



GRANTS TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Grants to address mental health and behavioral health

Application deadline: April 14, 2023

Time frame is 12 months:

- Grants will be announced June 2023
- Program activity will begin July 2023
- Grant period concludes June 2024
- Final report is due October 2024

Purpose: The request for proposals (RFPs) will be issued to health, community, and social service organizations to address gaps in access to mental and behavioral health care in West Virginia.

Approximately 50% of individuals will experience a behavioral health (BH) condition, such as depression or anxiety, in their lifetimes. The experience of these conditions results in changes in physical, emotional, social, and cognitive functioning that often significantly impact day-to-day functioning, relationships, and overall health. West Virginia consistently rates among states with the highest percentage of individuals experiencing BH conditions, highlighting the critical need for early identification, treatment, and prevention.

Lack of access to providers and treatments, financial hurdles, stigma, and lack of knowledge about BH conditions and treatments are all barriers to receiving adequate treatment and evidence-based care. Behavioral health needs for children and adolescents are at an all-time high, with the pandemic worsening a preexisting BH crisis. Similarly, older adults are experiencing increasing unmet needs for BH services, exacerbated by greater isolation and loneliness during the pandemic, provider shortages, and lack of access to needed services.

Highmark is committed to transforming BH care so that BH is an equal pillar to physical health and where the promise of BH treatment and support is fully realized. There is unprecedented opportunity to advance the delivery of BH care. In addition to increasing access to BH care, there is significant need and opportunity to make BH care more focused, integrated (including into nontraditional, community-based settings), proactive, evidence-based and quality-focused, and increasingly connected to social and physical health.

The Highmark West Virginia Charitable Fund for Health will award a total of **\$500,000** in grants to organizations (up to **\$100,000** per organization) to support programs that address behavioral health and mental health in West Virginia.

There is particular interest in innovative approaches to increase access to care, new models of care delivery, and approaches to enhance quality and evidence-based care. Special consideration will be given to projects designed to:

- Expand access to care.
- Focus on populations for which there are high rates of unmet need, including children/adolescents and/or older adults.
- Develop and deploy innovative programs and delivery models, including use of nontraditional workforce (e.g., well-trained coaches, peers).
- Focus on nontraditional settings for integrating BH care
- Advance innovative, personalized, proactive, or upstream approaches to BH care.

Use of funds: Grants may be used to initiate effective BH programs and services, or to expand existing services available to West Virginia residents.

Potential projects/programs:

- Access and increased availability to BH services in communities across the state (brick and mortar and/or virtual care access) through health care, social service agencies, and nontraditional settings (community-based settings)
- Connecting at-risk individuals to care access points (programming, ED diversion programs, provision of telehealth and technology resources, training and resources for pediatricians and other primary care providers, transportation)
- Crisis services (crisis call line, mobile crisis team services, crisis receiving and stabilization services)
- Home- and community-based care (with goal of having people stay in their own homes)
- Developing and deploying innovative upstream or downstream programs or delivery models, including use of nontraditional workforce (e.g., well-trained coaches, peers, community health workers)

Measuring success/outcomes:

Demonstration of outcomes/impact is important and may include, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Increased BH care access/utilization (including clinical services and/or lower-intensity interventions), especially among underserved populations.
- Improvements in clinical, social, and/or functional outcomes (e.g., as measured by validated measures).
- Enhanced integration or coordination of BH services.
- Improvements in prevention-related outcomes.
- Improved awareness and/or attitudes toward BH and/or BH treatment.
- Increased engagement in BH services.
- Planned sustainability.
- Improvement of delivery of care.

The Highmark West Virginia Charitable Fund for Health, a fund of the Highmark Foundation, is a private, charitable organization of Highmark, Inc. that supports initiatives and programs aimed at improving community health. The Highmark West Virginia Charitable Fund for Health's mission is to improve the health, well-being, and quality of life for individuals who reside in West Virginia. We are proud to support charitable organizations that are a good fit with our mission statement.

To be eligible for a grant, an organization must meet the following criteria:

- Be a nonprofit defined as tax exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and as a public charity under section 509 (a) of that code. The Foundation does not support third-party or fiduciary arrangements.
- Be located in one of the 55 counties in West Virginia.

This RFP is available at
highmarkwvfund.versaic.com.

For questions or additional information regarding the RFP or application, call the Foundation at **1-866-594-1730** or email cathy.mcalister@highmarkhealth.org.

For more information, visit the Highmark Foundation website at highmarkfoundation.org.

