



## Creating Community Through Art Therapy Request for Proposal

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Prevent Blindness has received a grant to develop an art therapy initiative for the purposes of creating community among people living with thyroid eye disease (<https://preventblindness.org/thyroid-eye-disease/>) and to address the psychosocial aspects of the disease.

To implement this program, we are seeking a partner with experience in developing art therapy programs, as well as the public relations and communications elements involved.

Attached is the funded proposal for background. All responses to this RFP should provide an overview of how you will implement the program, a list of relevant related experiences, and a budget.

Prevent Blindness will undertake the following. All other expenses should be included in your proposed budget:

- Provide general oversight of the program and assign an organizational liaison to work with you.
- Secure the in-person location.
- Coordinate and fund the delivery of art supplies (to virtual participants and to the in-person location).
- Post social media items (both free and paid) throughout the program period, promoting the work
- Directly pay the art therapist fees for their time implementing the sessions (\$2,000 each for the in-person and virtual groupings).
- Directly pay a stipend of \$500 for the healthcare professional's engagement.
- Pay the facility fees.

### PREVENT BLINDNESS OVERVIEW

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness ([www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org)) is the leading eye health and safety organization in the United States, dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight across all ages and eye conditions. We do so by educating the American public about conditions related to vision and eye health; advocating for public policy that advances equitable access to eyecare; promoting early detection as a key to the prevention of vision loss and blindness; supporting public health research to identify the scope of vision problems across the United States; and developing resources that meet patient and caregiver needs.

**Responses to RFP due by 5:00pm CST on Wednesday, December 1, to Jeff Todd, President + CEO, Prevent Blindness.**



# Creating Community Through Art Therapy

(Focus on People Living with Thyroid Eye Disease)

## CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH ART THERAPY

Over the past few years, with Horizon Therapeutics' support, Prevent Blindness has been able to advance awareness and proactive behavior related to Thyroid Eye Disease (TED). This has been an important time in access to care for individuals with TED – from the excitement of the FDA approval of TEPEZZA, a first of its kind treatment, to the concerns about the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic on maintenance of eye health.

It is our mission to “prevent blindness and preserve sight,” and we do so by educating the American public about conditions related to vision and eye health; advocating for public policy that advances vision and eye health and equitable access to care; promoting early detection as a key to the prevention of vision loss and blindness; supporting public health research to identify the scope of vision problems across the U.S.; and developing resources that meet patient and caregiver needs.



Our recent achievements have included:

1. Increasing awareness of TED
2. Developing new educational resources
3. Launching a patient empowerment program
4. Promoting participation in clinical trials
5. Advocating for increased access to care at state- and national-levels
6. Making progress toward systems-level improvements in vision and eye health

**With this proposal, Prevent Blindness seeks to bring art therapy to bear in creating community among people living with TED and to address the psychosocial aspects of the disease.**

### Situation Overview

- People with TED, most often adult women, may experience dry, irritated eyes, sensitivity to light, blurred or double vision, eyelid retraction, proptosis (bulging eyes) and facial disfigurement.
- Over time, these symptoms may progress into vision loss due to progressive swelling, corneal erosion, optic nerve damage, corneal ulceration and optic neuropathy.
- As a result of TED symptoms, particularly changes to personal appearance and ability to work, many individuals experience social isolation, stigma, decreased quality of life, economic burdens, and related mental health challenges, including clinical anxiety and depression.
- Care partners and family members may also experience isolation or struggle with relationships, economic burdens and mental health as a result of caring for someone with TED.
- Because TED is a rare disorder, most people with the condition and their loved ones are not able to connect with other people with similar experience and understanding, exacerbating the feelings of isolation and depression.

## Program Objective

Create an interactive program that can:

- Connect people living with TED to their peers
- Offer psychosocial value through a program shown to improve self-esteem
- Provide a platform to raise awareness and understanding of this rare condition

## About Art Therapy

Art therapy is an integrative mental health treatment modality that has been shown to help people improve their mental, emotional, and even physical wellness. The process of creating art can help reduce anxiety and depression, provide a safe and supportive space to express difficult emotions in a creative manner, and reduce isolation. Art therapy promotes insights, enhances social skills, and helps participants cultivate emotional resilience, while reducing and resolving conflicts and distress. Additionally, individuals participating in a group art therapy program are able to enhance interpersonal skills while connecting with others going through similar life experiences.

Group art therapy can also improve self-esteem, particularly in populations experiencing isolation and stigma. Participants in a group art therapy program offered to people with epilepsy reported improved self-esteem after an 8-week art therapy program. People living with seizures, similar to people living with TED, tend to isolate themselves for fear of feeling uncomfortable in social settings and research has found that fear, lifestyle limitations and stigma were rated some of the most difficult aspects of epilepsy. Participants in nine locations across the country reported improved feelings of self-worth, self-respect and ability to do things as well as most other people, as measured on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

## Art Therapy Adaptations

### Art Therapy for People Experiencing Vision Challenges

One of the more wonderful things about art creation, and art therapy, is that it is accessible to nearly everyone, regardless of physical or visual limitations. Art creation can be adapted to lower-light situations, utilizing stronger contrasts between colors or light materials on dark backgrounds, larger format, or negative space. Individuals experiencing double vision can explore that through overlapping layers or duplicative images.

Additionally, adaptive art materials can focus on other senses beyond vision – using tactile and auditory experiences, incorporating dry materials such as shredded paper, masking tape, string/yarn, seeds, beads, leaves, bark, confetti, glitter, tiles, etc. and wet materials such as glue, shaving cream, paint (and added texture to paint, such as sand, or beads), clay, etc.

### Telehealth: Art Therapy from a Distance

As a direct result of social distancing precautions and mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic, certified art therapists have addressed the problem of adapting art therapy to a telehealth environment, offering interactive, online sessions. By providing necessary art supplies in advance or working with materials typically accessible in or near everyone's homes, certified art therapists have



found creative solutions that allow participants to benefit from art therapy, including group art therapy from home. This also allows group therapy participants from a variety of locations to interact and connect despite the distance.

## **Pilot Program Proposal**

We propose piloting an art therapy program for people living with Thyroid eye disease through a dual implementation approach— one in-person program in a key market, such as the Chicagoland area, and another virtual program accessible to people across the country. This pilot program would provide Prevent Blindness with the opportunity to gauge interest in an art therapy program for this population, test both formats of the program, and build an initial foundation for a potential program expansion in future years.

### Pilot Session Schedule

- 6-week program (weekly sessions) to allow for consistent interaction and give participants time to get comfortable with the art therapy format.
- 90-120-minute sessions to allow time for check in, topic/theme introduction, art therapy directive instructions, time for art making, sharing/discussion, and closing.
  - Example Session:
    - Check-in (10 minutes)
    - Certified art therapist introduces therapeutic topic/theme and brief discussion (5 - 10 minutes)
    - Art therapy directive instructions (5 - 10 minutes)
    - Art making (45 min – 1 hr)
    - Sharing/discussion (20 - 30 minutes)
    - Closing (5 minutes)

### Number of Participants

- For both programs we will target approximately 8 participants. This number ensures that there are sufficient participants to facilitate a group conversation and comradery between participants and to allow for any no-shows or drop-off without the potential number of participants becoming overwhelming for the certified art therapist.

### Session Staffing

- Each program will be staffed by a certified art therapist, a volunteer healthcare professional, and a Prevent Blindness liaison.

### Post-Program Promotion

- Take/gather photos of artwork (with release/permission from participants)
- Utilize “sound bites” from participants talking about the program – potential to record voice memos, interviews, or just utilize post-session survey comments
- Incorporate into next session promotion and awareness displays (online or in-person)



### Program Evaluation and Measurement

- General measurements – number of participants, anecdotal feedback from participants, volunteers, and certified art therapists

- Art therapy measurements – pre- and post-session interviews and surveys will help measure specific psychosocial elements between baseline (pre-session) and the end of the program (post-session); certified art therapist input
  - Potential to utilize PQH9 or PHQ2 standardized questionnaire, other scales
  - For pilot program, potential for more detailed interviews after the program

## Proposal Location Considerations

### Why Chicagoland?

Offering the in-person pilot program in the Chicagoland area makes sense for a variety of reasons, including:

- Access to a larger population of individuals, and therefore a larger population of people living with thyroid eye disease
- Links to a network of TED specialist, centers, including Illinois Center for Thyroid Eye Disease, and renowned medical institutions, such as Northwestern, Rush, Loyola, University of Chicago, etc.
- Access to Prevent Blindness headquarters as a potential location
- Proximity to local Prevent Blindness staff as well as local program coordinator and potential sponsor



### Why Virtual?

Offering an online program expands access to more individuals, including:

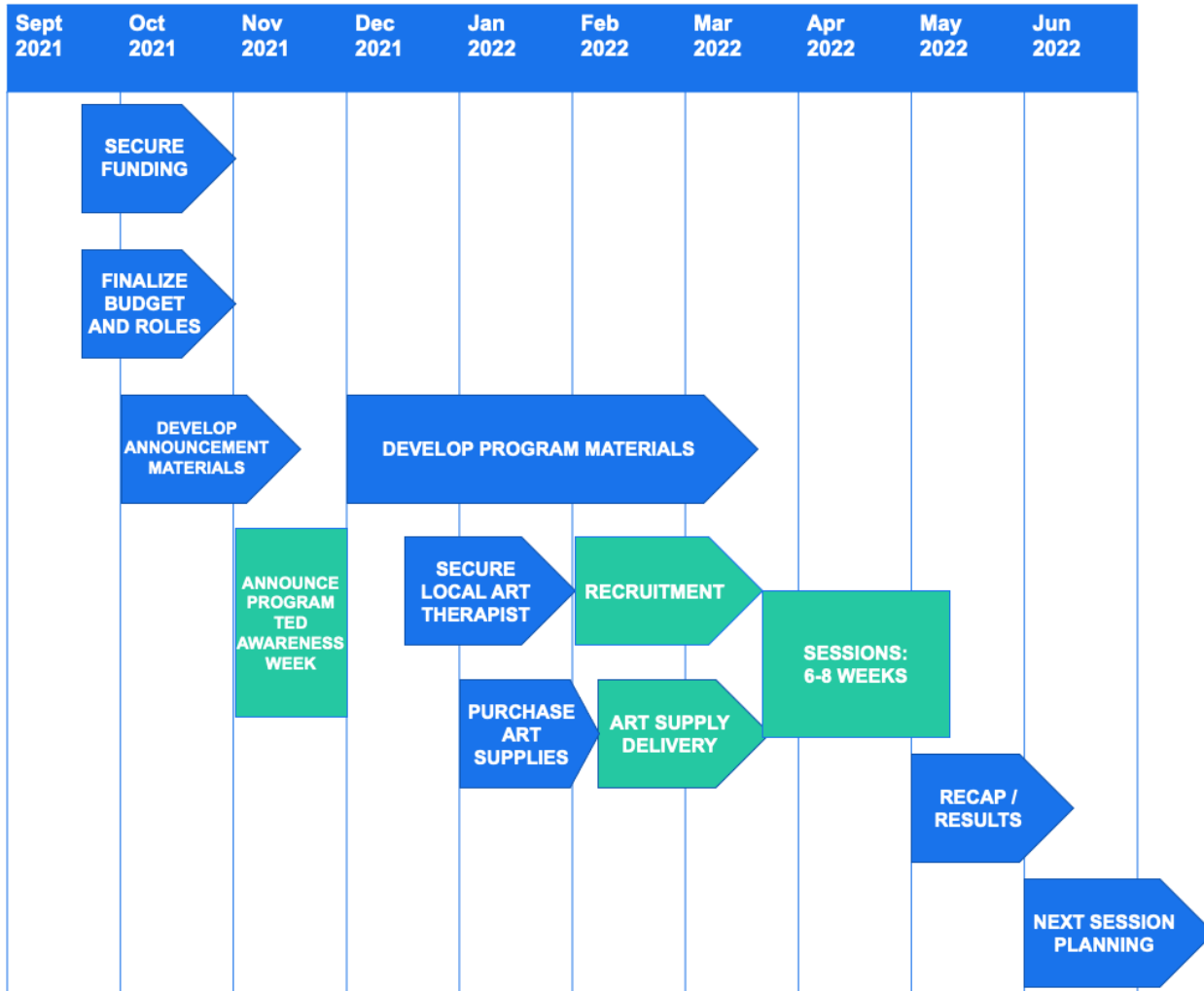
- Larger geographic area, including rural areas
- People who may have difficulty commuting to in-person meetings or events due to health challenges or access to transportation
- People who may not wish to gather in person due to COVID-19 precautions or other health considerations

## Timeline

In November 2021, Prevent Blindness will promote Thyroid Eye Disease Awareness Week, with an emphasis this year on the psycho-social impacts of the disease. This will be a good opportunity to begin to gather contact information for people interested in participating in future programs, such as this one.

We will officially begin recruitment in February 2022 and the pilot programs will start sometime in March 2022.

Estimated Timeline





## Proposed Year Program Development and Execution

- **Program Coordination**  
Plan development (establishing goals, roles, timeline, etc.); create participant booklet, therapist guide, and other session materials; secure in-person location; recruit local art therapist; planning and discussion across program teams; selection and purchase of art supplies; social media support; etc.
- **Program Recruitment, Registration, and Intake**  
Develop recruitment materials; social media outreach; recruit healthcare professionals; create registration/intake forms; etc.
- **Program Evaluation, Recap, and Future Planning**  
Create evaluation materials (pre- and post-session surveys/interview guide); prepare summarizing presentation; develop video(s) for use in future program promotion; plan for program expansion; etc.
- **Direct Training Costs to Include**  
Certified art therapists' fees; art supplies (including shipping to participants); facility fees; etc.

## About Prevent Blindness

At Prevent Blindness, it is our vision that all children are afforded the benefits of sight as they grow and learn; that all adults are educated about proper eye health and have access to care; that necessary attention is provided to issues surrounding the aging eye; and that no one needlessly loses his or her sight due to unsafe practices. We envision a better quality of life through better vision health.

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the leading eye health and safety organization in the United States, dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight across all ages and eye conditions. We do so by educating the American public about conditions related to vision and eye health; advocating for public policy that advances equitable access to eyecare; promoting early detection as a key to the prevention of vision loss and blindness; supporting public health research to identify the scope of vision problems across the United States; and developing resources that meet patient and caregiver needs.