



# Request for Proposals

## Mental Health Access and Availability

### OVERVIEW

Moses Taylor Foundation embraces a whole-person approach that intentionally focuses on mental health and well-being in its mission to improve the health of people in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to support projects that further the Foundation's mission by expanding access to and increasing the availability of mental and behavioral health services for adults within the Foundation's 11-county region.

To ensure the approach is reflective of the community's articulated needs, the Foundation utilized insights from grantees and partners, conducted a thorough internal review of funding requests, and incorporated recommendations from the [NEPA Behavioral Health Needs Assessment \(2022\)](#). These collective insights highlighted the regional need to enhance access to and availability of mental health services, address the barriers that impede progress, and pursue opportunities for near-term impact. In alignment with these insights and recommendations, this funding opportunity seeks innovative, evidence-based solutions and promising practices that will achieve one or more of the following goals:

- **Strengthen the care continuum:** Enhance coordination between entities to provide individuals with continuity of care at all stages of their mental health journey, preventing gaps as they transition between different levels of care
- **Increase the availability of and diversity of providers:** Improve access to and the quality of training opportunities for all provider types to expand access to care, reduce wait times, and alleviate the burden on existing providers
- **Integrate mental health services in healthcare and non-healthcare settings:** Integrate mental healthcare into the broader healthcare system and accessible non-healthcare settings to create additional access points, especially in underserved areas
- **Eliminate barriers to care:** Use technology and innovative approaches to address logistical, financial, and cultural barriers that limit access to in-person mental health services

The Foundation has allocated \$750,000 per year for a two-year period to meet this need, with requests expected to range from \$75,000 to \$150,000 per year. Proposals should demonstrate progress in year one and the ability to achieve measurable outcomes within a two-year timeframe.

## **BACKGROUND**

The United States is experiencing a mental health crisis, with more than one in five Americans living with a mental health condition. Even before the pandemic, rates of mental health and substance use disorders (SUDs) in the United States were on the rise, increasing by approximately 30% between 2007 and 2019. According to the [NEPA Behavioral Health Needs Assessment \(2022\)](#), the national mental health crisis is acutely felt in the NEPA region. This comprehensive assessment, which gathered insights from health care providers, community advocates, and patients, revealed escalating rates of anxiety, depression, and substance use – identifying mental health as a prominent regional concern. The assessment also highlighted that care is severely limited in this region due to a shortage of mental health providers, impacting availability, accessibility, and affordability. This is an issue felt across the nation, with 64% of all counties in the United States facing a shortage of mental health providers, resulting in more than three-quarters (77%) of adults with mental health conditions being unable to receive care due to a lack of available clinicians. The workforce shortage is even more acute for rural communities and communities of color due to geographic isolation and lack of diverse representation among providers.

Addressing mental health workforce challenges has become a frequently cited solution to the accessibility and availability issues within the mental health system. However, these challenges are nuanced, driven by an overreliance on psychiatrists and other highly educated professionals who take years to train, an unequal distribution of those providers across the country, and limited efforts and attention to equipping lay community providers and peers to act as the first line of support for those in need. This scarcity of providers results in month-long waiting lists and gaps in services, creating substantial barriers for individuals seeking access to effective mental health care across the continuum of services. Furthermore, our fragmented care system has created barriers for people to access the care they need when they need it, given mental health services are often seen as separate from primary healthcare. Relying solely on our licensed clinicians will not address the growing demand, underscoring the need for more proactive strategies to mental healthcare, such as prevention, early intervention, and alternative approaches to care.

Despite these challenges, it is clear that for those who access quality care, mental health treatment is overwhelmingly effective – particularly when started early. Early identification and connection to care reduces the severity of long-term symptoms, which in turn can also lower the risk of substance use, medical costs, and other social costs associated with poor mental and physical health. Therefore, it is crucial to broaden how we think about the workforce to allow for more timely interventions in the places where people are showing up with mental health needs. For instance, integrating mental health into other practice areas, including primary care, family medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, and specific specialty areas, enables health systems to optimize and extend their existing workforce, thereby reducing strain on current mental health specialists, especially in areas with limited access to specialists.

Community-initiated care and peer support models can also reduce reliance on clinically-trained providers for low-level interventions, increasing the availability of licensed providers to support individuals with greater mental health needs. These models focus on training key community members – including doulas, peer support specialists, and community health workers – in

essential skills and resources to support individuals with lower levels of need. Trained community members can provide mental health education, reduce stigma, identify symptoms early, and direct appropriate referrals as needed, serving as the frontline workforce in community settings and reducing the need for higher levels of care.

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to expand access to and increase the availability of mental and behavioral health services for adults within the Foundation's 11-county region. This funding opportunity seeks innovative, evidence-based solutions and promising practices that will strengthen the continuum of care through cross-sector coordination and collaboration, improve access to and quality of training opportunities for all provider types, integrate mental health into other healthcare and non-healthcare settings, and eliminate barriers to care.

### **FUNDING OPPORTUNITY**

The Foundation has allocated \$750,000 per year for a two-year period to meet this need; and we anticipate requests will range from \$75,000 to \$150,000 per year. This opportunity is designed to support work that will demonstrate progress in year one and the ability to achieve measurable outcomes within a two-year timeframe. The interventions outlined below are designed to align with and advance the overarching goals of strengthening the care continuum, increasing provider availability and diversity, integrating mental health services across settings, and eliminating barriers to care. We anticipate funded projects will incorporate aspects of at least one of the interventions outlined below:

- Develop greater alignment between entities working to improve access to care, such as establishing a coordinated care navigation and referral system that provides individuals with continuity of care at all stages of their mental health journey
- Increase availability of and diversity of provider types across the full spectrum of need to improve access to care, reduce the burden on existing providers, and decrease service wait times – all while offering a relatable and supportive resource
- Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for all mental and behavioral health provider types, ensuring they are knowledgeable about the latest evidence-based practices and innovations in mental healthcare
- Integrate mental health services in places where people are already accessing healthcare, including primary care, family medicine, women's health centers, pediatrics, and other specialty areas, as well as non-health community-based settings
- Utilize telehealth, mobile apps, and other digital platforms to provide remote mental health services, ensuring greater accessibility, particularly for individuals in rural or underserved areas
- Address the logistical, financial, and/or cultural barriers to accessing mental health services, especially for high-need or underserved communities
- Ensure that mental health services are culturally-sensitive and linguistically-accessible, addressing the unique needs of diverse populations to improve engagement and outcomes

**Anticipated Outcomes and Shared Metrics:** Grantees will develop expected grant outcomes to monitor their specific program and approach. However, where appropriate, we propose the use of the following shared metrics to align efforts toward a more collaborative approach to system advancement:

- Increase in mental and behavioral health service utilization
- Increase in the total number of all types of mental health providers
- Reduction in average wait times for mental health services
- Increased integration with other health and community-based services
- Increased professional development opportunities for all provider types

**Grant Eligibility Criteria:** Applicants must meet the criteria below and serve people within the Foundation's [11-county region](#).

*Nonprofit:* An organization that is exempt under Section 501c(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is not classified as "a private foundation" under Section 509(a).

- OR -

*Fiscally-sponsored program:* A group or project with a nonprofit 501c(3) organization acting as a fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor is considered the grantee and is responsible for all legal aspects of the project, including reporting and financial management.

- OR -

*Government entity or public instrumentality:* schools, local government, etc.

- OR -

*Coalitions:* Applications involving more than one group or organization are welcome; however, one organization will be the recipient of the grant and must meet the criteria above. All coalition partners are expected to participate if a coalition applicant is invited to a proposal meeting. Letters of support are required for application submission.

#### **Further Criteria for Consideration**

Grant proposals will be evaluated according to the Foundation's [established criteria](#):

- Fit with the Foundation's Mission, Vision, Values, and Focus Areas
- Organizational Capacity
- Soundness of Project
- Potential for Impact

## APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

### Timeline

ACTIVITY	DATE(S)
Funding opportunity released and online application portal opens	October 30, 2024
Submit questions about the funding opportunity	By November 15, 2024
Answers to the questions posted on the Foundation website	November 22, 2024
Pre-submission meetings	November 25, 2024 – January 17, 2025
Submission deadline	January 27, 2025
Finalist notifications	By February 10, 2025
Proposal meetings (virtual)	February 24-28, 2025
Grantees selected and notified	March 27, 2025

### Application Process

#### 1. Pre-Submission Meeting

Applicants are required to schedule a meeting with [Lisa Savero-Mooney](#) prior to proposal submission. This provides staff with an opportunity to learn about the organization's needs and interests and to advise the organization on the best fit within this funding opportunity.

#### 2. Proposal Submission

Applicants must submit a complete proposal via the Foundation's [applicant portal](#) by the designated submission date to be considered for funding. Please [contact us](#) with any questions regarding proposal submission. Upon receipt of a completed proposal, applicants will receive an email confirmation.

#### 3. Proposal Meeting

Foundation staff will review all proposals to confirm alignment with the Foundation's RFP guidelines and receipt of all required information. Following review, the Foundation will request a virtual proposal meeting for all applications receiving further consideration. Declined applicants will receive notification of the Foundation's decision via email. Please add [noreply@yourcause.com](mailto:noreply@yourcause.com) and [grants@mosestaylorfoundation.org](mailto:grants@mosestaylorfoundation.org) to your Safe Senders list to ensure all correspondence is received.

#### **4. Review and Notification**

Foundation staff will provide an analysis of all proposals under further consideration for review by the Foundation's Board of Directors. The review will include an evaluation of the grant proposal, feedback from the proposal meeting, and any other information gathered regarding the applicant and proposed grant request. Funding decisions will be made during the March 2025 meeting of the Board, and applicants will be notified of final funding decisions by their Program Officer shortly thereafter.

#### *Optional - How to Learn More*

Organizations interested in this funding opportunity are encouraged to submit questions via email to [Lisa Savero-Mooney](mailto:Lisa.Savero-Mooney@moses-taylor.org) prior to November 15, 2024. A resulting FAQ will be posted to the Foundation's website by November 22, 2024.

#### **PROPOSAL APPLICATION**

The Moses Taylor Foundation RFP Application includes the following components: Organizational Profile and Executive Summary, Proposal Narrative and Proposed Outcomes, and Project Budget and Required Attachments. Please contact us with any questions regarding proposal submission.

#### ***Organizational Profile and Executive Summary***

- Legal Organization Name
- Tax ID#, Year Incorporated
- Mailing Address, Telephone Number, Website
- Organization Budget for Current Fiscal Year
- Mission
- CEO/Executive Director Name, Title, Email Address, Telephone Number
- Project Contact Name, Title, Email Address, Telephone Number
- Project Title
- Amount Requested and Grant Period
- Executive Summary of Proposed Project
- Select the criteria this project is intended to address (as outlined in the RFP *Funding Opportunity* section)
- Type of Support (Program/Project, Capital, Human Resources, Strategy, Finance and Operations)
- Northeastern Pennsylvania County(ties) Targeted

### ***Proposal Narrative and Proposed Outcomes***

- Describe your organization, including its history, primary activities, populations served, and recent accomplishments.
- How would you describe your organization's current engagement within the mental health space (e.g., early stage, expanding efforts, well-established), and how do you see this opportunity helping to advance your organization's objectives?
- Describe the purpose of the project and the need or problem it is intended to address. How does the project connect to the Foundation's funding opportunity criteria?
- Describe your organization's capacity to undertake the project and the capacity of key partners, if relevant.
- Outline the planned project activities and timeline.
- Detail anticipated goals and outcomes and how they will be measured. Specifically, note where these align with the Anticipated Outcomes and Shared Metrics as listed in the RFP.
- What, if any, plans do you have to continue this project beyond the requested grant period? What other sources of funding might support successful project continuation?
- How do you solicit feedback from your participants? Do you have a system in place to make changes to your program(s) based on the feedback received?
- Beyond the funding amount requested, are there any other tools or resources the Foundation can provide in order to help make your project a success?

### ***Project Budget and Required Attachments***

Using the general format provided on the Foundation's website as a guide, outline all costs related to the grant request. Include the expense amount, the amount applied to this request, the amount provided from other sources (list sources and amounts of other funding received and anticipated), the total, and a description of the line item. Adjust line item names as needed to reflect the project request. Requests for multi-year funding should include a yearly budget and an overall project budget.

The following attachments must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Word, or Microsoft Excel format. Other formats will not be accepted.

- Most recent audited financial statements and management letter
- Organization budget for the current fiscal year
- Organizational chart
- List of Board Members, including professional affiliations
- Letters of support from partner organizations, when appropriate

As part of the review process, the Foundation may request additional information relevant to your proposal. It is not necessary to submit additional documentation (job descriptions, resumes, tax exempt status, etc.) at this time.

## **Funding Partnership Commitment**

As a partner with our grantees throughout this work, the Foundation commits to:

- Active engagement with grantees with a focus on listening to understand
- Support grantees to achieve their goals and to adapt to new or unexpected circumstances
- Solicit, and be open to, direct, constructive feedback about our approach to, and implementation of, this project and specific opportunities to change course and adapt

## **About Moses Taylor Foundation**

Moses Taylor Foundation is a private foundation dedicated to building healthy communities and providing opportunities for people in Northeastern Pennsylvania to lead healthier lives. The Foundation was established in 2012 following the sale of Moses Taylor Health Care System. Since that time, the Foundation has approved more than 500 grants for a total of more than \$34 million invested throughout the region. The Foundation has four areas of focus: Health Care Access and Quality (including primary care, oral health, and mental health services), Older Adult Health, School-Based Health, and Nonprofit Effectiveness. The 11-county service area includes Bradford, Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties. For more information, visit [www.mosestaylorfoundation.org](http://www.mosestaylorfoundation.org).

## **About Mindful Philanthropy**

We extend our sincere gratitude to Mindful Philanthropy for their support and guidance throughout the development of this Request for Proposals. Mindful Philanthropy is a nonprofit leader in mental health philanthropy dedicated to catalyzing impactful funding in mental health, addiction, and well-being. Their foundational research and expertise are instrumental in guiding strategic mental health funding opportunities, including this opportunity, to improve mental health support access and availability in our community. For more information, visit [www.mindfulphilanthropy.org](http://www.mindfulphilanthropy.org).

