



COVID-19 School Wellness Initiative – Illinois (CSWI-I) Request for Proposals

Release Date: June 1, 2021

Proposals Due: August 16, 2021

ABOUT ILLINOIS CHILDREN’S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

The Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) is a statewide private foundation that is focused on serving all children in the State of Illinois. The vision of the Foundation is that every child in Illinois grows up healthy.

ILCHF was created in December 2002 through an action of then Attorney General Jim Ryan and an Illinois insurance carrier. This action and a settlement of approximately \$125 million established the only private foundation focused solely on the health needs of children in Illinois.

ILCHF’s work is focused primarily on children’s mental health and children’s oral health across the State of Illinois. From the Foundation's inception through 2020, a total of more than \$110 million has been awarded in approximately 640 grants.

For additional information about ILCHF, please see www.ilchf.org.

CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the social emotional wellbeing of children and families around the world. ILCHF staff have spent the past 13 months listening to Illinois stakeholders discuss needs related to mental health that have been intensified by the pandemic, as well as analyzing relevant literature and reliable data sources. Stakeholders have included students and teachers, independent parent leadership groups, school leaders, public education and health system leadership, mental health providers and consumers, ILCHF mental health grantees, City of Chicago and State of Illinois public officials, mental health trade associations, mental health professional organizations, legal and healthcare advocacy associations and fellow child-focused foundations.

These stakeholders consistently talked about the increase in depression and anxiety for the entire population of Illinois. The concerns discussed with ILCHF focused specifically on the mental health needs of children, parents and teachers in school settings. The collective understanding is ‘if the parents are not ok, and the teachers are not ok; the children will not be ok’. Focusing on children’s mental health has been a long-time strategy of ILCHF and much work has been done to further systems of care across the State. These system of care projects have brought schools and mental health providers together to successfully strengthen the network supporting children and families.

To further support children, their caregivers and school personnel, ILCHF is funding two initiatives – **COVID-19 School Wellness Initiative – Illinois** and **COVID-19 School Wellness Initiative – Chicago**. Representing a total investment of \$8.6 million over two and half years, these initiatives encourage the development of new or the expansion of current relationships between schools and child and family mental health providers. Both schools and mental health providers are invited to initiate or expand these relationships to benefit the wellbeing of children, parents, and school staff.

The goals of these new targeted two and a half year COVID-19 mental health response grants are to:

- 1) Provide flexibility for communities to determine the best approach to respond to local mental health needs;
- 2) Allow funds to be used for a range of responses, from prevention to early intervention to treatment;
- 3) Allow funds to be used to support social & emotional wellness needs of not only children, but also parents/caregivers and teachers/school staff;
- 4) Create enduring relationships between schools and mental health providers that will last beyond the grant.

The specifics particular to each of the initiatives will be provided in the respective RFP. Collaborations involving schools from 14 specific counties are invited to apply for the Illinois-focused initiative and collaborations involving schools in 14 specific zip codes are invited to apply for the Chicago-focused initiative. In each initiative, applicants may apply for grants of up to \$150,000 per year for two years. ILCHF will invest up to \$4.2 million in each initiative as well as up to \$200,000 in a project evaluation.

PROJECT DESIGN & PROCESS

The approach to developing a mental health supportive response for children, parents/caregivers and teachers/school personnel will include:

- 1) A Medicaid billing certified non-profit mental health provider as Lead Applicant.
- 2) The Lead Applicant will partner with one or more public schools/school districts to determine the best approach for their local community. The schools must be located within the designated geographic area. Schools could be single units, groups of schools, a district, or multiple districts.
- 3) Grades targeted for intervention range from Pre-K through 12th.
- 4) Parents/caregivers will be lead partners in planning the approach and leading the initiative. The expectation is that at least two parents/older youth will be involved in the development of the application.
- 5) The projects can last up to two and a half years. Funding of up to \$150,000 will be awarded in both 2021 and 2022 for total of grants of up to \$300,000.
- 6) The proposed approach may use evidence informed, or promising methods to provide prevention, early intervention, and/or treatment level services to children/youth and/or parents/caregivers and/or school faculty/staff.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DETAILS & ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

In 2020, the ILCHF Board of Directors committed \$7.5 million to COVID-19 Recovery Funds in both 2021 and 2022. Through the **COVID-19 School Wellness Initiative – Illinois** (CSWI – I) ILCHF

will invest \$4.2 million of those COVID-19 Recovery Funds to support school wellness in counties across the State which have been disparately impacted by COVID-19. Factors considered in selecting the fourteen counties included COVID-19 public health data, community demographic data, economic status, as well as the data provided by the Ericson Institute's [Illinois Risk and Reach Report](#).

Across the State of Illinois, schools located in the following counties are invited to partner with a Medicaid billing non-profit mental health organization to submit a response to the RFP: Fayette, Jackson, LaSalle, Macon, Macoupin, Marion, Montgomery, Peoria, Rock Island, St. Clair, Stephenson, Vermillion, Williamson, and Winnebago.

Up to \$150,000 will be paid out at the beginning of year one and year two. The planned budget should support interventions that may last through the 2023-24 school year, up to June 30, 2024. The Lead Applicant must be a mental health provider, however subcontracting with schools to support their participation is allowable.

PROJECT ELEMENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

ILCHF grant funds may be used for, but not limited to, salaries and benefits, consultant fees, data collection & analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, education and training, flexible funding for child & family needs, marketing, and communication materials. Eligible expenses in the Initiative may include a limited amount of capital expenditures that are deemed essential to accomplish the outcomes of the Initiative. Any proposed capital expenditures must be justified in the Budget Narrative.

Grant funds may be used for indirect costs; however, the indirect costs must be itemized in the budget with a preference that itemized indirect costs not exceed 10% of total expenditures.

NOTE: ILCHF funding cannot be used for:

- Partisan, political, or denominational programs
- Endowments
- Attempts to influence legislation, as prohibited by section 4945 of the Internal Revenue Code for private foundations.

EVALUATION PROCESS

ILCHF will separately fund a modest mixed-methods evaluation that grantees will be required to participate in. The aims of the evaluation are:

- 1) Describe the social emotional wellness activities that grantees have chosen to implement, and are they being implemented.
- 2) Consider whether there are changes over time in the social emotional wellness of the overall intended participants.
- 3) Assess if new or expanded relationships are developed and established between school partners and mental health providers and whether these relationships endure.

Grantee’s participation in the evaluation will include pre and post assessments, occasional interviews and up to three focus groups. The evaluation team selected will share data with the grantees as they become available for purposes of grantee program planning. Grantees will meet virtually with the evaluation team and ILCHF staff on a quarterly basis.

TIMELINE

June 1, 2021	RFP released
June 14, 2021	Informational Conference Call - 2pm
August 16, 2021	RFP applications due
December 1, 2021	Awards Announced
Project Time Frames	January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024
Year 1	January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022
Year 2	January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023
Year 2.5	January 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024

APPLICATION PROCESS

Proposal Submission Guidelines: *Complete responses to this Request for Proposals are due to ILCHF no later than 5:00 pm on August 16, 2021 through electronic submission only. For more information, please visit our [website](#). Faxed or e-mailed submissions will not be accepted. Application narratives inclusive of questions II.A – II.H will be approximately 10 pages in length.*

A proposal will not be reviewed unless it is complete and includes the following:

I. Title Page

- A. Project title
- B. The name and contact information for the lead organization for your project.
- C. Project abstract **(250 words)**

II. RFP Questions

- A. Discuss the mental health provider's experience with providing social emotional supports in schools, or in partnering with schools. **(500 words)**
- B. Discuss the demographics of the school partners selected. What needs have been identified among the students/parents/teachers? **(500 words)**
- C. Discuss the population of focus for the interventions, the tiers of the interventions and the selected models or the novel approach for supporting the wellbeing of the population of focus. Please address the approach for engaging the population of focus. How can this collaboration build upon the school's current strengths to improve the well-being of the students, caregivers and/or teachers. **(1500 words)**
- D. Discuss the process of developing this new or expanded relationship between the mental health provider and the proposed school partner/s. What makes both system partners a good match? **(500 words)**
- E. Discuss the process of engaging and responding to parents/caregivers in the application process. Note that a minimum of two parents or older youth must be part of the development of the proposal, with a preference towards 50% of the application development team. **(500 words)**
- F. Discuss how leadership for the project will be shared between the mental health and school providers and parents/older youth. What is the leadership structure? How will the project be staffed? **(750 words)**
- G. What metrics or measures would be both useful and efficient for the school/provider partners to determine if the interventions were having the intended impact? **(500 words)**
- H. Assuming the initiative is successful, discuss any potential funding sources to continue the provision of tier 1 & 2 services to the population of focus after the grant funding concludes. **(250 words)**

ATTACHMENTS. *The page limit does not apply to the information that you will provide in Attachments. Only the information that is identified in each of the sections below may be provided as attachments.*

A. Budget (required).

B. Other Documentation (required). For the lead agency:

- a. Agency Mission Statement
- b. Agency Board of Directors
- c. IRS Letter of Exemption
- d. Most recent Form 990 and AG-IL 990
- e. Most recent audited financial statements
- f. Officer's Certification Form
- g. Letters of agreement/from school partner leadership to participate in the initiative if awarded
- h. List and roles of persons substantially participating in the development of the application
- i. Timeframe for what interventions are planned to be provided, to what populations of focus and when

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/QUESTIONS

Applicants are welcome to contact Amy Starin, PhD, LCSW, Senior Program Officer at amystarin@ilchf.org with questions.

For administrative questions applicants can contact Nedrae Hunt, Foundation Administrative Manager at nedranaehunt@ilchf.org.

For a link to the June 14, 2021 informational conference call at 2:00 pm, please email nedranaehunt@ilchf.org and request the dial-in information for the COVID-19 School Wellness Initiative call.