

Request for Proposals

Evaluation Team for COVID-19 School Wellness Initiative (CSWI-Evaluation)

INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) is a statewide private foundation that is focused on increasing children's access to healthcare throughout the State of Illinois. ILCHF concentrates its funding primarily in the areas of children's oral health and mental health. The vision of the foundation is that every child in Illinois grows up healthy.

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/caregivers 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'.

CSWI Initiative

To 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 \$8.4 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 CSWI initiative will begin on January 1, 2022, and continue through the school years to June 30, 2024. The target geographies for the interventions are 14 Zip Codes in the city of Chicago and 14 counties outside of Cook. (See full CSWI RFP's for more detail).

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.

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.

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. Proposals for the CSWI Initiatives are due to ILCHF on August 16, 2021.

CSWI Evaluation

The following language is included in the CSWI RFP's to inform the services applicants about their basic responsibilities related to the evaluation of CSWI:

"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 whether they are 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."

The three 'aims' of the evaluation should guide the development of a mixed-methods evaluation design. The design should incorporate up to 14 project sites in Chicago and 14 project sites in the following Illinois counties: Fayette, Jackson, LaSalle, Macon, Macoupin, Marion, Montgomery, Peoria, Rock Island, St. Clair, Stephenson, Vermillion, Williamson, and Winnebago. Remote data collection is acceptable, and quarterly meetings with the ILCHF staff and the CSWI grantees can occur virtually as well. The timeline for the evaluation and the proposed budget should include time after the CSWI services grants end (6/30/2024) for final data collection and report writing.

The allowable budget for the CSWI evaluation is in the range of \$200,000. If an applicant for this work believes a larger budget is required in order to provide a quality product please delineate the suggested budget and rationale for that budget.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

If your organization is interested in pursuing this opportunity, please provide responses to questions below and submit answers into the ILCHF electronic grant application system through this link.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Name

Mailing Address

City

State

Postal Code

Web Site Address

Tax ID Number

Agency Budget

Briefly describe your organization including its mission, communities served, and population served.

PROJECT LEAD CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name

Last Name

Title

Office Phone

Extension

Office Fax

E-Mail

Mailing Address if different than above

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/PRESIDENT/DEPARTMENT CHAIR (IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE)

First Name

Last Name

Title

Office Phone

Extension

Office Fax

E-Mail

ILCHF Diversity & Equity Questions

NARRATIVE

1. **Background and Expertise.** Who will serve as the Principal Investigator and what is their experience in evaluation, particularly as related to mental health/school partnerships? Who else will participate in the evaluation team?
2. **Defining the Evaluation Approach.** Take the three 'aims' of the evaluation and draft a set of related research questions. Provide a draft plan, with possible associated metrics, to answer the questions. Provide a draft sampling plan that accommodates population diversity between the Chicago and Illinois County sites.
3. **Approach to Community Communication.** Describe your plan to establish and maintain relationships and communication between the evaluation team and the 28 CSWI lead applicants. Describe an ongoing plan to share data as it is available to inform project quality improvement. Formal progress reports will be required at six-month intervals, however the ongoing data sharing with all partners should be emphasized.
4. **Timeline.** Provide a draft timeline that covers the work of the project over up to three years.
5. **Proposed budget (as Attachment A).** Propose a three-year budget for this work that includes any necessary planning and phase-in, training, and any other key components of your proposed approach. Use the budget workbook and budget narrative provided.
6. **Letters of Recommendation (as Attachment B).** Provide up to three letters of recommendation from partners with whom you have worked to evaluate strategic initiatives within child and family serving systems.
7. **Additional Attachments (merged as Attachment C).**
Principal Investigator's curriculum vita (limit 4 pages)
Curriculum vita from any additional lead evaluation staff (limit 4 pages each)

Project Staffing Chart
 Officer's Certification Form
 Board List
 IRS Letter of Exemption
 Most Current Audited Financials and Auditor's Management Letter
 Most Current Form 990 and AG990-IL

TIMELINE

<i>When</i>	<i>What</i>
July 1, 2021	RFP is issued
July 19, 2021 at 2PM	Informational Conference Call
September 1, 2021	Applications Due
October 6, 2021	Finalist Interviews
December 1, 2021	Award notification
January 1, 2022	Evaluation Begins

We will host a conference call on **Monday July 19, 2021 at 2pm** for applicants to pose questions before submitting information. Please email amystarin@ilchf.org to RSVP for the call. **Applicant finalists will be invited for virtual interviews on Wednesday, October 6, 2021.** Please ensure that a lead partner from your team can be available during that time frame.

Many thanks for considering this opportunity – we are excited to hear from you!