Request for Proposals: 2022-23 State Advocacy Grants to Enhance Healthy Mental Development in Children and Adolescents

Thanks to the generous support of the Friends of Children Fund, the AAP is pleased to announce a second round of funding for the State Advocacy Grants to Enhance Healthy Mental Development in Children and Adolescents (HMDCA) program, which will provide grants AAP state chapters for advocacy projects that support child and adolescent mental and behavioral health. **Priority will be given to AAP chapter projects which did not receive funding in the first round of HMDCA state advocacy grants announced in January 2022.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already existing child and adolescent mental health crisis. Rates of childhood mental health concerns and suicide rose steadily between 2010 and 2020, and by 2018 suicide was the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-18. The pandemic has intensified this crisis: across the country pediatricians have witnessed dramatic increases in Emergency Department visits for all mental health emergencies, including suspected suicide attempts and a recent study conducted by HHS, found that between 2016 and 2020, the number of children, ages 3-17 years, diagnosed with anxiety grew by 29% and those with depression by 27%. Children of color have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and the inequities that result from structural racism as well as the effects of racism itself which also impact the mental health care of children.

The AAP Blueprint for Suicide Prevention, Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Behavioral Health Principles, the Healthy Schools Campaign released Restart and Recovery: Leveraging Federal COVID Relief Funding and Medicaid to Support Student and Staff Wellbeing and Connection, and the US Surgeon Generals’ Advisory: Protecting Youth Mental Health may be helpful resources as proposals are developed. Additionally, other suggested topics that could be eligible for funding under these grants include activities to:

- Support the implementation of 988 and the crisis care continuum for children, adolescents, and their families
- Increase access to mental health services for children and adolescents in the Medicaid program
- Implement or improve existing Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA) programs
- Prioritize the identification of children at risk of suicide and reduce access to lethal means
- Address the pediatric mental health workforce shortage

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), the AAP will support selected AAP chapters with a one-time grant of up to $10,000 to support and advance state advocacy projects related to infant, child, or adolescent mental and behavioral health. The goal of Healthy Mental Development State Advocacy Grants is to support specific advocacy projects or efforts that lead to changes in state policies to enhance access to mental health services. This can be achieved through coalition-building, education of policymakers and other stakeholders, direct advocacy with state lawmakers, advocacy communications and media engagement, or building advocacy capacity.
Among the types of activities that the Healthy Mental Development State Advocacy Grants can be used for are:

- Engagement of coalition partners to create an advocacy strategy to increase access to child and adolescent mental health services.
- Travel for in-person meetings between pediatricians and state and local policymakers.
- Digital communication tools (website, social media, infographics, etc) that promote the need for additional mental health services for children.
- A public education campaign declaring a State of Emergency in Children's Mental Health in your state with calls to action for state policymakers.

To apply for the Healthy Mental Development State Advocacy Grants, AAP chapters must apply by **Friday, September 9, 2022 at 5 pm CT**. In order for an application to be considered, all required forms – application with a spending plan - must be submitted. Award decisions are anticipated by early/mid October 2022. Chapters will have until June 30, 2023, to spend the funds. Applications should be sent to Katie Matlin at kmatlin@aap.org.

Other important information about the grant:

- Programs operated using Friends of Children Fund (FCF) funding are governed by the AAP Board of Director’s policies on these respective funds. The policies restrict against including expenses for permanent staff or capital purchases.
- Grant money also cannot be used to:
  - Raise general funds for the chapter
  - Fund indirect costs/overhead
  - Pay for alcohol
- Grant money **may** be used to fund consultants, including consultants who function in the role of chapter executive director or lobbyist.
- Grantees must also submit a report within 30 days of the end of the project period to Katie Matlin at kmatlin@aap.org. The report should include the following:
  - Chapter name
  - Amount awarded
  - Direct program expenses
  - Advocacy project objectives and ultimate outcome
  - Partners engaged
  - Lessons learned
- Grantees will be invited to participate in meetings with other chapter grantees throughout the project period.

Questions about this funding opportunity can be sent to Katie Matlin at kmatlin@aap.org. As a reminder, applications must be received by **Friday, September 9, 2022 at 5 pm CT** in order to be considered.

*AAP Chapters in Canada are not eligible for this grant opportunity.*