



Innovation Grants

CREATE SOMETHING NEW

An initiative of MCCOY 

2024 Request for Proposals

OVERVIEW

The Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY), with support from the United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI), is awarding Innovation Grants up to \$20,000 to school-community partnerships as part of our Closing the Gap Initiative. Closing the Gap is an initiative of MCCOY that aims to build better partnerships between schools and community organizations, so every student has equitable access to resources, opportunities, and a community where they belong. Based on substantial assessments and data collection from both schools and community organizations, we believe youth and families will have better outcomes when schools and communities work together to address the complex challenges impacting youth.

Closing the Gap identifies **five challenges** to improving youth and family outcomes informed by input throughout Marion County, existing research, and secondary data:

- Mental Health
- Trauma/Violence
- Social Emotional Health/Development
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Social Media/Internet Use

MCCOY expects to award grants up to \$20,000 to support development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative pilot projects and programs developed by school-community partnerships to address these five key challenge areas of Closing the Gap. Projects and programs are expected to be fully developed and/or begin implementation by December 31, 2024.

Proposals are due by 5:00 pm ET on July 1, 2024 and must be submitted online.

[Submit your application through the online form.](#)

MCCOY expects to announce funding decisions no later than July 31, 2024.

PRIORITIES AND FOCUS POPULATIONS

Innovation Grant proposals must meaningfully address one or two of the 5 challenge areas through planning or implementation of an innovative pilot project or program:

- Mental Health
- Trauma/Violence
- Social Emotional Health/Development
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Social Media/Internet Use

Closing the Gap prioritizes equity, working towards a future where all students and families have equitable access to what they need, when they need it. Therefore, applicants should clearly articulate how the proposed program or project meets the needs of disadvantaged or marginalized students/families within the community.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for funding for a Closing the Gap Innovation Grant, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

- An applicant must be a **local education institution** (K-12 school) OR a **nonprofit community-based organization** with a 501(c)3 status located in and serving Marion County, Indiana.
- Applicants **must participate in at least three (3) check-in Zoom calls** with MCCOY staff, to provide updates on their project/program development or implementation.
- Applicants applying for a grant to **implement** a project/program must submit a **signed partnership agreement**. A template is provided on the [Innovation Grant webpage](#). Partnerships may already exist or be newly developed for the purpose of the proposed project/program.
- Applicants should **meaningfully address one or two of the 5 challenge areas** of Closing the Gap as described above.
- Community-based organizations who serve as the primary applicant must have an **annual operating budget of at least \$75,000** and have been in operation for at least 12 months on the date of submission.

Schools and organizations that have questions about their eligibility for participation in the Closing the Gap Innovation Grant opportunity may contact:

Kate Roelecke

Director of Strategy and Operations

kate.roelecke@mccoyouth.org.

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

MCCOY recognizes that school and community partnerships are at different levels of preparedness to address the challenge areas identified by the Closing the Gap Initiative. MCCOY plans to support innovative and meaningful projects/programs addressing one or two of the challenge areas through the following types of Innovation Grants:

- **Planning Grant:** These proposals are submitted by applicants who are still in the planning and development stage of their project/program. They may still need to develop the necessary partnerships or think through components of their project/program. Planning grants may transition to the implementation stage before the grant period ends on December 31, 2024. Planning Grants must result in a fully developed action plan prior to implementation.
- **Implementation Grant:** These proposals are submitted by applicants who have established a school-community partnership (confirmed by a signed partnership agreement as part of their proposal submission) and have provided sufficient details of their action plan to ensure that implementation will be successful. Implementation Grants must show measurable results and outcomes and share these results in an evaluation report submitted after the grant period ends on December 31, 2024.

An applicant may submit only one proposal for a Closing the Gap Innovation Grant. All proposals must include brief narratives describing the proposed project/program, how it will serve the needs of the community, and how it will address one or two of the challenge areas.

Planning Grant proposals must describe how the applicant has innovated in the past, identify a team of committed individuals to participate in the planning process, provide a detailed timeline of planning activities (and potential implementation), and provide a budget and budget narrative.

Implementation Grant proposals must explain the expected impact of the proposed project/program, discuss potential roadblocks, and provide a detailed timeline, budget, and budget narrative. A signed partnership agreement between at least one school and one community-based organization is also required.

Letters of support (optional) may also be included for both types of proposals.

In reviewing proposals and determining funding recommendations, the selection committee (including MCCOY Staff and key stakeholders) will take into consideration the following as relevant, among other factors:

- The number of students and families who will be impacted and the potential outcomes for those students and families.
- The approach to addressing the identified challenge area(s).
- The applicants' capabilities to carry out projects/programs of the type and scale proposed.
- The feasibility of the program or project plan, including the viability of the timeline and proposed investment, the likelihood of aligning key partners or other critical success factors, and the achievability of the anticipated outcomes.
- Whether the amount of the requested grant is proportional to the scale and impact of the project/program to be funded by the grant.
- Whether the applicant(s) have the ability and commitment to sustain the project/program after funds from the grant are expended.

Funding Amounts

The 2024 Innovation Grants will be funded for a period of five (5) months, to support planning, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed project/program, beginning August 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2024. A total of \$120,000 is available for Innovation Grants. Grant requests may not exceed \$20,000. Any proposal exceeding this amount will not be considered for funding.

EXPANDED IMPACT

MCCOY’s Closing the Gap Initiative is expansive, working to build stronger school and community partnerships to achieve better outcomes for youth and families.

To make the most of this opportunity, Closing the Gap grantees will contribute collective learning through a variety of activities:

Required	Optional
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All-grantee meeting on August 15, 2024.• Three (3) check-in calls throughout grant period, ensuring projects are on track, learnings are being shared, and challenges are discussed.• End-of-Grant deliverables (Action Plan or Evaluation Report).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovation Workshop developed specifically for grantees (August, 15 2024).• Additional technical assistance and consultation as needed.• Special opportunities to connect during the Closing the Gap Symposium (September 2024).• Ongoing opportunities to connect with partners and the larger Closing the Gap network through virtual convenings, trainings, and more.

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

MCCOY will accept proposals until 5:00 pm ET on July 1, 2024. All proposals must be submitted online. MCCOY expects to announce funding decisions no later than July 31, 2024.

[Submit your application through the online form.](#)

MCCOY reserves the right to adjust the grant amount requested by the applicant based on, among other considerations, the factors mentioned in this Request for Proposals and the total amount allocated and available for the Closing the Gap Initiative relative to the number and quality of proposals received.

Please use the information below to guide the development of your proposal and the completion of the online application form. If you have questions about the submission process, please email:

Kate Roelecke
Director of Strategy and Operations
[*Kate.roelecke@mccoyouth.org*](mailto:Kate.roelecke@mccoyouth.org)

Applicant Information

Please provide the following information:

- Primary contact name, title, phone number, and email address
- Project/Program Team
 - Please share additional information about members of your planning or implementation team (school and/or community partners):
 - Names, titles, phone numbers, and email addresses
- Nonprofit organizations with a 501(c)3 status must submit their latest 990 form and a copy of their IRS determination letter as proof of annual operating budget and nonprofit status.

Proposal

Please answer the following questions with respect to your proposed project/program. *Pay close attention to the word limits of the narrative portions of the proposal.*

Project Narrative Overview

- Indicate which challenge area your project/program will address (may select up to TWO):
 - Mental Health
 - Trauma/Violence
 - Social Emotional Health/Development
 - Chronic Absenteeism
 - Social Media/Internet

- Describe the challenges and opportunities your community faces in adequately addressing the Closing the Gap challenge(s) you will focus on. (300 words)

- Please indicate whether you are applying for a Planning Grant or an Implementation Grant (must choose one).
 - Planning Grant
 - Implementation Grant

- What is the title of your proposed project/program (if known):

- Briefly summarize your proposed project/program and how it will address the challenge area(s). (250 words)

Planning Grant Narrative

- Describe where you are in your planning process. What work has been done to date in the development of the project/program? Have you identified or developed key partnerships or gathered a team to support the development of the project/program? What input or buy-in have you received from key stakeholders? What challenges or successes have you experienced so far? (300 words)
- Describe your proposed planning process. What key activities are necessary to move this process forward (i.e., meetings, workshops, information gathering)? What milestones will help you know you are on track? How will you use the grant period (August – December 2024) to successfully develop an action plan for the project/proposal? (300 words)
- Please describe your timeline of the key activities and milestones for the grant period (August – December 2024). Indicate whether you will begin implementation of the project/program before December 31, 2024. (250 words)
- Describe your planning team’s capabilities to carry out the planning process (e.g., key staff and roles, skills, facilities). Include information about partnerships that you hope to develop. (250 words)
- Have you considered potential sources for funding the implementation of your project plan after this grant is completed? Please describe. (250 words)
- What potential challenges do you foresee in developing your project/program and how will you address these challenges? Please address any factors that are critical to the success of fully developing an action plan to implement the project/program by the end of the grant period (December 31, 2024). (250 words)

Implementation Grant Narrative

- Describe your project/program plan. What are the key activities and milestones for successful implementation? Who are the anticipated participants? Is this an ongoing project/program or will it be implemented once? Please provide as much detail as possible to help us fully understand the proposed project/program. (300 words)
- In what ways will this project/program impact students, families, and/or the broader community? How will you measure these outcomes and impact by the end of the grant period (December 31, 2024)? Describe your anticipated outcomes as SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, Timebound). (300 words)
- Please describe your timeline of the key activities and milestones for the grant period (August – December 2024). Projects/programs do not have to stop at the end of the grant period (December 31, 2024) but should be substantially underway and have measurable outcomes. (250 words)
- Describe your implementation team’s capabilities to carry out the planning process (e.g., key staff and roles, skills, facilities). Describe the role of each partner (school and community organization) in the implementation of the project/program. (250 words)
- What potential challenges do you foresee in implementing your project/program and how will you address these challenges? Please address any factors that are critical to the success of implementing the project/program and evaluating early outcomes and impact by the end of the grant period (December 31, 2024). (250 words)
- Implementation Grant proposals must include a signed partnership agreement or memoranda of agreement indicating how the school(s) and community partner organization(s) will work together. A template is provided on the [Innovation Grant webpage](#). Documents may be uploaded through the online form to be included in the final application.
- If your project/program will continue beyond the end of the grant period, what are your potential funding sources to support the continuation of the work? (150 words)

Budget and Budget Narrative

Closing the Gap funding is not intended to support general operations, but rather to launch or scale innovative projects/programs targeting the Closing the Gap challenge areas. Grants may be used to support expenses such as start-up costs, salaries and benefits, equipment, supplies, and professional services necessary to carry out your program or project plan. Grant administration funds (indirect costs) must not exceed 10% of your overall budget. Applicants are not required to demonstrate a financial match; however, MCCOY encourages applicants to seek complementary funding from public or other private sources for the proposed program or project.

Planning Grant applicants that anticipate implementing the developed project/program prior to December 31, 2024 may include expenses related to implementation in their proposed budget.

The following information must be provided as part of the online application form:

- Indicate total amount requested.
- Provide totals for the following budget categories:

Personnel	
Contractors	
Program Expenses	
Professional Development	
Program Evaluation	
Marketing Expenses	
Technology Expenses	
Other (Please describe in Narrative)	
Administrative (Indirect) Cost (no more than 10% of total budget)	

Budget Narrative

Please use the following guidance to provide a detailed narrative for your proposed budget. Begin each section of your narrative with the budget category being described. Including the total requested for that category in parenthesis will be helpful (see example below). Include enough detail about each category and include line items from your budget to give reviewers a good understanding of how grant funds would be used. The entire narrative should not exceed 300 words.

- **Personnel Expenses:** Includes salaries/benefits going towards the project/program. Calculate the amount of time personnel will dedicate to the project/program.
- **Contractual Expenses:** Speaker fees or partner support related to the project/program.
- **Program Expenses:** Curriculum, materials, and supplies. Provide unit prices and expected number of units when possible. Food is an allowable program expense but must be explained.
- **Professional Development:** Includes training required to implement project/program. Include as much detail as possible about the source of the professional development and how it will be applied to the proposed project/program specifically.
- **Program Evaluation:** Expenses related to evaluating the project/program may be included. This could include expenses related to survey development or incentives for evaluation activities. If an evaluator is working with the project/program, they should be included under Contractual Expenses.
- **Marketing Expenses:** Professional printing or other marketing expenses related to promoting project/program activities.
- **Technology Expenses:** Fees for programs/software critical to project/program success. The narrative must describe how the program/software is utilized with the project/program.
- **Other Expenses:** Please describe any expense falling outside of the previously mentioned categories.

Example Narrative:

Personnel Expenses (\$6,000): *The Program Director will provide oversight of the Afterschool Project and supervise an intern who will be responsible for most of the implementation. The intern will be paid \$15/hour and work approximately 15 hours a week (\$225). The Afterschool Project will run for 12 weeks total and will require 3 weeks of prep (15 weeks total), bringing the total personnel expense for the intern to \$3,375. The remaining \$2,625 will support the Program Director's time supervising the intern and providing oversight for the project.*

Describe how you will sustain your proposed project/program, should you plan to do so, at the conclusion of the grant. Include any ongoing support from key stakeholders or other funding sources. (250 words)

Briefly describe how you might adjust your project/program if you do not receive the full amount of your request. (150 words)

Optional Supporting Information

The following supporting information is optional, but may be attached to your proposal:

- No more than two (2) letters of support that include a description of how this proposal will impact the school and/or community.
- Additional documents that provide support or context to your narrative (e.g., evidence of program effectiveness, a more detailed project plan or timeline, etc.).

Submission Requirements

MCCOY will accept proposals through the online application form until 5:00 pm EST on July 1, 2024. To submit the proposal, applicants must enter the name, title, and email address of the person who has legal signatory authority for the school/organization that is the primary applicant, indicating that this individual has approved the proposal.

[Submit your application through the online form.](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Closing the Gap Initiative identifies four strategies that we are continuously working towards as a community. Several activities, projects, and programs align with these strategies to have impact across the socioecological framework:

- Adopting whole child approaches
- Engaging families through strengths-based practices
- Supporting and strengthening community school models
- Increasing investment in public education (advocacy efforts)

Additionally, the following best practices have been identified as example programs within each of the five challenge areas:

Mental Health	Trauma/Violence	Social Emotional Health/Development	Chronic Absenteeism	Social Media/ Internet Use
School-based mental health services School and community messaging campaigns	Mentoring Programs Behavioral Threat Assessment Management	Evidence-based SEL curricula Afterschool programs rooted in SEL concepts	Parent Teacher Home Visits Data project to get at root causes and find innovative solutions	Digital/ Media Literacy workshops and curricula Digital Storytelling projects

Informational Webinars

MCCOY will host two (2) informational webinars that will be recorded and posted to the Closing the Gap webpage after each session.

Webinar 1: Introduction & Overview Tuesday, May 21, 2024 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM Recording Posted by May 23	Webinar 2: Overview & Office Hours Thursday, June 6, 2024 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Recording Posted by June 10
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