



# School-Based Mental Health Prevention Request for Proposals

## Background

Mental health challenges are the leading cause of disability and poor life outcomes in young people. Over the past few years, we have seen significant increases in certain mental health disorders in youth, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

PreventionFIRST!'s Student Survey of 26,260 7th through 12th-grade students in Hamilton, Butler, Warren, and Clermont counties shows that more than half of students (53%) report having high levels of stress. One in 10 reported having suicide ideation. And 60% struggle to pull themselves out of a bad mood. In addition, 39% responded that they felt nervous or anxious all or most of the time. Just over 24% responded feeling depressed, sad, or hopeless most of the time and 29% said they desired to be alone all the time.

Interact for Health surveyed youth mental health partners in the Fall of 2022 and received 91 responses from 73 organizations. When asked to prioritize among issues, partners identified improving school-based prevention and programming to promote well-being as the most important area to focus on accelerating progress.

One strategy to help address the mental health challenges for youth is through the expansion of school-based mental health prevention. Because children and youth spend the majority of their time in school, schools play an increasingly critical role in supporting these students and providing a safe, non-stigmatizing, and supportive natural environment in which children, youth, and families have access to prevention, early intervention, and treatment through school-based mental health programs. While a growing number of schools have integrated social and emotional learning and other mental health programs into their curriculum, the scope and quality of programs varies significantly.

## RFP Goal

To expand evidence-based, school-based mental health prevention and promotion programs within schools that serve youth from Interact for Health's priority populations – Black, Hispanic, low-income families, LGBTQ+ and rural communities.

## RFP Overview

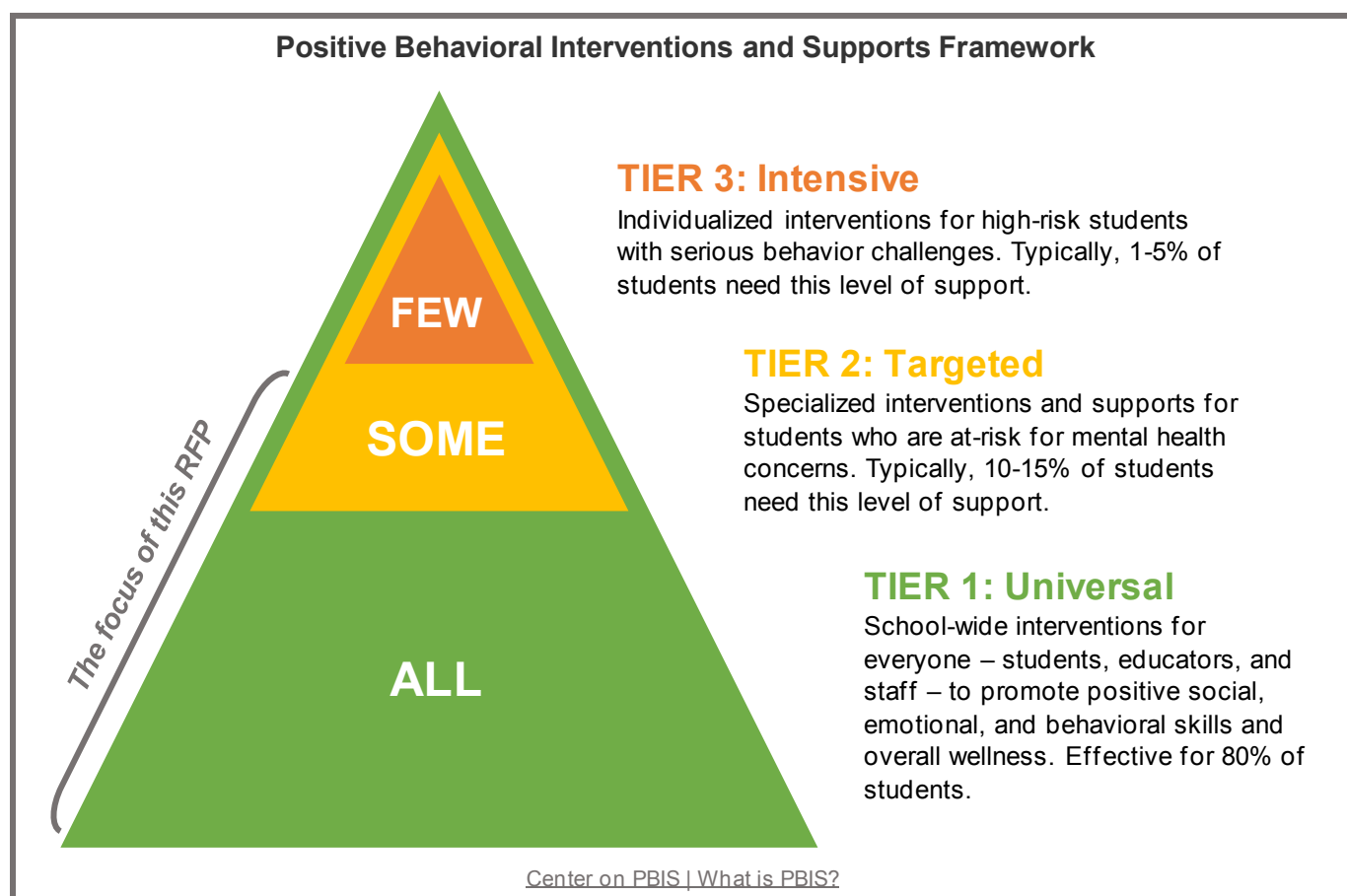
Interact for Health is embarking on a new strategic plan and hopes to work with new and existing partners to discover best practices and innovative approaches to improve youth mental health. The purpose of this RFP is to expand evidence-based, school-based mental health prevention programs in high-need schools.



To improve the lives of those who experience the greatest injustices in health, Interact for Health has prioritized the following populations: Black communities, Hispanic communities, children in families with low incomes, rural communities, and, for the mental health strategy, the LGBTQ+ community. For this RFP, we will prioritize programs and schools that serve these populations.

These efforts will be focused on the following prevention priorities:

- **Universal mental health screening, education and promotion programs**
- **Suicide prevention programs**
- **Staff wellness initiatives**



Examples of impact we hope to see include:

- Expand evidence-based programs that increase positive school climate and increase student knowledge of mental health, increase connection and belonging, provide tools for healthy coping, increase resiliency and promote protective factors, build skills in conflict resolution, build skills to identify risk and



prevent suicide, and promote mental health help-seeking behaviors for youth in Interact for Health's priority populations.

- Improve school cultures of mental health and well-being for teachers and increase the skills of school staff to identify and respond to mental health issues.
- Increase availability of culturally relevant and appropriate student and family support and resources.

Interact for Health is investing \$1,000,000 for the School-Based Mental Health Prevention RFP in 2023. Grants may be awarded for **project-based or general operating support depending on the proposed efforts**. Grant size and length will vary based on the scope of the project. We anticipate they will **range from \$100,000 - \$200,000 for 12-18 months**.

## Eligibility Criteria

We welcome funding requests from schools or providers of mental health well-being programs for youth in schools. If a school is applying, we request a letter of support from the partnering provider. If a provider is applying, we request a letter of support from the partnering school(s). Providers should already be providing evidence-based prevention programs in schools and are seeking to expand those programs to additional high-need schools and/or providing more comprehensive programs within existing partner schools.

Applicants must:

- Be a public or private nonprofit or governmental organization
- Provide services in at least one county of Interact for Health's 20-county service area (see [map](#))

Organizations that do not have nonprofit or governmental tax status may still seek funding through fiscal sponsorship. A fiscal sponsorship is a partnership between a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization (the sponsor organization) and charitable project that does not have tax-exempt status (the organization without 501(c)(3) status, aka the sponsored organization). When Interact for Health provides funding for a fiscal sponsorship, the 501(c)(3) organization is considered the Lead Organization" on the project.

For additional details, please read Interact for Health's [Fiscal Sponsorship Policy](#).

## Grantee Requirements

Depending on the project, awarded grantees may be expected to:

- Participate in grantee meetings up to three times per year to share their work and learning with other grantees and Interact for Health
- Participate in [evaluation and learning activities](#) for the grant as well as part of the



overall initiative

## Proposal Selection Criteria

The most competitive applications will:

- Prioritize schools that serve our priority populations: youth who identify as Black, Hispanic, or LGBTQ+; youth in low-income families; and/or youth in rural communities
- Authentically center youth in the project by seeking their input, acting on their feedback, elevating their leadership and/or sharing decision-making power with them
- Implement evidence-based prevention programs, and be from organizations with experience delivering those evidence-based programs
- Work to improve health outcomes by reducing disparities and advancing health equity
- Have goals for the grant period that are clear, feasible and aligned with the goal of the RFP
- Demonstrate that the organization can achieve the goals outlined in the proposal with the budget, timeline and staff capacity indicated

## Timeline

Proposal Webinar	<b>June 13, 2023, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.</b>
Proposal deadline	<b>July 7, 2023, 5:00 p.m.</b>
Site visits	<b>July 17-21, 2023</b>
Notification of grant award	<b>July 31, 2023</b>

## Proposal Webinar

A proposal webinar will be held to answer questions about the RFP concept and application process on **June 13, 2023, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.** Attendance is optional and not required in order to submit a proposal. Please register for the webinar [here](#). If you cannot participate in the webinar, the recording will be posted to the [Open Funding page of our website](#) shortly afterwards.



## Proposal Submissions

Completed applications must be submitted no later than **July 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.** via Interact for Health's online grants portal. To begin the application process or to access a PDF of the required application questions, please visit the [Open Funding page of our website](#). If you have an open grant or have received a grant from Interact for Health in the past three years, your email address may already be registered in the system. For assistance with the application process, please contact Director of Grants Management Kristine Schultz at [kschultz@interactforhealth.org](mailto:kschultz@interactforhealth.org).

## Site Visits

Before selecting projects for funding, Interact for Health staff will conduct a site visit, either virtual or in person, with the potential grantee. Representatives from collaborating organizations are required to attend the site visit. This meeting allows Interact for Health staff to hear more about the proposed project and ask any clarifying questions. Site visits will be conducted **July 17 – 21, 2023**. Applicants will indicate their preferred timeslot during the application process. Site visit topics will include:

- General discussion of your proposed project and budget
- Population of focus for the project
- Any disparities that exist and how this project plans to address them
- Community engagement tactics
- Collaborating partners and organizations or those you plan to engage
- Your organization's journey around diversity, equity and inclusion

## Questions

For any questions regarding the process, please contact Program Manager Deanna Hillard at [dhillard@interactforhealth.org](mailto:dhillard@interactforhealth.org) or 513-458-6615.

## Definitions

**Mental Health & Well-Being:** Mental health *is* health. It shapes how we cope with stress, overcome challenges, build relationships and enables us to value and engage in life. Simply put by someone in our [focus groups](#), it means being good with yourself. For Interact for Health, we define mental health broadly to mean the promotion of mental health, resilience and wellbeing; the treatment of mental and substance use disorders; and the support of those who experience and/or are in recovery from these conditions, along with their families and communities.

**Social-Emotional Learning** is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.



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**Youth:** Interact for Health defines youth as anyone between the ages of 0 and 24 years old.