

ELEVATE YOUTH CALIFORNIA: YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER PREVENTION PROGRAM: STANDARD TRACK

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS AUGUST 2021



This funding opportunity is provided by The Center at Sierra Health Foundation under contract with the State of California's Department of Health Care Services through Proposition 64, California Cannabis Tax Fund, Allocation 3, Youth Education Prevention, Early Intervention and Treatment Account.

On November 8, 2016, Proposition 64 (Prop 64) was passed by voters, allowing adults aged 21 years or older to possess and use marijuana. Prop 64 created two new taxes, the revenues of which are deposited into the California Cannabis Tax Fund. Current law allocates, after other specified disbursements, 60 percent of the remaining California Cannabis Tax Fund be deposited into the Youth Education, Prevention, Early Intervention and Treatment Account (YEPEITA). Funds are disbursed to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for youth programs aimed to educate and prevent harm from a substance use disorder.

The Center at Sierra Health Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization bringing people, ideas and infrastructure together to create a collective impact that reduces health disparities and improves community health for the underserved living in California. For information about The Center, visit www.shfcenter.org.

READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS AND CRITERIA CAREFULLY

BACKGROUND

Sierra Health Foundation: Center for Health Program Management (The Center) was founded by Sierra Health Foundation in 2012 as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. With offices in Sacramento and Fresno, The Center pursues the promise of health and racial equity in communities across California. Leveraging leadership, operational and funding support from Sierra Health Foundation and its partners, The Center establishes investment partnerships with public and private funders; community members; community organizations; national, state and local government agencies; nonprofits; and businesses to advance health equity.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Launched in 2019, Elevate Youth California is investing in a statewide movement to expand youth and young adult substance use prevention through policy, systems and environmental change, focusing on communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs. Elevate Youth California is grounded in social justice youth development,^{1,2} which expands the concept of a positive youth development framework and addresses social factors including racism, xenophobia and other racial inequities youth face as they develop into adulthood (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Social justice youth development recognizes these systemic forces and supports young people in developing the skills and knowledge to transform the systems that influence their lives, neighborhoods and broader community. Additionally, social justice youth development expands the traditional asset-based youth development approach to support youth activism and leadership development to dismantle the structural inequities and harmful narratives. This includes the criminalization of youth of color, the school-to-prison pipeline, housing insecurity/homelessness, and inequitable education and economic opportunities, to name a few.

Since the program's launch, The Center awarded \$21.5 million to the first cohort of 26 community-based organizations in March 2020 and \$29.7 million to the second cohort of 32 community-based organizations in November 2020. Both funding rounds support racially and culturally responsive, trauma-informed, population-based and place-based approaches, particularly for California's demographic communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs. The funded programs focus on youth activism and support through mentoring and/or peer-to-peer support to help individuals and communities engage, cope with adversity, heal trauma and thrive. In August 2021, the program invested \$5 million for community-based organizations and Tribal organizations to build on the operational, programmatic, financial or organizational infrastructure of the funded partners.

¹ Ginwright, Shawn, and Julio Cammarota. "New Terrain in Youth Development: The Promise of a Social Justice Approach." *Social Justice*, vol. 29, no. 4 (90), 2002, pp. 82–95. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/29768150.

² Social Justice Youth Work: Actualizing Youth Rights <http://jyd.pitt.edu/ojs/jyd/article/viewFile/488/462>.

ELEVATE YOUTH CALIFORNIA FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES 2021-2022

The Center is contracted to provide three funding opportunities in years 2021-2022: standard track, innovation track and capacity building track. The goal of this funding opportunity, now termed the **Standard Track**, is to expand youth and young adult substance use prevention through policy, systems and environmental change. The goal of the **Elevate Youth California: Supporting Capacity Building for Community Organizations** is to support emerging grassroots organizations to build their operational, programmatic, financial or organizational infrastructure to implement youth and young adult substance use prevention programs. **Elevate Youth California: Innovation in Youth Substance Use Prevention** will focus on evaluation by applying an appreciative inquiry approach to build upon the learnings from these new and innovative approaches to substance use prevention.

The Elevate Youth California funding opportunities are summarized below:

Funding Track	Length of agreement	Approximate Award Amount	Anticipated Release of RFA	Focus
Standard	36 months	Up to \$1 million	August 2021	Policy, system and environmental change through youth activism, mentorship and peer-led support
Innovation	33 months	To be determined	November 2021	Non-traditional methods for policy, systems and environmental change with evaluation
Capacity Building	30 months	\$75,000 - \$400,000	February 2022	Strengthening the operational, programmatic, financial or organizational infrastructure of community-based organizations focused on youth substance use prevention

THE STANDARD TRACK FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

In this current round of funding, The Center is seeking applications from community-based organizations and Tribal organizations that:

- Support youth engagement that focuses on youth activism specifically in communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs
- Reflect the communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs
- Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate social justice youth development, peer-to-peer support and mentoring programs that are healing-centered, trauma-informed and focused on youth ages 12-26
- Utilize an intersectional approach to health equity through policy, systems and environmental change

In addition to youth activism, applicants must support youth and young adults through mentoring and/or peer-to-peer support to educate communities, change social norms around substance use, and prevent harms and risks associated with substance use.

Recognizing how critical family engagement (biological, adoptive or fictive) is to successfully supporting and engaging youth and young adults, program strategies should incorporate family engagement throughout program implementation.

Finally, COVID-19 has dramatically shifted how community-based organizations support and engage youth and young adults. Given these challenges, successful applicants will incorporate youth engagement plans that take full advantage of technological solutions to addressing the digital divide, as well as account for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and California Department of Public Health guidelines for social and physical distancing. Applicants are asked to describe detailed youth engagement plans in the application narrative, work plan and budget.

GLOSSARY

Prevention: Activities that promote healthy behaviors, reduce risks and build protective factors that either prevent new starts of substance use or mitigate consequences and contributing factors associated with substance misuse.

Harm Reduction: Strategies that seek to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with substance misuse for those for whom abstinence is not an immediate and/or feasible goal. Harm reduction aims to reduce at-risk, moderate and high-risk behaviors often associated with substance misuse.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD): Recurrent use of alcohol and/or substances causing significant problems, including health problems, disability and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school or home.

Addiction: The chronic neurobiological disorder centered on a dysregulation of the natural reward system. [View this video on rethinking addiction.](#)

Policy, Systems and Environmental Change: Policy, systems and environmental change is a way of modifying larger structures to make healthy choices practical and available to all community members. By changing policies, systems and/or environments, communities can help tackle health issues by looking at them from a population level. Organizations, agencies and stakeholders make policy decisions. Policy approaches include legislative advocacy, fiscal measures, taxation and regulatory oversight. Systems change refers to a fundamental shift in the way problems are solved. Within an organization, systems change affects organizational purpose, function and connections by addressing organizational culture, beliefs, relationships, policies and goals. Environmental change strategies involve changing the economic, social or physical surroundings or contexts that affect health outcomes. Environmental strategies address population health outcomes and are best used in combination with other strategies.³ Additional details and examples can be found in this [fact sheet on the California Dialogue on Cancer PSE Change website](#).

Social Justice Youth Development: Social justice youth development expands the concept of a positive youth development framework and addresses social factors including racism, xenophobia and other racial inequities youth face as they develop into adulthood (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Social justice youth development recognizes these systemic forces and supports young people in developing the skills and knowledge to transform the systems that influence their lives, neighborhoods and broader community.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is a theoretical framework for understanding how multiple social identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and disability intersect at the micro level of individual experience to reflect interlocking systems of privilege and oppression (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism) at the macro social-structural level.⁴

ELEVATE YOUTH CALIFORNIA FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER PREVENTION PROGRAM

Eligibility Criteria

Organizations must meet the following minimum requirements:

- The organization must have an office located in California.
- Provide services in California.
- Are a 501(c)(3) community-based organization or Tribal organization⁵ with established and trusted community relationships. Fiscal sponsorships are eligible. Also open to coalitions of organizations and collaboratives, as long as the backbone organization is an eligible applicant.

³ Rural Health Information Hub.

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/health-promotion/2/strategies/policy-systems-environmental>

⁴ The Problem with the Phrase *Women and Minorities*: Intersectionality—an Important Theoretical Framework for Public Health. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3477987/>

⁵ Tribal organizations may be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or a public entity.

- Applicant organization must not have an active Elevate Youth California grant. Fiscal sponsors are the exception and are allowed to submit for a new fiscally sponsored project that was not awarded a previous Elevate Youth California grant.
- Have demonstrated experience partnering with young people of color and other marginalized communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs.
- Applicant organizations and collaborative partners must deeply engage and reflect the proposed communities served that are disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs.⁶ Grantee partners should have a history of working with impacted communities, including representation on the board and staff, clients served and neighborhoods served.
- Applicant organizations and their partners must have demonstrated evidence of inclusivity and shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation or military status in any of its activities or operations.

SCOPE OF WORK

As mentioned previously, The Center’s approach to supporting young people is through the lens of social justice youth development, which increasingly has been adopted by nonprofits and school-based programs, as well as for those youth-serving organizations that engage youth with identified substance use needs.

Grantee partners must recognize and be responsive to the historical and ongoing trauma, systemic racism and criminalization of the War on Drugs that low-income and communities of color have faced. This trauma is perpetuated by the lack of investment in community-based prevention, intervention and treatment access, especially to culturally responsive, healing-centered and trauma-informed approaches, and through the cultural stigma related to seeking behavioral health services in communities of color. Being mindful of this history and creating culturally and linguistically appropriate programming and materials is vitally important in this work. This funding opportunity is intended for organizations and partners that possess cultural humility and responsiveness, and whose staff and organizational leadership reflect the racial, ethnic and cultural community it intends to serve so that prevention and education is tailored and utilizes a stigma-reducing approach.

It is also essential that grantee partners recognize that youth and young adults may be drawn to experimentation and other risky behaviors and may seek out substance use to cope with underlying stress, anxiety and other behavioral health issues that have historically impacted communities of color. Applicants should also be sensitive to the dynamics of the criminalization of youth of color for substance use, including zero-tolerance policies in education settings and youth programs. For Elevate Youth California, The Center seeks to fund partners who embrace a public health, harm-reduction approach and who are committed to the focus of this project, which is to address communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs.

⁶ The impact of the War on Drugs and other racial inequities (e.g., school-to-prison pipeline, juvenile and criminal justice involvement) is well established. A number of online resources are available including: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2374804/>, <http://www.drugpolicy.org/issues/race-and-drug-war>.

Activities supported by this funding opportunity must be related to preventing youth substance use disorder through a policy, systems and environmental change approach, and must be focused on the following three outcomes:

- 1) Investment in youth empowerment, leadership and development
- 2) Program implementation through the cultural lens of the impacted community
- 3) Population-level impacts through policy, systems and environmental change

This funding opportunity focuses on youth from communities of color and other marginalized populations that are disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs, criminalized for substance use, and often have less access to prevention, treatment and information about substance use disorder supports. These include American Indian/Alaskan Native, African American, Asian-Pacific Islander and Latinx communities in California, as well as youth of color who are part of the LGBTQ2S+⁷ community, youth with disabilities or who have life experiences that increase the risk of substance use disorder, including being system-impacted and formerly incarcerated, youth who have experienced the foster care system and youth experiencing homelessness.

Elevate Youth California recognizes youth may experience more than one form of oppression or marginalization. For example, LGBTQ2S+ youth of color may experience discrimination and lack access to resources based on race and sexual orientation, and thus may be at greater risk for substance use. Similarly, while foster youth generally are in need of healing from trauma, foster youth of color face additional challenges due to racial bias. These youth may experience even more short-term placements and may have even fewer positive adult relationships. This analysis of the intersections of race and other forms of oppression is commonly referred to as “intersectionality.” This funding program encourages applications seeking to reach youth at even greater risk for substance use due to these intersectional identities and social factors.

⁷ There is an increasing knowledge of the unique needs and experiences of the LGBTQ2S+ community and how those needs and experiences affect health outcomes. The following resources are shared so applicants can familiarize themselves on key definitions, terms and references to strengthen their understanding of the LGBTQ2S+ community: <https://lgbtqhealth.ca/community/>, <http://lgbtq2stoolkit.learningcommunity.ca/>.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Proposals are required to include youth activism and at least one other strategy including mentorship and/or a peer-led support program.

	Youth activism for policy, systems and environmental change	Mentorship/relationship building	Peer-led support and leadership program
Definition	Youth activism and civic engagement related to substance use issues or their drivers/root causes (i.e., trauma, systemic oppression and marginalization). Youth voice must play a central role in determining the policy focus.	Programs that address social isolation and disconnection from community by establishing at least one stable, caring relationship with an adult/older youth mentor.	Peer-led support is defined as a cultural peer (broad and expansive) and is designed to foster an environment of inclusiveness and belonging for populations such as youth from the LGBTQ community, youth who are system-impacted and formerly or currently justice-involved, persons experiencing homelessness, etc. as the cultural peer.
Examples	Latinx 14-16-year-olds organize a campaign to address marijuana access and/or advertisement/marketing in a city.	Adult credible messengers provide one-on-one developmental support to youth actively on probation.	Student-led leadership development programming for LGBTQ2S high school-age students of color that creates a safe space and supports the mental well-being of LGBTQ2S youth.

All proposed projects should have clear and demonstrated screening and referral pathways with the ability to navigate youth to a higher level of substance use or behavioral health care if needed.

There will be technical assistance and support for organizations new to policy, systems and environmental change throughout the project period.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FROM THE FIELD

Below are examples of frameworks and elements that applicants should review to inform the development of their application and program model.

As presented in the [Prevention Institute's "California's Prop 64 Youth Education, Prevention, Early Intervention and Treatment Fund" brief](#), common features of successful initiatives that contribute to impact, outcomes and sustainability stem from community-rooted organizations with experience in youth leadership, organizing and advocacy. These initiatives focus on racial and health equity, centering both individual and community healing, strengthening community environments, and the deliberate creation of space for local youth-led approaches.

In alignment with the [Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative's Roadmap for California Prop 64 Expenditures](#), applicants should consider the following in their application:

- Integrate relationship- and engagement-centered assessment, interventions and healing into organizational culture, programs and services.
- Recruit and retain well-trained staff who reflect the diversity and lived experience of the children and youth, their families and caregivers, and communities served, and provide continuity of care between staff and those they serve whenever possible.
- Implement relationship- and engagement-centered trauma screening and assessment practices that are anchored in relationships and trust, assess resilience and well-being in addition to trauma history, are coordinated across agencies and providers, and used to develop a specific care plan.
- Implement evidence-based, promising and/or community-driven practices that help individuals and communities engage, cope with adversity, heal trauma and thrive.

Additionally, in alignment with the ["California Cannabis Tax Revenues: A Windfall for Law Enforcement or an Opportunity for Healing Communities?"](#) report, applicants should consider the following recommendations in their application and work plan:

- Research if your local city or county has a cannabis tax yet and, if so, how is it spending its cannabis tax revenue.
- Share the information collected under the previous point with fellow advocates and in the news media.
- Educate local officials on the racialized history of the War on Drugs and share with them examples of how state agencies and communities are prioritizing cannabis revenues for the most impacted neighborhoods.
- Bring forward proposals to your local officials for how to tax cannabis businesses and invest these revenues in your communities based on your local needs.
- In the absence of action on the part of local officials, consider using a local ballot measure to present voters with an alternative for capturing and spending these funds.⁸

⁸ Getting it Right From the Start, Model Ordinances: <https://gettingitrightfromthestart.org/our-model-ordinances>.

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL FUNDED ACTIVITIES

(ALL selected activities must be related to youth 12-26 years old in low-income, rural and/or urban racial, ethnic and cultural communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs).

- Culturally rooted, healing-centered youth activism that addresses policies and systems that allow for an oversaturation of cannabis businesses in low-income communities.
- Build capacity, training and funding to establish a cohort of young adult leaders 18-24 years old to provide peer-to-peer support to youth experiencing homelessness.
- Provide youth mentoring and coaching, as well as skill, knowledge and leadership building programs.
- Innovative programs that utilize technology in youth peer support or mentoring due to COVID-19 and/or remote service delivery for young people.
- Art-based, youth-driven program to strengthen political and public will to provide non-law enforcement, public health approaches to youth substance use intervention.
- Healing-centered mentoring program for youth of color and other marginalized youth to develop a communications campaign to build community awareness of youth substance use and misuse prevention and intervention.
- Policy-focused campaign development activities to reduce targeted marketing of substances toward youth of color or other marginalized youth in communities impacted by the War on Drugs.
- Youth-led participatory action research project focused on developing and implementing stigma-reduction strategies for peers.
- Credible messenger street outreach program led by formerly incarcerated young adults or other system-impacted young adults to re-engage system-impacted youth of color in positive healing-centered mentoring program.
- Peer-based mentoring group led by young adults who experienced homelessness for youth and young adults currently experiencing homelessness.
- Development of a cross-sector coalition that analyzes a community's policies and practices that continue to criminalize youth of color.
- Participate in the regulatory process and advocate for protective practices in the accessing, distributing, marketing and using of substances in communities (e.g., buffer zones, retail restrictions, health claims).
- Encourage the incorporation of equity principles in the licensing and distribution of taxation benefits for communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs.
- Establishment of a youth-led, cross-cultural coalition to address the disproportionate rates of school suspension and expulsion for willful defiance by establishing restorative practices as an alternative.
- Policy-focused campaign led by transgender college students of color to increase a college district's investment in support services for LGBTQ2S+ students.
- Other innovative efforts to expand youth substance use disorder prevention and education in California racial, ethnic and cultural communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs. While focused on youth, this funding is also a chance to reimagine opportunities and ways of healing for youth and the community.

PROJECT FUNDING INFORMATION

Applicants are required to adhere to the budget guidelines included in the Budget Template. Applicants must submit their proposed budgets in the template format. Applications that do not conform to this template will not be considered. All items budgeted must be inclusive of all costs, including taxes and fees, in U.S. dollars.

Applicants are required to submit a detailed cost budget and budget justification to assist The Center in establishing cost reasonableness of the final fixed price amount awarded to the funded partner and the appropriate amounts for each annual payment made to the awardee.

Responsive payment schedule: Understanding that a significant infusion of resources upfront may be a challenge for program implementation, The Center will offer flexible and phased payments. Payments will be issued to awarded partners based on the achievement of a set of agreed-upon deliverables as defined in the grant. Each grant will be divided into a minimum three payments: (1) upon execution of grant agreement, and (2) and (3) based on conversations with partners demonstrating progress and approval of deliverables. Specific payment amounts will be determined through the proposed budget and in collaboration with awarded partners. If a grantee partner achieves all required deliverables by the end of the grant, the entire grant amount can be paid.

TOTAL AWARD AMOUNTS

Up to \$1,000,000* for three years for 501(c)(3) community-based organizations, Tribal organizations and coalitions/collaboratives.

Up to 20% of direct costs may be requested as indirect costs.

WHAT WE WILL NOT FUND THROUGH THIS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

- Debt retirement
- Operational deficits
- Partisan activities
- Religious organizations for explicit religious activities
- Activities that exclusively benefit the members of sectarian or religious organizations
- Purchase of properties
- Directly or indirectly, purchase, prescribe or provide marijuana or treatment using marijuana

GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

Funding will be distributed in low-income urban and rural areas throughout California.

Up to 85% of this funding will be set aside to support urban programs and organizations, and up to 15% will be set aside to support rural programs and organizations.

Rural: For purposes of this grant program, The Center defines rural as a Medical Service Study Area (MSSA) that has a population density of 250 persons or less per square mile and has no incorporated area greater than 50,000 people. To determine if the geographic area to be served by your proposed project is rural, please connect to the [California Resources and Human Services Agency website](#) to find your county and specific area.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Grants will cover activities for the following time period: November 16, 2021, to November 15, 2024.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantee partners will be required to submit regular progress reports responding to the performance measures identified in their grant agreement and work plan, as well as financial reports describing actual expenditures of grant funding. Potential performance measures include: numbers and type of outreach and education activities conducted, number and demographics of the people reached, evidence of effectiveness of activities, increase in information available to community youth, and progress of policy, systems and environmental change outcomes. There will be technical assistance available to assist selected organizations in their data collection and reporting requirements.

Performance measures may be revised as needed to address current situations and high-priority challenges. Progress reports will follow the below timeline.

Report	Period	Due Date to The Center
Progress Report 1	11/16/2021-2/15/2022	3/15/2022
Progress Report 2	2/16/2022-5/15/2022	6/15/2022
Progress Report 3	5/16/2022-8/15/2022	9/15/2022
Progress Report 4 and Annual Report	8/16/2022-11/15/2022	12/15/2022
Progress Report 5	11/16/2022-2/15/2023	3/15/2023
Progress Report 6	2/16/2023-5/15/2023	6/15/2023
Progress Report 7	5/16/2023-8/15/2023	9/15/2023
Progress Report 8 and Annual Report	8/16/2023-11/15/2023	12/16/2023
Progress Report 9	11/16/2023-2/15/2024	3/16/2024
Progress Report 10	2/16/2024-5/15/2024	6/15/2024
Progress Report 11	5/16/2024-8/15/2024	9/15/2024
Cumulative Final Report	8/16/2024-11/15/2024	12/8/2024

YOUTH LISTENING SESSIONS

Selected organizations must host a minimum of one youth listening session with their constituency each year of project implementation to hear directly from impacted youth on project outcomes and implementation.

Youth listening sessions are a designated time for youth to provide feedback on the program strategies and how the implementation is going. This is a unique activity from regular programming and is centered around youth voices. For some, a youth listening session may be called a healing circle or focus group. It should include a series of questions that seek feedback and input from youth on a specific aspect of the program, including, but not limited to, program planning, program activities, policies to change, prevention campaigns, program materials or youth engagement.

Please include a minimum of one annual youth listening session in your proposed activities and budget.

SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Center will select applicants who present the most complete and responsive applications demonstrating the most favorable mix of credentials, capacity, potential and cost. Applications will be judged on overall impact, strength of implementation team and proposal, youth and family engagement plans, and budget.

Overall, the application should demonstrate the ability through staffing, program strategies and approaches to provide comprehensive prevention, education and early intervention for youth substance use disorder that is culturally responsive, linguistically appropriate and reflects the community served.

The following criteria will be used in the application review.

Organizational Experience. The application should provide a clear explanation of why the organization is the appropriate organization to implement the youth substance use disorder prevention project, including, but not limited to:

- Track record of engaging with community impacted by the War on Drugs
- Track record working with youths' families
- History of youth-led programming
- History of working at the policy and systems change level in addition to service delivery
- Demonstrated commitment to social justice youth development and an asset-based approach to youth engagement.
- An understanding of the role trauma plays in the development of young people.

Intended Participants and Need. The applicant should provide a brief description of the need, challenge or issue the project will address and a description of the youth who will be engaged. Applications are expected to focus on youth 12-26 years old who are disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs. Applications that seek to reach youth who are at even greater risk for substance use due to intersectional identities and social factors are encouraged.

Project Plans/Use of Funds (inclusive of application narrative and work plan). Project plans must focus on youth activism and support through mentoring and/or peer-to-peer support and should be based on evidence-based, promising and/or community-driven practices that help individuals and communities engage, cope with adversity, heal trauma and thrive. Plans must include a description of the direct services and policy, systems and/or environmental activities, as well as a clear statement of the policy, systems and/or environmental changes the activities focus on and the potential population impacts. Additional criteria include:

- The use of an equity framework that recognizes the need to strive for health and racial equity in program activities and outcomes
- Culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate activities
- An intersectional approach to health equity through policy, systems and environmental change
- A comprehensive youth and family engagement plan that is responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Prevention and education that is tailored and utilizes a stigma-reducing approach
- Clear and demonstrated screening and referral pathways with the ability to navigate youth to a higher level of substance use or mental health care, if needed

Project Outcomes and Evaluation. The application should specify project outcomes, as well as methods for tracking and evaluating outcomes.

Organizational Capacity: The application should describe your organization's capacity to implement the project in terms of the implementation team and other organizational resources. The strongest applications will include a plan for incorporating youth substance use disorder prevention and education into the organization's workflow, as well as leveraging of community partnerships to improve and deepen the impact.

Budget and Budget Narrative. Applicants must submit a detailed cost budget that adheres to funding guidelines and is clearly linked to the proposed activities. Review criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Consistent with the proposed project plan (includes youth stipends or incentives, appropriate staffing levels, other likely costs)
- Includes a minimum of one listening session per year
- Includes travel costs for in-person convenings
- Has an indirect cost of no more than 20% of the direct costs

Additional Requirements. Applications must:

- Have executive support for the proposed project, as evidenced by a signed letter of support from the senior administrator, demonstrating a willingness to commit staff time and resources to add new activities
- Affirm the applicant's ability to submit quarterly data and financial progress reports on a specific set of measures
- Affirm participation at two in-person convenings. Travel costs to attend the convenings are the responsibility of the funded organization and may be included in the proposed budget. Organizations may bring teams of two to four staff and/or collaborative partners.

If The Center determines that in-person convenings are not allowed due to COVID-19 and public health guidance, funded partners can modify their budgets to reallocate travel costs to other programmatic line items.

In addition to the above criteria, factors that inform the final slate of funded partners include demographic diversity, underserved youth population, geographic coverage and programmatic approaches. The Department of Health Care Services holds final decision-making authority in selecting funded projects.

Application Appeal Process. An application appeal process is not available for this funding opportunity.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

At The Center's discretion, the timeline below is subject to change to best meet programmatic needs and funder requirements.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

September 27, 2021, at 1 p.m. (Pacific Time)

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:

October 2021

APPROXIMATE AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT:

November 10, 2021

APPROXIMATE DATE GRANTS ISSUED:

November 16, 2021

NOTE: All funding will be backdated to November 16, even if grant agreements are signed after November 16.

To be considered, organizations must submit applications online by **1 p.m. (Pacific Time)** on the deadline date of **Monday, September 27**.

Proposals received after the due date/time will not be reviewed. Submission before the deadline date is highly advised in case you experience technical difficulties with submitting your application through the portal. We may not be able to respond to your requests for help on the deadline date.

PROPOSERS' WEBINARS

We have scheduled two proposers' webinars to review this Elevate Youth California program funding opportunity and the application process, and to answer questions. Participation in a webinar is strongly recommended. The content of each webinar will be repeated and the same. Please review the application materials prior to registering for a webinar. Additionally, we will host office hours to provide additional support on the application.

RFA Review Webinars

Thursday, August 26, from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

[Register on Zoom](#)

Tuesday, September 7, from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

[Register on Zoom](#)

Office Hours

Tuesday, September 14, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

[Register on Zoom](#)

Thursday, September 23, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

[Register on Zoom](#)

Note: A confirmation e-mail with the link to join the webinar will be sent immediately after registration. If you do not receive it, please check your spam/junk folder.

IMPORTANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

To help us process your application, please follow these submission guidelines:

- We encourage you to submit your application before the deadline date in case you need help with any of the RFA components.
- Applications are due no later than 1 p.m. (Pacific Time) on Monday, September 27, 2021.
- Submit the application via our online portal through [this link](#). You will use the link that you will receive via e-mail to continue working on your saved application.
- When working on your application in the portal, use Microsoft Edge, formerly known as Internet Explorer, as the browser when working on a PC, and Safari as the browser when working on a Mac.
- Respond to all required fields (marked with an *).
- Upload all attachments listed under “Application Checklist” below.
- On the portal, you may click “Save & Finish Later.” You will receive an e-mail with a link to return to your in-progress application.
- Click “Save & Finish Later” any time you will not be working in your application for a few minutes.
- You may submit your application only once. Be sure your application is complete and accurate, including required documents, before submitting it. Revised applications will not be accepted.
- If you are unable to submit your application online or need help, please contact us at elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org with the subject line: Application Online Help.

Send questions and inquiries related to this funding opportunity
to elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org with the subject line:
Elevate Youth California RFA Question

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Initiate the funding application [online](#). The link is posted on the [Elevate Youth California website](#) and [The Center's Elevate Youth California webpage](#).
- Required Application Attachments**
 - Proposed budget completed with The Center's Proposed Budget Template (template available in the online portal)
 - Proposed budget justification
 - Applicant organization's W-9
 - Work plan completed in The Center's required template (template available in the online portal)
 - Support letter signed by the applicant organization's administrator/executive

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Applications received after the above deadline will not be considered.

If you are unable to submit your application online or need help, please contact us at elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org with the subject line: Application Online Help.

APPLICATION FOR REFERENCE ONLY

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION USING THE ONLINE PORTAL

If you are unable to submit your application online or need help, please contact us at elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org with the subject line: Application Online Help.

Elevate Youth California Grant Application

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION INFO

Organization name

Is this organization a fiscal sponsor?

Name of fiscally sponsored project, if applicable

Address

County

Phone

URL (optional)

Director/CEO Contact Name

Director/CEO Contact Title

Director E-mail address

Director phone

Application Contact

Application Contact E-mail Address

Application Contact Phone

Applicant Organization Tax ID #

Organization Status – Organization has 501(c)(3) nonprofit status with the IRS. Yes, No, Unsure

What is the applicant organization’s annual budget amount?

Does the applicant organization have an annual financial audit? Yes, No

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name (10 words maximum):

Brief Summary and Purpose of Project (100 words maximum):

Amount Requested: \$_____

Start Date: November 16, 2021

End Date: November 15, 2024

Proposed Implementation Strategy

Required:

- Youth Activism for Policy, System or Environmental Change

Select at least one additional strategy:

- Mentorship/Relationship Building
- Peer-led Support and Leadership Program

Geography

County-level

Please indicate what percentage of activity will be spent in which California counties. Total must add up to 100. (A list of all 58 California counties is in the online application.)

Region where services will be implemented (see definition in RFA):

- Urban
- Rural
- Both

Population to be served [able to choose multiple]

Disproportionately impacted community you will predominantly be serving:

- African-American/Black [Provide specific population(s) _____]
- Asian-American/Asian Pacific Islander [Provide specific population(s) _____]
- Latino/Hispanic [Provide specific population(s) _____]
- Native American
- Other (Please identify) [Provide specific population(s) _____]

Additional Area of Focus

- Foster Youth**
- LGBTQ2S+ Youth**
- Youth with Disabilities**
- Homeless Youth**
- Immigrant Youth**
- System-involved Youth**

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Organization Description. Provide a brief overview of your organization as follows:

- a) when it was established,
- b) racial/ethnic make-up of board and staff,
- c) your organization's mission,
- d) whom you serve,
- e) geographic area your organization covers,
- f) socio-economic status of the community served,
- g) history of working at the policy and systems change level, and
- h) the types of programs you operate.

If applying as a coalition, information about the coalition should be provided. (200 words maximum)

Track Record with Community. Describe your organization's history and relationship with the community disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs selected in the Project Summary section of this application. How does your organization reflect the community it serves? (200 words maximum)

Track Record with Youth. Please describe your organization's history and relationship with youth engagement and leadership development with a particular focus on any subpopulation in which you plan to focus. In what ways does your organization incorporate social justice youth development and trauma-informed practices into its work? How does your organization apply an intersectional approach to achieving health and racial equity and youth engagement? (300 words maximum)

Track Record with Family Engagement. Please describe your organization's history and planned approach to engaging young people's family members. (200 words maximum)

Need and Intended Participants. Provide a brief description of the need, challenge or issue the project will address. Describe the youth that you plan to engage in the project. (200 words maximum)

Policy, Systems and Environmental Change. Identify what policy, systems and/or environmental change the project will be addressing. Identify the impacts on the youth population that will be realized if the policy, systems and/or environmental changes you are focusing on are successful. (200 words maximum)

Use of Funds and Project Plans. Based on the selected strategy/strategies, describe in detail your plan for using these funds. Include how you plan to increase youth understanding of substance use disorder through the cultural lens of the impacted community and how you plan to reduce harm for those youth who are already using substances. Describe your plan for engaging youth, including recruitment, training and leadership development. What plans do you have in place to account for COVID-19 public health guidance and youth and family engagement? If you use any curriculum, evidence-based programming or other innovative programs to implement the identified strategies, please include those details. (300 words)

Outcomes and Evaluation Process. Based on the monitoring/evaluation approaches identified in the work plan attachment, describe your overall plan for evaluating progress toward your project's goal(s), including outcomes such as youth empowerment, leadership and development; community education; changing social norms around substance use; and preventing harm from substance use disorder. (200 words maximum)

Organizational Capacity. Describe:

- a) your organization's capacity to implement the project in terms of the implementation team and other organizational resources,
- b) the project's integration into your workflow,
- c) how (if at all) you are using community partnerships to improve and deepen impact, and
- d) how this project may further build your organization's capacity. (250 words maximum)

Technical Assistance. What technical assistance would your organization benefit from in implementing this project? This technical assistance can be focused on organizational capacity building or community capacity building among other areas. This information will help us plan our learning convenings. (150 words maximum)

ATTACHMENTS

- Proposed Three-year Project Budget (required) – Download The Center's budget form in the Attachments tab of the online application form, fill it in and upload it. Be sure to complete a budget for each year. Each budget will roll up to the total budget spreadsheet.
- Proposed Project Budget Justification (required) – Please describe expense line items and what they will support. You may download a template in the Attachments tab of the online application form for use.
- Applicant organization's W-9 (required).
- Work plan (required) – Download The Center's work plan template in the Attachments tab of the online application form, fill it in and upload it.
- Support letter signed by the applicant organization's executive, or if you are applying as a coalition, support letter signed by each coalition member stating their role in the project and signed by that organization's executive.