

Priority: Youth Health and Well-Being



PURPOSE: To advance health and well-being for young people, ages 9 to 25, in Colorado who experience health inequities due to economic injustice, racism, and discrimination through strategic investments designed to support young people, strengthen families, and build youth-centered communities.

Focus Area: Supporting Young People

DESIRED RESULT: Young people develop a strong sense of belonging, identity, purpose, and agency.

Why We Care

We believe that developing a strong sense of belonging, identity, purpose, and agency leads to greater health and well-being for young people.

The need to belong is fundamental to adolescent well-being and rooted in biology—feeling and being connected to others has always been necessary for survival. When young people belong, they feel safe, supported, respected, and accepted. A **sense of belonging** supports a range of benefits for young people, including positive mental health, academic engagement and performance, self-esteem and self-efficacy, and future trajectories of employment, education, and training. Conversely, not belonging is associated with social isolation, poor mental and physical health, school disengagement, antisocial behavior, and finding unhealthy alternative spaces for belonging.

The **development of an integrated identity**—a sense of internal consistency about who one is across time and across multiple social contexts (e.g., race/ethnicity, profession, culture, gender, religion)—is critical to healthy adolescent development. It serves as an internal framework for making choices and provides a stable base from which young people can act in the world. Throughout adolescence, a young person’s sense of identity increasingly influences the decisions they make.

Helping young people develop a **sense of purpose**—a forward-looking life aim that guides actions and decisions—can build resilience, support mental health, reduce negative risk-taking, and provide a sense of direction and motivation. Young people need to successfully explore their unique talents and preferences, discover what they find most meaningful, and understand how they might make a positive difference in the world. Young people with a greater sense of purpose are happier, healthier, and more motivated to achieve a wide range of positive developmental outcomes.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

- **Part 1: Due 11/14/2024, by 5:00 p.m.**
- Part 2 (if invited): Opens 12/12/2024
Due 02/06/2025, by 5:00 p.m.
- Grant Start Date: 07/01/2025

[Click here to apply!](#)

When young people develop a **sense of agency**—a process through which they come to believe they are active agents in directing their lives—they can conceptualize a goal, develop a plan to pursue it, be confident in their ability to achieve it, and act towards their goal. Increasing youth agency benefits young people by building their capacity to become independent adults. This increased capacity can boost their confidence as they transition into adulthood.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

In addition to [Caring for Colorado’s general eligibility requirements](#), the proposed work must serve:

A minimum of 75% of young people living with low incomes (at or below 260% of the federal poverty level, 80% Area Median Income, or [TANF eligible](#)).

OR

At least 90% of young people who represent one or more of [Caring for Colorado’s priority populations](#).

Eligible Funding Strategies

To support young people in the development of a strong sense of belonging, identity, purpose, and agency, we will fund organizations that create the conditions young people need to:

- Cultivate healthy, supportive relationships and social networks with peers, near-peers, and trusted adults.
- Explore their values, interests, and goals.
- Contribute in meaningful ways to others and their community.
- Make good decisions and establish positive health behaviors, including but not limited to managing stress in healthy ways, getting an adequate amount of sleep, staying active, eating a nutritious diet, refraining from substance misuse, delaying early sexual activity, and preventing STIs and unwanted pregnancy.*

Organizations that serve young people and their families can submit one application that includes strategies from the Supporting Young People and Strengthening Families focus areas. To do so, please select the 2GEN Focus Area on the Part 1 Application.

**This list of positive health behaviors was created based on insights from participants in our youth listening sessions. Although other positive health behaviors will be considered, those listed will be prioritized.*

Types of Funding

We will fund requests for general operating or project support. Annual grants will range from \$50,000 to \$125,000, and applicants can request funding for up to three years.

Grantmaking Guiding Principles

Our grantmaking decisions are guided by five principles that influence an organization's ability to advance health and well-being for young people, ages 9 to 25, who experience health inequities due to economic injustice, racism, and discrimination. The principles were developed based on insight from our youth and community listening sessions and are informed by best practices in the field of adolescent health and well-being. Grant funding will be prioritized for applicants who demonstrate alignment with these five principles:



[Learn more about our guiding principles.](#)

Examples of What We Will Fund

- Out-of-school time programs that offer high-quality prevention programming focused on:
 - The development of resilient characteristics and competencies, such as identity formation, self-efficacy, responsible decision-making, personal values, social skills, emotional and behavioral regulation, coping skills, and problem-solving.
 - Sexual and reproductive health, including education on healthy relationships, bodily autonomy, personal values, and pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STI) prevention.
 - The development of leadership, advocacy, and civic engagement, with opportunities to make meaningful contributions and to have those contributions recognized.
 - Holistic physical health programming with opportunities for young people to:
 - Move their bodies with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities, including sports and outdoor adventure.
 - Engage in health education designed to support young people in making decisions that foster good physical health (e.g., hygiene, sleep, nutrition, exercise, refraining from substance misuse).

What We Will Not Fund

- Applicants that do not meet [Caring for Colorado's general eligibility requirements](#).
- Organizations that do not offer free or accessible services based on a sliding fee scale.
- Requests to fund a scholarship model for participants to access programs or services.
- One-time events or experiences.
- Mentoring programs that do not use an evidence-based model.

- Evidence-based mentoring programs (peer, near-peer, and adult strategies).
- Statewide or regional organizations with a primary focus on increasing the quality and accessibility of out-of-school time or mentoring programs.

Application Review Process and Timeline

Caring for Colorado utilizes a two-part online application process. **No registration is needed to submit the Part 1 application, which is designed to provide grant-seekers with a quick, low-barrier opportunity to share basic information about the organization and proposed work.** Staff reviews Part 1 applications to determine eligibility and alignment with the funding opportunity.

Organizations that submit a Part 1 application by 5:00 p.m. on November 14, 2024 will be notified about the status of their application by December 12, 2024. If an application is declined, the organization will receive an email from a Philanthropy Lead with a brief explanation of the decision. Organizations that are invited to move forward in the review process will be asked to complete the Part 2 application by 5:00 p.m. on February 6, 2025. **The Part 2 application must be submitted via Caring for Colorado’s online grants portal.**

Part 2 Applications will be reviewed by March 3, 2025. If an organization’s application does not move forward in the review process, a Philanthropy Lead will provide the opportunity to schedule a meeting to learn more about the decision. If an organization is asked to continue in the review process, a Philanthropy Lead will schedule a site visit. Site visits will take place between March 17 and May 3, 2025.

Following a comprehensive team review process, Philanthropy Leads present their grant recommendations to Caring for Colorado’s Board of Directors for consideration. Following Board approval, Philanthropy Leads will notify applicants of grant decisions by June 16, 2025. The grant start date is July 1, 2025.

Learning & Assessment

How Your Application Informs Our Learning

The **Part 1 application** requires basic organizational data that Caring for Colorado collects to inform the decision-making process and help the foundation track and assess key grantmaking metrics over time (e.g., counties served, budget size, populations served, etc.).

The **Part 2 application** requires organizations to establish at least one outcome and subsequent objective for each [eligible funding strategy](#) selected. If funded, the grantee will report on the results of outcome(s) and objective(s) after 12 months.

POST GRANT AWARD:

In addition to reporting on grant outcomes and subsequent objectives, grantees will be asked *optional* learning questions in their annual grant report. These questions are designed to support Caring for Colorado in assessing our theory of change and create opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned with other grantees working on the same strategies.

Grantees will not be expected to implement any specific measurement tools or be asked to explicitly evaluate the impact of their work on the funding opportunity's desired results. We understand that organizations use different tools and methods to track data and measure impact, and we are confident that those will be helpful in reflecting on the funding opportunity's impact. We hope to learn if and how organizations are measuring outcomes like belonging, identity, purpose, and agency, but we will do so through informal conversations and optional learning opportunities.

Connect With A Philanthropy Lead

Philanthropy Leads are available to answer questions that will help you determine eligibility and prepare your Part 1 Application. We recommend you watch the [Youth Health and Well-Being Funding Opportunity Webinar](#) and review application resources before scheduling a meeting.

Philanthropy Leads are assigned to specific counties. [Refer to our regional map](#) to determine your primary contact.

Schedule a meeting with [Lauren Czajka](#), [Sarah Dutcher](#), or [Steph Perez-Carrillo](#).

How to Apply

The [Part 1 application](#) is submitted online and does *not* require registration in the Caring for Colorado grantmaking portal. For the best results, we suggest that you use Google Chrome as your web browser.

Important note: You cannot save your work while working on the Part 1 online form. We recommend using the [Part 1 Application Template](#) and then copying and pasting your answers into the online form.

If you are unable to complete an [online application](#), please contact our grants management team at grants@caringforcolorado.org to discuss alternative options.

Glossary of Terms

Learn more about [terms used in the Youth Health and Well-Being Funding Opportunity](#).

We Want to Hear from You!

If you have feedback on this funding opportunity, [please share your thoughts here](#). You may also use this form to share helpful resources!

