



**Department of  
Mental Health &  
Addiction Services**

Office of Community and Family Resiliency Request for Applications

Enhancing the System of Care for Youth & Families

RFA #: 86 MHA-FY26-OCFR-Enhancing System of Care

Funding Period: 09/01/2025 – 09/30/2026

Request for Applications Posting Date: 08/08/2025

Request for Applications Due Date: 08/29/2025, by 3 p.m. EDT

Mike DeWine, Governor

Jim Tressel, Lt. Governor

Leann Cornyn, Director

# Grants Posting Evaluation Criteria for Request for Applications (RFA)

Office of Community and Family Resiliency, Enhancing the System of Care for Youth & Families

RFA# 86

**Applications should be completed using the following information, guidance, and requirements:**

## **SECTION I. GENERAL PURPOSE & APPLICANT INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) releases this Request for Applications (RFA) for the purpose of soliciting applications from boards of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services, as defined in section 5119.90 of the Revised Code, to provide evidence-informed practices for early intervention, treatment, and supports for youth at-risk for or diagnosed with a substance use disorder (SUD), including justice-involved youth. The responsibilities of the selected applicants will include provision or coordination of early intervention, treatment, and supports for youth and their families.

This funding is designed to support local communities in implementing a modern System of Care (SOC) that promotes recovery, embraces trauma-informed principles, and is grounded in community-based supports. It provides an opportunity to strengthen cross-system partnerships to meet the prevention, treatment, and recovery support needs of youth and families with complex, multi-system involvement. This includes the integration of youth leadership, mentoring, early intervention programming, SUD and Mental Health treatment, harm reduction strategies, and youth and family peer supports.

For the purpose of this RFA, the term “applicant” means a board of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services (ADAMHS board) as defined in section 5119.90 of the Revised Code. The terms “application” and “response” may be used interchangeably to refer to the materials an applicant submits to OhioMHAS for consideration for a grant award under this RFA. The terms “grantee” and “selected applicant” may be used interchangeably to refer to an organization selected by OhioMHAS for an award through this RFA.

### **1.2 Overview of the Project**

The System of Care initiative aims to support the creation of, and access to, a coordinated network of services that meet the evolving needs of youth and families. This framework is rooted in access, opportunity, resilience, and recovery, ensuring individuals receive the treatment and support they need through authentic partnerships with families, youth, and community organizations. A core component of this work is the identification and closing of gaps in care across the behavioral health system.

**Target populations will include the following:**

- Youth at-risk for substance use disorder
- Youth with a substance use disorder (SUD) who require community-based treatment and long-term recovery support.

- Youth experiencing co-occurring substance use and persistent mental health challenges and are involved in or at risk of involvement with multiple public systems (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice, developmental disabilities, housing/homelessness).
- Youth at-risk for or involvement with the juvenile justice system or transitioning from the juvenile justice system.
- Youth belonging to populations that have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and lack of access to opportunities.

### **1.3 Issuing Office**

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Office of Community and Family Resiliency releases this Enhancing the System of Care for Youth & Families RFA.

### **1.4 Background**

Ohio's System of Care (SOC) for youth and families reflects a long-standing commitment to coordinated community-based responses to behavioral health needs. Originally launched through the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS), the SOC framework was strengthened and expanded following the 2013 merger that created the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). Since then, OhioMHAS has deepened cross-system collaboration and advanced services that are youth-driven, trauma-informed, and recovery-oriented.

This funding opportunity represents the next phase in modernizing the SOC framework to better serve youth and families—particularly those currently experiencing or at risk for substance use disorders (SUD), co-occurring mental health conditions, and multi-system involvement. Emphasis is placed on reducing disparities, expanding access to community-based supports, and embedding youth and family voice in every aspect of care.

Today's SOC is guided by core principles that ensure youth and families:

- Access a full continuum of prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery support services that meet behavioral, physical, educational, and social needs
- Participate in a culturally competent, trauma-informed, and person-centered planning process that builds on strengths and goals
- Are served in developmentally appropriate settings that promote healing, connection, and resilience
- Co-lead the design, delivery, and evaluation of services and policies that affect them
- Receive coordinated care across systems through shared data and collaborative leadership
- Are supported by peer partners, mentors, and recovery coaches who reflect their identities and lived experiences

Through this RFA, OhioMHAS aims to expand the reach and impact of the System of Care by investing in evidence-informed practices, elevating youth and family leadership, and fostering innovative, locally driven solutions.

### **1.5 Scope of Work**

Grantees of this funding must support and/or provide a comprehensive array of services. Eligible services should reflect a recovery-oriented System of Care that includes prevention (including suicide and problem gambling prevention), treatment, harm reduction, and long-term recovery support. These services should include:

**Behavioral Health Services (substance use treatment and/or co-occurring)** such as screening, assessments, individual and group counseling, day treatment, case management, and trauma-informed therapeutic services delivered by qualified providers.

**Peer Support** including:

- Youth peer support provided by trained youth with lived experience supporting others in recovery
- Family peer support offered by family members with lived experience providing guidance and support to caregivers

**Mentoring** services such as educational mentors, independent living coaches, recovery mentors, and youth leadership facilitators.

**Youth Leadership Development and Community Engagement** opportunities that allow youth to co-lead service planning, participate in evaluation efforts, and engage in advocacy initiatives that impact their lives and communities.

**Supported Education and Employment** services that help youth succeed academically, explore career paths, gain work experience, and transition into the workforce.

**Care Coordination** using team-based planning centered on youth and family goals. Grantees should incorporate meaningful family involvement by offering individualized family support planning, caregiver engagement in treatment and recovery decision-making, access to culturally responsive resources, and inclusive activities that promote healing, connection, and community. Family supports may also include coaching, peer support, and routine check-ins to strengthen resilience and well-being.

**Ancillary Supports** including:

- Transportation
- Interpretive and translation services
- Social and recreational activities
- Supported housing
- Independent living skills
- Educational and technology-related expenses such as laptops and internet access
- The cost of childcare while families engage in treatment and support services

**Outcome Measures:**

- **Youth retention:** Tracks how many youth stay engaged in services over a set period of time.
- **Youth satisfaction:** Measures how youth feel about the services they receive, including quality and relevance.
- **Youth increase in knowledge, skills, and abilities:** Assesses growth in areas like coping, communication, and decision-making due to program participation.
- **Pre-Post surveys:** Tools used to measure changes in youth outcomes by comparing responses before and after program involvement.
- **Youth recidivism:** Tracks how many youth return to juvenile justice involvement after participating in the program.
- **Youth connected to a mentor:** Counts the number of youth paired with a consistent mentor through the program.
- **Youth engaged in YLP:** Measures how many youth are actively participating in Youth Leadership Programming activities.
- **Number of new youth peer supporters:** Counts how many youth have been trained and onboarded as certified peer supporters.

## **Reporting Requirements:**

Awardees and any sub-awardees must participate in ongoing evaluation and data collection activities required by OhioMHAS. This includes:

- **Monthly Status Reports** submitted to the Office of Community & Family Resiliency. These should include progress updates, barriers encountered, and course corrections.
- **Mid-year and End-of-Year Reports** submitted through the OhioMHAS Grants Funding Management System (GFMS), capturing grant deliverables, performance metrics, and outcomes achieved.
- **OBHIS Data Submission**, including admission/discharge and service-level data as required by OhioMHAS and applicable law (ORC 5119.61, OAC 5122-28-04). For more information, visit: [mha.ohio.gov/research-and-data/obhis](https://mha.ohio.gov/research-and-data/obhis).

Awardees should expect to participate in **monthly check-in meetings** with OhioMHAS staff to review progress, share lessons learned, and identify technical assistance needs.

### **1.6 Eligible Applicants**

Only boards of alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health services that have the resources to complete each item under “Scope of Work/Deliverables” should apply.

Awardees that administer and/or dispense medications approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of SUD must provide effective controls and procedures to guard against tampering and diversion of controlled substances. Applicants must adhere to all federal and state guidelines for opioid treatment programs or office-based opioid treatment programs, if applicable.

Awardees also must be in good standing with state and federal entities. Applicants must commit to ongoing communication and collaboration with OhioMHAS, public children’s services agencies, and any other applicable systems during an individual’s recovery process, regardless of county of residence of the participant.

### **1.7 Award**

OhioMHAS has released this Request for Applications (RFA) to distribute a total of **\$2,239,352** in available funding. Eligible applicants may request up to **\$250,000 per year** to support the outlined scope of work.

Awards are expected to be announced for project implementation the week of **09/08/2025**.

**Future funding award years are contingent upon receipt of federal funds.**

The actual dollar amounts awarded for the selected application will be based on the amount of state or federal funding made available to OhioMHAS. Applications are qualified if they are in accordance with the application submission requirements and earn at least the minimum score requirements for quality and completeness of applications as specified in this RFA. Scoring and final selections will be completed by a team selected by OhioMHAS. To select awardees and determine award amounts, OhioMHAS may consider the quality of applications, the appropriateness and reasonableness of proposed budgets, geographic diversity, local partnerships, and available funding.

OhioMHAS may, at its option, make selections based in part on geographical and demographic criteria in order to provide a wide range of services around the state, and in both urban and rural areas. Applicants are encouraged to prepare and submit applications and budgets which are both practicable and capable of the scope of work.

Applicants are to be aware that OhioMHAS may, at its sole discretion, negotiate with all technically qualifying applicants for a revised Project Budget, if the Project Budgets of all technically qualifying applicants are in excess of the available funding for this project. Please refer to Section 7.1 C. of this RFA for further information on OhioMHAS procedures to be implemented if this occurs.

## **SECTION-II. Posting and Award PROCESS INFORMATION**

### **2.1 Anticipated Timetable**

1. The RFA, accompanying documents, and all questions and answers will be posted on the OhioMHAS website at: **<https://mha.ohio.gov/supporting-providers/apply-for-funding/funding-opportunities>**
2. All questions must be submitted electronically no later than **08/22/2025, by 3 p.m. EDT**, to OhioMHAS at [The Office of Community & Family Resiliency](#):
3. The FAQ mailbox will close one week prior to the application due date. No questions will be answered after the deadline. You may **NOT** contact any OhioMHAS staff member directly with questions regarding this RFA. Contacting staff directly with questions could result in disqualification of an application.
4. Responses to all questions (FAQ) will be posted to the OhioMHAS website at **<https://mha.ohio.gov/supporting-providers/apply-for-funding/funding-opportunities>** and will be updated frequently.
5. Applications must be submitted electronically to [MH-PreventionServices@mha.ohio.gov](mailto:MH-PreventionServices@mha.ohio.gov) by **08/29/2025 by 3 p.m. EDT.**
6. Application grant notification letters will be sent approximately fourteen days post grant application closure.
7. OhioMHAS agreements are not valid and effective until the issuance of an approved State of Ohio Notice of Sub-Award (NOSA). The NOSA will contain the start and end dates of the award.
8. The grantee(s) must be able to begin work no later than seven (7) working days after the time funds are encumbered and approved by the Office of Budget & Management. The grantee(s) will be notified by the OhioMHAS Agreement Manager when work may begin. Any work begun by the grantee prior to this notification may not be reimbursable by OhioMHAS.
9. All work must be completed and approved by the OhioMHAS Agreement Manager. All work must be completed by 3:00 p.m. of the last day of the programmatic period as it appears on the NOSA.

It is the responsibility of all applicants to check the webpage dedicated to this RFA on a regular basis for

responses to all questions, as well as for any amendments, alerts, or other pertinent information regarding this RFA. OhioMHAS is not responsible for the accuracy of any information regarding this RFA that was obtained or gathered through a source different from the Q & A process described in this RFA.

Should applicants experience technical difficulties accessing the OhioMHAS website where the RFA and its related documents are published, they may contact the OhioMHAS Helpdesk at MHAHelpdesk@mha.ohio.gov for guidance.

A bidders' conference will **not** be held for this funding opportunity. All necessary details are included in the RFP.

### **SECTION-III. APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

The applicant must submit electronic response to (MH-PreventionServices@mha.ohio.gov). A copy of the grant *application* must be received by OhioMHAS no later than **08/29/2025**. *Applications* received after this date and time will not be reviewed. Materials mailed or submitted separately from the *application* packet will not be accepted or added to the application/proposal by staff of OhioMHAS. Faxed or mailed *applications* will not be accepted. Costs incurred in the preparation of this application are to be borne by the applicant; OhioMHAS will not contribute in any way to the costs of the preparation.

#### **3.1 Page-Limit**

The page limit for this application is 10 pages, single spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point readable font such as Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri. The 10 pages do not include the Budget Expenditure Form and Budget Narrative.

#### **3.2 Application-Components**

##### **A. Face-sheet**

- a. Name of applicant organization, address, phone number
- b. Executive director name and contact information
- c. Project Director name and contact information
- d. Fiscal officer name and contact information
- e. Applicant's federal tax ID
- f. Title of this RFA
- g. Amount of funding requested

**B. Abstract** – Summary of services and supports to be provided, the target population(s), number of individuals projected to be served in the first and second funding period, the goal(s) and objectives(s) of the proposed services and supports, and the total amount of funding requested for the first and second funding period. (400 words or less)

**C. Scope of the Work/Project Description:** Provide a detailed description of the proposed approach to completing each deliverable and timeline for completing each deliverable. In the project description, please also include the following information.

- a. **Population of Focus:** Identify and describe your population(s) of focus and the geographic catchment area where your organization and/or sub-awardee(s) will deliver services that align with the intended population of focus and scope of the grant.
- b. **Number to be Served:** Please identify the number of individuals projected to be served.
- c. **National Outcome Measures (NOMS):** Applications must include a description of the project goals and measures to be achieved during the programmatic project period.
- d. **Applicant Qualifications:**  
The applicant must address all the minimum qualifications and fully describe their prior experience working with this population, the level of subject matter expertise (SME) and other related qualifications and/or credentials.
- e. **Staffing Plan:** The applicant's response must identify by position and name, the staff who will be key to the project's success. Include FTE, qualifications and the service providers' level of subject matter expertise implementing the proposed services and supports.
- f. **Sub-Awardee** qualifications and staffing plan (if applicable)
- g. **MOUs and Contracts:** Signed by multiple partner organizations across key functional areas, specific to the scope of work.
- h. **Adherence-to-the-National-CLAS-Standards:**
  - 1. Link to National CLAS Standards  
<https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/standards>
  - 2. How diverse cultural health beliefs and practices will be implemented in a culturally competent and trauma informed manner
  - 3. How preferred languages will be honored
  - 4. How to meet health literacy and other communication needs of all sub-populations identified in the proposal

**D. Outcome Measures:** Applications must include a description of

- a. Project goals and outcomes to be achieved.
- b. Detailed methodology for measuring progress; benchmarks that provide an indication of standards to achieved.
- c. Methodology for tracking progress achievements or shortfalls.
- d. Methodology-for-analyzing and correcting project errors.

**E. Reporting:** Award recipient will be required to participate in OhioMHAS sponsored meetings and provide regular communication regarding status and project outcomes throughout the grant project period, including but not limited to:

- a. Startup meeting with OhioMHAS project lead
- b. Submission of Office of Community & Family Resiliency Monthly/Quarterly Status Reports
- c. Monthly monitoring calls with OhioMHAS project lead
- d. Technical Assistance calls with OhioMHAS project lead as needed
- e. Mid-Year Reporting (GFMS)
- f. End of Year Reporting (GFMS)

**F. Budget-Expenditure-Form-and-Budget-Narrative**

- a. Applications must include a Budget Expenditure Form and Budget Narrative that identifies all costs to complete the project as described in the Request for Application.

- b. Include a signed Notice of Award/Sub-Awardee Statement of Assurances including budget and budget narrative for each sub-awardee.
- c. Include the Budget Checklist which can be found on the OhioMHAS Funding Opportunities Page.

**SECTION IV. CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION SCORING**

**4.1 Scoring Applications**

OhioMHAS will enter into agreement(s) with grantee(s) that best demonstrate the ability to meet the requirements outlined in this RFA. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a team from OhioMHAS using the criteria below. The final award decision will consider both the technical score and alignment with the goals of the System of Care initiative.

Applicants that incorporate a strong focus on **peer support, mentoring, youth-led services, and supported education and employment** will receive higher scores in relevant sections. Proposals that clearly demonstrate meaningful integration of these components especially through youth and family leadership, developmentally appropriate supports, and cross-system collaboration will be prioritized during review.

All applications will be scored using the following performance rating scale:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>0 – Does Not Meet</b>	Response does not comply substantially with requirements or is not provided.
<b>1 – Weak</b>	Response was poor and minimally addresses the objective.
<b>2 – Below Average</b>	Response indicates the objective will not be fully met or met at a below-average level.
<b>3 – Meets</b>	Response generally meets the objective or expectation.
<b>4 – Above Average</b>	Response indicates the objective will be exceeded.
<b>5 – Strong</b>	Response significantly exceeds the objective and contains at least one enhancing feature that offers tangible benefit.

Scoring will be calculated by multiplying the score in each category by its assigned weight and summing across all categories for a total technical score. Reviewers will evaluate both the **quality of the response** and the **degree to which applicants demonstrate a clear plan for implementing priority service areas** as outlined in the Scope of Work.

In addition to technical scoring, OhioMHAS may consider geographic diversity, applicant readiness, and the strength of partnerships when making final funding decisions.

**SECTION V. AWARD**

1. Awards are expected to be announced during the week of **09/08/2025**
2. Grant award will not exceed **\$250,000.00**.
3. All grant funds must be expended by **09/30/2026**

4. Renewals are subject to successful performance and the availability of future funds. It is anticipated that awardees will have the opportunity to renew for up to two years.

**Deadline for submission of all applications is 08/29/2025, 3 p.m. EDT and must be submitted to MH-PreventionServices@mha.ohio.gov**

## **SECTION VI. CONDITIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

\*According to requirements of Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 126.07, OhioMHAS agreements are not valid and enforceable until the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) certifies the availability of appropriate funding, as indicated by the approval of the Purchase Order (PO). The selected applicant(s) may neither perform work nor submit an invoice for payment for work performed for this project for any time period prior to the PO approval date. The OhioMHAS Agreement Manager will notify the selected applicant(s) when the requirements of ORC Section 126.07 have been met.

\* \* Subject to all applicable approvals, the agreement period is expected to run from approximately **09/08/2025 through 09/30/2026**. Renewal of the agreement(s) will be contingent upon availability of funding, satisfactory performance, the continued need for the services described herein, and all required approvals.

### **6.1 Public Release of Records**

Public release of any evaluation or monitoring reports funded under this agreement will be made only by OhioMHAS. Prior to public release of such reports, OhioMHAS must have at least a thirty (30) day period for review and comment.

## **SECTION VII. ATTACHMENTS AND THEIR USES**

- A. Required Applicant Information and Certifications (*To be completed & included in the application as specified*)
- B. Assurances
- C. Application Score Sheet (*For applicant reference purposes*)
- D. Project Budget Form (*To be completed and included in cost application packet as specified in Section 3.2,*

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION, RATING, AND SCORING:** Each application will be scored, and numerical technical point values will be assigned according to the criteria listed below. The scale (0-5) will be used to rate each application response to the RFA on the technical evaluation sections:

DOES NOT MEET	WEAK	BELOW AVERAGE	MEETS	ABOVE AVERAGE	STRONG
0 POINTS	1 POINT	2 POINTS	3 POINTS	4 POINTS	5 POINTS

OhioMHAS will score the application responses by multiplying the score received in each category by its assigned weight and adding all categories together for the Offeror's total technical score. Representative numerical values are defined as follows:

- DOES NOT MEET (0): Response does not comply substantially with requirements or is not provided.
- WEAK (1): Response was poor related to meeting the objectives.
- BELOW AVERAGE (2): Response indicates the objectives will not be completely met or at a level that will be below average.
- MEETS (3): Response generally meets the objectives (or expectations).
- ABOVE AVERAGE (4): Response indicates the objectives will be exceeded.
- STRONG (5): Response significantly exceeds objectives (or expectations) in ways that provide tangible benefits or meets objectives (or expectations) and contains at least one enhancing feature that provides significant benefits.

Review Criterion	Weight	Rating 0-5	Highest Possible Score
<b>Requirements:</b> Demonstration that applicant meets the minimum requirements to apply for the grant. Applications that do not meet the minimum requirements will not be scored.	1		5
<b>Abstract:</b> Summary of the proposed plan	1		5
<b>Project Description Components</b>			
<b>Scope of Work:</b> Quality and completeness of proposed services aligned with RFA expectations, including integration of <i>peer support, mentoring, youth-led programming, and supported education and employment.</i>	20		100
<b>Prior experience:</b> Demonstration that applicant has prior experience successfully implementing complex projects across multiple organizations, including prior experience developing training curricula, hosting trainings, providing technical assistance, implementing statewide conferences and events, and leading organizations to improve performance as applicable.	20		100
<b>Staffing and Partnerships:</b> Plan for recruiting staff, including a list of staff positions, assigned duties, proposed qualifications, and the amount of FTE for each position on the project. Demonstration to a strong commitment to statewide collaboration, evidenced by signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with multiple partner organizations across key functional areas.	15		75
<b>Proposed implementation approach:</b> A realistic timeline for each month of the project. The timeline should include objectives that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound). All key dates, key activities, and responsible personnel should be outlined in detail and align with the proposed phases of the project.	20		100
Demonstrate a strong focus in one or more of the following areas: <b>peer support, mentoring, youth-led services, and supported education and employment</b>	2		10
<b>Evidence-based and evidence-supported practices (EBPs/ESIs):</b> A discussion of proposed EBPs and ESIs.	6		30
Adherence to National CLAS Standards	2		10
<b>Evaluation:</b> Reasonable plan for evaluating fidelity of each EBP/ESI and working with organizations to implement changes to improve fidelity.	6		30
<b>Sustainability Plan:</b> Initial plans on the development of a sustainable program after the grant ends.	6		30

<b>Cost:</b> Cost is reasonable, realistic, and is within the projected annual budget	2		10
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>101</b>		<b>505</b>