

# Supporting Mental Health and Substance Use Community Response

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Workshop: Community Healthcare Solutions  
Pre-Convention Program

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# Who is CAI?

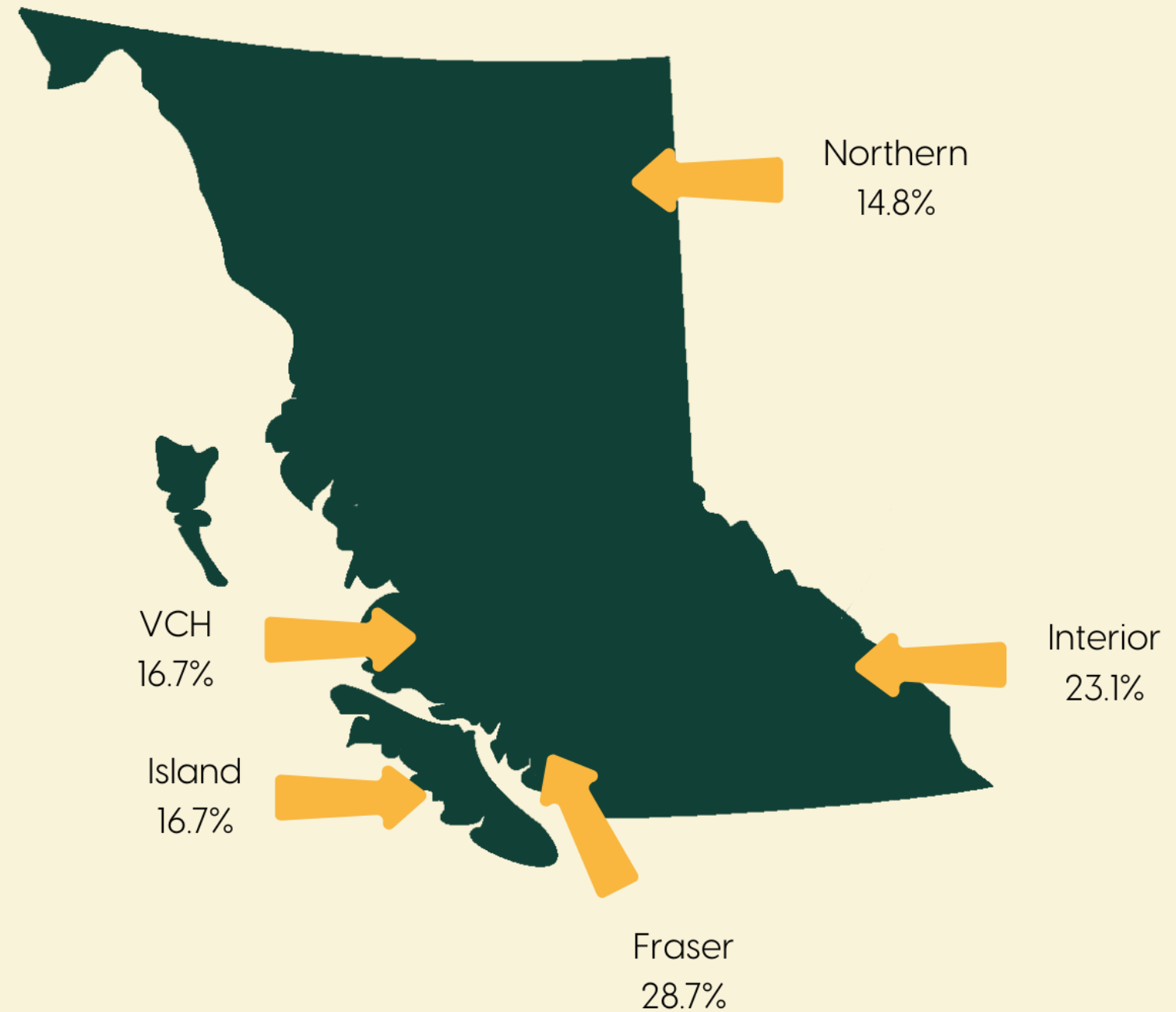
Community Action Initiative is a nonprofit organization transforming how we address mental health and substance use (MHSU) challenges in B.C. through trust-based granting, community engagement, and capacity building.



# Our Reach

## Targeted Grants Across Regional Health Authorities

2023-2024



**\$16,915,659** In Grants

**38** CATs

**25** LLN Workshops

**23** PPN Groups

**49** Counselling Grantees







It takes a  
Community...  
Thank you  
for your role  
in the  
response



# Take away #1

What you'll hear from the Cowichan CAT is an example of what can be achieved by bringing together different aspects of community and having Municipal leaders play an active role



## Take away #2

It's complicated,  
but we can do it





## Take away #3

Collectively, what we're doing is  
Restoring People to Themselves...  
their families, and community





# Questions?



# Appendix:

## More about our work







# Community Counselling Fund

For the past five years, CAI has stewarded the Community Counselling Fund (CCF), which supports 49 community-based organizations to deliver free/low cost, culturally relevant mental health care. These organizations are situated in every health authority in both urban and rural communities.

Our equity-focused approach ensures that adults from all walks of life can access quality mental health supports. In 2023-2024, 10,766 counselling sessions were funded through the CCF.

# Local Leadership Network

Local Leadership Network (LLN) is a project that aims to support local governments, particularly elected officials, with the work communities are already doing to respond to the toxic drug poisoning crisis.

LLN hosts full day trainings, presents at conferences and municipal events, and hosts a monthly network meeting to provide ongoing education.





# Community Action Teams (CATs)

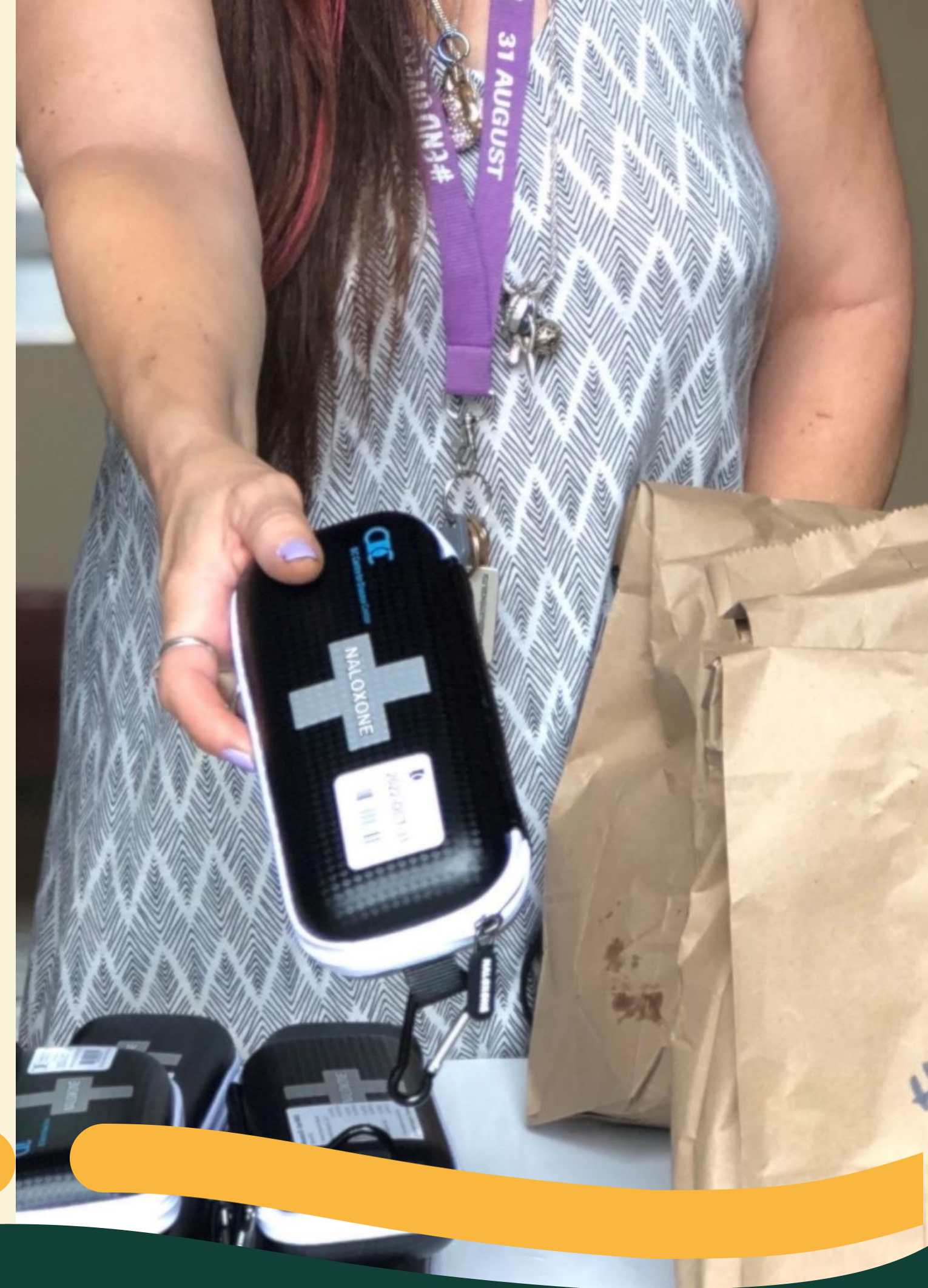
Community Action Teams (CATs) were created to help bring together health authorities, public health, nonprofit organizations, government representatives, peer groups, and others to develop partnerships to provide focused, action-oriented strategies tailored to local community needs.

CAI provides annualized funding and supports capacity building for these teams. There are 38 funded CATs across the province.

## Provincial Peer Network

The goal of the Provincial Peer Network (PPN) is to strengthen collaboration and information sharing between drug user-led organizations by developing a network. Through regional and provincial capacity building, it works to ensure that the provincial overdose response is effective in saving lives and connecting people to harm reduction, treatment, and recovery.

There are 23 PPN groups for which CAI provides annualized funding and support for capacity building





## Capacity Building Grant for First Nations, Métis, Inuit, & Urban Indigenous led Bed-based Treatment & Recovery Operators

This grant is a one-time funding opportunity up to \$25,000 for First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous led organizations currently providing bed-based treatment and recovery services to develop and/or implement capacity building strategies within their organization. 11 First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous led organizations in BC have been awarded this grant.

## Youth Wellness Grant

The Youth Wellness Grant is a funding opportunity for community-based organizations in BC to develop and deliver programs that address grief, loss, and bereavement among youth and families of drug poisoning victims, and aims to restore emotional health and wellness. Non-government, not-for-profit, community-based organizations or First Nations, Métis, Inuit or urban Indigenous led organizations in BC are invited to apply for up to \$80,000 in annual funding for a 3-year term. 12 BC organizations were awarded The Youth Wellness Grant in 2025.



**Community Action Initiative is a nonprofit organization transforming how we address mental health and substance use (MHSU) challenges in B.C. through trust-based granting, community engagement, and capacity building.**

As an essential connector between grassroots organizations and government, we translate rich community insights into actionable public health frameworks that empower communities to design—and lead—their own solutions. This involves aligning specific local needs with provincial priorities, ensuring local voices actively shape MHSU resource allocation and programming.

We're driven by the belief that harnessing community wisdom, lived experiences, and diverse perspectives is essential for nurturing better public health outcomes. And that's how we're fostering equitable MHSU initiatives across B.C.—through a more collective, community-centred approach that truly serves all.





# Thank you!

## Please get in touch to learn more

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