

Boscola Announces Over \$1.7 Million in State Grants for Violence Prevention Programs

By Senator Lisa Boscola

Bethlehem (April 15, 2026)- Senator Lisa Boscola announced that \$1,719,606 in state funding has been awarded today to five nonprofit organizations serving Northampton County through the FY 25-26 Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) Grant Programs.

“This state funding will enhance efforts to provide important violence prevention programming that will benefit young people,” Boscola stated. “These grant funds will fund programs that will improve academic performance and social skills and also provide opportunities for young people to have fun in a safe setting. Without these programs many children would be unsupervised and there would be a much higher risk of engaging in risky behaviors.”

The grants were awarded as followed:

- Greater Easton Development Corporation, (Safe Routes to School Program) \$500,000
- Community Bike Works, (Easton Bike Club) \$494,800
- Valley Youth House, (Services to Easton Area and Bethlehem Area School Districts) \$412,986
- St Anthony Youth Center of Easton, Pa Inc (dba Easton Area Community Center), (Youth Programs in West Ward) \$232,820
- Wilson Area LINCS Family Center, (Skills Training and Recognition (STAR) Program) \$79,000

Greater Easton Development Corporation will use the \$500,000 state grant to continue its Safe Routes to School program, a community-based safety and prevention initiative serving school-age youth in Easton’s West Ward neighborhood. The program deploys trained Easton Ambassadors along key pedestrian routes surrounding Paxinosa Elementary School to reduce risks associated with traffic hazards, unsupervised time, and exposure to neighborhood-level safety concerns during school arrival and dismissal. By providing crossing support, visibility, informal mentorship, and real-time coordination with school and municipal partners, the initiative aims to strengthen protective factors for approximately 600 students annually.

Community Bike Works will use the \$494,800 state grant to expand the Easton Bike Club, a bike-based mentoring and violence-prevention initiative serving high-risk Easton Area High School students ages 14–18. The program uses bicycles as an engagement tool to connect teens—particularly boys of color from low-income neighborhoods in Easton’s West Ward and South Side—with caring adult mentors in a structured environment. Through a 48-hour Earn a Bike curriculum, daily afterschool and summer cycling activities, one-on-one mentoring, youth apprenticeships, and a new “Bike Bus” commuter support model, the project aims to build protective factors. Teen participants spend time each week with mentors, learning bike mechanics, safe riding, communication skills, and healthy coping strategies, while also gaining access to safe recreational outlets, transportation support, and meaningful leadership opportunities. Community Bike Works expects to serve approximately 60 individuals during each year of the project.

Valley Youth House will use its \$412,986 state grant to expand its school-based violence-prevention and mental-health services into the Easton Area and Bethlehem Area School Districts, serving approximately 700 students annually across four secondary schools. The project responds to elevated trauma exposure, behavioral disruptions, unmet mental-health needs, poverty-related stress, and school-based conflict documented through local PAYS data, district discipline reports, and county-level violence trends. The initiative provides a coordinated continuum of supports that include trauma-informed, school-based counseling; Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS); the Too Good for Violence (TGFV) evidence-based curriculum; risk and trauma screening; mindfulness instruction for students and staff; crisis intervention; family and collateral engagement; and ongoing participation in Student Assistance Program (SAP) processes. The program aims to reduce violence risk, strengthen protective factors, improve emotional regulation and coping skills, and increase school engagement for youth at risk for involvement in violence but not yet exhibiting chronic violent behavior.

Easton Area Community Center will use the \$232,820 state grant to expand its long-standing organized competitive sports and athletic programs serving underserved youth in Easton’s West Ward. The EACC currently provides after-school programming, a full-day summer camp, and rapidly growing competitive sports offerings including basketball, wrestling, cheerleading, and a piloted soccer program. The proposed project aims to enhance administrative capacity, strengthen existing sports programs, and expand offerings to include larger-scale soccer programming and additional sports such as pickleball, tennis, golf, and softball. Organized sports are intended to support positive youth development, reduce exposure to gangs and negative peer influences, build social and emotional skills, and provide consistent supervision during high-risk after-school hours. EACC anticipates serving 250 youth throughout the project period.

Wilson Area LINCS Family Center will use the \$79,000 state grant to launch the Skills Training and Recognition (STAR) Program, a new evidence-based after-school prevention initiative for approximately 200 intermediate-aged youth in the Wilson Area School District. The program responds to elevated community risk factors identified through the Communities That Care (CTC) planning process, including low neighborhood attachment, depressive symptoms among youth, normalization of substance use, and limited access to structured prosocial opportunities. STAR will provide three annual cycles of supervised, skill-building sessions delivered after school, with instruction provided by trained community partners and volunteers. Guided by the Social Development Strategy, the program will strengthen protective factors through hands-on skills training, positive adult

“This \$79,000 grant through the Violence Intervention and Prevention Program is a tremendously valuable investment for middle school youth in the Wilson community,” said Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, President of the Wilson Area LINCS Coalition for Families and Youth. “This funding will expand our capacity to provide the Skills Training and Recognition (STAR) Program, an evidence-based, community-based after-school prevention initiative to increase youth connection to their community. Through structured and supervised programming outside of school time, STAR gives middle school youth meaningful opportunities to build skills, engage in prosocial activities, and receive recognition for their positive contributions.”

PCCD today approved funding today for the FY 25-25 Building Opportunity Through Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Grants and the FY 25-26 Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) Grant Programs. Approximately \$62.5 million was available for VIP and BOOST. PCCD received 464 applications for VIP and BOOST. The Committee approved 177 applications for a total of \$65.268 million.

