

2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
**Pride Month – Improving the Health of Mercer County LGBTQ+ Youth and Families**

Release Date: June 3, 2024  
LOI Deadline: July 12, 2024

The Buhl Regional Health Foundation (BRHF) is a private health foundation, committed to making a positive impact on the health and well-being of the community we serve through education, grants, scholarships and collaborative partnerships with local organizations. Our mission to identify and address the diverse health care needs of the community gives us the unique opportunity to invest in your innovative solutions.

BRHF envisions a healthy community where people are active participants in driving their physical and mental health and the health of the community. Additionally, we are concerned about the Mercer County youth and we want to hear from them and learn what they feel their needs are.

## **OVERVIEW**

The most recently released (2022 data), Pennsylvania State LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment indicates LGBTQ people experience health challenges at increased rates as a result of social, environmental, cultural, and institutional factors, which contribute to health disparities. Experiences with discrimination, minority stress, familial homophobia and transphobia, and targeting by the tobacco industry are some of the factors contributing to barriers to health and healthcare. LGBTQ health challenges do not exist in silos; instead challenges intersect and compound each other. Numerous biological (e.g., infectiousness, effectiveness of treatment), behavioral (e.g., tobacco use), and psychosocial or structural (e.g., discrimination, homophobia) factors can undermine LGBTQ individuals' full potential for health and wellbeing.

Several aspects of the survey findings relate to mental health, both personally and among LGBTQ communities in general (see LGBTQ Community Health Section). While the majority of respondents report being satisfied or very satisfied with their life (66.6%; 51.8% satisfied and 14.8% very satisfied), more than one third report being dissatisfied with their life (33.4%; 25.8% dissatisfied and 7.6% very dissatisfied). These percentages are similar to the 2018 and 2020 PA LGBTQ Health Needs Assessments (69.2% and 30.8% in 2020, 72.6% and 27.4% in 2018).

In the past year, three in four respondents report experiencing a mental health challenge (75.0%). When asked more specifically about the past 30 days, over half (57.4%) of respondents report having poor mental health for 10 days or less, while over one in four (27.2%) report having poor mental health for 20 days or more. Among all respondents, half have received counseling or other mental health treatment in the past year (52.5%) and among respondents who have experienced a mental health challenge in the past year even more have received counseling or other mental health treatment in the past year (63.1%). However, mental health counseling and treatment needs persist.

Respondents were asked about lifetime experiences of discrimination, which can have a significant impact on mental health and access to health care, and thoughts of self-harm and suicide. In their lifetime, more than six out of ten respondents (62.4%) have experienced discrimination based on their LGBTQ identity. Nearly half of respondents (48.0%) report having thought of harming themselves,

with more than three out of four (83.3%) of those respondents first experiencing thoughts of self-harm at age 19 or younger. Over half of respondents (50.6%) say they have considered suicide at some point in their life.

Younger respondents were more likely to report negative experiences related to mental health, including being more likely to experience a mental health challenge in the past 12 months, having more days of poor mental health in the past month, having less life satisfaction, and feeling more left out and isolated. Reports of all of these experiences declined with age group progression. However, the age group with the highest likelihood of reporting a lack of social and emotional support was respondents 50 to 64 years of age. Experiencing mental health-related challenges, including thoughts of self-harm and suicide, was more common for transgender and non-binary respondents, and respondents who identified as bisexual, pansexual, asexual, demisexual, or queer. Transgender and non-binary respondents were also significantly more likely to report lifetime experiences of LGBTQ-based discrimination (71.0%, compared to 56.1% of respondents who were not transgender or nonbinary).

Respondents were asked what they would prioritize as the top three health issues impacting LGBTQ communities. Depression was the most frequently selected health issue, selected by more than half of respondents (57.3%). Depression was selected as a top priority by more than half of every respondent age group. Depression was also highly reported as a top health challenge in the 2016, 2018, and 2020 Needs Assessments. Other top three health priorities also relate to mental health, with more than one third of respondents selecting loneliness and isolation (37.4%) and suicide (35.5%). Alcohol and other substance addiction is also a top priority among more than a third of respondents (34.5%). One third also identify access to welcoming care (33.2%) as a top priority. Violence and homicide (30.9%) and bullying (24.9%) are also top priorities identified by more than 20 percent of the respondents.

Among respondents ages 20 and under, depression (53.4%) and suicide (48.6%) are top priorities, with violence and homicide selected third most frequently (33.0%) and bullying a close fourth (31.0%).

As part of the Healthy Community Collaborative, the Buhl Regional Health Foundation recently surveyed elementary, middle, and high school students about health in their community. The goals of the survey were to understand youths' perspectives and collect ideas for how to improve health in their community. Preliminary results indicate that youth would like to see improved social harmony, no drug, cigarette, vaping or alcohol use, more collaboration and community engagement, no bullying, and more/improved green spaces.

An additional survey conducted by BRHF in fall 2023 indicated a need for mental health programming for our Mercer County LGBTQ+ youth and adults.

In recognition of Pride Month (June), the Buhl Regional Health Foundation is issuing this Request for Proposals to our community stakeholders, seeking innovative initiatives that propose to improve health outcomes in our community by addressing the inequities, health disparities, mental health needs and obstacles that LGBTQ+ youth and their families face.

## **GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

BRHF will award grants in September 2024 for implementation of initiatives that strive to increase Mercer County's LGBTQ+ youth and families access to optimal mental or physical health and well-being and/or improve their access to quality healthcare. BRHF believes that healthy youth are connected to and helping to drive the health of their community. We desire to fund programming

that ensures our youth are given the tools they need to make informed decisions related to their health and the health of their community; therefore, we seek to fund organizations that are aligned with our beliefs by listening to youth and using their voices to inform decision-making.

## **USE OF FUNDS**

Organizations are invited to apply for funding to launch a new initiative or improve a current initiative focused primarily on optimizing the health of the LGBTQ+ youth and families in Mercer County, PA. Start-up organizations are welcome and current initiatives receive preference if they are collaborative and innovative in nature.

\*\*\*If awarded, funding must be exhausted within a one-year grant period from the date funds were received; BRHF does not award multi-year grants\*\*\*

## **GRANT REQUIREMENTS**

To qualify as a grant recipient, your organization's initiative must meet the following requirements:

- Initiative may be new to the community or include improvements to an existing initiative.
- Initiative must provide services and/or outreach to LGBTQ+ youth and families in Mercer County. "Youth" is described as aged 18 and under.
- Initiative must intentionally address mental or physical health, health disparities and/or inequities.
- Initiative's goals must be clearly identified and methods for measurement of goals and objectives should be clearly described.
- Initiative must include a plan for collaborating across sectors in our community and/or establishing strong community partnerships.

## **GRANT PRIORITIES**

The recipient(s) of the Pride grant will:

- Demonstrate creativity and innovation in the community.
- Predominantly serve LGBTQ+ youth and families with demonstrated physical or mental health disparities or unmet health needs.
- Actively develop strong, cross-sector community partnerships.
- Address LGBTQ+ youth and/or families physical or mental health or well-being and/or increase access to necessary health services.
- Have a clear plan for sustainability beyond the grant period.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Eligible applicants will meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be classified as tax-exempt by the IRS, typically 501(c)(3) status, government agency or utilizing a fiscal agent who is clearly identified in the application.
- Faith-based organizations must welcome all faiths and participation in religious activity participation must be clearly defined as optional.

- Applicant's efforts must serve LGBTQ+ individuals, aged 18 and under and/or their families who reside in Mercer County, PA.
- Previous grantees of BRHF must have fulfilled the required 18 month waiting period from their last grant award and all previous grants must be closed (all grant reporting completed and any unused funds returned).
- Preference will be given to applications:
  - collaborative in nature.
  - that include programming needs such as meeting space, educational classes, supplies that will be utilized long-term.
  - for start-up costs related to new programs or organizations.
  - that assist with transportation to and from existing or new programming.
  - that include educational classes.

## **UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

This grant may not be used to fund the following:

- Supplemental funding to previously awarded grants
- Direct payment to a pediatric care provider
- Research projects, such as clinical trials
- Health fairs or other one-time events
- Consumables and daily supplies including: t-shirts, clothing, giveaways, prizes, snacks, cosmetics and beauty supplies
- No reimbursements for items purchased prior to the grant period
- Sponsorships of events
- Sports team equipment
- Field trips
- Addiction treatment
- Mental health treatment
- Additional expenses may be disallowed at the discretion of BRHF

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Responses to this RFP must be submitted through BRHF's grant portal. All other forms of submission will not be reviewed. First-time applicants will need to create a new account. Once an account is established, the Letter of Interest can be completed within the portal and must be submitted by the deadline listed in this RFP.

A review of the LOI's received will prompt BRHF to issue invitations for detailed proposals. All applicants will be notified of the status of their LOI, either via invitation to continue the application process or a letter of ineligibility.

Detailed proposals will require the upload of the organization's most recent 990, a full project budget, proposed use of the funding requested and additional details and documentation regarding your organization and proposed initiative.

Additional attachments to the application are optional, not scored, and may not be used in response to application questions. Applicants may include up to four pages of attachments, including, but not limited to: citations/references, flyers, letters of support and letters of intent or interest from current or future community partners.

**APPLICATION REVIEW**

Detailed proposals will be scored based on the following criteria:

- Creativity and innovation
- Significance of impact on the community’s health needs
- Effective collaboration efforts or goals
- Actionability

**REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Grant recipients will be required to submit reports on project development and implementation on an interim and final reporting schedule determined by the BRHF Director of Grantmaking.

**RFP TIMELINE**

The RFP Cycle will follow the timeline below:

Deadline for LOI	July 12, 2024
Detailed Proposal Invitations Sent	July 17, 2024
Deadline for Detailed Proposal	August 16, 2024
Award Announcements	September 16, 2024
Funding Issued	September 30, 2024

**QUESTIONS**

The Buhl Regional Health Foundation staff is here to be a resource throughout the application process. Questions, requests for guidance, and portal support needs should be directed to Kimberly Porsch, Director of Grantmaking, [kimberly@buhlrf.org](mailto:kimberly@buhlrf.org) or Jessica Koss, Executive Team Assistant, [jessica@buhlrf.org](mailto:jessica@buhlrf.org).