



PRESS RELEASE FOR NOW MATTERS NOW – AWARDEE OF THE 2025 INNOVATION FUND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bellevue, WA — Monday, December 8, 2025

NOW MATTERS NOW Selected as 2025 Innovation Fund Grantee by The Tow Foundation

Bellevue, WA: Now Matters Now announced today that it has been selected as one of ten organizations to receive support through [The Tow Foundation's 2025 Innovation Fund](#), a \$10 million initiative focused on expanding access to the care and support for mental health and well-being that youth need to thrive.

The 2025 Innovation Fund was launched by The Tow Foundation amid rising rates of mental health challenges among young people and reports of difficulty accessing support and care. The Foundation has committed to funding organizations driving innovative ideas and solutions to the crisis.

Now Matters Now is building the most trusted online space for youth suicide and mental health care—led by people with lived experience and grounded in proven, evidence-based tools. With nearly half of youth struggling with suicidal thoughts lacking access to care due to cost, long waitlists, and stigma, Now Matters Now offers free peer-led virtual support groups where young people can connect with peers who understand and practice emotional survival skills, rooted in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). Rather than waiting for traditional mental health systems to change, Now Matters Now is creating a new model, one that is accessible, always available, and designed for real-world needs.

Over the three-year grant term, this funding will enable the organization to create a foundation for and expand their youth peer-led support groups, launch new Family & Friends groups to support caregivers, grow its digital library with real youth stories and free DBT resources, and continue to demonstrate the power in peer-led, lived-experience-informed support.

"From the very beginning, young people with lived experience have been critical to realizing Now Matters Now—not just as participants, but as co-creators shaping every aspect of our work," said **Ursula Whiteside, CEO of Now Matters Now**. "This grant enables us to deepen our work together, tailoring our support groups with and for the young people who know best what care should look like. We are enormously

grateful to The Tow Foundation for believing in this vision, and to our community that is proving that a new kind of peer-led care is possible."

"Young people in our community are navigating rising mental health challenges while facing real barriers to care," said **Ghazaleh Shokouhaghahi, MA, Now Matters Now Groups Manager**. "This support allows us to strengthen the programs they need."

"We designed the 2025 Innovation Fund to advance new solutions to unmet mental health challenges faced by young people," said **Frank Tow, chair of the Innovation Fund Committee and board member of The Tow Foundation**.

"NOW MATTERS NOW stood out for their creativity, credibility, and commitment to young people."

"Congratulations to NOW MATTERS NOW and all of the 2025 Innovation Fund awardees. We are proud to partner with ten organizations that are imagining, creating, and expanding access to services that promote well-being," said **Emily Tow, President of The Tow Foundation**.

To be eligible for the 2025 Innovation Fund, applicants were required to serve youth in at least one of the following states: California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, New York, or Pennsylvania. Eligibility criteria included being a 501(c)(3) nonprofit (or having a fiscal sponsor); demonstrating a track record of advancing youth mental health and well-being; exploring innovative solutions; and supporting communities or populations facing barriers to accessing support for mental health and well-being. In shaping the Fund, the Foundation intentionally revisited its earliest ethos – taking risks, learning alongside partners, and opening space for ideas that may be unconventional, unproven, or still emerging.

The Tow Foundation named the following organizations as 2025 Innovation Fund grantees:

Church World Service Greensboro (NC)
Communities for Just Schools Fund (Washington, D.C.)
Homeboy Industries (CA)
Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (CA)
Mount Sinai Morningside (NY)
Now Matters Now (WA)
Nunchi Health (CA)
Our Children's Trust (OR)
Tapestry Family Services (CA)
Wellness Workforce Collaborative (NY)

About Now Matters Now

Now Matters Now is a non-profit building the most trusted online space for suicide care, led by people with lived experience and grounded in proven, evidence-based tools. The organization empowers people to manage overwhelming emotions, harmful thoughts, suicide ideation, anxiety, and substance abuse through practicing simple, evidence-based skills. Free weekly virtual peer-led support groups bring these skills to life in real moments of need, while learning is reinforced with free online resources and sharing innovative interventions like Stop, Drop, and Roll for Emotional Fires. Now Matters Now is working toward 24/7 access as ubiquitous and accessible as AA, creating a supportive community committed to making mental health and suicide care available to everyone, everywhere.

About The Tow Foundation

The Tow Foundation was established in 1988 by Leonard and Claire Tow as a way to give back to the communities that shaped them. Its five primary impact areas are equity and justice, medicine and public health, arts and culture, higher education, and civic engagement. Grounded in its decades of work in Connecticut and New York and based in New Canaan, CT, the Foundation supports visionary leaders and nonprofit organizations to find and enact innovative solutions to persistent inequality. It works to ensure people can become full participants in their communities, achieve transformative and lasting progress, and develop approaches that allow everyone to reach their full potential.

About the Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund launched in 2022 with the goal of funding creative approaches to addressing issues affecting children and their families. The second iteration in 2025 focused on expanding access to the care and support that youth need to thrive. Through multi-year grants, the Innovation Fund supports organizations advancing youth mental health and well-being, strengthening access for young people and their families, and delivering solutions grounded in trust, safety, community, and culturally informed support.

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