



ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION
Oral Health Initiative Grant Opportunity

ENHANCED PATHWAYS TO ORAL HEALTH FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN INITIATIVE

| | |
|--|--|
| Grant Opportunity Title | Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children Initiative |
| Foundation Contact | Zach Wilder, Associate Program Officer zacharywilder@ilchf.org |
| Application Posting Date | April 29, 2025 |
| Informational Webinar (register here) | May 20, 2025 at 1:00 pm CST |
| Application Closing Date | June 30, 2025 at 5:00 pm CST |
| Grant Award Date (Anticipated) | October 23, 2025 |
| Grant Period | January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2027 |
| Anticipated Number of Awards | 14 two-year grants |
| Award Range | Up to \$40,000 |
| Estimated ILCHF Funding Total | \$560,000 |

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) has a single vision: **that every child in Illinois grows up healthy**. Working with grantee partners across the state, the Foundation focuses its grant making on identifying and funding solutions to the barriers that prevent children from accessing the ongoing healthcare they need, with a primary focus on children's oral health and mental health.

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 Illinois' only statewide private foundation focused solely on the health needs of children. Since inception, ILCHF has awarded more than \$141 million to organizations across the state.

ENHANCED PATHWAYS TO ORAL HEALTH FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN INITIATIVE

OVERVIEW

Throughout its history, ILCHF has learned from families and communities regarding the challenges they have experienced while navigating complex health care systems. Many children living in underserved or rural areas experience significant barriers to utilizing essential oral health care services. According to the most recent [Illinois Oral Health Surveillance Brief](#), only 2 in 5 children enrolled in Medicaid have seen an oral health care provider in the last 12 months, and nearly 70% of children enrolled in the Head Start program had an unmet oral health need. One overwhelming challenge that impacts all aspects of oral health care is related to workforce shortages. In fact, more than 2.1 million Illinois residents currently live in a federally designated [Dental Health Professional Shortage Area](#).

Challenges to accessing oral health care services widen inequities and exacerbate the risk of experiencing painful complications, such as dental caries. These poor health outcomes disproportionately harm children from lower-income households, including participants enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). In 2022, the Illinois WIC program served approximately 120,000 infants and children per month at more than 170 clinics throughout the state. Even with programs such as WIC, children from lower-income households continue to have limited access to dental care services. Such barriers to care have resulted in children enrolled in the WIC program experiencing significantly higher rates of cavities and lower oral health care utilization than the general population.

Further support is needed to ensure that every child, baby, and mother participating in the WIC program has access to the oral health care they deserve. Fortunately, opportunities exist to assist families enrolled in WIC with the resources necessary to reduce oral health disparities and establish support systems for perinatal and early childhood dental care needs.

The Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation is seeking proposals in response to its "Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children Initiative" that increase the number of Local Health Departments that retain Community Health Workers and primary medical providers who offer oral health education, patient navigation, and integrated preventive care in WIC clinics.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DETAILS & ELIGIBILITY

This funding opportunity will provide 14 two-year grants of up to \$40,000 each to **Local Health Departments (LHDs)** advancing strategies that improve oral health education, patient navigation, and integrated preventive care in WIC clinics. **Specifically, grant funding could be directed toward the salaries and professional development of new and/or current Community Health Workers (CHWs) and primary medical providers that would be trained to offer oral health services to infants, children, and current or expectant mothers enrolled in the WIC program.**

- CHWs can play a crucial role in supporting the oral health of WIC-enrolled families by identifying dental providers accepting Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), offering basic oral health education and nutritional counseling, and advocating for individual health needs. While CHWs cannot provide dental care, they can facilitate case management to connect families to those who provide oral health services. CHWs can also support WIC programs to offer oral health support to pregnant people. The Illinois CHW Training Program is managed by the Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA) and provides public health services in rural and underserved communities. Enrollment in the training program costs \$750 per person. IPHA also offers assistance to LHDs integrating new CHW programs, such as by facilitating hiring opportunities and setting up billing procedures. Learn more about CHWs and their role in supporting oral health care [here](#).
- Beginning upon the eruption of the first tooth, the Illinois Department of Public Health – Oral Health Section (IDPH-OHS) recommends that primary care providers – such as physicians, nurses, physician assistants, and others – counsel caregivers on oral health, identify suspicious lesions in the mouth that a licensed dentist should further evaluate, and apply fluoride varnish. In Illinois, primary care providers can offer fluoride applications to children ages five and under. Primary care providers are also eligible to be reimbursed by Medicaid for fluoride varnish applications provided to children five and under upon completing training approved by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. Learn more about fluoride applications for primary medical providers [here](#) and [here](#).

In order to be considered for funding, applicants must be an Illinois Local Health Department with an established WIC clinic. Utilizing the online link provided, applicants are required to submit a proposal indicating how funds in the amount of up to \$40,000 over two years will be utilized to support Community Health Workers and/or primary care providers in providing oral health patient navigation and education, integrated care, and dental home referrals for infants, children, and mothers enrolled in the WIC program.

Please note that preference may be given to organizations serving a federally designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Area. Recognizing the importance of supporting oral health initiatives across the state, ILCHF intends to award 2 grants in each of the IDPH health regions (see Appendix A).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In 2021, the Illinois General Assembly passed the "Community Health Worker Certification and Reimbursement Act ([Public Act 410 ILCS 67](#))". This law calls for IDPH to establish a CHW Certification Program that offers Medicaid reimbursement for services provided by certified CHWs. **In preparation for the finalization of the Certification Program, CHWs hired or trained during the grant period will be required to complete IPHA's CHW Training Program, including 20 hours of oral health education, at a cost of \$750 per person.** Grantees may use grant funds to cover the costs associated with training and should reflect proposed expenses in the submitted budget template.

IDPH-OHS offers technical assistance to LHDs to enhance oral health operations in WIC clinics. ILCHF is proud to partner with IDPH-OHS to support grantees in training individuals to become certified as CHWs with a focus on oral health, and primary medical providers, to offer the expansion of oral health services in medical settings. If awarded, IDPH-OHS would collaborate with LHDs to deliver individualized technical assistance. Examples of assistance provided by IDPH-OHS include, but are not limited to, supporting CHWs in collaboration with IPHA to complete certification requirements with an oral health concentration, training WIC nurses or other medical staff to identify unusual or suspicious lesions in the mouth on hard and soft tissues, and offering in-person training to apply fluoride varnish to the teeth of children ages five and under.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & OTHER DETAILS

ILCHF is working to provide greater transparency in its grantmaking practices and to help applicants have greater information regarding the details associated with implementing a grant. Two reports associated with the grant will be due:

- February 28, 2027 (Progress Report)
- February 28, 2028 (Final Report)

Grant recipients will be informed of the funding decision in October 2025. The first half of the grant funds will be disbursed no later than December 15, 2025. The second half of grant funds will be disbursed no later than December 15, 2026. Grantees will have until December 31, 2027, to complete their projects and spend down their grant funds.

For more information, an info-session webinar will be held via Zoom on May 20th, 2025, at 1:00 pm CST. To register for the webinar, click [here](#). Below, please find the questions that are contained in the online application.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

I. Title Page

- a) Organization name
- b) Project title
- c) Project abstract (250-word limit)
- d) Total project budget
- e) Requested amount
- f) Project start date
- g) Project end date
- h) RFP Category

II. Organization Information

- a) Executive Director/President/CEO first name
- b) Executive Director/President/CEO last name
- c) Prefix
- d) Executive Director/President/CEO title
- e) Executive Director/President/CEO email
- f) Tax ID
- g) Organizational background - "Please provide a brief description of your organization, including mission and population/communities served (100-150 words)"
- h) Annual budget
- i) Address
- j) City
- k) State
- l) Postal code
- m) County
- n) Phone
- o) Website

III. Primary Contact Person – Instruction: "This person will receive all communication related to the application."

- a) Last name
- b) First name
- c) Prefix
- d) Title
- e) Email
- f) Office phone
- g) Extension
- h) Mobile phone

IV. Project Director – Instruction: "This person will be the staff person in charge of operational management and implementation."

- a) Last name
- b) First name
- c) Prefix
- d) Title

- e) Email
- f) Office phone
- g) Extension
- h) Mobile phone

COMMUNITY DEFINITION, PROJECT NARRATIVE and BUDGET

V. Community Definition – Instruction: “Please select the most appropriate designations for the populations you plan to serve.”

- a) Primary geographic area served
- b) Please list all the counties included in the catchment area of the population you intend to serve.
- c) Describe the demographics of the community to be served. Data provided could include, but is not limited to, socioeconomic status, number of students with IEPs, languages spoken, insurance coverage, unemployment, school district spending per pupil, population density, and age distribution. Discuss relevant health data if known for children and adults, substance use, average wait times for oral health services, etc. (250-word limit)

VI. Project Narrative

- a) Focus area
 - Oral Health
- b) Program area
 - Workforce Development
- c) Primary Age Group
- d) Population served – “Number of unduplicated children to be served by this grant annually once fully operational. Please indicate numbers of unduplicated adults to be served as well.”
- e) Please describe the WIC-enrolled population specific to the geographic area to be served and the oral health needs your organization plans to address. Be concise using sources of data (i.e., statistics/research) specific to your geographic area and proposed population (500-word limit).
- f) Please describe how you propose to use up to \$40,000 over two years to enhance access to oral health resources for WIC-enrolled families. Describe a strategy that increases the number of Community Health Workers and primary medical providers offering oral health education, patient navigation, and integrated preventive care in WIC clinics (500-word limit).
- g) Please briefly describe how the proposed project has been specifically designed to address the problem and the likelihood – based on prior relevant research, as feasible – that it will successfully do so (500-word limit).

- h) Please describe how you will track the progress of the project, and how you will incorporate new learning into the project. Specify how child/family/community outcomes will be measured (500-word limit).
- i) Please describe how you envision the project, once developed, being sustained over the long-term (500-word limit).
- j) If another funder decides to partner in terms of funding applications, we would like to have the ability to share your application with them. We will not share your application without your permission to do so. Please select the response below which reflects your level of interest in providing permission for us to share your application with an interested funder.
 - Please do not share our application.
 - Please share our application with any interested funder.
 - Please contact us to discuss the possibility of sharing our application.

VII. Budget and Financial Information

Please complete the two-year budget template found on the ILCHF website and upload it as an attachment (www.ilchf.org). Examples of eligible costs include:

- Staff time to develop and/or administer program
- Salaries for Community Health Workers and/or primary medical providers to be trained in oral health education, patient navigation, and integrated preventive care
- Professional development and other training expenses
- Travel time
- Meeting expenses
- Communications expenses
- Materials/supplies
- Equipment

Provide a budget narrative. Delineate details associated with the budget, clarify the calculations leading to the budget numbers, and provide details that do not fit within the budget template.

Attachments - Instruction, "If one of the required documents is not applicable for your organization, please attach a note in its place explaining why the document cannot be provided."

- a) Budget template
- b) The *Officer's Certification Form* signed by the CEO/President or Department Chair – this is a document that can be downloaded from our website.
- c) Applicant organization IRS letter of exemption
- d) Applicant organization most recent audited financial statements
- e) Board of Directors' list for applicant organization

APPLICATION PROCESS

ILCHF utilizes an online application system. The application link can be found by [clicking here](#) or visiting www.ilchf.org

Prior to beginning the online application process:

- Be sure you have read the RFP thoroughly and are certain your organization and/or initiative qualify for the funding being offered.
- Make sure you have your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) from either the most recent IRS Form 990 or IRS Determination Letter ready when you enter the system. You will need it to establish your application file.
- Ensure copies of your organization's most recent key financial documents – IRS Form 990, Audited Financial Statement, IRS Letter of Determination – are all available to you in an electronic format to attach to your submission when you submit it. Instructions on how to submit these documents are in the form itself.
- **Proposals are due by June 30, 2025, and must be submitted online.**

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/QUESTIONS

ILCHF will host an Information Session Webinar via Zoom on May 20th, 2025, at 1:00 pm. **Please click [here](#) to register for the webinar.** The webinar will be recorded and available on ILCHF's website for those who are unable to attend.

Directions and technical assistance will be provided by Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation located at:

Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation
1200 Jorie Boulevard, Suite 301
Oakbrook, IL 60523
Phone: 630.571.2555
Fax: 630.571.2566
www.ilchf.org

For questions related to Children's Oral Health please contact:

Zach Wilder, Associate Program Officer
ZacharyWilder@ilchf.org

For technical assistance related to this RFP please contact:

Nedra Hunt, Senior Manager of Grants & Administration
NedraHunt@ilchf.org

APPENDIX A IDPH Health Regions

Note: In July 2024, IDPH combined its Chicago and West Chicago health regions into a single region. For this initiative, ILCHF intends to fund two proposals each in the City of Chicago and the rest of the Westchester Region.

Health Regions and Local Health Departments

Click on a region on the map for a list of local health departments.

- [All Health Regions](#)
- [All Local Health Departments](#)

- ★ IDPH Regional Office
- [Westchester](#)
- [Champaign](#)
- [Marion](#)
- [Metro East](#)
- [Peoria](#)
- [Rockford](#)
- No Local Health Department
- Local Health Department Jurisdictional Boundaries

