



## **Elevate Youth California Request for Applications Questions and Answers**

Updated December 21, 2021

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### **APPLYING**

**Q: Can a local behavioral health department apply for multiple projects, and submit multiple proposals? There are many different projects that are eligible and we would like to apply for more than one program.**

A: Similar to other applicants, a local behavioral health department is only eligible to submit one application for this funding opportunity even if there are different projects within the department. Please note that if an applicant is serving as a fiscal sponsor for an organization/program, more than one application may be submitted for separate organizations/programs affiliated with the fiscal sponsor.

**Q: Can you define a fiscal sponsor and who is eligible to be a fiscal sponsor under this grant?**

A: A fiscal sponsor is an organization, usually a nonprofit organization, that provides financial oversight and other administrative services to support another organization or project. In this

case, a fiscal sponsor will utilize its 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status to be the grantee on record and accept payment from The Center. Fiscal sponsors must meet the eligibility criteria listed in the Request for Applications.

**Q: If our fiscal sponsor is the applicant organization, do you want organizational information, annual budget and financial audit from the fiscal sponsor or our program (which is under the fiscal sponsor)?**

A: We do need some information about the fiscal sponsor, but focus on the project itself. Review the request for applications for full information about applying.

**Q: My organization submitted an application for the last round of funding, but was not awarded. We are planning to submit another application this round; are you able to provide feedback?**

A: We offered feedback sessions to declined applicants after the last round of funding, but because this current funding opportunity is released, we are unable to provide feedback on previously submitted applications. Please review the request for applications. We provided two proposers' webinars – on November 30 and December 7 – to review this funding opportunity and the application process, and to answer questions. Participation on a webinar was strongly recommended. The content of each webinar was the same and repeated. Webinar recordings are posted on the Elevate Youth California website under Recent News: <https://elevateyouthca.org/>.

**Q: Is collaboration with other agencies a requirement? Can you speak to how partnerships should be handled/managed?**

A: Collaboration is not a requirement, but we welcome it if that is your approach. Partnership is encouraged where it makes sense. Pay attention to specific requirements for collaboratives/coalitions in the RFA.

**Q: Who is the letter from the executive director addressed to and what specifically should it say?**

A: All letters should be directed to The Center at Sierra Health Foundation. If an individual organization is applying, the executive director needs to indicate support for the application. If applying as a collaborative, each organization's executive director needs to indicate support and identify the role their organization will play in the collaborative project. Additionally, all letters of support should affirm the applicant's ability to participate in an appreciative inquiry process, submit quarterly data and financial progress reports and participate in two in-person convenings held by The Center.

**Q: If there are subcontracted services provided by a partner agency, where do we enter those costs in the budget?**

A: This can be listed under Miscellaneous. There also are specific line items for Consultants. Be sure to explain subcontracted services and consulting services in the budget justification.

**Q: The word limits on each response seem very limited. Does this emphasize the work plan or other items for the review panel to understand the project design?**

A: The review team will read the entire application package. Be precise in your description, but know there are other places to paint the full picture of your project. Be consistent in the Work Plan, Narrative and Budget.

**Q: In the work plan, there is no column in which to provide 'key activities/strategies' information. Are we able to include this information here?**

A: Based on the direction of the work plan, The Center encourages you to include the information that the document requires in the format listed. The application narrative, budget and budget narrative in addition to the work plan make up the entire application and your selected strategies should be consistent throughout the application.

**Q: Is the work plan a yearly requirement or do applicants submit the three-year work plan with the final application?**

A: Applicants must submit a three-year work plan at the time of application and will use this work plan for their program if awarded, unless The Center requests changes. The full work plan allows reviewers to better understand the proposed program. There is flexibility for awarded partners to request work plan and budget modifications throughout the grant period. Additional information regarding modifications will be provided to awarded partners.

## **COVID-19 IMPACTS**

**Q: How are current funded agencies and The Center adjusting to COVID-19?**

A: COVID-19 has impacted youth engagement activities. Many partners have transitioned to online platforms and are looking at technology for new ways to engage young people. The request for applications states: COVID-19 has dramatically shifted the ways in which community-based organizations are supporting and engaging youth and young adults. Given these recent 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.

Currently, The Center and the Department of Health Care Services are working on technical assistance for the current cohort of partners to learn and share adaptation best practices.

**Q: Will the convenings be in-person in Sacramento?**

A: For now, convenings are planned to be in Sacramento. Applicants are encouraged to build in travel and/or lodging in the budget. The final plans are yet to be determined. We will make adjustments if necessary and all grantee partners will be notified.

**Q: How flexible are the outcomes due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency?**

A: Very flexible. Please make sure proposals follow current public health guidance.

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Q: Can our organization apply for more than one Elevate Youth California funding opportunity, i.e., Capacity Building Track and Standard Track?**

A: Each of the funding opportunities are planned in a way to allow applicants to know if they are awarded an Elevate Youth California grant. If an organization is not awarded, they are eligible to apply for another funding opportunity as long as the organization does not have an active Elevate Youth California grant.

**Q: How many proposals will be funded in the three different Elevate Youth California funding opportunities?**

A: The total number of funded proposals is dependent on the final amount of funding that will be allocated for each funding opportunity and the amount that applicants are requesting in their applications. The California Department of Health Care Services determines the amount of funding available for each funding opportunity.

**Q: How long are the grant periods for the three funding opportunities?**

A: The Elevate Youth California Standard Track will be three years, the Innovation Track will be two years and nine months, and the Capacity Building Track will be two years and six months.

**Q: If my organization is not selected for the Elevate Youth California Innovation Track funding opportunity, will we be given information about the other tracks?**

A: If your organization's proposal isn't selected, your organization is eligible to apply for a different track. Information on all the funding opportunities will be available once they're released on the Elevate Youth California website under "News."

The Standard Track Request for Applications includes a summary of each track with the anticipated release date of the Request for Applications. Additionally, you can request to receive e-blasts from Sierra Health Foundation and The Center online at <https://www.sierrahealth.org/maillinglist>.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Q: Are mental health and substance use entities eligible to apply?**

A: 501(c)3 community-based organizations, Tribal organizations and County Behavioral Health Departments are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Other mental health and substance use entities that are not eligible applicants can be partners in applications, but are not eligible applicants.

### **Q: Is there a minimum or maximum yearly organizational budget for agencies?**

A: There is not a minimum or maximum annual budget restriction for the Elevate Youth California: Youth Substance Use Disorder Prevention Program: Standard Track.

### **Q: Are public agencies eligible to apply?**

A: The only public agencies eligible to apply as the primary applicant are County Behavioral Health Departments. This is in addition to 501(c)3 organizations and Tribal organizations being eligible to apply. Other public agencies can be partners in applications, but are not eligible applicants.

### **Q: Are public entities eligible to receive funding as a sole applicant or lead applicant in a consortium? If so, can a consortium application be submitted between an educational entity and a community-based clinic?**

A: This funding opportunity is specifically for 501(c)3 organizations, Tribal organizations and County Behavioral Health Agencies as the eligible applicant. Public entities that are not Tribal organizations or County Behavioral Health Agencies are ineligible to apply. We welcome collaborative applications where the applicant is a 501(c)3 organization, County Behavioral Health Agency or a Tribal entity.

### **Q: My agency is both a federally qualified health center and a 501c3. How does this impact our eligibility?**

A: If your entity has a 501(c)3 nonprofit status, you are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity, as long as your entity adheres to the rest of the eligibility requirements listed in the Request for Applications. Please review the eligibility criteria listed in the Request for Applications when considering applying for this funding opportunity.

**Q: Is an organization able to submit more than one application?**

A: No, only one application per organization is allowed. The exception is if the applicant is serving as a fiscal sponsor for a project submitting an application, then the organization may submit more than one application.

**Q: Is it possible for an applicant to submit more than one proposal in response to this RFA? For example, if the same applicant has different programs that would target different populations or geographic areas?**

A: An applicant is only eligible to submit one application. The exception is if the organization is acting as a fiscal sponsor for another project.

**Q: Does our organization require an established social justice program to be considered?**

A: Please review the eligibility and selection criteria in the request for applications. The applicant's program does not need to be established; however, the application will need to convey expertise in this work by the applicant or partners. Review the criteria and then make your best decision about applying.

**Q: We are a collaborative of nine community-based organizations. One partner was awarded in round 1 – will they need to be omitted from participating to ensure our eligibility is not impacted?**

A: It is only required that the applicant organization does not have a previous Elevate Youth California grant. If you are the applicant organization and do not have an active Elevate Youth California grant, you are eligible, as long as you meet the additional criteria. It is important to note that the work and finances being supported by active Elevate Youth California-funded partners may not be duplicated in this new funding. The new application must include unique activities and participants that are not already being supported by an active funded partner.

**Q: Will our organization be less likely to be funded if we are in a city that was funded by other Prop. 64 funding?**

A: We are aware of other state agencies distributing Prop. 64 funding. We will award funding based on applications received. If you know of projects you will be collaborating with within this revenue stream (Prop. 64), we encourage you to list those partners.

**Q: Are applicants eligible to partner with other agencies to help with program implementation if they are headquartered outside of California?**

A: There are no restrictions on partner location, although funding can only support services in California.

**Q: Last year, my organization received a grant to support a program in a north Central Valley site. This year, would we be eligible to apply for a grant to support a south Central Valley site?**

A: If you currently hold an Elevate Youth California grant, you are ineligible to apply. You can be a partner, but cannot be the lead applicant.

**Q: Our CBO submitted a request with funds also from Prop. 64. It is for outdoor activities. Will this disqualify us for this health-focused opportunity?**

A: This funding opportunity does not have any impact on other proposals funded through the Governor's Office of Business Development or the California Natural Resources Agency. If you are somehow leveraging those awards, you may want to identify that, but there is no direct connection to those funding opportunities.

**Q: We have three full-time staff and an advisory board of 13 youth who guide our vision, policy priorities and coalition-building work. Would the youth on the advisory board count as leadership?**

A: Yes, youth who serve as full-time staff and on the advisory board count as leadership. Please note that we do ask applicants to also look at the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of their full staff and board to determine if it's a reflection of the communities they plan to serve.

**Q: If an organization doesn't have significant Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) representation in leadership, but has started integrating justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work and committees within the organization, would the organization still be considered based on other application components?**

A: This funding opportunity requires applicant organizations and collaborative partners to deeply engage and reflect the proposed communities served that are disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs. Grantee partners should have a history of working with impacted communities, including representation on the board and staff, clients served and neighborhoods served. Not having a significant BIPOC representation in leadership will not disqualify organizations, but it is a key component that our reviewers will consider when reviewing applications. Please refer to the Request for Applications for additional eligibility and selection criteria.

## **FUNDING**

**Q: Does the RFA apply to the entire state of California?**

A: Yes, this is a statewide funding opportunity.

**Q: Can indirect funding be more than 20 percent?**

A: No, indirect funding cannot be more than 20 percent.

**Q: Will awarded funding be renewable after the three years?**

A: There are no additional funding commitments as of right now, so plan for three years of implementation.

**Q: Can you define the budget years?**

A: February 16, 2022, is the start of the first budget year. The budget template is broken down by budget years and defines it further.

**Q: Is funding expected to supplement an existing program or only new programs funded entirely by this?**

A: There is no requirement; this is an applicant decision.

**Q: Can funds be carried forward from year one's budget to the second year?**

A: Yes, funds can be transferred over to a different year after completing The Center's budget modification form and receiving approval. Additional information regarding budget modifications will be provided to awarded partners.

**Q: What are the funding restrictions under this grant?**

A: Please refer to page 11 of the Request for Applications for a list of funding restrictions. If you have any specific questions on funding restrictions, please send us an e-mail at [elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org](mailto:elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org).

**Q: Are matching funds required for this grant?**

A: Matching funds are not a requirement for Elevate Youth California grants.

## **GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION**

**Q: Are we able to focus on more than one geographic area or region?**

A: Review previously funded projects and their approach and decide with partners or your team what geographic area you will focus on. Visit the Elevate Youth California Program Impact webpage at <https://elevateyouthca.org/program-impact/>.

**Q: Can our program serve both urban and rural?**

A: Yes. In the application, applicants are able to identify the urban/rural breakdown by percentage.

**Q: Are rural organizations less competitive?**

A: Applicants should review eligibility and selection criteria in the request for applications to make the best decision on this. This funding opportunity is focused on communities disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs. If there are youth of color within your community, you can focus on those populations disproportionately impacted by the War on Drugs.

**Q: Are we required to provide evidence to demonstrate communities that have been impacted by the War on Drugs in our local geography?**

A: You should be able to look at population impacts of the War on Drugs at the macro level. It may not be specific to local geography, but may reflect data in California or in the U.S. Demonstrate your understanding of which communities have been impacted. Resources on this can be found in the Request for Applications.

**Q: How do you define rural?**

A: As stated in the RFA:

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.

**Q: Is there a definition for “urban,” “low-income urban” or “urban-racial?”**

A: Geographic areas that do not fit the rural definition are considered urban for this funding opportunity. Low-income urban and urban-racial are intersectional terms that look at multiple social identities.

**Q: How many grants will be approved per geographical area?**

A: 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.

**Q: Will you be awarding two different organizations within the same geographical area?**

A: Multiple grants in the same geography is not uncommon. It is a possibility.

**Q: Are you looking for counties with a certain percentage of poverty, a section of the community, or school districts that have a high percentage of poverty?**

A: There are geographic considerations for this funding opportunity; however, there are not specific areas within a community or county that we are only funding. Funding will be distributed in low-income urban and rural areas throughout California with up to 15% being set aside to support rural programs and organizations.

## **ONLINE PORTAL**

**Q: I'm having a problem with the portal link.**

A: Check the browser you are using. Use Internet Explorer on a PC and Safari on a Mac. Feel free to e-mail us at [elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org](mailto:elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org) if you continue to have issues and we can troubleshoot. We can provide the link via e-mail and you can find the link on page 12 of the Request for Applications under Application Checklist. You can click on the link in the PDF.

**Q: Do I need to make a new account to apply to this funding opportunity?**

A: You can use your existing account, but be sure to follow the specific link to this funding opportunity.

**Q: Are forms for budget and workplan available on portal?**

A: Yes, all required documents are in the portal in the attachments section.

**Q: Can you confirm if it is Word count or character count in the application?**

A: Word count. There is a counter inside the portal within each question.

**Q: Is there an easy way to create a Google Doc with questions from the RFA?**

A: We don't have a tool for this. The questions that applicants must respond to are listed in the request for applications.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

**Q: Is there a minimum program reach?**

A: No, there is not a minimum program reach under this funding opportunity; however, we do ask all applicants to be reasonable with the amount they are requesting, the proposed program activities and their program reach.

**Q: Can project activities be virtual given COVID-19?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Are planning sessions to inform activities an eligible activity in this opportunity?**

A: Yes, this is an eligible activity. Please review eligibility criteria in the request for applications.

**Q: Can our program include stipends to participating youth?**

A: Yes. There are no restrictions on providing stipends to youth.

**Q: Can our program include prevention education with families?**

A: We cannot weigh in on the specifics of project design; this is up to the applicant. We encourage you to review the eligibility criteria in the Request for Applications and project descriptions of the first round cohort on the Elevate Youth California website at <https://elevateyouthca.org/program-impact/>.

**Q: If our program primarily focuses on girls and women of color to explore the impact on gender, would our application still be competitive and eligible?**

A: Nothing that is described in the question makes this approach ineligible. Please describe the need, opportunity and historical context of the disproportionate impact by the War on Drugs on the community, so the reviewers can understand your analysis and rationale on the focus area.

**Q: Our organization has a small program that serves 15 young people. Would we be expected to ramp up immediately or can we build up time to increase?**

A: Your activities are responsive to your local environment and context. Review selection criteria and put together the strongest response that reflects your best thinking.

**Q: Are we required to provide advocacy on a particular issue?**

A: This funding opportunity is related to substance use in the community and preventing youth substance use through policy, environmental and systems change. Advocacy needs to focus on substance use prevention. We encourage you to refer to the Glossary (harm reduction, trauma-informed practices and recognizing developmental path young people are on). Look at the entire application package focused on substance use in youth context.

**Q: Can our project focus primarily on youth but also families outside of the age bracket?**

A: We have updated this question in the Request for Applications this year to ensure families are engaged. Describe how it takes place and make sure they are defined broadly (i.e. biological or neighborhood elders considered family, etc.). You are encouraged to lift up strategies around family engagement in your application.

**Q: Define impacted youth for listening sessions. Does this mean youth with substance use issues?**

A: Impacted youth is defined by the applicant. This is based on the youth population you identify to focus programming on in your proposal.

**Q: If our organization has youth directly leading activities, can youth listening sessions include youth not already working with us?**

A: Youth listening sessions can include youth who are leading activities within your program or youth who are not a part of your program. The structure of youth listening sessions are determined by the applicant organization and should help inform the program's implementation.

**Q: If an organization is led by current and former foster youth, can listening sessions be hosted with community stakeholders?**

A: A minimum of one listening session is to be held annually with youth and young adults ages 12 to 26. Additional listening sessions can be held with community stakeholders; however, these sessions will not be counted toward the annual youth listening session requirement.

**Q: When you mention direct services, I assume you mean using funding for youth advocating for direct services, not using funds to actually provide direct services?**

A: This can be a balance between policy, systems and environmental change, and also making sure young people are supported through direct services to meet their immediate needs. We encourage you to visit the Elevate Youth California website to read project summaries from previous cohorts of grantee partners at <https://elevateyouthca.org/program-impact/>.

**Q: Can you explain more about youth activism for policy, system and environmental changes with examples?**

A: The website includes summaries of previously funded projects for examples. Youth activism can include a youth organizing model or it can look like system-impacted youth leading campaigns against substance use, housing insecurity and access to shelter, as examples. The policy campaigns do need to be connected to addressing substance use.

**Q: Is a family engagement strategy now required?**

A: Yes. Family is defined broadly in the request for applications.

**Q: Can we propose to implement prevention programs for children in elementary school or are we restricted to serving youth aged 12-26?**

A: The focus of this funding opportunity is impacting 12- to 26-year-old youth and young adults in California.

**Q: Can evaluation be a funded expense?**

A: Yes, applicants are more than welcome to include evaluation as a funded expense within their budget. Please include in the proposed project budget justification how you arrived at the request amount, how the evaluation will be conducted and the purpose. Additional information on the budget justification can be found in the RFA and budget justification template.

## **PROPOSERS' WEBINARS**

**Q: Where can I find information on the proposers' webinars?**

A: We provided two proposers' webinars – on November 30 and December 7 – to review this funding opportunity and the application process, and to answer questions. Participation in a webinar was strongly recommended. The content of each webinar was the same and repeated. Webinar recordings and slides are posted on the Elevate Youth California website under Recent News: <https://elevateyouthca.org/>.

**Q: Where can I find the recording of the proposers' webinar?**

A: The recording and slides are posted on the Elevate Youth California website at <https://elevateyouthca.org/> under Recent News.

## **REPORTING**

**Q: Can you provide more details on quarterly reporting requirements?**

A: Awardees will be required to report data to better understand the youth populations that are engaged from racial, ethnic and gender backgrounds, as well as the various systems the young people are touching. There is also an effort to understand the capacity that organizations may have from an organizational policy standpoint (e.g. professional development of staff, mentors, etc.).

## OTHER

**Q: Is there an e-mail we can contact if we have any questions in the future?**

A: Please direct your e-mails to [elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org](mailto:elevateyouthca@shfcenter.org) if you have any questions regarding Elevate Youth California funding opportunities.

**Q: Can you share excellent programs and outstanding outcomes from the past year?**

A: We can share that 26 amazing partners were selected in the first cohort, but will not highlight any particular one. Your program needs to be driven by your thinking. The Request for Applications lists content we expect to see and eligible activities.

**Q: What happened to the sustainability question that was included in the last round of funding?**

A: This was not an explicit question. Last year's responses to sustainability were focused on fundraising and not program impact. This year we do not have a standalone question regarding sustainability, but we encourage applicants to build that into their responses and move beyond sustainability as a financial question.

**Q: Can you update my e-mail address on file to receive e-blasts from Sierra Health Foundation and The Center?**

A: You can request to receive e-blasts from Sierra Health Foundation and The Center online at <https://www.sierrahealth.org/maillinglist>. You also can use this link to make updates to your information for our mailing list.

**Q: Does the budget justification need to be for each year or for the total budget (all two-years and nine-months)?**

A: We ask that you cover all three years in the budget justification. For example, if you have rent in the budget for Years 1 and 2 but not Year 3, explain that. You must also explain in-kind resources that are included in the project budget.

**Q: Can you speak more to the type of evaluation designs that you are looking for?**

A: The evaluation design needs to be responsive to your approach. Explain why your evaluation plan is the right approach for your project.

**Q: If one becomes a grantee, are there any restrictions on an organization's hiring of people who may have past digressions on their background under this grant? We like to hire people with lived experience.**

A: The Elevate Youth California program does not have any restrictions on hiring people with lived experiences with this funding. It is the organization's policies and practices that determine who is eligible to be hired.

**Q: Are there any insurance coverage requirements for this grant?**

A: There are insurance coverage requirements; additional information will be shared with awarded applicants at a later time.