Caring for Colorado FOUNDATION

Frequently Asked Questions

Youth Health and Well-Being Funding Opportunity

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Eligibility

How do I know if my organization is eligible to apply for funding?

All applicants must meet Caring for Colorado's general eligibility requirements. Additional eligibility varies by focus area.

General Eligibility Requirements:
Caring for Colorado considers applications from organizations that benefit the people of Colorado and are:

- Charitable, nonprofit organizations with tax-exempt classification from the Internal Revenue Service; or
- Tax-supported institutions, including state and local governments and schools.

New or emerging organizations or for-profits are permitted to apply through a tax-exempt organization acting as a fiscal agent. The most common type of fiscal agent arrangement is between a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization and a non-tax-exempt group. The fiscal agent has the ultimate authority and responsibility to see that the funds are used for the intended purpose; it cannot simply be a pass-through organization. Fiscal sponor fees should not exceed 10% of the total request amount.

Caring for Colorado does NOT fund:

- Organizations or projects that unlawfully discriminate with regard to employees, volunteers, delivery of programs or services, or clients based on age, sex, religion/creed, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, marital status, military or veteran status, pregnancy, or genetic information.
- Individuals.
- Activities supporting political candidates.

Focus Area Eligibility

Supporting Young People and Strengthening Families:
The proposed work serves a **minimum of 75% of young people/families who live on low incomes** (at or below 260% of the federal poverty level, 80% Area Median Income, or TANF eligible) **OR** the proposed work explicitly centers one of Caring for Colorado's priority populations (**at least 90% of the young people or families served identify with the population centered**). We recognize that many young people hold multiple, intersecting identities and may experience overlapping forms of inequity. However, for eligibility purposes, this requirement is intended to support efforts that are intentionally designed *by and for* a specific priority population. Therefore, multiple priority populations cannot be combined to meet the 90% threshold.

Building Youth-Centered Communities:
The proposed work serves **one or more of the following counties**: Alamosa, Archuleta, Baca, Bent, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Custer, Delta, Fremont, Garfield, Huerfano, Kit Carson, Lake, La Plata, Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Mesa, Montezuma, Montrose, Morgan, Otero, Phillips, Prowers, Pueblo, Rio Grande, Saguache, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma **OR** the applicant is a **School-based Health Center** that provides comprehensive, equitable healthcare to young people (ages 9 to 25).

How does Caring for Colorado define adolescence?

Adolescence is generally defined as the period beginning with puberty—marked by rapid physical and neurological development—and continuing until adulthood, when both the body and brain are fully mature. Because young people are entering puberty earlier, we define adolescence as spanning ages 9 to 25. By focusing on this developmental stage, we seek to advance key prevention goals. At Caring for Colorado, we use the term *young people* interchangeably with adolescents.

How does Caring for Colorado define living with low income?

CFC defines living with low income as living at or below 260% of the federal poverty level, 80% of Area Median Income, and/or TANF eligible.

Why do some focus areas require organizations to serve a minimum of 75% of young people living with low incomes, OR explicitly serve at least 90% of young people who represent one or more of Caring for Colorado's priority populations?

In alignment with our commitment to health equity, we prioritize populations who are experiencing the greatest inequities in health, well-being, and opportunity and who have historically faced the most barriers due to systemic inequity, racism, and discrimination. For the Supporting Young People and Strengthening Families focus areas, proposed work must hit either the 75% or 90% threshold to be eligible. Learn more about our **priority populations.**

When applying for Supporting Young People or Strengthening Families, do the eligibility requirements pertain to everyone our organization serves, or just to the young people and families who would be reached through the specific work we are proposing?

The eligibility requirements apply to the specific work you are proposing. If your organization serves a broader population, you can apply for a program/project grant (not general operating), and your application must clearly demonstrate that the program or project meets the 75% or 90% eligibility threshold.

Why are specific counties eligible for the Building Youth-Centered Communities focus area?

Caring for Colorado is committed to strengthening communities across the state by investing in counties with fewer philanthropic resources and limited or aging infrastructure—conditions that can contribute to greater health disparities. Eligibility is determined using a range of factors, including childhood poverty rates, the size of the school-aged population, teen health and mortality indicators, and whether a county serves as a regional hub for surrounding rural communities. This list of eligible counties is reviewed annually to ensure resources remain aligned with evolving community strengths, opportunities, and needs.

Are School-based Health Centers that apply under Building Youth-Centered Communities required to operate in certain counties?

No. Any School-based Health Center is eligible to apply under the Building Youth-Centered Communities focus area.

Are School-based Health Centers only eligible to apply under Building Youth-Centered Communities?

No. School-based Health Centers are eligible to apply in any focus area; however, the proposed work must meet the eligibility criteria for the selected focus area.

Can my organization apply every year, even if we already have an active Youth Health and Well-Being grant?

Organizations may submit one Youth Health and Well-Being application per year, but can only have one active grant per focus area. Although an organization with an active grant is eligible to apply for funding in a different focus area, depending on the context, the application may be less likely to be funded due to limited funding. Please note that organizations that receive funding under the 2GEN focus area are considered to have an active grant in both Supporting Young People and Strengthening Families.

Can my organization submit more than one application?

No. Each organization can only be the primary applicant on one application per funding opportunity. We recommend that you select the focus area and strategies that most closely align with your core work. Organizations can be part of an additional collaborative application as long as they are not the primary applicant.

What does “Statewide Breadth, Rural Depth” mean?

Although we are committed to being a statewide funder, rural communities working to address health inequities for our priority populations will receive high priority in Caring for Colorado funding decisions due to resource constraints in rural communities, such as lack of transportation, inadequate or aging infrastructure, workforce shortages, lack of a robust tax base, limited philanthropic investment, and other barriers. Additionally, we estimate that approximately 70% of Youth Health and Well-Being grants awarded will serve communities outside the seven-county metro area (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson).

Given Caring for Colorado’s “Statewide Breadth, Rural Depth” philosophy, what increases the likelihood that an organization serving urban communities will be funded?

Our team will review applications exclusively serving urban communities with additional considerations. Organizations that do not meet the following conditions are less likely to be prioritized:

- At least 90% of the young people or families served live on low incomes.
- Youth programming is specifically focused on older adolescents (middle school, high school, or young adults).
- The organization has deep expertise in our grantmaking **Guiding Principles**.
- The applicant demonstrates an explicit commitment to serving the parents and caregivers of adolescents and recognized as a trusted resource for families.

Application Process

What is the application process and timeline?

Caring for Colorado utilizes a two-part online application process. Part 1 opens in September and is due in November. Organizations need to register with Fluxx (the grants management system) at least two days prior to the deadline. Organizations invited to submit a Part 2 Application will be notified in December, and the deadline is in February. Site visits occur in spring, and final awards are announced in June. Specific timelines can be found in each year's Grant Guidelines resource.

Why does the grant application process take several months and include two parts?

We recognize this is a long process, and we deeply value the time and effort applicants put into applying. Our goal is to balance thoughtful decision-making with respect for the capacity of grant-seekers. The two-part process allows us to do this in several ways:

- Part 1 is designed as a quick, low-barrier entry point. It allows organizations to share essential information without investing significant time or resources up front.
- Part 2 is by invitation only, which means only organizations that are most aligned with our strategies and priorities are asked to provide more detailed information.
- The extended timeline gives our team the ability to carefully review applications and build a well-rounded portfolio that reflects Colorado's diverse regions, focus areas, and communities served.

While this process adds time, we believe it ultimately reduces the burden on applicants and ensures resources are invested in a way that advances equity and impact statewide.

What information is required in the Part 1 Application?

The Part 1 Application is designed to provide grant-seekers with a quick, low-barrier opportunity to share basic information about the organization and proposed work. Applicants will be asked to:

- Share basic organizational information.
- Select a focus area.
- Confirm eligibility.

- Select the eligible strategy/ies that best reflect their core work.
- Answer the questions, "Tell us about your organization" and "Describe your proposed work and the population served."

A PDF of the full Part 1 Application can be found **here**.

What information is required in the Part 2 Application?

Part 2 is by invitation only. Applicants will be asked to complete the following sections:

- Learning and Assessment:
  - Applicants will be asked to describe their approach to implementing each selected strategy and develop at least one objective and one outcome for each selected strategy, including a description of how progress will be measured.
- Narrative Questions:
  - In what ways is your organization uniquely qualified to deliver the proposed work?
  - What challenges might your organization face as you implement this work?
  - What else would you like us to know?
- Demographics:
  - Caring for Colorado collects demographic data to help us better understand our grantmaking and evaluate the effectiveness of our work in advancing our mission and commitment to equity. The information collected serves as one data point, among many, in our efforts to understand how our partners are working to equitably build a healthier future for Colorado's young people and their families. We understand that not all organizations collect all the data requested in this section. If you do not collect any demographic data on your board, staff, or communities served, you may indicate that in the application. Please note that all demographic data must be input into the online application. Data from applicants and grantees is maintained secure and confidential within Caring for Colorado's internal data-management system.
- Financial Summary:
  - Applicants are asked to provide the following amounts for two full fiscal years: total assets, total liabilities, total revenue, and total expenses. In addition, depending on your organization's business type, you will need to attach certain financial documents (see required attachments section below).
- Required Attachments:
  - Board of Directors: List of the board of directors, with titles and terms
  - Key Staff: List of key staff, with titles and tenure
  - Major Contributors: List of the major contributors to the organization and contribution amounts for the previous fiscal year
  - Current-year annual operating budget
  - Program/Project Budget: A Program/Project budget is submitted as an attachment in the portal and is NOT required for general operating requests. The budget consists of three parts: projected expenses, projected income, and a narrative description of expense items.

- Financials:
  - Tax-exempt organizations requesting more than $25,000 must submit Year-to-Date financials and audited financials for the most recently completed fiscal year-end. If audited financials are unavailable, applicants must provide their most current IRS Form 990/990EZ. If the applicant does not file an IRS Form 990 or 990EZ, they can provide an internal fiscal year-end balance sheet and income statement.
  - Governmental entities do not need to provide additional financial attachments.
  - For fiscally sponsored projects, applicants can submit the fiscal sponsor's audited financials for the most recently completed fiscal year-end.

What happens during Site Visits?

Applicants invited to continue with the application process after review of their Part 2 Application will be asked to schedule a site visit with a Philanthropy Lead. These visits are typically in-person at the applicant's office or program site. Site visits are an opportunity for Caring for Colorado to learn more about organizations and their communities served, ask questions, and see programming in action (as appropriate).

When will grant decisions be made?

Following a comprehensive team review process, the Youth Health and Well-Being team presents grant recommendations to CFC's Board of Directors for consideration. Applicants are notified of grant decisions in June after Board approval. The grant start date is July 1.

When will funds be distributed?

Organizations that have submitted their Grant Agreement will receive funds on or before July 1. Organizations receiving multi-year funding will receive the full award at one time.

What are the grant reporting requirements?

Organizations with 12-month grants will be required to submit one final report following their grant period. Organizations receiving multi-year funding will be required to submit interim reports on an annual basis with a final report at the culmination of the grant period. All reports will be based on the objectives and outcomes by eligible strategy submitted as part of the Learning and Assessment Plan in the Part 2 Application.

Application Guidance

How do I know which focus area to select?

Once you have determined eligibility, review the desired results and strategies for each focus area. Successful applicants easily find alignment between their organizations' core work and at least one of the funding strategies. If you find it challenging to identify where your proposed work fits, this is often a sign of misalignment with the funding opportunity, and we would not encourage you to apply.

If you work directly with young people, we recommend that you apply under Supporting Young People. If you work directly with the parents/caregivers of adolescents, we recommend you apply under Strengthening Families. If your core work directly serves both young people and their parents and caregivers, you can apply under "2GEN" which combines the Supporting Young People and Strengthening Families focus areas. The Building Youth-Centered Communities focus area offers broader opportunities for organizations working to support young people, but the primary beneficiary of the proposed work must be young people, ages 9 to 25.

Should I apply for a general operating, program/project, or capital grant?

Caring for Colorado generally prefers to fund general operating requests. We want our grant dollars to give you the flexibility you need to meet the needs and opportunities that best serve your organization and community.

To ensure funding focuses on Caring for Colorado's priority populations, applicants *must* apply for program/project grants under the following circumstances:

- The proposed work is a project of a large institution such as a university, governmental department, or hospital.
- The proposed work meets the eligibility criteria, but the overall organization does not.

The following examples help illustrate the differences between general operating and program/project requests:

- 96% of the individuals served by ABC Family Resource Center live with low incomes. Even though not all of their work focuses on adolescents and/or their parents and caregivers, they can apply for general operating funds as long as their grant objectives/outcomes (written as part of the Part 2 application) focus on young people ages 9-25 and or their parents and caregivers.
- 50% of the individuals served by ABC Youth Program live with low incomes. They cannot apply for general operating funds. However, they can submit a program/project request for XYZ Program Site where 82% of the youth served live with low incomes.

Please note that we only consider capital requests under the Building Youth-Centered Communities focus area.

Can I request funding for strategies in multiple Youth Health and Well-Being focus areas?

Yes, you may request funding for strategies in the Strengthening Families and Supporting Young People focus areas. To do so, select the 2GEN focus area on the Part 1 Application. If you apply under 2GEN, you must select at least one strategy from Supporting Young People and at least one strategy from Strengthening Families. The only

exception is that "*Access concrete support, especially in times of need*" cannot be the only strategy selected under Strengthening Families. This strategy is meant to serve as wrap-around support for more comprehensive programs and services.

You cannot combine Building Youth-Centered Communities strategies with those from any other focus area.

Does Caring for Colorado consider collaborative applications from more than one organization?

Yes. One organization must serve as the primary applicant. We recommend that you clearly outline each partner's responsibilities and describe how funding will be distributed. The proposed work for all organizations must meet the eligibility requirements of the focus area. Organizational-level questions and required documentation should be provided by the primary applicant (e.g., Audited Financials). A program/project request is generally preferred for collaborative applications. Please note that submitting a collaborative application does not increase the likelihood of funding. Collaboration is encouraged only when it strengthens the work—for example, by creating efficiencies or enhancing collective impact.

Does selecting more strategies make my application more likely to receive funding?

No, the number of strategies chosen does not affect the chances of your application being funded. We understand that many of the eligible strategies are interconnected and may relate to your proposed work. We strongly recommend that applicants select one or two strategies that *best* represent the main purpose of their core work (or two to three strategies if applying under 2GEN, which combines the Supporting Young People and Strengthening Families focus areas). If invited to submit a Part 2 Application, organizations will need to develop a learning and assessment plan for each chosen strategy, which will form the basis for all required reporting if the application is funded.

How much funding and how many months should my organization request?

There is no minimum or maximum request amount. Our advice is to ask for what you need to accomplish the proposed work. Applicants may request funding for 12 – 36 months. The grant amount and grant period depend on several factors, including, but not limited to, the scale and scope of the proposal, other sources of funding available to support the work, and our available budget.

The grant range from our last cycle was $80,000 (12-month period) to $300,000 (36-month period).

Organizations that are new to Caring for Colorado may be awarded grants with a term of up to 24 months, while organizations with a prior history of engagement with Caring for Colorado may be considered for a grant term of up to 36 months.

Organizations requesting program/project support can add up to 20% to their request to cover indirect costs.

The following organizations will generally not be considered for indirect cost support, and in no event greater than a 10% allocation will be permitted: Higher education and their affiliated organizations, State and local governments and their agencies, Non-rural, non-critical access hospitals, and Private foundations.

Does requesting a smaller amount increase the chances of receiving funding?

No. The size of your request does not affect the likelihood of funding. Instead, we consider whether the request is reasonable for the scope of the proposed work and whether your organization has the capacity to achieve the intended results.

Is it possible to schedule a meeting with a philanthropy lead before we apply to discuss alignment with the funding opportunity?

Yes! If you have specific questions about your eligibility or proposed work, please schedule a virtual meeting with the Philanthropy Lead assigned to the county where your office is located. Links to schedule office hours are available on our website. Feel free to email us with any specific questions.

What other resources might help strengthen my application?

The funding opportunity resources on the Youth Health and Well-being page provide all the information you need to submit an application. Here are some additional resources that our team regularly uses:

- UCLA Center for the Developing Adolescent
- Portrait of a Thriving Youth (University of Virginia)
- Wellbeing Framework (Youth Transition Funders Group)

We also encourage you to refer to our Glossary of Terms to learn how we define concepts like belonging, identity, purpose, and agency.

Funding Decisions

How does Caring for Colorado make grant decisions?

When making grant decisions, Caring for Colorado considers various factors, including eligibility, population served, alignment with focus areas, strategies, and **Guiding Principles**, as well as geography, community context, and proposed impact. What we prioritize may shift on an annual basis depending on what we are learning about youth health and well-being across the state.

Does Caring for Colorado use a rubric to score applications?

We use a tool that helps us create a well-rounded portfolio rather than a rubric to score applications. The major categories we consider in the Part 1 Application process include:

- Eligibility
- Population Served
- Focus Area and Strategy Alignment
- **Guiding Principles Alignment**
- Community Context

Do programs need to be evidence-based?

We fund an array of programs, including evidence-based programs, promising practices, and local adaptations that center local youth voice and the science of adolescent development. We recognize that some evidence-based programs may not be culturally responsive and affirming or must evolve to address changing contexts and emerging issues.

Does Caring for Colorado fund organizations they have not previously funded or are unfamiliar with?

Yes. We welcome and encourage applications from organizations that are new to CFC.

Organizations that are new to Caring for Colorado may be awarded grants with a term of up to 24 months, while organizations with a prior history of engagement with Caring for Colorado may be considered for a grant term of up to 36 months.

If our application is not funded, will you give us feedback?

The most common reason an application is declined is that the available funding is not enough to support all eligible and aligned applications. Our declination rate often exceeds 80%. Because of the volume of applicants, we are unable to provide specific feedback to Part 1 applicants who are declined. Organizations that submit a Part 2 Application and do not receive funding will have the chance to schedule a meeting to learn more about the decision.