The Colorado Health Foundation™

Funding Opportunity:

Developing Agency, Identity and Belonging in Young People

This funding opportunity is intended to support programs that provide safe, welcoming spaces for young people to develop trusted relationships outside of school or home. It supports programs that help young people who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+ or members of other groups facing inequities, feel a sense of belonging, community and connection. It will also provide these young people with greater access to programs informed by and responsive to their cultural backgrounds, helping them build the characteristics needed to navigate adverse circumstances and feel a sense of agency regarding their physical and mental well-being.

BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ identified young people are more likely to experience adverse childhood experiences related to being in oppressed groups, including racism, bullying/otherization, community and systemic violence, and gentrification-related harms. These challenges are evident in Colorado.?

Funding will be considered for programming focused on groups of young people experiencing significant inequities including those whose first language is not English, immigrants and refugees, those who have been involved in the juvenile criminal legal system, those who are involved with or aging out of the foster care

system, or those living with disabilities.

This funding opportunity is informed by the learning and evaluation of two completed funding opportunities: Culturally Responsive and Youth-Driven Physical Well-Being; and Supporting Healthy Minds and Youth Resiliency. The work done under those opportunities has been impactful but having two youth programming opportunities created challenges for grantees as well as the Foundation's strategic effort. They've been merged and evolved into this new funding opportunity.

Funding Details

- Organizations may seek up to two years of project support. Organizations may request up to $125,000 per year for a total of $250,000 over two years.?
- Organizations will only be allowed to have one grant under this funding opportunity at a time.
- If your application is declined, you must wait until the next calendar year to reapply, unless you are invited back by Colorado Health Foundation staff.
- Organizations currently receiving funding for Supporting Healthy Minds and Youth Resiliency and/or Supporting Holistic, Culturally Responsive and Youth-Driven Physical Well-Being will not be eligible to apply for this funding opportunity until their grant has ended.?

Criteria

- Programs must intentionally serve BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+ or youth experiencing significant inequities who are primary and/or secondary school aged.
    - Programs serving areas with populations of 50,000+ should be designed to s*pecifically* serve BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA2S+ youth.?
- Programs serving areas with populations below 50,000 must be intentionally culturally responsive and inclusive of BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA2S+ youth.
- Programs must support young people as they build their skills and/or develop in each of the following areas:?
    - Development of **identity**: Young people will feel confident and affirmed in their identities and able to explore them safely.
    - Demonstration of **agency**: Young people will engage in programming that facilitates their making positive change in their lives and communities through demonstrated exercise of power and influence
    - Experience of **belonging**: Young people will establish supportive relationships with peers and trusted adults and understand themselves to be valued members of their communities.

- Programs should incorporate learning of historic and current societal systems, the inequities present in those systems and the role identities play in those systems.?This learning should be specific to the youth being served and focused on.
    - Programs that help young people connect to their identities and the communities that share their identity will be prioritized.

- Programs must engage, affirm, and intentionally respond to cultural identities and dynamics of the young people served:
    - Program components are designed or adapted to meet historical and contemporary cultural needs.
    - Program staff bring lived and learned experiences that help them understand the needs, identities and culture of participants, and reflect the communities they serve.
    - The organization has a history with and is trusted by participants.
    - Programming affirms participants' languages and traditions.
    - Programming builds on community and cultural strengths.

- Programs must include the same group of young people and adults meeting over a sustained period.
    - Programs during the school year should have programming engagement for at least 35 hours per school year, and summer

programs should be at least 3 weeks long with 75 hours of engagement.?

- Programs must involve, collaborate with and empower the young people served and/or their families and be responsive to their feedback.
    - For programming focused on elementary-aged children, regular communication and intentional and explicit incorporation of families into the development and improvement of programming is required.
    - For middle and high school-aged programming, direct engagement with youth in the programming around how to develop and improve it is required.?

Preference will be given to programs that:

- Are provided by small, grassroots, community-based organizations.
- Focus on or include cultural activities.
- Take an intersectional approach to supporting identity development and a sense of community belonging in young people.
- Foster a sense of collective identity amongst young people with oppressed identities.

What We Will Not Fund

- Programming that is based in schools, for school credit.
- Programs that lack a deep understanding of the needs and desires of the young people served and their community.
- Programs primarily focused on mentorship without a relational or community-based component with adults and fellow young people.
- Programs that do not require ongoing participation for a specific duration (e.g. drop-in programs).
- Programs centered on competition or whose primary outcome is focused on training toward individual athletic ability.
- Programs that require a fee for participation and do not have an intentional sliding-scale or scholarship system.
- Programs that provide clinical mental health care.
- Grants focused on planning or program development.

Frequently Asked Questions

General

How competitive is this funding opportunity?

It is highly competitive. We will likely only be able to fund 15-25% of applications.

What does the application process look like?

Once you apply, there will be several layers of internal review of your request. We may reach out with questions, or schedule time to connect or conduct a site visit. We will try to provide a decision to all applicants within 90 days of the application deadline.

What should our evaluation look like?

We are interested in a variety of types of evaluation. We appreciate organizations that use evaluation to learn and improve their programming. We recognize that the concepts we are focusing on can be difficult to measure, and trust organizations to explore evaluation that makes sense for them.

Can we apply for multiple chapters/programs at once?

Yes, if your organization has multiple chapters or programs, you can include them in **one application**. Please explain how they are connected and how, if they are separate programs, each helps to contribute to the criteria we are looking for.

Can you get a renewal grant after the first two years? Is there a standard time between an initial grant and a renewal application?

Yes, while there is not a separate process for renewal grants, we will consider renewing a program/organization after their first grant ends. There is no set

break period between grants. However, you cannot receive two grants from this funding opportunity at the same time. So please wait to apply until you are within 3-4 months of your current grant ending.

Note: if your programming is in a rural area and is more informal, you are trying to reach young people virtually, or your focus is on young adults, please reach out. We will not fund your work through this funding opportunity, but there may be other ways we can partner.

Criteria

Do we still meet the criteria if we only focus on BIPOC young people or only focus on LGBTQ+ young people, but not both?

Yes. Programs can be focused on BIPOC **and/or** LGBTQIA2S+ young people. They do not have to focus on both. However, young people from both groups must feel safe and welcome, and we value intersectional work.

Will you consider programs that include young people who are not BIPOC/LGBTQ+?

Yes. While our criteria include that specific demographic focus, we do not have a minimum percentage and will consider programs that include other young people. This is especially important given our understanding of rural contexts across the state.

We do not track demographic criteria. Are we still eligible to apply?

Yes, however, please provide your best guess or an explanation of who you believe you are serving in your application so that we can understand.

Do we still meet the criteria if we only meet the minimum time requirements for summer, or only for the school year, but not both?

Yes. Programming can be over the summer (3 weeks, minimum of 75 hours) **and/or** over the school year (minimum of 35 hours). Programs only need to meet the minimum hours for one or the other, even if they have programming during both time periods.

We serve a large geographic area or multiple regions of the state. How do we know if we qualify for the rural or urban standard?

We evaluate these criteria with an understanding of your context. Make your best guess based on who most of your program participants are and where they live.

Our program focuses on a specific demographic group (e.g., young people living with a disability, young people involved in the juvenile legal system, etc.). Could my program qualify?

Yes. We will still evaluate your program based on a focus on LGBTQ+/BIPOC young people. However, we are interested in supporting organizations who have an intersectional focus.

How many young people need to be served by our program?

We fund a range of programs. Some of them take a broad approach and reach hundreds of young people. Some of them take a deep approach and reach fewer than twenty.

Types of Programming

Will you fund in-school programming?

We will not fund programming that is part of classroom work in a school (curriculum). Programs can occur physically within a school, and even during the day as long as they are outside of instructional time and not for school credit.

Will you fund clinical mental health programs?

No, we will not fund clinical supports through this funding opportunity.

Will you fund 1:1 mentoring?

No, we will not fund programs that are exclusively 1:1 mentoring. If a mentorship program also includes extensive group/community programming that allows young people to develop relationships with each other and trusted adults, we will consider it.

Will you fund programs that are focused on physical activity/sports?

Yes, we are open to considering programs focused on physical activity as long as they also meet all of the rest of the criteria. This can include sports-focused programming.

Will you fund programs that require payment to participate?

Yes. However, the Colorado Health Foundation prioritizes Coloradans living on low income, and we want to ensure that everyone can participate. We expect organizations to have a thoughtful sliding scale/scholarship program for us to consider funding them.

Will you consider funding current programming, expansion of programming, planning grants, and/or new programs?

Yes, we will consider funding current programming, new programming, and expansion of programming. We will not fund planning grants.

Budget

Are there any funding opportunity specific rules about the budget?

No. Organizations must apply for program/project support. Your budget can include funding for staff, materials/supplies, and stipends for young people, among other things. We will not fund capital grants.

Can we include indirect or overhead funding as part of our budget?

Yes. We generally consider funding up to 10% indirect costs. However, there is no line-item budget required as part of this application. Note: While a line-item budget is no longer required, you will need to provide a financial narrative that explains how you plan to spend the funds at a high level.

Can you apply with partner organizations, and provide funding for them as part of the application?

Yes. However, one organization will have to apply and manage the funds.

We often partner with third-party evaluators, contractors and other organizations over the course of our work with applicants and grantees. Your application and

its attachments may be shared with these individuals or entities during the review process and grant cycle. All third-party organizations partnering with the Foundation have signed a confidentiality agreement and will not use or share the information for purposes outside of the scope of work specific to the grant application or grant award. If you have any concerns or would like additional information, please email Show email or call our senior director of Grantmaking Operations at Show phone.

We encourage all applicants to sign up in our grants management system a week before the grant deadline to confirm registration is complete in advance of submitting a grant application. Applications submitted in advance of deadlines (Feb. 15, June 15 and Oct. 15) are not reviewed until the deadline has passed.

Grant Deadlines

Feb 15, 2027

Learn more about this funding opportunity by watching this webinar.

We're here to help

Have questions? Contact your Program Officer for more information.

FIND A PROGRAM OFFICER ??

ACCESS YOUR APPLICATION