



The Colorado Health Foundation™

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Staff Well-being Network Convener Proposal Deadline: Feb. 19, 2021

[About The Colorado Health Foundation](#)

[The Colorado Health Foundation](#) (CHF) is bringing health in reach for all Coloradans by engaging closely with communities across the state through investing, policy advocacy, learning and capacity building.

We do everything with the intent of creating health equity and believe health equity exists when there are no unnecessary, avoidable, unfair, unjust or systemically-caused differences in health status among Coloradans. Learn more about the [cornerstones](#) that guide our work.

Our work is focused in four areas: Maintain Healthy Bodies, Nurture Healthy Minds, Strengthen Community Health and Champion Health Equity. Through these areas, we are making progress toward our vision that across Colorado, each of us can say: "We have all we need to live healthy lives." Learn more about our [focus areas and priorities](#).

[Overview](#)

CHF commits to supporting youth and young adults to develop resiliency by growing a sense of identity, agency and belonging. This body of work will help develop CHF's understanding of the influence of staff well-being on an organization's ability to further advance youth resiliency. The work is aligned with CHF's interests in ensuring young people have the coping skills, relationships and supportive environments to handle their life challenges.

Since 2019, CHF's Youth and Young Adult Resiliency team has been exploring how to support grantees to foster staff well-being through healing opportunities based in relationships, organizations and communities. This opportunity was identified through nonprofit partner conversations and staff observations about heightened stress among organizational leaders and staff.

We are aware of the deeply wearing effects of systemic racism and oppression, economic hardship, individual and community trauma, changes and uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic, persistent and growing inequities that diminish opportunities for youth, and ongoing organizational financial insecurity on our grantee organizations' leaders and staff. These stressors are merged with increasing demands on staff at youth-serving organizations to grow their social-emotional skillsets to be even more effective in reaching organizational goals. Our interest in healing justice as a framework for this effort toward improving staff well-being reflects this awareness.

CHF's support for staff well-being would be available to current and future grantees in

the Youth Resiliency portfolio. These organizations work with youth of color, LGBTQ youth, unhoused youth and other youth who have historically had less power and privilege. Staff at youth-serving organizations play a fundamental role in assuring that youth are seen and respected and feel seen and respected, grow into their own identities and power, and feel a sense of hope for their future. Staff serve as strong and committed role models for social and emotional well-being and leadership. And yet, these same staff who work so closely with youth experiencing trauma often have limited training in spiritually and culturally relevant healing arts, mental health and youth empowerment. Too often, staff lack time and supports for processing their own experiences of trauma and their experiences in working with the youth in their care. Further, workplace culture in youth-serving organizations often becomes the environment for staff and program participants to experience a place where emotional, physical, spiritual, social and financial contributors to health and well-being are recognized, honored and nurtured. Organizational boards, executive leadership and staff shape that culture through their own attitudes, behavior, language and policies.

Grantee input elevated the array of perspectives we now hold on critical drivers of well-being and what erodes it. Many of Colorado's nonprofit leaders think about well-being holistically: emotional, spiritual, physical, social and financial health are all critical to good quality of life, and to employees' ability to engage fully in achieving an organization's mission. Several theoretical frameworks also informed the framing of this request. Compassion fatigue alerts us to staff stress and exhaustion that can often go undetected. Racial battle fatigue calls our attention to the daily toll of fighting against racism. Community healing and healing justice work recognizes that individual efforts toward well-being are not enough. Organizational and community efforts are imperative, recognizing the need for systems that heal and relationships within communities that heal.

Through interviews with more than 50 grantees in summers of 2019 and 2020, along with insights from a grantee advisory group convened over several sessions last fall, the following lessons emerged:

- Leaders know their agency culture and community deeply. Any funding and supports should allow great freedom for leaders to decide what is best to support the well-being of their staff.
- Leaders named the following priorities for well-being: improving staff salaries and benefits, mental health and healing, combating racism, staff empowerment and connection and learning.
- Leaders largely do not know other grantee recipients and would value ongoing connection with their peers. Leaders care not just about their own staff, but about building the field of youth work and their collective ability as youth-serving organizations to support and sustain their staff's work.

Addressing racism and injustice can be done both through individual work at the agency level and through ongoing relationships that grantees build in networks with one another.

This request seeks a convener to facilitate and support stronger and lasting bonds within and among diverse youth organizations through opportunities for individual, organizational and community healing.

Purpose

CHF aims to secure a partner who can engage participants from a potential of up to 70+ Youth Resiliency grantees in ongoing individual, organizational and community healing. All



participation on the part of grantees will be optional. All the work that follows rests on building trustworthy and culturally resonant relationships. Because of the great diversity of organizations in the portfolio, early work in understanding the strengths, culture, community and identity of organizations will be critical. We expect the project will be guided by leaders, staff and youth from the participating organizations serving as advisors in various ways.

Key aspects of the work include:

- **Tap and share existing strengths across our grantees.** Leaders within the network hold highly valuable experience and expertise. The convener will identify and support ways organizations can and want to learn from one another. Examples might include sub-grants/contracts to leaders to share their knowledge and experience with their peers on topics of value to many, or more formalized peer mentorship.
- **Support leadership networks.** The convener will play a critical role in creating trusted space for important conversations to occur in an array of small groups where relationships can form and hopefully last. The composition and focus for these networks will be driven by the grantees themselves. Networks will be optional, and leaders who participate will receive stipends for their engagement. It may be leaders of color want a safe space to process Racial Battle Fatigue and leadership stress. It may be that leaders wish to explore barriers to taking short sabbaticals and identify resources needed to take advantage of this time to regenerate. It may be that leaders wish to come together to exert their collective power in working toward equitable salaries and benefits for the field. It may be that a group of leaders want to explore how to use collective purchasing to reduce the financial and administrative burdens of necessary organizational functions that are not specific or unique to their missions, such as payroll services, optimal health benefits or legal consultation.
- **Identify common learning needs across organizations and find ways to address those interests.** Training and coaching opportunities that span organizations may offer economies of scale and opportunities to build new relationships. Yet, solidifying and sustaining new practices requires planned supports within each organization. It may be that trainings are offered by the convener, a Youth Resiliency grantee or an organization outside of the network. Training may be coupled with more individualized coaching or peer leadership support for organization-level change. The convener will also identify ways to curate and share relevant resources and supports across the network.
- **Co-create, with grantees, guidance in how additional funding for staff well-being, offered under a separate funding pool, can be used for professional development, coaching and healing within and across organizations.** Funds for this are additional and separate from the fund for this RFQ.

Goal

To advance the field of youth resiliency, and the ability of staff to best support young people, activities aim to have the following impact on staff well-being:

- 1) Leaders increase knowledge of and access to well-being supports and resources, including relationships with peers, which are well-matched to the unique needs of their organizations serving youth of color, LGBTQ youth and youth with trauma experience.



- 2) Leaders increase understanding of and engagement with coping/healing strategies and practices that support staff, particularly staff of color, in their roles.
- 3) Organizations increase practices and investments in efforts that promote individual, organizational and community well-being.
- 4) Staff increase self-efficacy in responding to youth needs/trauma as an important strategy to reduce burnout among staff/leaders.

Participants will co-create an approach to evaluating the initiative by defining what meaningful progress across the four goals articulated above would look like to them.

A potential related body of work is under consideration regarding advancement of equitable salaries among youth-serving organizations. As this takes shape, the network could have an additional goal of expanding agency practices that demonstrate progress toward equitable salaries and benefits, such as agency plans, commitments and board resolutions to prioritize equitable salary and benefits.

Considerations

This request recognizes that interested firms, groups or individuals may thrive best in this role who:

- Have experience in and with multi-racial leadership groups, holds equity as a core value in their work and can offer a lead convener who identifies as a person of color;
- Have experience with coaching, building the capacity of individuals and organizations to center equity in their work, including equity for those who have historically had less power or privilege, such as people of color, LGBTQ individuals and those living on low income;
- Have a strong track record developing respected, trusted relationships with and among leaders of color and across multiracial groups;
- Have lived experience in working with youth who have experienced trauma and who have historically experienced marginalization in their communities;
- Have values rooted in healing and justice work, and are able to articulate their own healing journey; and believe that having places for restorative work and transformational healing in our communities is essential for nonprofits and the youth they serve to thrive;
- Have experience nurturing learning and support networks, particularly in communities of color and other marginalized communities;
- Have experience working with teams of people with varied perspectives, including funders, evaluators, youth and adult participants.

Experience should include ability to guide, exchange and build expertise among participants around the topics below, which could take place through partnership:



- Racial equity
- Multi-racial approaches
- Compassion fatigue
- Racial battle fatigue
- Healing-centered approaches
- Youth resiliency
- Youth engagement practices
- Culturally-relevant mental health
- Trauma-informed practices

Deliverable(s)

Deliverables will be developed following convener selection and are not required for response to this RFQ. See How to Apply for more details.

- Outreach approach to inform structure, content and early phasing of work.
- Establish advisory groups and other mechanisms for obtaining and using input from nonprofit participants, young people and other stakeholders.
- Create an initial learning and evaluation plan.
- Establishment of groups and other learning opportunities consistent with the priorities articulated by grantee participants.
- Evidence that nonprofit participants were adequately resourced to participate and implement changes in their organizations focused on staff well-being.
- Evidence that experts drawn from within the grantee network were adequately compensated for their time and effort in sharing their skills and experience with others.

Timeline

This RFQ includes the following phases:

Feb. 19, 2021: Proposal Deadline

March 4 or 5, 2021: Interview selected applicants

March 19, 2021: Award announcement

Following the contract award, we anticipate:

March-April 2021: Onboarding selected convener with CHF. Collaborate with learning and evaluation partner and advisory group to identify next steps in the design of the network,



including advisory structures.

May-June 2021: Launch advisory structures and begin network engagements

July-December 2021: Implement network activities, including feedback and learning circles with participants, CHF and other project partners

Reporting Structure

The selected convener will report to the Senior Program Officer, Hillary Fulton, overseeing the CHF's Youth Resiliency work. The convener will also need to collaborate closely with other CHF staff, including the Learning and Evaluation team (Nick Stuber), other internal staff serving cross-functional departments (Policy, Communications), the grantee advisory group and other external partners.

Budget and Contract

The budget for the role of convener shall not exceed \$100,000 in 2021. This contract is renewable annually based on lessons from prior work. CHF intends the remaining budget of \$450,000 to be allocated for components of the work including participant and advisor stipends, funding for sub-contractors to bring their wisdom and support and funds for additional professional development or healing supports identified by advisors.

Once selected, CHF will work with the convener to establish a contract and budget that defines roles and responsibilities for these funding elements.

Budget requests should include clear rationale for the amounts requested. Cost effectiveness will be considered in reviewing applications, and those submitting responses to the RFQ are expected to revise the budget appropriately if the needs of the project as ultimately designed can be met with less funding.

How to Apply

CHF believes those who have historically had less power or privilege should be at the heart of our work. Hence, we strongly encourage applications from those who identify with or are members of underrepresented communities and can articulate their own healing journeys. Given the nature of this capacity building work, we are seeking a partner with some specific areas of expertise. ***We recognize most applicants will likely need to partner in order to meet the core requirements of this work and look forward to seeing joint applications.***

To apply, please submit a response by **February 19, 2021, by 5 p.m. (MST) to Hillary Fulton at hfulton@coloradohealth.org. The response should be clearly structured to address the following questions:**

- 1) **Applicant Overview:** Provide a summary description about your organization/company, what you do and what compels you to do it. Help us learn about who you are. *(One-page maximum)*
- 2) **Interest:** Tell us why you are responding to this request. What sparked your interest? Why do you want to invest your time in this kind of work? *(One-page maximum)*
- 3) **Experience:** Tell us about the team and/or individual(s) you will commit to this project.



What makes them the right fit for this particular project? What related experience, including lived experience, do they bring? What sets them apart from others? If this is a multi-organizational team, how will you navigate the complexities of working across organizations? You may attach resumes, but it is not required. (Note: By submitting an application, you are committing your availability for the duration and deliverables of this project, as described above.) *(Four-page maximum)*

- 4) **Equity Commitment:** How does your organization/company align with CHF's [cornerstones](#)? Please share how your organization/company works towards and practices equity, including reflections about your journey toward understanding your own bias, privilege and power. *(Two-page maximum)*
- 5) **Approach:** Tell us how you will approach this project if selected. We are not requesting a project plan at this stage. Rather, help us understand how you would think about approaching this work and what you'd take into consideration. Be clear about how you would center equity in your approach. Be clear about how you would assure flexibility and accessibility to the project and its participants. If your proposal is not responding to the full scope of work, please be explicit about which parts you are applying for. If your organization/company operates outside of Colorado, please be explicit in your plan for understanding the context of Colorado. *(Four-page maximum)*
- 6) **Budget:** Please provide general ideas about how you will use your time and resources for this project. You do not need to provide a detailed or line-item budget, but please tell us about the types of fees and expenses you anticipate. Please indicate the hourly rate for the individuals assigned to this project, as well as total anticipated hours. This is intended to be an estimate and is subject to change based on contracting for the completion of specific work agreed upon with CHF. Cost effectiveness will be considered in proposal review.
- 7) **Legal Status:** Please provide documentation of your organization's/company's legal status (e.g., 501(c)3 or for-profit).
- 8) **References:** Please provide three references who have a high level of familiarity with your work on projects related to the nature of this request. Include a description of your working relationship and contact information.
- 9) **Primary Contact:** Include the name, title, phone number and email address for the primary point of contact regarding this application.

Please limit application length to no more than 10 pages excluding budget, references, writing samples and resumes. Send a proposal and supporting documentation electronically in Microsoft Word or PDF format to Hillary Fulton at hfulton@coloradohealth.org. You are also welcome to reach out with any questions about the request or process.

Terms and Conditions

Application Rejection

CHF reserves the right to reject any or all applications, to waive informalities and minor irregularities in applications received, and to accept any portion of an application or all items proposed if deemed in the best interest of CHF.

Modification or Withdrawal of Applications



Applications may be modified or withdrawn prior to the established deadline.

Expenses

CHF is not liable for costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request.

Review

The review will identify the applications that most effectively meet the requirements of the request. The work will be offered to the contractor whose application conforming to the request will be most advantageous to CHF, price and other factors considered.

Confidentiality

CHF and its partners will keep confidential any materials submitted, and will not use them in any way other than for this selection process.

