

Special Announcement!

New Virginia Health Care Foundation Grant Opportunity!

Nurture Now: Helping Children Shine

What: A special \$1.3 million initiative to help address the crisis in children's mental health by providing basic mental health services* in School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) (*new or expanded*).

- A 2 year grant to each of 5 healthcare organizations working in partnership with a local school, where a significant number of children need behavioral health (BH) services and the majority of children are eligible for the federal free/reduced-price meal program or covered by Virginia's Medicaid/FAMIS health insurance (*up to 205% FPL*) or uninsured.
- Optimal for the SBHC to provide at least one additional service (*medical, dental*) to avoid stigma.
- Intended patient population: children in the school and their families.
- Preferred use of VHCF funds: licensed or pre-licensed behavioral health professionals. Modest start-up costs considered.

Learn More: Virtual Pre-Proposal Workshop (*mandatory to be considered for funding*)
January 8, 2024 from noon to 1:30 pm

Timeline: Proposals due February 16, 2024 *via email*
Decisions conveyed by June 30, 2024

* *Basic mental health services* are targeted interventions for students with identified behavioral, academic, attendance and/or emotional needs, and include (*not limited to*) assessment and diagnosis, individual counseling and therapy, small group counseling, behavioral support plans, teacher and parent training to support students

Nurture Now: Helping Children Shine

The Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF) happily announces its *Nurture Now: Helping Children Shine (NN)* initiative. *Nurture Now* is intended to increase access to basic mental health services for children from a school where the majority of children are eligible for the federal-free/reduced-price meal program and their families by establishing or expanding School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs).

Nurture Now funds may be used to:

- *Establish* a new SBHC which will provide behavioral health (BH) care and another health-related service (*e.g., primary medical care, dental care*);
- *Add* BH services at an existing SBHC which currently provides primary medical care or dental services, or another health-related service; or
- *Expand* BH services at an existing SBHC which currently provides mental health services and another health-related service.

THE PREMISE

Whether one goes by the headlines or is more inclined to consult recent studies, the message is consistent. Virginia is amid a mental health crisis. An estimated 2.8 million Virginians reported symptoms of depression and anxiety in 2023 (32%) (*Centers for Disease Control*).

The unavailability of mental health services consistently tops the list of local community health needs assessments conducted by Virginia's non-profit hospitals. Mental Health America ranks Virginia 39th, overall, in accessibility of mental health services, and 48th in youth mental health. Earlier this year, 40% of parents indicated they are "extremely" or "very worried" their children are struggling with anxiety or depression, according to a Pew Research Center report.

There are two main drivers of the unavailability of needed BH services: 1) The significant shortage of BH professionals and 2) a paucity of sites providing mental health services. This is especially true for children and Virginians covered by Medicaid/FAMIS or who are uninsured.

VHCF has been helping address the shortage of BH professionals in a variety of ways. With this initiative, VHCF aims to establish more sites providing mental health services. The target population is children and youth, especially those in low-income communities. Local schools are the target location for these sites.

Schools are logical venues to provide needed BH services. Children congregate there daily, and there are educational professionals who have insights about the students who may need help. Unfortunately, schools are overwhelmed with many post-pandemic dynamics and most are unable to create school-based health centers on their own.

This grant opportunity is designed to provide mental health services in schools with high numbers of children who need them, without the school having to administer or bill for them.

It is not unusual for organizations with the requisite infrastructure and experience delivering mental health and other services to successfully establish or expand a multi-service health center in a school. Having a free-standing healthcare entity handle all aspects of establishing and administering the SBHC enables the center to be established more expeditiously, provide needed services more quickly, and does not distract the school from its educational mission.

THE VISION

With *Nurture Now*, VHCF aims to stimulate and support the establishment or expansion of about five SBHCs, starting with the 2024 – 2025 school year.

Optimally, each SBHC funded by this initiative will:

- Serve a school with a high number of children/youth eligible for the federal free/reduced-price lunch program;
- Work collaboratively with school leaders and personnel to identify children's BH needs and treat them in a non-stigmatized setting and in a holistic manner;
- Provide BH services, plus another (*or several*) other service(s);
- Have a local practice site where children and their families can obtain needed care during non-school hours; and
- Have a viable plan to sustain operations.

THE EXPECTATION

There are multiple approaches to establishing and operating a SBHC. There are also many informative materials from reputable sources that contain suggested best practices and checklists for what makes an effective and successful SBHC.

A review of the materials reveals many commonalities. These have been synthesized and listed in [Key Elements of Nurture Now Proposals](#). It is expected that proposals for *Nurture Now* grant funds will address these key elements and reflect their incorporation into planning and implementation of the SBHC.

THE TOOLS

Some of the more informative implementation guidebooks, toolkits, and written materials to help an organization plan for and operate a well-functioning SBHC are listed below. They are also available on the [Nurture Now](#) page of VHCF's website.

- Washington School-Based Health Alliance *SBHC Planning, Readiness and Implementation Checklist*
- Washington School-Based Health Alliance *SBHC Clinic Coordinator Toolkit: Practical Strategies and Guidance to Enhance SBHC Coordination, Utilization & Efficiency*
- School-Based Health Center Alliance *Partnering with Schools to Improve Youth Mental Health: A Resource for Community Mental Health and Substance Use Care Organizations*
- Key slides from the National Association of Community Health Center's webinar, *School and Health Center Partnerships*
- Virginia Department of Education's *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Guidance for School Behavioral Health*

THE GRANT GUIDELINES

NOTE: Proposals will only be accepted from those organizations whose Executive leaders and staff key to planning and administering the SBHC attend the virtual Pre-Proposal Workshop.

Monday, January 8, 2024 from noon – 1:30 pm

The **Pre-Proposal Workshop will provide important information** about what the proposal is expected to contain, how the proposal will be evaluated and respond to questions potential applicants may have.

- **The principal of the school** where the SBHC will be located **and other school personnel who will be actively involved** in planning and implementing the SBHC are **also strongly encouraged to attend**.
- The applicant's Director of Development and/or grantwriter and others from the applicant organization and/or school district are welcome to attend.
- Please enjoy your lunch during the Workshop. This time was selected to minimize time away from daily operations.

[Click here](#) to register for the Workshop.

Grant Eligibility

Nurture Now applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Executive leaders and key staff from the applicant organization which is establishing the SBHC must have attended the mandatory Pre-Proposal Workshop (*see box above*).
- Be a private, non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, which has the experience and sufficient infrastructure to provide multiple health services, including behavioral health and bill Medicaid.
- Any community health center or hybrid clinic applicants must be in good standing with their respective associations (*Virginia Community Healthcare Association, Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics*).

Use of Funds

Nurture Now funds may be used to support:

- Salary and benefits of key SBHC personnel, preferably licensed or pre-licensed mental health professionals
- Modest start-up costs

Nurture Now funds may not:

- Fund indirect costs;
- Replace funding from an existing source (*public or private*), which has been reduced or eliminated; or
- Fund research initiatives.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS¹

Nurture Now proposals must contain an Executive Summary, Cover Sheet, concise narrative (*10 pages or less*), budget and budget narrative for each of the 2 years, most recent audit, and several forms provided by VHCF and referenced on the *Nurture Now* Proposal Checklist:

The narrative should include:

Need and Target Population

Use this section to describe the **need for BH services for students at the school where the SBHC will be located and rationale for establishing a health center (or expanding services) there. Describe the student population to be served.**

- Use **current data** from the school and community to describe the BH needs of the students and local community's youth.

- ✓ Provide a **profile of the school to be served by the SBHC**, including the facility location, number of students and grade levels to be served, percent of children enrolled in the National School Lunch Program, **student demographics** (*e.g., number of students by grade level, race/ethnicity, language, household income*) and any relevant data demonstrating the need for school BH service (*e.g., school attendance and behavior data, local youth suicide rates*).

- ✓ What Instructional Support Staff (*ISS*) (*school nurse, counselor, social worker*) are available to students in the school? What is the ratio of each ISS type to student?

- ✓ Describe the **demand for BH services at the school** and available to children in the local community and gaps or challenges meeting it.
 - How/where do **students and their families needing BH services currently obtain them** (*assessment, diagnosis, one-on-one counseling/therapy*).

Project Description

Use this section to provide a detailed description of what you are requesting funding for. **What, specifically, do you plan to achieve** with *Nurture Now* funds? What are your implementation plans? Please **be specific**.

- ✓ Describe the **BH services at the school before and with Nurture Now funds**.
 - What **BH services are currently provided** for students at the school? Their families? What will be different because of this initiative (*e.g., new services, more BH hours, reduced wait times*)?

¹Please note: This is a special, one-time grant initiative. As a result, some of VHCF's standard criteria and guidelines do not apply. Interested *Nurture Now* applicants should **ONLY USE THIS DOCUMENT for guidance**.

- How does the school (*and SBHC, if appropriate*) **identify students and family members with BH needs now and how will that change with *Nurture Now* funding?**
 - Are there/will there be protocols for this?
 - Please **use the [Before and With Nurture Now Funds chart](#) to show the changes in BH services available** to students and the school community with *Nurture Now* support.
 - What other services will be offered at the SBHC?
 - What staff will be needed to operate the SBHC?
 - What will the hours of operation be? What happens if children and their families need care outside of school hours?
 - Where in the school will the SBHC be located? Does SBHC space need to be prepared/modified in any way? If so, what is the plan for achieving that?
 - How will IT needs be addressed at the SBHC? Will you use the school district Wi-Fi? Will you use your practice's EHR?
- ✓ Describe your organization's **experience providing health services to *children*** and their families.
 - What is the organization's history and role in the community? Existing services? Patient population? Experience working with schools to provide health services, or in any other way?
 - ✓ **Describe your organization's relationship** with the school where the SBHC will be located, including any **current or past collaborative projects**.
 - ✓ **Provide as complete a picture as possible** of how the school and SBHC will work together per the following questions:
 - How do/will the SBHC and its services fit in with the overall school and community environment?
 - Who will be ultimately responsible for the success of this initiative and your organization's SBHC at the school? Who will be the **day-to-day champion and coordinator** for the SBHC at both organizations? Please provide their resumes and why they have been selected.
 - Will the school and/or school district provide any in-kind resources (*space, Wi-Fi, a point person or coordinator*)?
 - How will the SBHC's BH professionals coordinate and communicate with ISS support staff about students needing/receiving SBHC BH services? What are the roles of each? Will communication protocols be developed?
 - Will there be a process to make/manage/respond to requests for SBHC BH services for students and their families?
 - How/where will students needing more intensive BH services receive them?
 - What strategies will be employed to minimize stigma for accessing services at the SBHC?

- ✓ In addition to any positions for which *Nurture Now* funding is sought. Are there other staff and resources necessary at the SBHC and school to ensure success?
 - What will be the specific roles and responsibilities and FTE level of each SBHC staff person?

Sustainability Plan

- ✓ Include a specific and viable Sustainability Plan that includes *all* revenue estimates and funding sources that will enable you to continue the SBHC/BH services for the long-term. **Please use the VHCf-provided [Sustainability Plan form](#).**
 - Reimbursement by Medicaid will be critical to support ongoing SBHC operations. Describe your organization's experience billing Medicaid and maximizing Medicaid payments for pediatric and BH services.
 - How will you ensure eligible children and their families are enrolled in and covered by public health insurance (*Medicaid/FAMIS, Marketplace*)?

Strategic Plan/Vision Statement and Organization Leadership

- ✓ Indicate how your SBHC relates to your organization's strategic plan.

Community Commitment and Collaboration

- ✓ There is a **very strong preference** for proposals that demonstrate a **25% community match** of requested funding in each year (*in cash or in-kind*) by your organization, partners and/or other public and/or private sources.
- ✓ Identify any local organizations that will partner on this initiative. Describe current and planned cooperative efforts. Shared service provision and attempts to better integrate services within a community are all encouraged.

Evaluation Plan

- ✓ What are **your goals for the SBHC in Year 1? Year 2?** What will indicators of success be? What are the school's goals and indicators of success?
 - How many students and family members are expected to receive BH services (*Year 1: students, family members*)? (*Year 2?*)
 - How many BH visits are expected in Year 1 via this initiative (*students, family members*)? (*Year 2?*)
- ✓ Explain how **the impact and value of Nurture Now will be demonstrated** and indicate the **systems and/or tools you will use** to gather the needed data and information.

Implementation Timeline

- ✓ Provide a timeline for implementing key *Nurture Now* activities/steps for the 2 year grant period. Indicate whether you will be able to open at the start of the 2024-2025 school year with all key elements in place. If not, when will you be able to provide services?

Budget and Budget Narrative

- ✓ **Provide a budget on the VHCF-provided expenditure and income forms and related narrative** that clearly outline expenses associated with the proposed initiative, as well as all sources and amounts of anticipated revenue.
 - [Click here](#) to access the budget spreadsheet.
- ✓ Please provide your organization's current annual budget as an attachment.

NOTE: *Nurture Now* grants will be awarded for two years, with Year 2 funds available contingent upon sufficient progress in Year 1.

PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

- The **proposal narrative** must be no longer than 10 typed, double-spaced pages, using Arial 12-point font, with margins no less than 1". Please format to print on 8" x 11" paper and number narrative pages.
- A completed **Executive Summary** and a completed **Cover Sheet** as supplied by VHCF should be included ([click here to access these documents](#)). These forms and the required attachments are not included in the 10-page limit.
- Proposals **must be received in PDF format (≤25 mb) via email to Kari@vhcf.org by 5 pm on February 16, 2024.**
 - Combine the Executive Summary Cover Sheet, Proposal Narrative, and all attachments as a single PDF.
 - Ensure PDF size to <25 mb or less.

NOTE: Incomplete proposals or those which do not follow the RFP's specifications will not be reviewed. Please examine your proposal carefully to ensure you have provided all the information requested on the attached checklist and that your proposal meets all the specifications outlined above.

Materials will not be accepted under separate cover. All required forms and attachments should be submitted with the formal proposal.

AFTER PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Upon receipt of your proposal, VHCF's Grant Administrator, Kari Parkhurst, will send a confirmation email. If you do not receive it by 5:30 pm on the due date (February 16), please contact Kari directly, within 24 hours from the time the proposal was sent.

Following the submission of a formal proposal, **applicants will likely be asked to participate in a follow-up call/interview with VHCF.** This will include key leaders from both the applicant organization and the school. If a follow-up call is requested, applicants should be prepared to answer specific questions about their proposal and to provide additional information, if requested, in a timely manner.

CONDITIONS FOR GRANT ACCEPTANCE

Each *Nurture Now* grantee must:

- Sign a Letter of Agreement (*LOA*) with VHCF that delineates the terms and mutually-agreed upon objectives of the work for which funds are awarded.
- Agree to participate in and assist with an evaluation of its funded project, and to submit requested data and reports on a timely basis.
- Agree to join other *Nurture Now* grantees several times during the grant period to share learnings and discuss challenges and successes. (*Most, if not all, will be virtual.*)

APPLICATION TIMETABLE

RFP Released	December 18, 2023
Required Pre-Proposal Workshop (<i>via Zoom</i>)	January 8, 2024
Submit <i>Intent to Apply</i>	January 15, 2024
Proposals Due <i>via email, no later than 5:00 pm</i>	February 16, 2024
Notice of Award	By June 30, 2024
Grant Start Date	July 1, 2024

For more information about *Nurture Now*, contact:

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If you like, schedule a Zoom or phone call with Andrea [here](#).

***Nurture Now* is part of *Brighter Days Ahead*, a new multi-pronged mental health initiative of the Virginia Health Care Foundation, made possible by the partnership and investment of the Collis-Warner Foundation, Humana, Sentara Health, Carilion Clinic and the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation.**