



Virginia's Youth Mental Health Corps

SNAPSHOT OF NEED

Virginia's youth experience mental health struggles and have difficulties accessing care.

■ **33.4%** of Virginia high schoolers report feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for 2+ weeks in a row
Virginia Youth Survey

■ **55%** of Virginia youth that experienced a major depressive episode did not receive treatment
Mental Health America

■ **Only 22.9%** of Virginia high schoolers participated in suicide prevention or mental health training
Virginia School Climate Survey

■ **450:1** is the state rate of individuals to mental health providers, like social workers, counselors, etc.
Mental Health America



SNAPSHOT OF NEED

What does the demand for skilled professionals look like in Virginia?

Social and Human
Services Assistants

23,506

active jobs posted in
the past year

Substance Abuse,
Behavioral Disorder, and
Mental Health Counselors

6,914

active jobs posted in
the past year

Mental Health and
Substance Abuse Social
Workers

6,663

active jobs posted in
the past year

Child, Family, and School
Social Workers

1,091

active jobs posted in
the past year

Top Skills and Credentials Gaps YMHC Can Help Fill

- Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- First Aid Certification
- Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor
- Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)
- Licensed Professional Counselor
- Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA)
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Source: Chmura Economics & Analytics. (2024). *JobsEQ data analysis* [Data set Nov. 2023 – Nov. 2024].



Youth in Virginia are passionate about this issue and already part of the solution

What did young adults who took part in the Virginia Community Engagement Index have to say?

60%

of those who rated Health & Well-being as a top three need in their community said Mental and Behavioral Health was the number one issue to address.

#1

The number one place young people in Virginia volunteered was with a youth or educational services organization.

1 in 3

who volunteered said they did so in part to stand out on a college or job application and to gain exposure to new experiences.



[Learn more about the Virginia Community Engagement Index here!](#)

Virginia Youth Mental Health Corps

- Partner with state experts to design a national service (AmeriCorps) program model that will **engage young Virginians aged 18–24 in service opportunities** that will directly benefit youth and leverage existing resources to enhance resources to meet critical community needs.
- Articulate and develop future opportunities to incentivize national service, including **service-to-career and service-to-credit or credential pathways**, higher education incentives, and networking opportunities with Schools and Employers of National Service to offer additional benefits for members that earn certifications through their service.



Virginia Youth Mental Health Corps

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Youth Mental Health Corps programs are AmeriCorps programs that engage members ages 18–24 in service to youth ages 12–24 around youth mental health needs.

Serve Virginia defines youth mental health using the Portrait of a Thriving Youth domains, [learn more here](#).



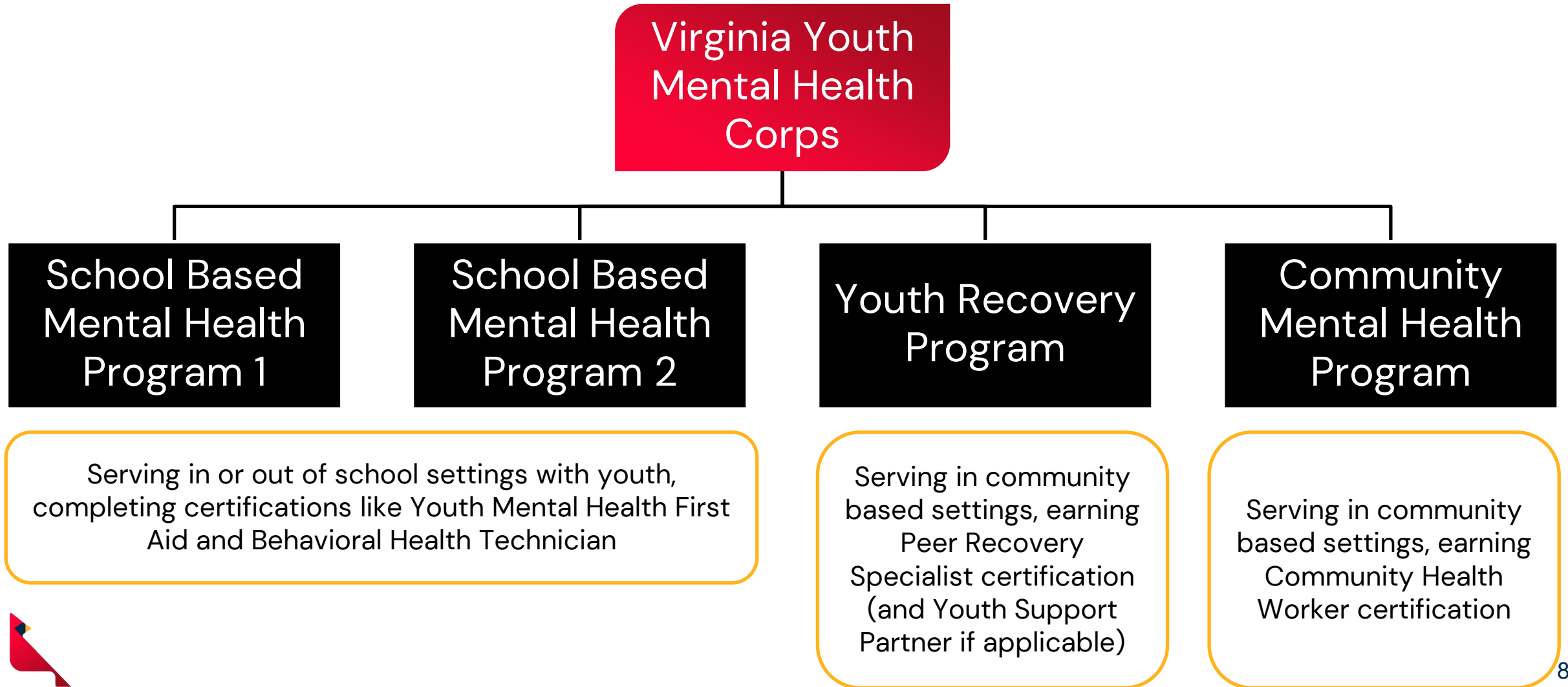
Virginia Youth Mental Health Corps

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Serve Virginia will support Youth Mental Health Corps programs in providing training for members, and supporting them in earning specific credentials based on the pathway they serve in. Serve Virginia is also building partnerships to help provide incentives for members, like scholarships or earned credit for experience, etc.



2025 Virginia Youth Mental Health Corps





Service to Career Pathways

- Serve Virginia will require members to earn credentials based on the pathway of their service:
- Behavioral Health Technician and Assistant (all members, this is a new credential launching in 2025)
- Youth Mental Health First Aid (school based mental health)
- Peer Recovery Specialist, Youth Support Partner (youth recovery)
- Community Health Worker (community mental health)

Timeline

- **Now–January 2025:** Offering support, training, and consultation for programs interested in applying to operate an AmeriCorps/Youth Mental Health Corps program; building the pathways and certification options for members
- **February–March 2025:** Securing additional implementation funding to support the programs and members in operating local Youth Mental Health Corps programs
- **May 2025:** Local programs awarded AmeriCorps and YMHC funds, begin recruiting members
- **September 2025:** Programs begin, members serve part time or full time for up to a year while earning a living allowance and education award



Support for the Youth Mental Health Corps

The Youth Mental Health Corps will pilot starting in September 2025–August 2027. Beginning with 75 members in 2025, the program is supported by federal and private funds.



Approximately \$1 million will support Youth Mental Health Corps programs, as a funding priority of AmeriCorps State



Serve Virginia is seeking about \$500k implementation funding from national partners (the Schultz Family Foundation, Pinterest, and America Forward)



Public-private partnerships are essential to replicate and scale this work across the Commonwealth



YMHC Program Model

Programs will select one or more pathways for members to serve within. Programs are responsible for ensuring that members have appropriate supervision for their service.

Pathways:

- Deepening impact of existing programs that train and credential Community Health Workers and Peer Recovery Specialists
- Designing a program with school-based mental health roles

Members can pursue one of three service-to-career pathways:



School-based mental health navigator

Members will earn stackable credentials and/or credits toward a higher education program as they serve in schools, out-of-school-time programs, and community-based youth organizations in communities with limited access to mental health services.



Peer support/recovery navigator

Members who have lived experience with mental health challenges and/or substance use disorder will support peers and near-peers along their recovery journey while getting the training and experience required to earn a peer support/recovery specialist state certification.



Community mental health navigator

Members without lived experience will have the opportunity to serve youth and young adults in communities where access to mental health resources is limited, all while receiving the training, support, and experience to earn a community health worker state certification.



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YMHC Program Model

The desired outcomes include:

- Engagement of young people as members, between the ages of 18–24 (or 18–29 for peer recovery) who are proximate to or from the communities served
- Support economic opportunity for members (training, higher education, resources leading to living wage jobs)
- Include credential or certification opportunities for members
- Serve youth in mental health capacity

Requirements of Youth Mental Health Corps Programs

- Engage members within the specified age range in service positions with a primary case load or beneficiaries between the ages of 12-24 (or 12-29 for youth recovery)
- Provide adequate supervision and support for members in their service activities
- Support members in participating in required trainings with Serve Virginia, as well as other training or support provided by your organization or partners that supports members in professional development
- Operate AmeriCorps program in compliance with AmeriCorps and Serve Virginia policies



Benefits for Youth Mental Health Corps Programs

Serve Virginia is currently securing resources to support Youth Mental Health Corps programs, and final details will be released as resources are secured. We anticipate offering the following benefits to organizations and members participating in the Youth Mental Health Corps:

- Training in Youth Mental Health First Aid and training to become credentialed as a Behavioral Health Technician or Behavioral Health Technician Assistant
- Additional trainings available based on pathways for Peer Recovery Specialist, Youth Support Partner, and Community Health Worker
- Potential funding support for programs
- Wraparound supports through national providers to support YMHC Members' mental health and wellness, provide supplemental mental health training, and offer career coaching, navigation and post-service job placement services.

