

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

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS NOVEMBER 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 has awarded \$108.976 million to 137 community-based and Tribal organizations. For additional information about Elevate Youth California partners, visit www.elevateyouthca.org.

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 Center encourages applicants to review the estimated timing of the various funding opportunities.

For information about the Elevate Youth California funding opportunities, visit www.elevateyouthca.org.

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>.

THE INNOVATION TRACK FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

This funding opportunity focuses on youth-serving entities that currently provide or are developing innovative youth-led social justice, peer support and mentoring strategies. The Innovation Track opportunity will be implemented for 33 months replicating the proposed innovative strategy or new promising program. At the end of the second year, funded partners will be required to participate in an evaluation using the appreciative inquiry method led by a third-party evaluator contracted by The Center. Appreciative inquiry is a participatory approach to evaluation that seeks to identify and build on what works well.³ The Center will contract with an evaluation consultant to lead the funded partners in a reflection process on the high points and successes of their projects and the features of their strategies that contributed to the successes. The consultant will synthesize information across the projects to provide a summary to The Center, The Department of Health Care Services, Proposition 64 Advisory Group and other stakeholders with the intention to further build the field of prevention.

Eligible applicants including community-based organizations, Tribal organizations and county behavioral health prevention programs are expected to:

- Pilot and evaluate innovative practices in youth-led activism, peer support and mentoring in communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs
- Reflect the communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs
- Develop and implement 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
- Intend to incorporate evaluation approaches to build upon the learnings from these new and innovative approaches to substance use prevention
- Utilize best practices in prevention and apply them in new domains (geographic: community, municipality, neighborhood, etc.; sectors: business, local agencies, etc.)
- Prioritize harm reduction and public health solutions that focus on positive messages to prevent substance use disorder
- Connect across various levels of the socio-ecological model to address the individual, relationship, community and societal factors that lead to substance use
- Pilot community-driven, culturally responsive solutions
- Engage non-traditional partners in prevention

For county behavioral health agencies applying as lead applicants, the applicant agency must be the primary service provider for program implementation and evaluative activities. While community-based partnerships are encouraged, public agencies applying are required to operate the proposed programming. Pass-through funding is prohibited for county behavioral health agencies.

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 and community norms around substance use, and prevent harms and risks associated with substance use. Recognizing how critical

³ Coghlan, A. T., Preskill, H., & Tzavaras Catsambas, T. (2003). An overview of appreciative inquiry in evaluation. *New directions for evaluation*, 2003(100), 5-22. [An overview of appreciative inquiry in evaluation \(ubc.ca\)](#)

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 and public agencies 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.⁴ 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

⁴ Rural Health Information Hub.

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

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.⁵

Innovation: Creating and piloting a new approach or utilizing established practices and applying them in a new setting with responsive modifications. For example, best practices in public health interventions apply a social norm change approach through a variety of strategies, including policy change, policy enforcement, communications/narrative change and intervention to name a few. Applying these best practices in new domains and/or piloting new community-driven approaches is how this round of funding supports innovation.⁶

Developmental inquiry/appreciative inquiry: An approach to evaluation that focuses on strengths rather than on weaknesses by asking about what is working and how to improve the results and conditions.

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

Eligibility Criteria

Organizations must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Must have an office located in California.
- Provide services in California.
- Are a 501(c)3 community-based organization, Tribal organization,⁷ or a County Behavioral Health Department with established and trusted community relationships. Also open to coalitions of organizations and collaboratives, as long as the backbone organization is an eligible applicant.
- 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.

⁵ 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/>

⁶ Innovative approaches can be informed by models such as Communities That Care <https://www.communitiesthatcare.net/> and Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol <https://preventionsolutions.edc.org/services/resources/communities-mobilizing-change-alcohol-cmca>, California's Tobacco Control Program https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/19/Suppl_1/i1

⁷ Tribal organizations may be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit or a public entity.

- Applicant organizations and collaborative partners must deeply engage and reflect the proposed communities served that are disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs.⁸ Grantee partners should have a history of working with impacted communities, including representation on the board and staff, organizational leadership, 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.
- Applicant organizations must take innovative approaches to program implementation and commit to participating in the appreciative inquiry described above.

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.

⁸ 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+⁹ 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.

Grantee partners are required to participate in the appreciative inquiry evaluation at the end of the second year. It will be led by a third-party evaluator contracted by The Center.

⁹ 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 LGBTQ2S+ community, youth who are system-impacted and formerly or currently justice-involved, persons experiencing homelessness, etc. as the cultural peer.
Examples	Latinx 14- to 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 it is 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.¹⁰

¹⁰ Getting it Right from the Start, Model Ordinances: <https://gettingitrightfromthestart.org/our-model-ordinances>.

To learn more about appreciative inquiry, please refer to the following resources from Better Evaluation: [Appreciative Inquiry | Better Evaluation](#) and [Appreciative Inquiry: An approach for learning and change based on our own best practices | Better Evaluation](#)

EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL FUNDED ACTIVITIES

While priorities and issues of focus vary between communities, this funding is a chance to reimagine opportunities and ways of healing for youth and communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs. 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. Examples of innovative initiatives include:

- Establishment of a youth-led coalition to raise awareness on how systemic racism and the War on Drugs criminalizes specific youth of color to expand opportunities for youth of color.
- Creation of an adult or peer mentorship program to provide mentorship to youth involved in the foster care system.
- Developing a youth-driven public-private partnership with county behavioral health and the county office of education to align youth substance prevention programs, practices and policy.
- To expand a county's youth-led alcohol prevention coalition to address other substances using community-driven best practices, and policies that expand appropriate stigma-reducing approaches.
- 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 and culturally responsive youth substance use prevention approaches that build resilience and address social norms around substance use in schools and youth-serving community organizations.
- Convening a neighborhood-specific youth group to develop policy recommendations on how to plan and use state and federal COVID-19 relief dollars on youth development and substance use prevention.
- Organizing a cross-system, multisector and youth and community-driven policy-making body to address root causes of youth substance use through a health-driven prevention strategy.
- 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.

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 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

\$500,000 - \$750,000* for 33 months (2 years, 9 months) for 501(c)(3) community-based organizations, Tribal organizations, County Behavioral Health Departments, 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: February 16, 2022, 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 timeline below.

Report	Period	Due Date to The Center
Progress Report 1	2/16/2022-5/15/2022	6/15/2022
Progress Report 2	5/16/2022-8/15/2022	9/15/2022
End of Year Report 1	2/16/2022-11/1/2022	12/1/2022
Progress Report 3	8/16/2022-11/15/2022	12/15/2022
Progress Report 4 and Annual Report	11/16/2022-2/15/2023	3/15/2023
Progress Report 5	2/16/2023-5/15/2023	6/15/2023
Progress Report 6	5/16/2023-8/15/2023	9/15/2023
End of Year Report 2	11/1/2022-11/1/2023	12/1/2023
Progress Report 7	8/16/2023-11/15/2023	12/16/2023
Progress Report 8 and Annual Report	11/16/2023-2/15/2024	3/16/2024
Progress Report 9	2/16/2024-5/15/2024	6/15/2024
Progress Report 10	5/16/2024-8/15/2024	9/15/2024
End of Year Report 3	11/1/2023-11/1/2024	12/1/2024
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
- Commitment to engaging youth and young adults through harm reduction strategies
- Innovative approach to youth substance use prevention and education

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 innovative youth-led social justice, peer support and mentoring strategies or new promising strategies 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
- Commitment to participate in the Appreciative Inquiry evaluation activities

Project Outcomes and Evaluation. The application should specify project outcomes, as well as methods for collecting data to document participant demographics, activities and progress to stated 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. For county behavioral health agencies, while community-based partnerships are encouraged, it must be clear the agency is taking the lead on implementation.

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 participate in an appreciative inquiry process in the signed letter of support from the senior administrator
- Affirm the applicant’s ability to submit quarterly data and financial progress reports on a specific set of measures in the signed letter of support from the senior administrator
- Affirm participation at two in-person convenings in the signed letter of support from the senior administrator. 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:

January 6, 2022, at 1 p.m. (Pacific Time)

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:

January 2022

APPROXIMATE AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT:

February 10, 2022

APPROXIMATE DATE AGREEMENT ISSUED:

February 16, 2022

NOTE: All funding will be backdated to February 16, even if subcontracts are signed after February 16.

To be considered, organizations must submit applications online by **1 p.m. (Pacific Time)** on the deadline date of Thursday, January 6.

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

Tuesday, November 30, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

[Register on Zoom](#)

Tuesday, December 7, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

[Register on Zoom](#)

RFA Office Hours

Tuesday, December 14, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

[Register on Zoom](#)

Tuesday, December 21, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.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 Thursday, January 6, 2022.
- 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](#).
- **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: February 16, 2022

End Date: November 15, 2024

Proposed Implementation Strategy (select at least two)

- Youth Activism for Policy, System or Environmental Change (required)
- 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

Racial/ethnic make-up of board and staff [able to choose multiple]

- 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)_____]

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. (250 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 participant outcomes such as change in knowledge, attitudes or behaviors; policy, systems and environmental outcomes such as increased awareness, changing social norms around substance use; and preventing harm from substance use disorder. Please also affirm your commitment to participating in the external Appreciative Inquiry activities. (300 words maximum)

Organizational Capacity. Describe:

- a) your organization's capacity, unique skills and experiences to implement an innovative 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)

ATTACHMENTS

- Proposed two-year and nine-month 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. The support letter should affirm the applicant's ability to submit quarterly data and financial progress reports and participation at two in-person convenings.