

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



State Agency Name: Office of Higher Education
Funding Opportunity Title: Higher Education Mental Health Services Initiative

Important Dates

- Deadline: Applications are due to the Office of Higher Education **Saturday, July 1, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.**
- Application Notification: Successful applicants will be notified **by August 1, 2023.**
- Implementation period: **September 1, 2023, thru August 31, 2024**

Overview

Purpose of the Higher Education Mental Health Services Initiative

Governor Lamont has allocated \$3 million to the Office of Higher Education (OHE) to fund public and private colleges and universities for the delivery of student mental health services.

The Office of Higher Education has identified the [JED Foundation](#) as a statewide collaborative resource in supporting mental health initiatives for students. Many of Connecticut's colleges and universities are already working with the JED Foundation to create systems, programs, and policies on campus. This grant may be used to initiate, supplement, or augment a JED Foundation effort to ensure campuses across the state have a coordinated mental health implementation strategy for students.

Applications are open to non-profit undergraduate institutions with an endowment per student of less than \$100,000.¹ Eligible institutions of higher education are assigned a predetermined maximum grant award based on their undergraduate student population and share of students receiving a Pell Grant. There are four tiers of per/student funding:

- If less than 20% of students receive a Pell Grant, an institution will receive \$15 per student.
- If 20-29% of students receive a Pell Grant, an institution will receive \$20 per student.
- If 30-39% of students receive a Pell Grant, an institution will receive \$25 per student.
- And if 40% or more students receive a Pell Grant, an institution will receive \$30 per student.

¹ Endowment at the end of the fiscal year F2021 (From IPEDS)

| Institution Name | Enrollment | % Pell | Maximum Grant Award |
|--|------------|--------|---------------------|
| Albertus Magnus College | 1,088 | 48 | 32,640 |
| Asnuntuck Community College | 1,304 | 33 | 32,600 |
| Capital Community College | 2,715 | 48 | 81,450 |
| Central Connecticut State University | 8,593 | 36 | 214,825 |
| Charter Oak State College | 1,538 | 37 | 38,450 |
| Eastern Connecticut State University | 4,475 | 31 | 111,875 |
| Fairfield University | 4,354 | 10 | 65,310 |
| Gateway Community College | 6,003 | 45 | 180,090 |
| Goodwin University | 3,213 | 74 | 112,455 |
| Housatonic Community College | 3,821 | 48 | 114,630 |
| Manchester Community College | 4,448 | 39 | 111,200 |
| Middlesex Community College | 2,106 | 36 | 52,650 |
| Mitchell College | 599 | 41 | 17,970 |
| Naugatuck Valley Community College | 5,243 | 42 | 157,290 |
| Northwestern Connecticut Community College | 1,228 | 35 | 30,700 |
| Norwalk Community College | 4,420 | 38 | 110,500 |
| Quinebaug Valley Community College | 1,162 | 42 | 34,860 |
| Quinnipiac University | 6,843 | 15 | 102,645 |
| Sacred Heart University | 6,417 | 17 | 96,255 |
| Southern Connecticut State University | 7,440 | 42 | 223,200 |
| Three Rivers Community College | 3,162 | 43 | 94,860 |
| Tunxis Community College | 3,365 | 41 | 100,950 |
| University of Bridgeport | 2,350 | 55 | 82,250 |
| University of Connecticut | 18,917 | 23 | 378,340 |
| University of Hartford | 4,521 | 28 | 90,420 |
| University of New Haven | 5,097 | 28 | 101,940 |
| University of Saint Joseph | 898 | 38 | 22,450 |
| Western Connecticut State University | 4,640 | 33 | 116,000 |

*Source: IPEDS, 2021-2022

Eligible Award Uses

Awards must be used to fund the following eligible uses:

- Access to and availability of care: To supply sufficient capacity and technical resources to meet student demand for mental health services through a JED collaborative.
- Training: To equip faculty, staff, campus mental health coalitions, and students with the skills and knowledge required to identify, support, and respond to students with mental illness, developed with consideration given to the student's race, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, socio-economic status or status as a veteran or service member of the armed forces of the United States.

Selection

The selection committee will evaluate applications using the following criteria:

1. Evidence-Based Practice: Applications have a base of evidence-based practice and/or research to support the program's effectiveness.
2. Sustainable Outcomes: Applications lead to sustainable student outcomes beyond the grant term.
3. Centralized Coordination: Applications show that the institution intentionally uses funds to link students to services in a coordinated manner.
4. Immediate Impact: Applications show how the funding will be put to immediate use.
5. Equitable Implementation: Applications demonstrate how program implementation and use of funds will be equitably distributed among students, especially among minority, underrepresented, and/or disadvantaged student populations.

A committee of individuals from OHE will review applications and grant awards up to the levels described above.

Application Logistics

| Activity | Date |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Call for Applications | June 9, 2023 |
| Application deadline | July 1, 2023 |
| Award notification | On or before August 1, 2023 |
| Implementation of Award | September 1, 2023 |
| Mid-year Report | March 31, 2024 |
| End-of-year Report | September 30, 2024 |

For questions, please email Jacqueline Lucier (Jacqueline.Lucier@ct.gov).

Application

All eligible schools wishing to apply for grants must complete all components of the application [here](#). Please keep each response limited to 300 words max (2,000 characters).

Application Information

- Institution of Higher Education name:
- Institution DUNS number:
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number
- Respondent's name:
- Respondent's title:
- Respondent's email address:
- Respondent's phone number:

Application questions

Please keep each response limited to 300 words max (2,000 characters).

1. **Need:** Describe the landscape for student mental health on your campus, including reference to evidence, either quantitative or qualitative, of students' current needs. Why does your school need these funds for support?
2. **Strategy:** Describe how your school will use the funds within the two (2) eligible use categories. Why have you chosen this specific approach? Explain your rationale and the supporting evidence behind your plans.
3. **Implementation:** Describe your implementation plan to obligate funds for new or expanded programs by August 31, 2024. Additionally, please list any community or vendor partners you will engage in this work. How will you ensure that resources reach students in a coordinated fashion?
4. **Tracking:** How will you know if programs are working? What outcomes will you measure and track?
5. **Equity:** Describe how your plan will yield equitable outcomes through its design and implementation. Explain any efforts to serve specific groups that may have been marginalized or underserved in the past.
6. **Budget.** Please use the space provided in the application to describe how you would use your grant award to support the programs and strategies you listed in the previous questions. Schools should use the following line items when building their budgets in the template.
 - A. Project Personnel Expenses
 - B. Personnel Fringe Benefits
 - C. Travel
 - D. Equipment
 - E. Supplies
 - F. Contractual & Consultant Services
 - G. Other Support Costs

H. Indirect/Administrative Costs

Budget Line-Item Descriptions

A. Project Personnel Expenses, if applicable

List each staff position separately and provide salary and percentage of effort as a percentage of FTE devoted to this award. Each staff person's role listed in the budget must be described in the application narrative and each staff person mentioned in the narrative must be listed in the budget.

B. Personnel Fringe Benefits, if applicable

Identify the types of fringe benefits to be covered and the costs of benefit(s) for each staff position. Allowable fringe benefits typically include FICA, Worker's Compensation, Retirement, SUTA, Health and Life Insurance, IRA, and 401K. You may provide a calculation for total benefits as a percentage of the salaries to which they apply or list each benefit as a separate item. Holidays, leave, and other similar vacation benefits are not included in the fringe benefit rates, but are absorbed into the personnel expenses (salary) budget line item.

C. Travel

Describe the purpose for which program staff will travel. Provide a calculation that includes itemized costs for airfare, transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel-related expenses multiplied by the number of trips/staff. Only domestic travel is allowable.

D. *Equipment*

Equipment is defined as tangible, non-expendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year AND an acquisition cost of **\$5,000 or more per unit** (including accessories, attachments, and modifications). Any items that do not meet this definition should be entered in **E. Supplies** below. Purchases of equipment are limited to 10% of the total funds requested. If applicable, show the unit cost and number of units you are requesting. Provide a brief justification for the purchase of the equipment.

E. Supplies

Include the amount of funds to purchase consumable supplies and materials, including promotional materials and equipment that does not fit the definition above. You must individually list any single item costing \$1,000 or more.

F. Contractual and Consultant Services

Include costs for consultants related to the project's operations, except training or evaluation consultants, who will be listed in Section G., below.

G. Other Support Costs

Allowable costs in this budget category should include when applicable:

- Office space rental: If space is budgeted and it is shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.
- Utilities, telephone, internet, postage, copying, and similar expenses that are specifically used for grant activities and project staff. If such expenses are budgeted and shared with other projects or activities, the costs must be equitably pro-rated and allocated between the activities or projects.

H. Indirect/Administrative Support Costs

Administrative costs are general or centralized expenses of the overall administration of an organization that receives Higher Education Mental Health funds and do not include particular project costs. These costs may include administrative staff positions. For organizations that have an established indirect cost rate for federal awards, administrative costs mean those costs that are included in the organization's indirect cost rate agreement. Such costs are generally identified with the organization's overall operation and are further described in Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance.

Options for Calculating Administrative/Indirect Costs (choose A or B)

Applicants choose one of two methods to calculate allowable administrative costs - a federally approved indirect cost rate method, or a *de minimis* method. Regardless of the option chosen, the federal share of administrative costs is limited to 5% of the total funds **expended** under this grant. Do not create additional lines in this category.

A. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate

If you have a federally approved indirect cost rate, this method must be used, and the rate will constitute documentation of your administrative costs, not to exceed the 5% maximum federal share payable by the federal award. Specify the Cost Type for which your organization has current documentation on file, i.e., Provisional, Predetermined, Fixed, or Final indirect cost (IDC) rate. Supply your approved IDC rate (percentage) and the base upon which this rate is calculated (direct salaries, salaries, and fringe benefits, etc.). This grant does not restrict the overall indirect cost rate claimed. It is at your discretion whether to claim your entire IDC rate to calculate administrative costs. If you choose to claim a lower rate, please include this rate in the Rate Claimed field.

Determine the base amount of direct costs to which you will apply the IDC rate, as prescribed by your established rate agreement (i.e., based on salaries and benefits, total direct costs, or other). Then multiply the appropriate direct costs by the rate being claimed. This will determine the total amount of indirect costs allowable under the grant.

B. De Minimis Rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs

Organizations who do not currently have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate and who receive less than \$35 million in direct federal funding may indefinitely use a *de minimis* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Additional information regarding what is included in MTDC and use of this option can be found at 2 CFR 200.414(f) and 200.68.

Scoring Rubric

An application must receive at least 10 points, based on the rubric below, to receive a grant. All successful applications will receive the full grant amount.

| Criteria | Score | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Evidence-Based Practice | Application includes no references to evidence-based practices and/or research that supports the effectiveness of the proposed mental health programs | Application includes few references to evidence-based practices and/or research that supports the effectiveness of the proposed mental health programs | Application includes multiple references to evidence-based practices and/or research that supports the effectiveness of the proposed mental health programs |
| Sustainable Outcomes | Application does not state sustainable outcomes for students that will occur beyond the grant term and/or does not reference long-term mental health strategy | Application mentions some high-level sustainable outcomes for students that will occur beyond the grant term and/or mentions a long-term mental health strategy | Application describes in-depth the sustainable outcomes for students that will occur beyond the grant term and/or mentions a well-planned long-term mental health strategy |
| Centralized Coordination | Application does not provide any detail on how grant will use funds to link students to services. Application also does not discuss using funding to enhance existing programs and/or to establish coordination to oversee new programs | Application provides some detail on how funds will be used to link students to services in a coordinated manner; or some detail is provided on existing programs and/or on establishing coordination for new programs | Application provides significant detail on how grant funds will be used to link students to necessary services; and/or specific uses of funds are outlined , including using funds to enhance existing programs or to establish coordination of new programs |
| Immediate Impact | Application does not outline the immediate use for funding , i.e. there is no sense of urgency | Application outlines a program idea that shows funding will be put to immediate use but there is little to no sense of urgency | Application outlines a clear and relevant program idea that shows funding will be put to immediate use and conveys a sense of urgency |
| Equitable Implementation | Application does not reference equity in the program idea and/or minimally demonstrates that implementation will be targeting populations of greater need | Application refers to some equity in the program idea and/or somewhat demonstrates that implementation will be targeting populations of greater need | Application incorporates equity into all aspects of the program idea and/or substantially demonstrates that implementation will be targeting populations of greater need |

Compliances and Assurances

Any institution of higher education (IHE) accepting funds through the Higher Education Mental Health Services Initiative agrees to abide by the following assurances:

- Each IHE that receives funding will cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of (i) the U.S. Department of Education and/or its Inspector General; or (ii) any other federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority.
- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this initiative.
- All IHEs received GEER funding through the Higher Education Mental Health Services initiative will be expected to submit a final report documenting the impact of the grant program, including but not limited to how the funding was used to address gaps in services, reduce barriers to connecting students to services, and the utilization rate of the program.

Supplemental Information

OHE Reserves the Right: OHE reserves the right to withdraw this Request for Proposals (RFP) after the proposals are received if OHE, in its sole discretion, determines that no applicant has met the requirements. OHE also reserves the right to accept a proposal subject to conditions that OHE imposes.

Request For Proposals Grant Awards: Applicants are required to submit narratives to OHE electronically. OHE reserves the right to make changes to the RFP grant awards without discussion with the applicants. Therefore, proposals should represent the applicant's best effort to ensure a quality proposal from both a technical and cost standpoint. All awards are subject to the availability of state and federal funds. The grant award is not final until the award letter is executed. OHE will issue notification of the RFP award. The effective dates of the project will be set forth in the notification of the RFP award.

Freedom of Information Act: All the information contained in a proposal submitted in response to this RFP is subject to the Freedom of Information Act Sections 1-200 et seq. The FOIA provides that, except as provided by federal law or state statute, records maintained or kept on file by any public agency (as defined in the statute) are public records, and every person has the right to inspect such records and receive a copy of such records.