



PrairieCare Fund

Support for youth mental health

2025-2026 Grant Request Guide

Request for Proposals

Who is PrairieCare Fund?

PrairieCare Fund is a 501c3 grant making public charity founded in 2016. PrairieCare Fund financially supports youth mental health and wellness programs in schools and nonprofits throughout the state of Minnesota. PrairieCare Fund seeks school districts wanting to strengthen their mental well-being strategies to enhance youth social/emotional learning and mental health resilience. PrairieCare Fund is seeking funding proposals for the 2024-2025 school year.

Funding information:

- Past grant awards range from \$1,000 to \$25,000.
- Previous applicants and recipients
 - Applicants who were not funded by PrairieCare Fund in previous years are invited to submit an updated proposal or new initiative.
 - Previous PrairieCare Fund grant recipients are invited to apply for a new initiative or build on a previously funded project.

Allowable use of funding:

- Funding may go towards staff stipends for project coordination time, staff training, consultant/trainer fees, evidence-based curriculum, materials, and/or supplies.

Unallowable use of funding:

- Tier III mental health treatment or direct therapeutic services.
- Staff salaries for work that are already part of one's job description.
- Staff benefits.
- Capital campaigns.
- In-direct costs.

How does a district or school qualify for funding?

Minnesota schools ***committed to supporting youth mental health*** are eligible to apply. Schools not identified as public must submit their most recent form 990, operational budget for the last fiscal year, and be in good standing with the state.

Eligibility will be based on a school's ability to submit a project proposal that aligns with PrairieCare Fund's mission and vision. Considered proposals will be scored by the PrairieCare Fund Grant Committee on their effective capabilities, value & cost, overall impact, sustainability, and evaluation. Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon the selection of applicants for this grant opportunity. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by PrairieCare Fund's legal consultant.

Grant Application Timeline

January 23 rd , 2025	Application Available
March 17 th , 2025	Applications Due by 5pm
March and April 2025	Applications under review
May 2025	Applicants will be informed of decisions and funds dispersed, if selected

Application Guidelines and Requirements

This guide serves to highlight the various aspects of the upcoming Mental Health Grant Application. The electronic application will be available to all interested applicants via prairiecarefund.org/grants on January 23rd, 2025. **To ensure a fair and equal review process of each proposal, self-created applications will not be accepted.**

Our goal is to help all interested applicants improve their ability to submit a clear and concise proposal that they can implement with fidelity. A list of nine focus areas, with example strategies, is provided to generate ideas. Districts may have unique or additional ideas of how funding might be used to support youth and staff well-being. Those ideas are welcomed. The project can involve one or more school sites as determined by the needs of the school community for the 2025-2026 school year.

Grant Proposal Guidelines

- PrairieCare Fund is looking for proposals that are most likely to advance our mission.
- Proposal must be vetted by school or district administration and ready to implement if a grant is awarded.
- Proposal should be clear and concise, enabling the grant reviewers to easily envision your project.
- Ask someone who is unfamiliar with your grant project to read your proposal and provide feedback on answer clarity, missing components, and strength of the proposal.
- To ensure a competitive proposal that gets noticed, you will need a well thought through plan that is clearly communicated throughout the application questions.
- Providing relevant test data, MN Student Survey results, or other local data is highly recommended.
- Proposals that offer the greatest value/impact for dollars spent are encouraged.

Grant Proposal Requirements

If a grant is awarded, the grantee agrees to the following activities:

- Connection with your PrairieCare Fund throughout the granted school year.
- Complete a mid-term and final report by the laid out due dates.
- Consider a school site visit with PrairieCare Fund to observe an agreed upon grant activity.
- Submit pictures, videos, testimonials, summaries, or other forms of progress updates.
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Questions and Clarifications

Please review the contents of this packet in detail. If you are unsure of whether your school may be eligible for funds or have questions regarding the application requirements, please do not hesitate to reach out. If you wish to schedule time to discuss any element of the proposal or application, you may do so by sending an email to mmoody@prairiecarefund.org to schedule a phone call. Our staff and grant committee look forward to working with you to ensure a smooth application process.

Application Content

Before applying, consider:

- Seeking district administrative approval, from a steering team, for the project.
- Review the nine focus areas and example strategies under each area (Page 4). Selecting a primary focus area to meet your school community's needs.

Application Contents (*This is a preview of the application contents. Do not create your own template, the application will be provided electronically*):

1. School/District Information

- a) Organization Name and Mailing Address.
- b) Project Title.
- c) Amount of Funding Requested.
- d) School Demographics.
- e) Project Lead and Grant Implementation Team (Name, title, grade level, phone, email).

2. Project Details

- a) Describe the need this project is intended to meet.
- b) Provide goals of the project in the SMART goals format.

3. Implementation Plan

- a) Provide a timeline of the grant activities and major milestones within the project.

4. Evaluation Plan

- a) List at least (3) measurable criteria that you will use to measure your success.
- b) How will you gather the data to measure success.

4. Review and Sustainability

- a) How will you ensure the plan is on track.
- b) How will you gather the data to measure success.

6. Budget Proposal

- a) Estimated project cost.
- b) Describe any additional funding outside of this grant that you are seeking.
- c) In detail, please itemize the costs of your proposed budget.

7. Mental Health Funding Strategies

- a) Using the provided list of mental health funding strategies (review on page 4 of this packet), indicate the primary focus of your project. If you opt for option 9, provide a description of your unique strategy.

8. Signatures

- a) Project lead and Principal/Superintendent signatures required.

Mental Health Funding Strategies

1. **Option 1: School mental health foundational components**
 - Build or expand a school mental health team or collaborative with broad stakeholder engagement.
 - Complete an assessment to identify goals and priorities.
2. **Option 2: School climate and connectedness**
 - Assess the school climate with students, staff, and caregivers; identify goals, implement improvements.
 - Provide Positive Behavior Interventions Supports (PBIS with fidelity).
 - Expand culturally responsive and/or trauma-sensitive practices.
 - Implement circle training, restorative practices, and/or alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices.
3. **Option 3: Social and emotional learning (SEL)**
 - Assess and implement SEL with the [adoption of universal, evidence-based programs](#) (CASEL).
 - With a current SEL program: a). increase fidelity, b). provide ongoing implementation support to staff, or c) ensure practices align with the vision and goals and is culturally and linguistically responsive to students.
 - Expand SEL resources to families and into homes.
4. **Option 4: Mental health literacy**
 - Expand mental health education earlier into the elementary and/or middle school curriculum; plan and collaborate on a K-12 scope and sequence of mental health literacy.
 - Provide professional development and training: examples may include trauma-informed practices, Youth or teen Mental Health First Aid, QPR training, Kognito-suicide prevention, ACEs, practical classroom-based interventions.
5. **Option 5: Mental health disparities are targeted**
 - Expand culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive policies and practices.
 - Review and eliminate discriminatory discipline policies and practices that further erode BIPOC and LGBTQ youth's sense of acceptance and belonging at school.
 - Improve the overall quality of health and services through targeted training, assessments, and evaluation.
 - Expand mental health information and resources in numerous ways as a variety of languages.
 - Improve safety and inclusion practices for LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC.
6. **Option 6: Basic wellness needs of youth or employees**
 - Increase the frequency of daily or weekly practices of stress reduction, mindfulness, or gratitude.
 - Increase positive peer relationships and strategies for deeper social connections.
 - Increase opportunities for daily movement: classroom activity breaks, Yoga Calm, expansion of rec activities.
 - Involve those at most risk in clubs, recreation activities, and/or volunteering.
7. **Option 7: Parent/caregiver education and engagement** (in sustainable ways)
 - Expand mental health literacy.
 - Train key staff to assist as cultural liaisons and school system navigators for mental health.
 - Give parents the skills to talk with their child about mental well-being; reduce stigma.
8. **Option 8: Employee mental well-being**
 - Survey staff about their needs and recommendations for social and emotional well-being; implement ideas.
 - Target stress reduction and workload modifications specific to school administrators and leaders.
 - Provide resources for staff to increase their resilience and stress management skills.
 - Find ways to increase employee connectedness and decrease isolation.
9. **Option 9: Propose a strategy to meet your school community needs.**

Past PrairieCare Fund Grant Recipients & Program Titles

ISD 622 - Early Childhood Social-Emotional Supported Classroom

Utilized *Conscious Discipline*® which is built on the premise of developing discipline within children rather than applying discipline to them. This grant focused on preschoolers with the goal to improve emotional regulation and social skills. This district had profound results. Their students gained skills to self-soothe, learned how to be friends, and improved peer and adult trust and relationships.

ISD 741 - Paynesville Cares - A Community-Based Support Network for Youth

Community wide *Youth Mental Health First Aid* training. Mental Health First Aid is an in-person training for anyone who wants to learn about mental illnesses and addictions, including risk factors and warning signs. This 8-hour training teaches participants a 5-step action plan to help a person in crisis connect with professional, peer, social, and self-help care. The goals are to decrease stigma and barriers, educate and increase skills. This program had a component of students being peer mentors and had community engagement events. Students developed a Social Justice Theatre presentation which enhanced the ability of community members to recognize youth dealing with a mental health crisis and how to reach out, listen, and connect with appropriate resources. This program created a high level of engagement with plans for 6 courses to be offered per year.

Prior Lake - Savage Area Schools - Growing Through Grief

This district partnered with Park Nicollet to offer *Growing Through Grief*. *Growing Through Grief* is an intensive in-school grief support program that was provided to elementary, middle, and high school students who have experienced the death of a family member or friend. Grief services were provided free of charge to students which also included peer support groups and one-to-one counseling on a regular basis throughout the school year. 100 school staff were trained, and they had 611 student contacts. 46 students were affected by loss and became involved in group and individual support with teachers and school personnel feeling more equipped to identify and assist appropriately. They created a video for ongoing training.

Le Sueur Henderson School District - 7 Mindsets Social Emotional Learning Curriculum

7 Mindsets not only impacts academic performance and interpersonal relationships within the school setting, but also equips students with problem solving and self-regulation skills for life beyond. All licensed elementary staff were trained. They also hosted family and community events and education. Hilltop Elementary saw a reduction in behavioral referrals by 22% from 688 to 540 and increased mental health referrals from 0 to 15. Park Elementary experienced a reduction in behavioral referrals by 99% from 688 to 72 and decreased mental health referrals from 21 to 10. Both schools discovered student absenteeism correlated highly with crises at home such as parents with mental health difficulties or drug addiction. They identified that students are often better at learning these new skills than adults, and more community outreach is needed to assist the teachers and parents with their own mindsets. Clear plans were developed to continue to grow and expand programming to older students, parents, and additional staff.

South Washington County Schools - Healthy Connections in an Overconnected World

South Washington wanted to harness the power of communication to inspire social and behavioral change. Their program impacted 12,000 students, families, and staff serving middle schools in Cottage Grove, Lake, Oltman, Woodbury, and High Schools in East Ridge, Park, Woodbury, South Washington Alternative. They educated their community on the impact of media on brain development and engaged teens to tell their stories of growing up connected and stressed. This initiative included youth-led messaging and stories. Community education was focused on educating parents and staff on risks of on-line use including cyberbullying, helping teens to build a health relationship with the digital world and be more aware of the teen experience and its relationship to mental health. This district developed podcasts to promote resiliency and further share their message. This grant request was prompted by two student suicides and the search for ways to better help youth.

True North with Dugsi Academy - Healing for a Refugee Community

This initiative focuses on healing the refugee community. Their community experiences high rates of trauma in their students, families, and staff due to war, poverty, violence, and relocation. Their school has 100% free or reduced lunch and 85% of their student body uses English as a second language. This school partnered with the *Center for Mind-Body Medicine* to offer the training and a CALM team was established to support and monitor progress. They created a Sanctuary Room and engaged schools and religious communities. This pilot project was utilized as a template for schools serving refugee populations nationwide. The outcome of their proposal implemented a highly effective foundation of self-awareness and self-regulation that was integrated seamlessly into the instructional model to address the trauma experienced in refugee populations. Their goal was to have all learners become aware of their own internal state and afford everyone real tools to support those with mental illness and/or experiencing trauma.