

2026 grant program: Improving youth mental health

Request for application (RFA) deadline: March 12, 2026, 5:00 P.M. ET

Our commitment

The Cigna Group Foundation committed \$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 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

- Youth from underserved communities are disproportionately impacted by mental illnesses, and they 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).
- More than two out of three children and adolescents experience trauma by age 16.⁴

Our call for action

We seek to support nonprofits serving underserved youth and their families, prioritizing evidence-informed projects that strongly align with one of the following **grant program goals:**

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

Focus: SEL in school and after-school settings

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

Focus: family-school partnerships

Increase pathways to mental health intervention and access to care

Focus: trauma-focused services

Together, we can improve the mental health of youth.

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Grant program eligibility and requirements

- The RFA and full application are two distinct steps.
 - First step: the RFA link available on our website will direct you to the grant application portal.
 - Second step: If eligible and invited to submit a full application, you will receive an email with a link to the full application. Please note the dates in the timeline for these steps.
- The nonprofit is a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization and within one of the specific subsections of the Internal Revenue Code (see [FAQ](#)).
- Grant request must total **\$150,000**. The budget narrative should reflect eligible expenses required for the specific grant request only. Salaries for staff members are allowable for related program implementation. Non-eligible expenses include fringe benefits, payroll taxes, general operating expenses, administrative and indirect costs.
- Progress and impact measurement, including activity-tracking practices and evaluation methodology, 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 the number of staff members in a school or related setting (e.g., after-school programs) trained in positive youth development.
- Grantees awarded funding will be expected to complete a progress report (at six months) and final report (at end of term).
- Additional details, including the link for the RFA are on [The Cigna Group Foundation website](#).

Grant Amount: \$150,000

Grant Term: 12 months

Grant program delivery

(must be in one of the following states)*

Arizona	Missouri
Connecticut	New Jersey
Florida	Pennsylvania
Georgia	Tennessee
Illinois	Texas

Grant program timeline

2/3	RFA opens
3/12 5:00 P.M. ET	RFA closes
3/18	Invite to submit full application (if eligible)
4/15 5:00 P.M. ET	Full application due
Late June	Decision notification
8/1	Grant term begins

**National nonprofit organizations may be eligible with existing partnership/program delivery model for state(s) listed.*



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/surgeongeneral/priorities/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.scientificamerican.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 January 14, 2025. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/sites/default/files/documents/health/publications/nimh-strategic-framework-for-addressing-youth-mental-health>Youth-MH-Disparities-Framework_0.pdf

4. Lawrence-Sidebottom D, Huffman LG, Beam AB, Guerra R, Parikh A, Roots M, and Huberty J. "Rates of Trauma Exposure and Posttraumatic Stress in a Pediatric Digital Mental Health Intervention: Retrospective Analysis of Associations With Anxiety and Depressive Symptom Improvement Over Time." *JMIR Pediatric Parent*. 2024 Feb 27;7:e55560. doi: 10.2196/55560. PMID: 38412001; PMCID: PMC10933721.