



**ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION
Mental and Oral Health Grant Opportunity**

BRIGHT MINDS, BRIGHT SMILES: MENTAL AND ORAL HEALTH INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

Grant Opportunity Title	Bright Minds, Bright Smiles: Mental and Oral Health Integration Initiative
Foundation Contacts	<p>Mental Health Initiatives Christine Brambila, Senior Program Officer, Mental Health ChristineBrambila@ilchf.org</p> <p>Oral Health Initiatives Marissa Sanders, Senior Program Officer, Oral Health & Other Initiatives MarissaSanders@ilchf.org</p>
Application Posting Date	March 13, 2026
Informational Webinar (register here)	March 24, 2026, at 1:00 pm CDT
Application Closing Date	May 8, 2026, at 5:00 pm CDT
Grant Award Date (Anticipated)	August 20, 2026
Grant Period	November 1, 2026 – October 31, 2029
Anticipated Number of Awards	20 three-year grants
Award Range	Up to \$300,000
Estimated ILCHF Funding Total	\$6,000,000

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION

The 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, ILCHF focuses its grant making on identifying and funding solutions to address 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 approximately \$149 million in nearly 900 grants to more than 300 organizations across the state.

BRIGHT MINDS, BRIGHT SMILES: MENTAL AND ORAL HEALTH INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

OVERVIEW

The recent enactment of H.R.1 has resulted in significant cuts to Medicaid funding, with Illinois facing up to [\\$51 billion](#) in lost federal funding over the next decade. The existing children's healthcare safety net largely relies on its ability to bill Medicaid for services. The state's safety net providers are essential to ensure that the most vulnerable children and families can access the mental and oral health services children need to grow up healthy. However, these funding cuts compromise the operational and financial stability of these essential providers across Illinois, compromising children's ability to access high-quality mental and oral health services in their community.

ILCHF has met with several mental and oral health service providers, and community partners from across the state regarding the impact of these changes. A key theme that has consistently emerged from these meetings has been a concern that cuts to Medicaid will threaten the long-term sustainability of healthcare services supporting the state's most vulnerable children. Across the state, children enrolled in the Medicaid program already experience numerous hurdles when attempting to locate and utilize mental and oral health services. Barriers to accessing essential healthcare services exacerbate health inequities and disproportionately harm children from under-resourced communities. With more than 1.4 million children enrolled in the Illinois Medicaid Program, additional investment is needed to ensure that the state's children's health safety net providers can sustain and enhance existing children's mental health services, oral health services, and partnerships.

In an effort to address a portion of this critical need, the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation is seeking proposals in response to the "Bright Minds, Bright Smiles: Mental and Oral Health Integration Initiative" that seek to sustain and enhance the coordination of existing children's mental health programs and/or oral health programs in Federally Qualified Health Centers and (FQHCs), Local Health Departments (LHDs), schools offering healthcare services, or community-based organizations (CBOs).

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DETAILS & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

This funding opportunity will provide 20 three-year grants of up to \$300,000 each to eligible children's safety-net organizations that improve access to existing mental health services, oral health services, or both, deliver mental or oral health education to children and parents/caregivers, connect families with patient navigators or care coordinators, enhance mental or oral health referral networks, or strengthen co-located mental or oral health services offered in community settings.

To be considered for funding, applicants must be a 1) Federally Qualified Health Center/Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike, Local Health Department, school offering healthcare services, or community-based organization (see the FAQ document for the definition of a CBO), and; 2) currently offer mental health services, oral health services, or both to children enrolled in Medicaid. Please note that applicants are not required to offer both children's mental health and oral health services to be eligible for funding.

Applicants are invited to submit a proposal indicating how funds of up to \$100,000 per year for three years will be used to support sustaining or enhancing existing mental health services and/or oral health services, and partnerships. Examples of sustaining or enhancing existing mental health services or oral health services include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting ongoing current mental or oral health services through direct service provision to children.
- Acquiring additional equipment or completing minor construction projects to enhance the array of mental health services or oral health services provided to children.
- Hiring and/or training community health workers, care navigators, or care coordinators to assist families with accessing mental or oral health services and resources.
- Delivering mental or oral health education and integrated preventive care services to children and parents/caregivers during primary care visits.
- Co-locating mental or oral health services in primary care settings, schools, or community settings where children spend a significant amount of time.
- Establishing linkages between oral and mental health services in co-located settings.
- Enhancing family referrals to mental or oral health service providers accepting Medicaid.
- Expanding a linguistically and culturally representative workforce that reflects community demographics.
- Addressing barriers to accessing and utilizing mental health or oral health services.

Please note that preference may be given to organizations:

- Serving a federally designated Mental or Dental Health Professional Shortage Area.
- With demonstrated experience in coordinating and collaborating with organizations to expand service utilization by children and families to mental health or oral health services
- That bill Medicaid for over 50% of children's mental health or oral health services.

ILCHF intends to award 20 three-year grants of up to \$300,000 each through this initiative. In recognition of the importance of advancing both children's mental and oral health, ILCHF anticipates awarding approximately 10 grants focused on children's mental health and 10 grants focused on children's oral health. Applications that propose strategies integrating both mental and oral health will also be considered, which could result in fewer grant awards being made exclusively to either focus area.

Additionally, ILCHF intends to ensure geographic representation across its seven funding regions (see Appendix A) by awarding at least two grants in each region. To promote equitable access to funding opportunities, only one application will be accepted per organization.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & OTHER DETAILS

ILCHF is working to provide greater transparency in its grantmaking practices and to assist applicants by providing additional information regarding implementing this grant. The following details will assist applicants as they consider this funding opportunity.

There will be three reports associated with this grant that will be due:

- November 30, 2027 (Progress Report)
- November 30, 2028 (Progress Report)
- January 31, 2030 (Final Report)

Grant recipients will be informed of the funding decision in August 2026. Grant funds will be distributed using the following timeline:

- Payment #1 on or before October 15, 2026
- Payment #2 on or before October 15, 2027
- Payment #3 on or before October 15, 2028

Grantees will have until October 31, 2029, to complete their projects and spend down their grant funds.

For more information, an informational webinar will be held via Zoom on March 27, 2026, at 1:00 pm CDT. To register for the webinar, click [here](#).

Below, please find the questions that are contained in the online application.

TITLE PAGE and 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. Applicant Information – (If using a Fiscal Sponsor, the Fiscal Sponsor must be the Applicant)

- a) Prefix
- b) Executive Director/President/CEO First Name
- c) Executive Director/President/CEO Last Name
- 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 – "This person will receive all communication related to the application."

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

IV. Project Director Information – "This person will be the staff person in charge of operational management, implementation, and reporting requirements."

- a) Prefix
- b) First Name
- c) Last Name
- d) Title
- e) Email
- f) Office Phone

- g) Extension
- h) Mobile Phone

PROJECT DETAILS

V. Community Definition – “Please select the most appropriate designations for proposed work and the populations you plan to serve.”

- a) Primary Geographic Area served – “Please select one option that best represents the area served.”
- b) Please list all the counties included in the catchment area of the population you intend to serve.
- c) Primary Age Group – “Indicate if the request is intended to primarily serve one of the age groups listed or will serve multiple age groups within the category. If the request will not directly serve children, then please select “not applicable.” A full description can be provided below.
 - None
 - Infants/Toddlers (0-5)
 - Children (6-13)
 - Adolescents (14-18)
 - Young Adults (19-21)
 - Multiple
 - Not applicable
- d) 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 behavioral health services, etc. (250-word limit)

VI. Project Details

- a) Focus area – “Select the Focus Area that best describes the main focus of your project.”
 - a. Mental Health
 - b. Oral Health
 - c. Both Oral Health and Mental Health
- b) Program area - Select the Program Area that best describes the primary activity of your project.
 - a. None
 - b. Advocacy/Policy
 - c. Direct Service
 - d. Education
 - e. Other
 - f. Workforce Development
 - g. Research/Evaluation
 - h. Planning

- c) Population Served. Number of unduplicated children to be served by this grant annually once fully operational. If applicable, please indicate numbers of unduplicated adults to be served as well.

VII. Project Narrative

- a) Please describe the current children's mental health and/or oral health services your organization provides. (250-word limit)
- b) Please describe the need that your project will address. Be concise using potential sources of statistics/research specific to your geographic area and proposed population only. (250-word limit)
- c) Please describe the work you will do to address the need outlined above. Please describe how grant funding will be used to sustain and/or expand existing children's mental and/or oral health services. (500-word limit)
- d) Please describe the site where mental and/or oral health services will be sustained or expanded including a description of co-located services, if appropriate. Additionally, please indicate the proposed staffing model and plans for recruitment of staff. (150-word limit)
- e) Please describe how you will track the progress of the project, the timing involved, and how you will incorporate new learning into the project's design. (150-word limit)
- f) Please describe any established strategic partners and potential partners you will work with for this project and describe how they will be involved. (250-word limit)
- g) Please describe how you envision the project, once developed, being sustained over the long-term utilizing existing infrastructure. (150-word limit)
- h) 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.
 - Please contact us to discuss the possibility of sharing our application.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

VIII. Budget and Financial Information

- a) Please complete the three-year budget template found on the [ILCHF website](#) and upload it as an attachment. Examples of eligible costs include:
- Staff time to develop and/or administer program
 - Professional development and other training expenses

- Travel time
 - Meeting expenses
 - Communications expenses
 - Materials/supplies
 - Equipment
- b) 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

XI. Attachments - Please be sure to press "Upload" as you attach each document. The document name will change to a hyperlink when attached. Please label all attachments starting with your organization name i.e., 'Mental Health and Oral Health Proposal to ILCHF RFP Budget Template.' 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. Only the information that is identified in each of the sections below may be provided as attachments. None of the information required in Sections I – VII may be included or expanded upon separately as an attachment.

- a) 3-Year Budget Template
- b) The Officers Certification Form signed by the CEO/President or Department Chair – this document can be downloaded from the ILCHF [website](#).
- c) Applicant's IRS Exemption Letter
- d) Applicant's Most Recent Form 990
- e) Applicant's Most Recent IL-AG 990
- f) Applicant's Most Recent Audited Financial Statements
- g) 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. **If you encounter any challenges when attempting to access the application, please contact Zach Wilder, Program Officer, Children's Health, at ZacharyWilder@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 – most recent IRS Form 990, most recent IL-AG 990 Form, 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 May 8, 2026, and must be submitted online.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/QUESTIONS

ILCHF will host an Informational Webinar via Zoom on March 24, 2026, 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 the 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 the "Bright Minds, Bright Smiles: Mental and Oral Health Integration Initiative" RFP please contact:

Marissa Sanders, Senior Program Officer, Oral Health & Other Initiatives
MarissaSanders@ilchf.org

For RFP questions specifically related to mental health please contact:

Christine Brambila, Senior Program Officer, Mental Health
ChristineBrambila@ilchf.org

For technical assistance related to this RFP please contact:

Zach Wilder, Program Officer, Children's Health
ZacharyWilder@ilchf.org

APPENDIX A ILCHF Funding Regions

