

William Penn Foundation

Request for Proposals

Accessing Mental Health Services for Young Children and Caregivers

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Introduction

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve the lives of young children in Philadelphia. The Foundation's Children and Families program was created 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 goal, 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.

Philadelphia has seen a growing demand for mental and behavioral health services among young children and their families. Key stakeholders such as local nonprofit organizations, teachers, and families, have told us that there are often waitlists for services and there is a lack of needed diversity among service providers as well as additional barriers to accessing services. This RFP seeks to address these challenges by funding projects that will increase access for families with children prenatal through age 5 in need of mental health services for themselves and/or their young children.

The Foundation recognizes that there are many ways that organizations and communities can contribute to increasing access to mental health services for Philadelphia’s young children and caregivers. For this RFP, we will prioritize proposals that focus on direct service and/or policy or system change. Organizations may choose a small geographic focus or may seek to make change on a citywide scale.

Regardless of the approach, all applicants should describe a compelling explanation for how their proposed work will make tangible improvements in the quality of life for residents of Philadelphia. The specific criteria that will be used to assess all proposals can be found on pages 7 and 8 of this document.

Why is the Foundation using a Request for Proposals to advance this objective?

The Foundation has chosen to advance this objective using a Request for Proposals for several reasons. First, we believe that stakeholders across the region have a great deal of expertise and experience that can be supported to make progress on an objective that we heard was important to communities in our region. We want to hear about the impactful projects that are underway or could get underway and need funding. Second, we want to be as transparent as possible about the opportunity for non-profit organizations in the region to secure funding for work to advance this objective. Third, we heard from applicants and grantees in the past that our grant application process was overly burdensome, had unpredictable timelines, and did not provide sufficient information about the funding availability or the criteria used in selecting grantees. Fourth, we heard that applicants wanted an opportunity to show Foundation staff their work, not just tell them about it. The RFP process, including site visits as described below, is part of our effort to address all of this important feedback and to align with the Foundation’s grantmaking values (as detailed on our website).

This RFP seeks projects that will increase access to mental health services for young children, aged 0 to 5, and their caregivers in Philadelphia.

Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) refers to mental health as our “emotional, psychological, and social well-being.” It affects how we think, feel, and act. Some mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, ADHD, and PTSD can begin in early childhood. Mental health services for caregivers and their children during early childhood can help support strong parent/child relationships, promote positive parenting practices, and help children learn to manage symptoms that may present barriers in social and educational settings.

Children in Philadelphia who reside in communities that are heavily impacted by poverty often endure a high rate of adverse-childhood experiences (ACEs) – witnessing violence, abuse, neglect – which can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being.¹ According to the 2017 *Place Matters* report designed by the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS), mental health risk index scores for 85% of Philadelphia zip codes were above the national average for need.²

According to the Zero To Three *Think Babies Campaign*, early treatment of mental health concerns can help prevent more serious mental health disorders in adulthood.³ Lack of culturally and linguistically competent staff, workforce shortages, long waitlists, and services that are inaccessible to local neighborhoods make it difficult or impossible for children and their caregivers to access mental health services.

Between 9.5% to 14.2% of children from birth to 5 years old experience emotional, relational, or behavioral disturbances⁴



¹ Public Health Management Corporation. (2013). *Philadelphia Urban ACE Study*.

² Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services and Scattergood Foundation. (2017). *Place Matters*.

³ Zero To Three. (2023). “Yes, Mental Health Includes Babies.”

⁴ Zero To Three. (2023). “Yes, Mental Health Includes Babies.”

Opportunity Overview

WPF seeks to support efforts that increase access to mental health services for caregivers and young children in Philadelphia. Funding will be limited to projects that will positively impact families with young children, ages 0-5, who have traditionally faced barriers to service for reasons including, but not limited to limited income, insufficient availability of treatment, inaccessible treatment sites, cultural and/or linguistic barriers, immigration status, and limited awareness of existing services.

Proposals must include activities that do at least one of the following:

1. Increase the number of licensed mental health providers serving young children who participate in Medical Assistance (Medicaid).
2. Increase the number of culturally and linguistically competent mental health professionals serving in community-based settings.
3. Expand the reach of existing comprehensive mental health services for young children in geographic areas of the city with the greatest need. *Special consideration will be given to proposals that address service needs in Philadelphia's top ten "high risk" zip codes, according to the Risk Index published in the 2017 DBHIDS Place Matters report: 19120, 19121, 19122, 19124, 19132, 19133, 19134, 19139, 19140, 19142⁵*
4. Advocate for policies that increase access to mental health services for families with young children.

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

- Physical health services such as well child and adult exams or treatment.
- Services currently covered through Medicaid's Behavioral Health Choices program including drug and alcohol treatment.
- Services to children and families covered under Pennsylvania's Early Intervention program.

We are requesting proposals for **up to three years of funding**. After reviewing proposals, WPF will conduct site visits and gather additional information from a limited number of organizations.

Organizations that propose projects in partnership with other applicants will be considered on their individual merits. However, the Foundation recognizes that making significant progress on the objective is difficult and encourages organizations to include partnerships that leverage complementary strengths, resources, and expertise to reach proposed goals.

Furthermore, the Foundation recognizes that there are many different tactics or approaches that could be used to advance the objective stated above. All proposals that meet the review criteria described below are encouraged.

⁵ [Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services and Scattergood Foundation, \(2017\). Place Matters.](#)

WPF has \$3.5 million available to advance this objective at this time. The maximum amount of funding that organizations may request for direct expenses is \$600,000 over three years. (This does not include the overhead amount that will be added to project budgets, based on a formula described on the “How to Apply” section of our website).

At least \$1 million of the total amount awarded under this RFP will be reserved for grants to organizations that have budgets under \$5 million per year and/or are led by individuals who are members of groups with a history of discrimination or exclusion.

Eligibility

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.

Proposed projects must occur in Philadelphia and serve families who are residents of Philadelphia.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be judged on the criteria below. **Applicants should address these criteria in their narrative responses to the application questions.**

Alignment			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Project activities and goals are unrelated to the defined objective.	Project activities and goals may advance the defined objective, but connection is vague.	Project will make a clear but indirect contribution to advancing the defined objective.	Project will make a clear and direct contribution to advancing the defined objective.
			Strong Required
Program Design			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
The approach to the work is vague or unclear.	Outlines an approach to the work that describes one of the following: the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, or a detailed plan to track the outcomes and impact on the relevant objective.	Outlines a clear approach to the work that describes two of the following: the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, or a detailed plan to track project outcomes and impact on the relevant objective.	Outlines a clear approach to the work that describes the organizational capacity to carry out the proposed program, a feasible plan to implement the work, and a plan to track project outcomes and impact on the relevant objective.
			Strong Required
Partnerships and Collaboration			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No identified partners or plans for collaboration.	Partners are identified but there are no clear commitments.	Some existing partnerships, a clear plan to build new partnerships, and a description of each partner's role to maximize impact.	Sufficient existing partnerships or commitments from partner organizations and a description of each partner's role to maximize impact.
		Developing or Strong Required	
Organizational Experience			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No implementation experience and no track record of success.	Limited implementation experience (less than two years) with advancing the specified objective and a minimal track record of success.	Some implementation experience (2-5 years) with advancing the specified objective and a track record of success in Philadelphia or other relevant cities or regions.	Extensive implementation experience (5+ years) with advancing the specified objective and a track record of success in Philadelphia and/or Pennsylvania.
		Developing or Strong Required	
Community Engagement			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No evidence of familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort and no plan for future engagement.	Minimal evidence of the applicants' familiarity with intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort, but there is a commitment to develop a stakeholder engagement plan during implementation.	Evidence of the applicants' familiarity with the intended beneficiaries of the proposed effort 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 effort and there is a plan for ongoing engagement during implementation.
		Developing or Strong Required	

Additional expectations:

Focus Population	Proposals should focus on providing supports for traditionally marginalized communities including low-income, BIPOC, 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.
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.
Geography	Special consideration will be given to proposals that address service needs in Philadelphia’s top ten “high risk” zip codes, according to the Risk Index published in the 2017 DBHIDS Place Matters report: 19120, 19121, 19122, 19124, 19132, 19133, 19134, 19139, 19140, 19142. ⁶

⁶Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services and Scattergood Foundation. (2017). *Place Matters*.

Learning and Evaluation

Grantees will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how they have made progress toward the objective above and what they have learned during the year.

In addition, organizations funded as a result of 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.



Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an optional informational webinar on **Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 3:00PM EST.**

Register for the webinar at <https://lu.ma/william penn foundation>

Budget

Project budgets should cover up to three years of funding and may include up to three months for planning. Organizations are encouraged to build on their existing programs, using WPF funding to supplement or enhance those efforts.

Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any fees to partner organizations or 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, and implementation, are eligible for funding.

In rare cases, it is possible that *everything* an organization does is focused on advancing the specific objective stated above. If that is the case, an organization may be eligible for general operating, rather than project, support. If you believe that to be the case, please contact the Program Officer named below to discuss further.

Application Process

Before you apply, please review your responses to the four 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.

Is your project:

	YES	NO
Advancing access to mental health services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focused primarily on children from prenatal to age 5 and/or their caregivers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving families who reside in Philadelphia?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focused primarily on families impacted by poverty or other risk factors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please also review all of the criteria on pages 7 and 8 and make sure that your program aligns with those.

If you answered “yes” to all of the questions above and meet the stated criteria, 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 EST on **October 25, 2024**. 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 Kellie Brown at Kbrown@williampennfoundation.org

Timeline

September 18, 2024

Proposal submission period opens.

September 24, 2024

Informational Webinar (see page 8)

October 25, 2024

Proposals due by 5:00PM EST

November 6-8, 2024

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 11 –

November 27, 2024

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

January 31, 2025

WPF Board review selected proposals.

February 2025

Project implementation can begin.