

2026 SIGNATURE GRANTS

Children's Health Foundation (formerly Rest Haven Children's Health Fund) is pleased to announce our inaugural **Children's Health Foundation Signature Grants**. Through this initiative, the Foundation will award **four grants of up to \$250,000 each** in 2026 to 501(c)(3) public charities serving children ages 0–17 in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Signature Grants will be reviewed and evaluated annually, and may vary in the number of grants and amounts allocated.

For this funding opportunity, the Foundation is seeking proposals for programs that provide a direct and measurable impact on (1) mental and behavioral health, (2) food insecurity, or (3) dental care of children and adolescents.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Eligible programs must address a clearly identified mental or behavioral health need through prevention, early intervention, identification, treatment, or improved access to appropriate care, and are limited to the following areas:

- Anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, or other significant emotional challenges;
- Significant mental or behavioral health conditions that substantially affect a child's emotional, behavioral, social, or daily functioning;
- Suicide prevention, crisis intervention, or other interventions addressing significant behavioral health risk;
- Trauma and adverse childhood experiences when the program provides a direct mental or behavioral health intervention;
- Early childhood mental health programs addressing clinically significant emotional or behavioral concerns that interfere with a child's development or functioning;
- Access to appropriate mental and behavioral health services for underserved children and adolescents; or
- Culturally responsive and community-based behavioral health services that directly address the mental or behavioral health needs of children and adolescents.

Food Insecurity

- Screening, referral, and coordinated services that connect food-insecure children to appropriate nutrition resources.
- Innovative programs that measurably improve children's access to nutritious food, such as (but not limited to) increased mobile food distribution and the creation or support of culturally responsive food programs.

Dental Health Care for Children and Adolescents

Screening, care, services, equipment, appliances, and sedation related to dental health care for underserved children when such services are not otherwise covered by private or public insurance/assistance.

Children's Health Foundation is particularly interested in programs that:

1. Address a clearly identified and significant community need supported by credible data, community needs assessments, service utilization data, waitlists, referral patterns, or other reliable evidence;
2. Provide a clearly defined health intervention that is designed to address the identified need;
3. Define meaningful and measurable outcomes for children and adolescents and describe how progress and impact will be measured. Existing programs should provide available outcome data, while new or expanded programs should identify the outcomes they expect to achieve and how those outcomes will be evaluated;
4. Reach underserved, vulnerable, or high-needs children and adolescents, particularly those who face barriers to accessing services and resources described in our funding priorities; and
5. Demonstrate a reasonable capacity to implement the proposed program and achieve the intended outcomes, including appropriate staffing, partnerships, expertise, and infrastructure.

Permissible and Impermissible Use of Funds

All programs are limited to serving children ages 0-17 who reside in San Diego or Imperial Counties. Grant funds may be used for program support, capacity building, technology, capital improvements, and administrative costs. Grant funds may not be used for political activities, lobbying, debt retirement, endowments, religious proselytizing, scholarships to individuals, re-granting without prior approval, real estate acquisitions, or indirect costs.

Children's Health Foundation will not generally consider proposals focused primarily on general youth development, mentoring, academic achievement, recreation, childcare, parenting education, or substance-use prevention without a direct mental or behavioral health component, or general wellness/social-emotional enrichment without a clearly identified mental or behavioral health need and intervention.

Grant Period and Reporting Requirements

The Grant Period begins December 31, 2026, and can go as long as December 31, 2028. Grantees will need to submit Interim Reports and a Final Report, dates TBD.

LOI and Application Timeline

8/21/2026	LOI Opens
9/14/2026	LOI Closes
10/12/2026	Next Round Applicants Announced / Applications Open
11/6/2026	Applications Close

All applicants will be notified by mid-December 2026 of the status of their Application. Checks will be distributed before the end of December 2026

Solicitation of Board and Staff

Applicants may not solicit the input or assistance of any CHF Board Members, Honorary Board Members, or staff during this time. Technical questions about the LOI or Application can be directed to the Executive Director. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in immediate disqualification from the 2026 Signature Grant process.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria: LOI

In addition to the program initiatives described above, applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria, which will be explained through submission of their Letter of Intent (“LOI”):

1. Must be organized as a 501(c)(3) public charity that is in good standing with federal and state regulatory agencies, with no legal actions pending.
2. Must be located in or maintain an active office in San Diego or Imperial County, and the program must serve children living in those counties who are ages 0-17 years old.
3. Should be in continuous operation for at least the three (3) previous years, have full-time Executive Director/CEO, access to experienced grants or financial management resources, and adequate staff to administer grant proceeds.
4. Must have a minimum annual operating budget of \$1M, with experience managing previous grants of \$50,000 or greater.
5. Maintain a Board of Directors or Board of Trustees of at least five (5) individuals.

LOI Applicants will also be asked to provide an estimated program budget and program summary.

The Foundation will review all eligible LOI submissions based on the selection criteria for this funding opportunity. Only organizations selected to advance will be invited to submit a full application. Submission of an eligible LOI does not guarantee advancement to the Application phase or receipt of funding.

Applicant Criteria: Application

Those applicants who are moving to the Application Phase will be required to submit the following in their Application:

1. Comprehensive program description
2. Three years of audited financial statements
3. Three years of IRS form 990s
4. Current operating budget
5. Complete program budget

How to Submit the LOI

All applications must be submitted through our online grant application portal after creating your unique account by [clicking here](#).

1. Create your account using the link provided above. For previous users, just log in. If you forgot your password, click on "Forgot Your Password?" to reset it.
2. For new users of returning applicant organizations, do not create a new profile for your organization to avoid duplication. Email us to get a new username added to your organization's profile. We do not have access to your password. If you forget your password, you must change it by clicking "Forgot Your Password" and following the prompts.
3. As soon as you register, you can view the Signature Grants LOI.
4. Once the application opens, you can begin filling in your responses to the questions and prompts. All of your responses and uploaded documents will be saved, and you can access your application at any time and from any device.
5. After the LOI and Application periods end, you will no longer be able to make any changes to either document. Incomplete applications will be rejected.
6. All Interim Reports and Final Reports will be made using the same portal.
7. For help please see the [Applicant Tutorial](#).
8. Want to add a collaborator from your organization? Watch this [Collaborator Tutorial](#).

AI Policy

Applicants may use AI-assisted tools to support the drafting and editing of grant materials. However, applicants and any staff, board members, or volunteers who contribute information included in a Letter of Intent (LOI) or grant application must ensure that all submitted information is accurate, truthful, and supported by appropriate documentation or independently verified sources, as applicable. The applicant organization retains sole responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, and content of its submission, including compliance with confidentiality, intellectual property, privacy, and data protection requirements. Children's Health Foundation may request applicants to disclose the extent of AI use in the preparation of grant materials at any point during the application review process or grant period. The submission of falsified, misleading, or unverified information may result in rejection of the LOI or application, termination of a grant award, or other remedies available to Children's Health Foundation. Children's Health Foundation reserves the right to seek the return of grant funds awarded based on materially false or misleading information.

Questions may be directed to Cass Kaminetz, Executive Director, at grants@chfsd.org.