

This project brings together 100 LGBTQIA2-S adult community members, targeting individuals who are transgender or Two-Spirit, and commercial sex workers in a series of town hall meetings to identify and address specific unmet housing needs. The findings from these sessions will inform housing services planning efforts for LGBTQ+ individuals and communities at DMH and other County agencies.



# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ LBTQIA2-S UsCC

## **Proyecto Mariposa (Project Butterfly)**

Modeled after a Latin American Tanda, a rotating credit association, this project facilitates a series of 10 discussion and mutual support sessions on self-care, mental health, financial wellbeing, and acculturation stress among 10 Latinx LGBTQIA2-S migrant adults. This project aims to reduce stigma, increase inclusion, and facilitate access to mental health services among this marginalized community.

## **Transforming Community Care: API LGBTQ+ Mental Health and Wellness Project**

This project enables 150 API LGBTQ+ adults to participate in a community mental health leadership academy training and culturally specific wellness workshops, as well as a community event reaching 75 people. Recommendations from these sessions will inform program planning and evaluation efforts for API LGBTQ+ individuals and communities at DMH and other County agencies.

# ARISE Division: FY 23/24 UsCC CBPs – ▶▶ LBTQIA2-S UsCC

## **Two-Spirit Storytelling as Medicine**

This project increases mental health awareness and support for 20 Two-Spirit Latinx community members through culturally specific gatherings, featuring storytelling and holistic wellness activities. This project seeks to increase inclusion, affirmation, and participation of Two-Spirit Latinx individuals in DMH and Los Angeles County services and stakeholder groups.

## **Bi-Affirming Mentorship**

To increase the visibility, acceptance, inclusion, and mental well-being of bisexual community members, a community contractor will facilitate an intergenerational project. This project engages 25 bisexual adults in a series of discussion and recording sessions examining, documenting, and sharing personal experiences of biphobia, mental health stigma, and confidence-building. Recordings will be disseminated widely through social media and community promotion.

# Thank you



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