

WilliamPennFoundation

Request for Proposals

Accessing Mental and Behavioral Health Services for Young Children and Caregivers

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Purpose of this Request for Proposals

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve quality of life for residents of the Philadelphia region. The Foundation's Children and Families program seeks to expand access to programs and resources that support the healthy development and academic success of young children, ages 0 to 8, in Philadelphia. A full description of the Children and Families program, its goals, and all of its objectives can be found on the Foundation's website.

This specific Request for Proposals (RFP) was created to help organizations to advance the following objective:

By 2028, the Foundation will make at least 10 investments related to accessing mental and behavioral health services for young children and caregivers experiencing service shortages; these investments will help inform future Foundation investments.

Why is WPF prioritizing this objective?

This objective was developed after extensive conversations with key stakeholders from the mental and behavioral health sector. We heard the need for increased resources to support culturally responsive and trauma-informed services; streamlined service intake and eligibility processes; reduced wait times for screening and intervention; increased workforce recruitment and retention; and embedding mental health services within existing family serving community-based organizations.

This RFP seeks to address these challenges by funding projects that will increase access for families with young children (prenatal to age 8), who are in need of mental and behavioral health services.

According to the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), mental and behavioral health services are a continuum of prevention, assessment, treatment, and support practices that promote emotional well-being, address mental health conditions, and encourage healthy behaviors across the lifespan. We know that, in many cases, the terms mental and behavioral health are used interchangeably. We encourage applicants to determine which of these terms best describes the work that is being proposed. For the purpose of this RFP, we will use MBH to refer to Mental and Behavioral Health services.



What types of projects will get funded?

The Foundation recognizes that there are many ways that organizations and communities can contribute to increasing access to MBH services for Philadelphia's young children and their caregivers.

For this RFP, we will consider proposals that focus on:

- Provision of MBH services that are not currently available to a defined group of intended beneficiaries,
- Expanding the number of licensed professionals prepared to implement culturally and linguistically relevant care where it is most needed, and/or
- Policy or system changes that will increase the availability of MBH services for young children in Philadelphia.

All work must be clearly designed for the primary benefit of young children and their caregivers living in Philadelphia. Projects must focus on expanding access for families with low incomes, people of color, and/or families whose primary language is not English. Projects should provide robust evidence of need for the population or geography the proposal is intended to serve.

Organizations may choose a small geographic focus or may seek to make change on a citywide scale.

What has to be in my proposal?

We are requesting proposals for **up to three years of funding**. Proposals for funding through this RFP must include activities that do **at least one of the following**:

1. Increase the number of licensed MBH providers serving young children who participate in Medical Assistance (Medicaid).
2. Increase the number of culturally and linguistically competent professionals serving in community-based settings.
3. Expand the reach of MBH services for young children in geographic areas of the city with the greatest need. Priority will be given to proposals that provide robust evidence of why services are needed for intended populations or geographies.
4. Advocate for policies that increase access to MBH services for families with young children (prenatal to age 8).

Please note, under this RFP, the Foundation **will not** consider proposals to support the following:

1. Physical health services such as well child and adult exams or treatment.
2. Services currently covered through Medicaid's Behavioral Health Choices program.
3. Drug and alcohol addiction treatment.
4. Services to children and families covered under Pennsylvania's Early Intervention program.
5. Capital projects/facility improvements.
6. Projects that do not have established evidence of implementation and impact (i.e., no pilot programs or studies to establish efficacy or effectiveness will be funded).

If you are proposing to expand the reach of services, you must have a strong track record implementing MBH services for families with children within the prenatal-8-year-old age range.

You may apply to expand implementation of currently offered programming or you may apply to offer a new service if you have clear evidence of client need/demand, a strong evidence base for the program, a clear and feasible plan to implement the work, and a solid justification for anticipated outcomes.

Organizations that propose projects in partnership with other applicants will be considered on their individual merits. However, the Foundation recognizes that the work necessary to make significant progress on the objective will be complex and encourages organizations to include partnerships that leverage complementary strengths, resources, and expertise.

All proposals that meet the criteria described on pages 7 and 8 are encouraged. After reviewing proposals, WPF will conduct site visits and gather additional information from a limited number of organizations.

The Foundation seeks to support efforts that increase access to mental and behavioral health services for young children and their caregivers in Philadelphia.

Quick Check: Is This Opportunity a Good Fit?

Before you apply, please review the questions below. If you can confidently answer “yes” to the questions, this funding opportunity may be relevant to you. If you respond “no” to **any** of the questions, this opportunity is not a good match for your project, and you should not apply.

	Yes	No
Is your project expanding access to mental/behavioral health services for children (prenatal to age 8) and/or their caregivers?	☐	☐
Is your project serving only families who reside in Philadelphia?	☐	☐
Is your project focused on families impacted by poverty or other risk factors?	☐	☐

! Also review **all** the criteria on the following pages to make sure your program aligns with those before you apply.

What types of organizations are eligible for funding?

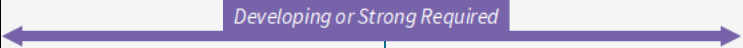
Applicants must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as 501(c)3 public charities or operate under a public charity fiduciary. Public charities include community-based organizations, schools and educational institutions, and other types of public-serving groups. Government entities are also eligible to apply.

Existing grantees currently receiving funding to advance this objective cannot request additional funds for their current projects.

Proposal Review

! Applicants must address these criteria in their responses within the Project Narrative section of the application. Proposals will be judged on the criteria and additional expectations below.

Alignment with Objective			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Project conveys no meaningful connection to the objective.	Project would make a marginal and/or uncertain contribution to advancing the objective.	Project would make a clear contribution to advancing the objective.	Project would make a clear and significant contribution to advancing the objective.
Developing or Strong Required			
Program Design and Feasibility			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Proposal does not provide a clear approach to the work. Anticipated outcomes and success are not well-defined.	Proposal describes an approach to the work, but some aspects are vague, difficult to understand or seem unrealistic. Anticipated outcomes are defined, but are of uncertain achievability, based on the details provided.	Proposal provides a clear approach but could be more specific. Anticipated outcomes require further clarification to assess feasibility.	Proposal provides a clear and feasible plan to implement the work and includes a solid justification for anticipated outcomes.
Developing or Strong Required			
Partnerships and Collaboration			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No potential partners or plans for collaboration.	Potential partners relevant to the project are identified but there are no clear commitments.	Some committed partnerships relevant to the project, a plan to build any necessary new partnerships, and a description of each partner's role.	Sufficient committed partnerships relevant to the project, a description of each partner's role, and a track record of successful collaboration.
Developing or Strong Required			
Organizational Experience			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No implementation experience and no track record of success.	Less than three years of experience with advancing the specified objective and a limited track record of success.	Three to five years of experience advancing the specified objective and success in Philadelphia or other relevant cities or regions.	More than five years of experience advancing the specified objective and an extensive track record of success in Philadelphia and/or Pennsylvania.
Emergent, Developing, or Strong Required			

Community Knowledge and Engagement			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and no plan for future engagement.	Minimal evidence of familiarity with intended beneficiaries of the proposed project, but there is a commitment to develop a stakeholder engagement plan during implementation.	Evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and there is a plan for ongoing stakeholder engagement during implementation.	Key components of the project were informed by the intended beneficiaries of the proposed project and there is a plan for ongoing engagement during implementation.
			

What else will be expected in my proposal?

Focus Population	Proposals should focus on providing supports for traditionally marginalized communities including low-income, people of color, and non-English language speakers.
Service Quality	Interventions should employ a model that has been shown to be effective and culturally and linguistically relevant for the population being served.
Evidence of Need	Proposals should include robust evidence of need related to intended populations served.
Accessibility	For proposals that include direct services, planned services should take place in accessible locations, during convenient times, with consistently available language supports for non-English speaking individuals.
Budget	The requested budget is reasonable for the proposed activities and the stated results.

Budget

How much money is available?

There is no minimum or maximum amount of funding that organizations may request. **However, grant requests under \$800,000 will be most competitive.** The grant amount requested should be commensurate with the contribution that the project will make to the overall objective.

WPF has allocated \$4 million to advance this objective through this RFP. At least \$1 million of the total amount awarded under this RFP will be reserved for grants to organizations that have budgets under \$2 million per year and/or are led by individuals who are members of groups with a history of discrimination or exclusion.

What should I include in my proposed budget?

Project budgets should cover up to 3 years of funding. Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any regrants to partner organizations or fees to consultants. This information can be provided in the proposal narrative.

Except in rare circumstances, total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of a participating organization's operating budget. All aspects of project development and execution, including planning, design, materials, community engagement, staffing, professional development, and implementation are eligible for funding.

What if my proposal includes any advocacy or lobbying activities?

The Foundation recognizes that advocacy can sometimes be a useful tactic to advance certain objectives. Advocacy takes many forms and sometimes includes activities that the Internal Revenue Service defines as lobbying. (See [Application Guidelines for Advocacy Projects](#) for general information on the IRS lobbying rules.) The Foundation is open to proposals that include advocacy and/or lobbying as part of the project and may fund projects that include lobbying so long as certain requirements are met.

Applications that include advocacy or lobbying must:

- Show in the budget submitted by the applicant that the amount requested from the Foundation is less than 80% of the total project budget.
- Identify the proportion of the total project budget, if any, that may support activities defined as lobbying under the IRS rules (the “lobbying percentage”). (You will see a specific question about this on the budget template.)
- Show that the applicant has funding commitments that will cover a minimum of 20% of the total project budget for at least the first year of the proposed grant period. In-kind contributions cannot be

counted toward this portion of the budget. (Organizations will be expected to demonstrate funding commitments for at least 20% of the budget for all years of the grant period, but we recognize that it may take additional time to secure those commitments.)

- If the lobbying percentage is more than 20% of the project budget, the applicant must show that they have committed funds that exceed that lobbying percentage.

In no cases can WPF earmark funds for lobbying activities, nor can Foundation funds be used to support or oppose any candidate for public office, for voter registration efforts, or for any partisan purposes.

Anything else I should know?

If you are awarded funding, you will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how you have made progress toward the objective above and what you have learned during the year.

Organizations funded through this RFP will be convened in a Learning Community to build networks among those advancing a common objective, to share learning and best practices, and to identify ways in which progress could be enhanced. Grantees will help to determine the frequency, content, and specific goals of the Learning Community. The overhead funding included with any awarded grants is, in part, meant to help subsidize staff participation in the Learning Community.

How to Apply

If you answered “yes” to all the questions in the “Quick Check” on page 6 and meet all the review criteria on pages 7 and 8, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online submission system at <https://wpcf.my.site.com/grantee>.

Submit your application by **5:00PM ET on October 22, 2026**. A WPF team will review all proposals and will notify applicants if they have been selected to move forward in the review process. **To download a working copy of the application to draft responses, please [click here](#).**

Selected organizations will take part in a site visit with WPF staff so that the Foundation can learn more about applicants’ work. Site visits will be approximately two hours in duration. We ask that organizations use this time to introduce key staff working on the proposed project, to show WPF staff where the work will take place, and to elevate the voices of the potential beneficiaries of the proposed project. Based on a combination of the written materials and the learning from the site visit, **a final slate of organizations** will be recommended to the WPF Board for consideration of their proposals.

This request or any subsequent response does not commit William Penn Foundation or the responding organization to any future funding or engagement. If you have any questions, contact **Kate Eisenpress, Program Officer, Children and Families at keisenpress@williampennfoundation.org**.



Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an optional informational webinar on **Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 1:00PM ET**.

Register for the webinar at <https://lu.ma/williampennfoundation>.

Timeline

September 9, 2026

Proposal submission period opens.

September 15, 2026

Informational Webinar (see bottom of this page)

October 22, 2026

Proposals due by 5:00PM ET

November 11-16, 2026

Select applicants notified that their proposals have been chosen for further consideration and a site visit. Other applicants will be notified that their proposals are not advancing in the process.

November 16-December 14, 2026

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

February 5, 2027

WPF Board review selected proposals.

February 8, 2027

Project implementation can begin.