



Open Call for Applications



Centering Youth Mental Health:

Multi-Year Funding for Local Coalitions that Support Adolescent and Young Adult Mental Health

Application deadline: September 8, 2023, 5:00 p.m. EDT

INTRODUCTION

Through this open call, the CVS Health Foundation (“the Foundation”) is announcing its **Centering Youth Mental Health** initiative, a multi-year philanthropic investment to improve adolescent and young adult mental health. In response to the continuing decline in mental health outcomes for young people ages 12 to 24, the Foundation intends to collaborate with community-based, multi-sector coalitions that are seeking to create sustainable, systems-level improvements in cities or counties. We believe that lasting change is possible if we create the conditions that foster connections among individuals, families, and organizations.

This five-year initiative will launch in October 2023 in up to four sites across the United States. City- or county-level coalitions will each be awarded a total of \$1,000,000 to implement strategies that increase young people’s access to the evidence-based care, programs and conditions that promote positive mental health outcomes.

This initiative aims to bridge care gaps for the most vulnerable adolescent and young adult populations, especially those who (1) identify as female, BIPOC, and/or LGBTQ+; (2) live in communities with limited availability of behavioral health care services; and/or (3) are involved in juvenile justice or child welfare systems. The vision of this initiative is that young people struggling with mental health challenges will receive intervention, treatment, and support services, so that they can enter the next stage of life with optimal well-being.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

The Foundation has identified three areas in which focused, collaborative action can result in improved mental health outcomes for young people. Funding recipients will be expected to accomplish **at least one** of the following goals over a five-year period:

1. **Access & Quality:** Develop **sustainable models for delivering culturally responsive mental health care** in primary care practices, educational institutions, and other community-based settings, focusing on prevention, screening, early intervention and follow-up.
2. **Care Navigation:** Simplify the process by which health care systems and agencies serving people ages 12-24 **coordinate care, intervention, and follow up** for those with positive screens or diagnoses.
3. **Workforce:** Increase the number of mental and behavioral health service providers, **particularly those who share identities with and the lived experience of youth and young adult populations at highest risk.**

As they work towards these goals, coalitions must engage in robust, candid, and comprehensive evaluation of their efforts. The CVS Health Foundation will provide technical assistance in the development and ongoing refinement of logic models that articulate how partners will deliver the results that adolescents and young adults urgently need.

Project plans will reflect each coalition’s local context and challenges. Accordingly, short- and medium-term project outcomes, which may include policy-related changes, will vary across the three funded sites and reflect state and federal regulatory requirements as applicable. The CVS Health Foundation will hold award recipients accountable for achieving **at least two** of the following long-term outcomes at the end of the funding period:

- A. New and existing care delivery sites are adequately staffed and funded.
- B. As part of standard operating practices, non-clinical sites provide regular mental health screenings and utilize closed-loop referral processes, including results tracking when possible.
- C. Clinical sites proactively identify young people at higher risk of mental health challenges and connect them to care.
- D. Care providers are enabled to deliver care and receive reimbursement for services.
- E. Institutions serving young people create the conditions needed to attract and retain diverse mental health care providers.

Given the complex and unpredictable nature of systems change, coalitions will have flexibility to revise, iterate, and/or adapt their strategies over the five-year period. Consistent with its trust-based philanthropy practices, the CVS Health Foundation is committed to serving as an engaged learner and relationship-oriented stakeholder in the change process.

ELIGIBLE GEOGRAPHIES

Through this initiative, the Foundation intends to fund coalitions in the following states:

Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia

Coalitions based in states other than those listed above are not eligible to apply for funding.

AWARD STRUCTURE

Each selected coalition will receive a \$1,000,000 award. This award will be disbursed in installments of \$200,000 over a five-year period. The Foundation understands that in some cases, the funding required at various points of the project period (e.g., at the launch or at the close) may need to be greater or less than \$200,000. We will dialogue with award recipients to determine a disbursement schedule that best supports the scope of work.

After the first installment, future grant disbursements will be contingent on the coalition making progress towards its goals, as evidenced by completion of grant requirements.

Applicants must designate a partner who will submit the application on behalf of the coalition, serve as the fiscal agent, and receive the funds in the event of an award. This partner must have 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service.

APPLICATION PROCESS

This is a two-part application process. To be considered for an award, applicants must complete **both** steps below no later than 5:00 pm EDT on Friday, September 8, 2023.

- **Step 1: Coalition Application** - In writing and through video-recorded responses, applicants will provide detailed information about their coalition's history, project strategy, governance, experience, and capacity. They will upload a project budget, submit letters of commitment from all coalition members, and present a preliminary project plan. Applicants can begin their application process [here](#).
- **Step 2: Fiscal Agent Information** – Applicants will also be required to fill out a [short application](#) on the Foundation's application intake system. When prompted for an invitation code, please enter **CVSHPHIL2**. Fiscal agents will be asked to upload a completed W-9 form and bank information on bank letterhead.

APPLICATION CONTENT

Applicants will be asked to provide written and video-recorded responses to questions in the categories listed below. We are not interested in highly produced video recordings that the coalition may have previously developed for marketing or communications purposes. Only responses recorded to answer the questions on this application will be considered.

1. **About Us** – Coalition members will tell the story of how the coalition formed, why it came together, and the values that guide its collective work. They will also introduce their community to us, sharing about the community's strengths, populations served, their unique challenges, and why the coalition believes that things can get better.
2. **Coalition Strategy** – This section will capture information about the goal(s) and outcome(s) that the coalition selected to focus on through this initiative. Coalitions will describe their plan for making progress toward the goal(s), and the experiences they bring to bear as they work together on this challenge.
3. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** – Coalition members will describe the extent to which their coalition's governance reflects the diversity of their community. They will help the Foundation understand what equitable health outcomes mean in their unique context. They will also present their plans for shaping their strategies with ongoing input from community members with diverse identities and lived experiences.
4. **Coalition Capacity** – Coalitions will help the Foundation understand their collective capacity to reach their selected goal(s) and deliver the long-term outcome(s). They will describe the knowledge, skills, and experience of their members, and how these members have worked to leverage these strengths. They will also reflect on how the Foundation's multi-year investment can support the growing edges of the coalition's capacity.

OUR FOCUS ON LEARNING

The Foundation will make space for our program team and grantees to learn and grow from our collective work under this initiative. The Foundation's learning practices are rooted in our commitment to continually increase our positive impact on the health of communities.

We are eager to learn from the work of the coalitions who will become part of this initiative. To support this learning, we will schedule quarterly virtual meetings with each coalition and make site visits to each community. We will also convene all coalitions in person periodically (dates still to be determined) and support travel-related expenses for coalition members to attend these events. The Foundation will co-develop agendas for all learning events in partnership with grantees.

To help us capture and act on the important lessons and insights from this initiative, the Foundation will engage its internal learning and evaluation manager. Funded coalitions will also be expected to use part of their award to pay for the services of a contracted or in-house evaluation specialist. During the first three months of the award period, the Foundation will work with each coalition to develop plans for measuring the coalition's progress towards its goals and expected outcomes.

TIMELINE

July 31, 2023 - Open Call launches. Coalitions are invited to assess their collective readiness for the Open Call. This self-assessment is accessible at the start of the application process.

September 8, 2023 – Application Deadline. To be considered for funding, a coalition must submit all required application materials no later than 5:00 PM EST.

October 6, 2023 – Notification of Award Decisions. All applicants will receive an email that notifies them of decisions related to their funding applications. Upon being notified, applicants selected to receive funding will begin working with the Foundation's program team to complete grant agreements and other administrative requirements.

October 20, 2023 – Awarded Projects Launch. Contingent on all grant terms and agreements being met, project activities will launch. The Foundation will host a call for funded coalitions to meet and greet one another and schedule planning sessions with each coalition to focus on the identification of key performance indicators and project outcomes.

QUESTIONS

We have compiled a set of Frequently Asked Questions for prospective applicants' reference. If your question is not answered below, you may email us at cvshealthfoundation@cvshealth.com. We will provide a response within 1-2 business days.

1. What counts as a “multi-sector, community-based coalition” under this Open Call?

We are interested in supporting coalitions that have a formalized structure for engaging diverse stakeholders in coordinated action to improve the mental health outcomes of people ages 12 to 24. Possible sectors represented in a coalition’s membership may include organizations or agencies from the K-12 education, higher education, child welfare, juvenile justice, health care, law enforcement, social services, and public health sectors.

Evidence of a coalition’s formalized structure may include, but is not limited to, a strategic plan, a steering committee, working groups, co-developed meeting agendas, a lead agency, and a part- or full-time coordinator. We recognize that coalitions interested in this funding opportunity will be at different stages of development. We encourage prospective applicants to complete the Coalition Readiness Self-Assessment, which is placed at the start of the Coalition Application form, to determine if this opportunity is right for them.

2. How many organizations should be part of the coalition that the Foundation intends to support?

We are interested in the quality, and not solely on the quantity, of partnerships represented in the coalition. For this reason, we are not prescribing a minimum or maximum number of coalition member organizations. However, the Foundation expects that coalition membership will expand over time to include partners who share identities with or have similar lived experience as the most adversely impacted adolescent and young adult demographics in the coalition’s community. We also expect that at least one coalition institution directly delivers mental health care to people ages 12 to 24.

3. What is considered a “sustainable, systems-level improvement related to adolescent and young adult mental health”?

Coalitions are expected to identify and address challenges that span beyond any single organization’s mission, constituents, and sphere of influence. The strategies that the coalition uses to address these challenges will be tailored to reflect the local context and strengths of its members and community residents.

The goals and outcomes included in the section called “Our Theory of Change” reflect the systems-level challenges that the Foundation would like to impact through this initiative. A sustainable improvement can be described in terms of the partnerships, policies, practices, or programs that will continue beyond the five-year time frame of the grant.

4. Does our coalition have to focus on all young people in the 12-24 age band?

Depending on their community’s particular context, a coalition may choose to focus on the entire 12-24 age band or a subset (e.g., ages 12-17; ages 18-24).

5. Can our coalition include other age groups in its proposed work?

We recognize that coalitions may be serving people who are younger than 12 or older than 24. While we don't expect coalitions to pause efforts to serve its defined priority populations, the Foundation's financial support must be applied towards strategies that specifically address the mental health and well-being of young people between 12 and 24 years old.

6. Can an organization be included in two different funding applications?

If a city or county has more than one coalition focused on the mental health and well-being of adolescents and young adults, it is allowable for an agency or organization to submit a letter of commitment in more than one coalition application. However, we will consider a fiscal agent submitting more than one application on a case-by-case basis and a favorable decision is not guaranteed. All applicants are responsible for contacting the Foundation to determine their eligibility for this type of exception.

7. Does my coalition's application have a greater chance of being funded if my project addresses more than one of the required goals or more than the two required outcomes?

Applications will be evaluated based on many factors. We will pay special attention to the quality of coalition partnerships and collective results, strength of selected strategies, and a governance structure that includes people who share identities with or have similar lived experience as the most adversely impacted adolescent and young adult demographics in the coalition's community. Selecting more than one of the required goals or more than two of the required outcomes could figure into the overall strength of an application if it demonstrates the coalition's influence, capacity, and reach; a comprehensive implementation and measurement plan will be paramount in these instances.

8. Within the eligible states, are there community types you're interested or not interested in, such as urban or rural areas?

We are interested in supporting the work of coalitions in communities experiencing sustained or increasingly negative outcomes related to adolescent and young adult mental health, and/or shortages related to mental and behavioral health workforce. We will give special consideration to cities or counties that provide data describing high prevalence of indicators such as depression, suicidal ideation, and/or deaths by suicide among the 12-24 age group, as compared to most other counties in the state.

9. If my organization currently has an active grant from the CVS Health Foundation, can it still apply, either as a lead agency or a supporting partner?

Yes, grantees with active CVS Health Foundation or CVS Health grants may be included as a lead or supporting agency in an application for this program.

10. Can coalition members collaborate to complete the application?

We fully expect that the application content will be developed in a collaborative fashion among all coalition members. When completing the online application, the coalition should select the agency that will serve as the owner of the application process. That owner will be able to invite

coalition partners to collaborate on the responses. Collaborators can work on the application together in real time, but only the owner will be able to submit the final content of the coalition's application.

11. Why do you ask for video-recorded responses as well as written ones?

We prefer not to rely solely on written responses, as this may create an unfair advantage for applicants who can enlist the paid services of a grant writer. Furthermore, we believe applicants should have more than one mechanism for representing the strengths of their coalition. Video-recorded responses can be an effective way to convey the vibrancy and trust that exists in healthy, well-governed coalitions.

12. How will funded coalitions be expected to report on their progress toward achieving their goals and outcomes?

All funded coalitions are required to select at least one goal and two long-term outcomes from the Foundation's theory of change. The goals are meant to guide the coalitions' decisions about strategy and partnerships, so that they make ongoing progress toward their selected outcomes.

At the start of the funding period, each coalition will meet with the Foundation's program team to identify the metrics that best describe what the project's short-, mid-, and long-term success will look like. The Foundation will assist grantees with developing a plan for monitoring their progress, including the identification of data sources, data collection methods, and reporting tools.

Each coalition will be expected to dedicate some staff time to collecting and reporting data that demonstrates their progress. While we don't prescribe a specific dollar amount, we expect each coalition's annual project budget to include funds to pay for the services of a contracted or in-house evaluation specialist. This individual will serve as the point person for the Foundation's learning and evaluation manager when discussing project metrics, KPIs, or outcomes.

Coalitions will provide the Foundation with updates about their progress in written and conversational formats. The Foundation will hold quarterly virtual meetings with each coalition for the conversational reports. All coalitions will be required to submit annual interim progress reports, and a final written report at the close of the grant period.

13. Can you review my application prior to the deadline to let me know if I am on the right track?

In fairness to all applicants, our program staff is unable to review and give feedback on applications in progress.

14. Do you have a cap on indirect costs?

Up to 15% of the \$500,000 budget can support indirect costs, which we define as overhead expenses that relate to overall operations of your organization or are shared among projects or functions. Examples of indirect costs include accounting, insurance, legal services, and utilities.

15. Do you have any other considerations related to the finances of the lead agency?

We will prioritize applications in which the lead agency's annual operating budget is at least \$1,000,000, as this typically indicates a stable base of financial operations in a community-based organization.

16. Are there restrictions on how much of the budget can go toward salaries?

We understand the importance of having stable funding for part- or full-time coalition coordinators. While we don't have a cap on dollars allocated toward salaries, we are supportive of also including direct costs that support programming whenever possible. If the coalition intends to carry out program activities with other funding, we request a brief description of the sources that will be used to cover the cost of such activities.

17. Will you provide feedback on a declined application?

Yes. If you would like to receive feedback on a declined application, please email us at cvshealthfoundation@cvshealth.com.

Centering Youth Mental Health:

Application Form Questions (For applicants' reference only)

I. About Us

1. Please provide a brief history of your coalition – why it came together, who was invited to join, and what problem(s) you are currently trying to address. How was the lead agency selected for this application? (200 words)
2. Please describe your coalition's governance structure. What are the levels of participation expected from coalition members? How many hours do members devote to the coalition on average each month? Does your coalition have paid staff (full or part time), and if so, what are the responsibilities of the paid staff? (200 words)
3. **Video Response:** Please introduce us to your community, focusing on its strengths and unique challenges. What is important for us to know about the population(s) your coalition serves? Why does your coalition believe that things can get better for this population? (3 minutes)
4. **Video Response:** What values guide the work of your coalition? How can these values be observed by community members? We define values as the set of core beliefs that guide how your coalition operates and conducts its business. (2 minutes)

II. Coalition Strategy

1. Which goal(s) from the Foundation's theory of change did your coalition choose to focus on over a five-year period? [Drop down box with three choices]
2. Please explain why your coalition selected this goal. How will working on this goal allow your members to leverage work and partnerships that are already underway? (100 words)
3. How will members work together to develop the strategy for achieving the goal(s) you selected? What past experiences will you draw from in your strategic planning? (100 words)
4. How would a five-year grant from the CVS Health Foundation assist your coalition in reaching this goal? How do you envision using the dollars? What other resources (e.g., financial, in-kind) will your coalition need to reach the goal? (100 words)
5. Which outcomes from the Foundation's theory of change did your coalition choose to focus on over a five-year period? [Drop down box with five choices]
6. What are some ways in which you will know your coalition is making progress toward these outcomes? What data or metrics will be essential for you to collect and monitor? (250 words)

III. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1. In your community's context, how does your coalition address health equity for young persons in your community? We define health equity as every person having a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health? (100 words)
2. **Video Response:** How does your coalition's governance reflect the diversity of your community? What are some areas for growth and development? (2 minutes)

3. **Video Response:** Describe a time when your coalition invited community members with diverse identities and lived experiences to shape the coalition’s priorities. How did you create an inclusive space? What was the result? (3 minutes)
4. Reflecting on the experience you described in response to Question 3, how will you invite diverse stakeholders to shape your coalition’s activities under this grant? (100 words)

IV. Coalition Capacity

1. How well is your coalition positioned to tackle this five-year project? What knowledge, skills, and expertise does it bring to the table? (200 words)
2. **Video Response:**
 - a. Describe a time when your coalition had different opinions about how to accomplish a goal. What did you do to reach consensus about a path forward? What was the result? (2 minutes)
 - b. Please tell us about a time when your coalition planned a strategy and established clear objectives, timelines, and action steps. How did you ensure good communication and space to learn from mistakes? What was the result? (2 minutes)
3. What are the primary growth opportunities for your coalition? How would this grant help your coalition grow its capacity? (200 words)
4. Tell us about your coalition’s experience with program evaluation. How would you describe your internal capacity to collect, analyze, and report on data related to your project’s selected outcomes? (200 words)

Scoring Rubric (Whole Number Scale of 1-5; Maximum Score = 20)

<p>About Us – To what extent do the responses include details about the coalition’s history, goals, values, and governance? To what extent do responses convey a strengths-based portrayal of the community served by the coalition?</p>		
<p>Limited (1)</p> <p>Responses include few details regarding the coalition’s history, purpose, values, and governance. Information about the coalition’s community is sparse and focuses mostly on the community’s challenges, saying little or nothing about its strengths.</p>	<p>Sufficient (3)</p> <p>Responses clearly describe the coalition’s history, purpose, values, and governance. The coalition’s presentation of its community is thorough and highlights the community’s challenges in the context of its strengths.</p>	<p>Substantive (5)</p> <p>Responses provide ample details regarding the coalition’s history, purpose, values, and governance. The coalition’s presentation of its community evokes hope and dignity; it demonstrates the coalition’s values are evident in the way it conducts its work.</p>

<p>Coalition Strategy – To what extent do the responses explain the coalition’s plans to achieve the goal(s) and outcomes they selected from the Foundation’s theory of change?</p>		
<p>Limited (1)</p> <p>Responses include few or no details regarding the coalition’s plans to achieve the goal(s) and outcomes from the Foundation’s theory of change. The coalition does not present a clear description of how it will know it is making progress towards its selected goal(s) and outcomes.</p>	<p>Sufficient (3)</p> <p>Responses provide basic details about how the coalition plans to achieve the goal(s) and outcomes from the Foundation’s theory of change. The coalition provides some indication of how it will know it is making progress towards its selected goal(s) and outcomes.</p>	<p>Substantive (5)</p> <p>The coalition presents a robust plan for achieving the goal(s) and outcomes from the Foundation’s theory of change. The responses articulate clear metrics and methods for assessing the progress that the coalition is making towards short- and long-term goals and outcomes.</p>
<p>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) – To what extent do the responses convey how the coalition is implementing, reflecting on, and/or grappling with authentic DEI practices?</p>		
<p>Limited (1)</p> <p>Responses include few or no details regarding the coalition’s efforts to address health equity and establish a governance structure that reflects the diversity of identities and lived experiences of community members. It is difficult to ascertain whether the coalition is doing its collective work in an inclusive environment.</p>	<p>Sufficient (3)</p> <p>Responses describe a coalition making some strides toward addressing health equity and establishing a governance structure that reflects the diversity of identities and lived experiences of community members. There is some evidence that the coalition is doing its collective work in an increasingly trust-based environment.</p>	<p>Substantive (5)</p> <p>Responses describe a coalition making significant progress toward addressing health equity. The coalition’s governance structure clearly reflects the diversity of identities and lived experiences of community members. There is ample evidence that the coalition is doing its collective work in an inclusive environment that distributes power equitably.</p>
<p>Coalition Capacity – To what extent do the responses describe the coalition’s capacity to undertake a five-year, systems-focused project?</p>		
<p>Limited (1)</p> <p>Responses include few or no details regarding the coalition’s experience, planning processes, and capacity to evaluate activities or programs. Details paint an unclear picture of whether coalition leaders and members will be able to undertake a five-year systems-focused project.</p>	<p>Sufficient (3)</p> <p>Responses describe a coalition with somewhat relevant experience, emerging planning processes, and limited but existing capacity to evaluate activities or programs. Details paint a partial picture of whether coalition leaders and members will be able to undertake a five-year systems-focused project.</p>	<p>Substantive (5)</p> <p>Responses describe a coalition with relevant experience, robust planning processes, and a solid track record of evaluating activities and/or programs. Details paint a clear picture of the coalition’s readiness to successfully implement a five-year, systems-focused project.</p>