



## FOCUS AREA: HEALTHY YOUTH RESPONSIVE GRANTMAKING

**Adolescence is a time of profound brain, body and emotional growth. The changes in brain structure and connectivity that occur between the ages of 10 and 25 present adolescents with unique opportunities for positive, life-shaping development and for recovering from past adversity. We believe capitalizing on these opportunities, centering youth voice and addressing inequities – in education, health care, child welfare and the juvenile justice system – are critical to ensure the healthy development of Colorado’s youth.**

### HEALTHY YOUTH - STRATEGIES

The Healthy Youth focus area supports efforts that promote healthy behaviors and engage youth ages 10 to 25 in implementing solutions for health and well-being. We emphasize a [Positive Youth Development](#) approach, which incorporates skill-building opportunities and authentic relationships into programs, practices and policies so that young people reach their full potential. In the Healthy Youth Focus Area, we will support two responsive grantmaking strategies:

- **Promoting Youth Health and Well-Being**
- **Amplifying Youth Voice and Leadership**

#### Promoting Youth Health and Well-Being

Young people have different physical and behavioral health needs than adults and need the time and space, outside of school, to grow as individuals and explore who they are. They may also need extra support to navigate the complexities of their life circumstances. We support programs and services that promote physical and emotional health for youth, including safe spaces for youth to congregate and build social connections; programs that validate and support needs or identities; and traditional health services that are delivered in ways that are adolescent-friendly and informed by youth. We prioritize organizations working with youth facing the greatest barriers to health and well-being.

We seek to fund:

**Youth-Friendly Health Services:** Integration/co-location of youth-friendly behavioral health and reproductive and sexual health services in school- and community-based settings. Services that are designed to meet needs and incorporate the input of young people, increase access to care and respond to identity are prioritized.

**Focused Programs for Youth:** Safe, healthy, inclusive and affirming programs designed to meet the needs of specific groups of youth experiencing the greatest challenges to health and well-being, including LGBTQ youth, youth of color, youth experiencing homelessness, pregnant and parenting youth, youth in or aging out of foster care, and youth involved with the juvenile justice system. Organizations that adopt a strengths-based focus, are culturally responsive and incorporate young people in decision-making are prioritized.

**Out-of-School Time Programs:** Organizations that provide regular, ongoing programming and safe spaces, focused on addressing emotional and mental wellness, physical activity, social skill building and/or sexual health. Programs integrating youth voice and leadership into core structures and practices are prioritized.

### Amplifying Youth Voice and Leadership

To improve the services provided to young people, youth should be involved in identifying needs and shaping the responses to those needs. We aim to improve youth health and well-being by supporting youth voice and leadership in decision-making that impacts them directly.

We seek to fund:

**Youth-Led Efforts:** Organizations that support a youth-led infrastructure (youth council, youth organizing team, etc.) where young people are leading the work or co-leading with adults on issues related to health and well-being.

**Youth Leadership Development:** Organizations implementing structured programs that provide youth an environment for learning and developing skills to address issues impacting youth health and wellness. We prioritize programs that engage youth who often are left out of these opportunities.

**Professional Development for Youth-Serving Staff:** Learning and skill-building opportunities for staff in youth-serving organizations to strengthen their capacity to be trusted adults, integrate youth voice and engage youth as partners in developing and implementing programs and services.