



Request for Proposals: 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 the availability of a limited number of state advocacy grants to advance policies that support child and adolescent mental and behavioral health. This announcement comes on the heels of the recent [National Emergency Declaration in Children's Mental Health](#) by the AAP, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association after all three organizations highlighted soaring rates of mental health challenges among children, adolescents, and their families over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating the situation that existed prior to the pandemic.

The worsening crisis in child and adolescent mental health is inextricably linked to the stress brought on by COVID-19 and the impact of systemic racism. By 2018, suicide was the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24 and the pandemic has intensified this crisis: across the country, we have witnessed dramatic increases in Emergency Department visits for all mental health emergencies including suspected suicide attempts. At the same time, more than 140,000 children in the U.S. have lost a primary or secondary caregiver, with youth of color disproportionately impacted.

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 ultimate 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.

This spring, the AAP, along with 29 other organizations, released comprehensive [Child and Adolescent Mental and Behavioral Health Principles](#) which offer specific and actionable opportunities that increase access to evidence-based prevention, early identification, and early intervention; expand mental health services in schools; integrate mental and behavioral health into pediatric primary care; strengthen the child and adolescent mental and behavioral health workforce; increase insurance coverage and payment; ensure mental health parity; extend access to telehealth; support children in crisis; and address the mental health needs of justice-involved youth. Additionally, the Healthy Schools Campaign released [Restart and Recovery: Leveraging Federal COVID Relief Funding and Medicaid to Support Student and Staff Wellbeing and Connection](#) which provides ideas for advocacy around school-based mental health.

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, December 10, 2021 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 January 2022. Chapters will have one year to spend the funds. Applications should be sent to Katie Matlin at kmatlin@aap.org.

Other important information about the grant:

- Grant money cannot be used to raise general funds for the chapter.
- 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 may be invited to participate in webinars 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, December 10, 2021 at 5 pm CT** in order to be considered.

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