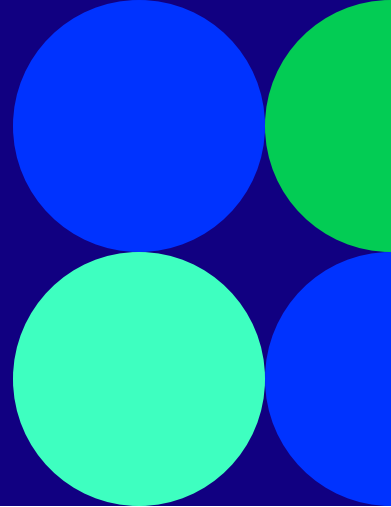


Improving Youth Mental Health

Request for proposal



Our commitment

The Cigna Group Foundation is committing \$9 million over three years to improve the mental health of youth (ages 5–18) as it relates to post-pandemic stress and distress. This commitment includes support for those who care for youth in everyday settings and interactions, including their parents, caregivers, and youth service professionals, such as educators and therapists.

Our why

As noted in the U.S. Surgeon General Advisory declaring a mental health crisis among youth, we all have a role to play in supporting youth mental health and creating a world where young people thrive.¹ Further, by supporting youth, we are committing to a path that will positively impact the productivity, success and wellness of U.S. citizens at large as this generation matures.²

- One in five youth has at least one behavioral health condition. Further, youth from disadvantaged and underserved communities, are disproportionately impacted by mental illnesses, and frequently experience reduced access to high-quality, evidence-based mental health services.³
- Inadequate levels of social and emotional functioning are increasingly recognized as central to many public health problems (e.g., substance abuse, obesity, violence).⁴
- Six in 10 parents (61%) whose teens have a mental health diagnosis report having trouble finding care, while about the same percentage of parents (58%) feel support and resources from their child's school are lacking.⁵
- More than a quarter (27%) of parents believe that community-driven programs, education and awareness campaigns to draw attention to teen mental health issues can have a positive impact.⁶
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of teens want their school to offer mental health services.⁷
- Only one-third (34%) of public schools provide outreach services, which includes mental health screenings for all students.⁸

Our call for action

We seek to collaborate with and support nonprofits that leverage evidence-informed programs and services to serve local youth experiencing the most need. For the first year of our three-year commitment, we will focus on investing in approaches that drive outcomes to address mental health concerns early; and strategically offer programming, intervention and access to care in schools and related settings in underserved communities. Our grant program goals are to:

Increase reach of programming that foster social-emotional skills and well-being.

Increase the number of parents, caregivers and youth service professionals who feel equipped to support.

Increase pathways to mental health intervention and access to care.



Together, we can improve the mental health of youth.

Request for proposal

Grant program eligibility & requirements

- The organization is registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization and within one of the specific subsections of the Internal Revenue Code (see [FAQ](#)).
- The budget narrative should reflect all eligible expenses required for the specific grant project. Salaries for staff members are allowable for the related program. Non-eligible expenses include fringe benefits or payroll taxes, general operating expenses, and administrative and indirect costs.
- Progress and impact measurement, including activity tracking practices and evaluation methodology, as well as alignment to the ability to address health disparities, should be clearly articulated in the application.
- The measurement approach should include connecting how program outputs and short-term outcomes drive to long-term, sustainable improved mental health among youth. For example, for the grant program goal to increase the number of parents, caregivers and youth service professionals who feel equipped to support, we'll seek to understand an aligned measure, such as number of staff members in school or related settings (e.g., after-school programs) trained in mental health literacy or other related trainings that teach how to identify signs and symptoms of youth in distress.
- Grantees awarded funding will be expected to complete a progress report (at six months) and final report (at twelve months, end of term).

Grant range and term

\$100,000 – \$150,000

One-year term

Grant geographical focus

Arizona
Connecticut
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Missouri
New Jersey
Pennsylvania
Tennessee
Texas

2024 grant application timeline

| | |
|------------|---------------------|
| 4/17 | Application opens |
| 5/22 | Application closes |
| Early July | Applicants notified |
| 8/1 | Grant term begins |

1. Office of the Surgeon General. *Protecting Your Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2021. <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeon-general/rpr/rpr-8-issues/youth-mental-health/index.html>

2. Prinstein, M. and Ethier, KA. "Science Shows How to Protect Kids' Mental Health, but It's Being Ignored." *Scientific American*. May 31, 2022. <https://www.sciencemag.com/article/science-shows-how-to-protect-kids-mental-health-but-its-being-ignored/>

3. National Institute of Mental Health. *Strategic Framework for Addressing Youth Mental Health Disparities: Fiscal Years 2022–2031*. [Report]. Last accessed March 25, 2024. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/strategic-framework-for-addressing-youth-mental-health/youth-mental-health-framework-0.pdf>

4. Jones, D.E., Greenberg, M. and Crowley, M. "Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship Between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Wellness." *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 11 (November 1, 2015): pp. 2283–2290. <https://doi.org/10.2195/ajph.2015.30.2630>

5. Economist Impact. "Sounding the alarm: parent perceptions of teen mental health in the US." A study commissioned by Cigna, 2022. <https://impact.economist.com/perspectives/files/default/files/sounding-the-alarm-parent-perceptions-of-teen-mental-health-in-the-us-fina13.pdf>

6. Economist Impact. "The US youth mental health crisis demands a community response." October 8, 2023. <https://impact.economist.com/perspectives/files/youth-mental-health-crisis-demands-a-community-response>

7. EdChoice. *Teens and Their Schooling Perspectives: A National Polling Report*. [PowerPoint presentation]. Morning Consult, 2023. <https://www.edchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/EdChoice-Teens-August-2023.pdf>

8. Institute of Education Sciences. *School Pulse Panel*. 2023. <https://ies.ed.gov/schoolpulse/summary.aspx>