

The Celia Lipton Farris and Victor W. Farris Foundation

Supporting Bold Leadership in Community Mental Health & Wellness

Summary

The Farris Foundation seeks to invest in organizations that focus on mental health and wellness and are committed to creating equitable and accessible community systems of care.

The foundation will support innovations that increase access to care, integrate mental health and wellness promotion with primary care and other human services, and support professional development. The capacity building grant program will support practical, "building block" projects that help behavioral healthcare organizations such as:

- Help the organization acquire the necessary knowledge, tools, and resources to develop, implement and assess targeted improvements in their work.
- Expand best practices and models that lead to sustainability.
- Build program capacity through planning, training, collaborating, and evaluating grants.

Applicants may request up to \$50,000 for one year of support. The foundation may invite follow-up requests for continued support depending on progress and interest.

Timeline – Fall Grant Cycle

2025 Activity	Date
Announcement	August 1, 2025
Concept Proposals Due	September 5, 2025
Concept Proposal Decisions	September 25, 2025
Full Proposals Due	November 5, 2025
Grants Announced	December 16, 2025

Background

The pandemic made everyone more aware of the importance of behavioral health and reminded us of the challenges ahead. We are at a tipping point. Our systems of care, support, and prevention are broken and disconnected. Our caregivers are burned out and neglected. We are hungry for new approaches in behavioral health that disrupt the forces holding those problems in place.

The foundation seeks to support projects that address pressing bottlenecks and blind spots in behavioral health. These are blind spots that funders, government, and our own organizational and professional biases ignore. We will focus on fresh ideas to advance emerging integration, access, and professional development trends. We are also eager to support new models of care, dialogue, and community-building that create spaces for the voices that are the least heard in communities.

Grants will support efforts that are both practical and visionary such as:

INTEGRATION - Accelerate the pace of integrating mental health care with other domains

- Increase the access and quality of behavioral health services in primary care through behavioral health integrated team-based care models
- Support efforts of organizations outside traditional healthcare organizations to promote behavioral health and wellness.
- Connect spiritual and contemplative practices to behavioral health and wellness.
- Use animals to help people cope with and recover from some physical and mental health conditions.

ACCESS - Increase access to culturally competent care for the most vulnerable

- Promote prevention, early identification, screening, and community-based crisis programs that help people sooner and prevent problems later on.
- Use digital technology/telehealth to make care more convenient and data more useful.
- Increase recovery-oriented education, services, and support in the community
- Mobilize community health workers such as peer specialists or paraprofessionals to address behavioral health disparities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - Emphasize the professional development and wellness of caregivers

- Support innovative efforts that build enduring programs, resources, and practices that promote workforce wellness, learning, and capacity.
- Align, develop, improve, or expand continuing education and training.
- Develop systematic coaching and supervision strategies.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include direct providers of healthcare services and support organizations of direct providers targeting underserved individuals and families in low-income communities.

Lead applicants must have a core mission that focuses on behavioral health and a reputation for cross-sector collaboration. The foundation will give priority to projects in the fields of addiction, trauma, depression, and other mental health disorders. The areas of developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injury are not a priority. Organizations that do not specialize in behavioral health are encouraged to work in collaboration with a community partner that does.

What will it fund?

Proposal elements and budget submissions may include, but are not limited to:

- Consultation, planning, feasibility research
- Professional or technical staffing expenses for a defined start-up/transition period
- Provider education, training, case consultation, peer support
- Program coordination, outreach, monitoring, and evaluation
- New methods of testing, explorations of new collaborations and partnerships, involving new allies, promoting cross-sector collaboration

The foundation will support projects proposed by organizations at various levels of capacity. Some grants may support projects just getting started. Other grants will support more advanced partnerships and coalitions where they take coordinated action.

Grants will favor applicants who have done their homework and have deep insight into a particular challenge or opportunity. Projects must include action plans that build on existing momentum, respond to clearly defined needs and opportunities, and have identified measurable activities and outcomes. The foundation is less interested in providing ongoing support to existing programs.

What the Foundation Looks for in a Project

The foundation seeks to learn from projects that push organizations to approach the more challenging questions of access, equity, and engagement. The foundation will reward creativity, experimentation, and a pioneering spirit.

We are looking for proposals that communicate the following:

A sense of urgency. The project is timely, rooted in specific behavioral health and organizational challenges, and would be recognized by peer organizations as a top priority.

Readiness for strategic action. Clarity about the role the organization or organizations seek to play in advancing practice. The applicant will use the funding to achieve a long-term vision.

Clear goals and objectives. The project has a solid outcomes and results orientation.

A learning orientation. The project addresses exciting questions about the challenges of the work that are useful to others.

Racial and gender equity. The project makes an explicit effort to address racial and gender equity.

Peer-involvement. Projects are created by or in direct collaboration with people labeled with mental health issues or those most impacted by trauma and harmful systems.

Holistic. Frameworks for healing address the whole person (mind, body, and spirit) and the broader context in which the person lives.

Eligibility Criteria

1. **Nonprofit organizations.** Applicants must be U.S.-based nonprofit organizations with approved IRS 501(c)(3) status or fiscal agents with a 501(c)(3) status. Collaborations may include organizations that do not have a 501(c)(3) designation.
2. **Target communities.** Provide services or collaborate with organizations in one of the following communities:
 - Northern New Jersey
 - Palm Beach County & Broward County, Florida
 - Northwest region, North Carolina (Watauga, Wilks, Avery, and Ashe, Counties)
 - Santa Fe County and adjacent Northern New Mexico Counties
3. **Behavioral health mission.** Lead applicants must have a core mission that focuses on behavioral health. The fund will give priority to projects in the fields of addiction, trauma,

and depression. Fields of long-term care, developmental disabilities, and traumatic brain injury are less of a priority. Organizations that do not specialize in behavioral health are encouraged to work in collaboration with a community partner that does.

4. **Local leadership.** Applicants outside the target communities are encouraged to apply with a community partner.
5. **Match requirement.** There is no funding match requirement, but financial and in-kind contributions toward the project budget and evidence of interest and support from other funders will strengthen the support case.
6. **Organizational size.** The foundation will favor requests that have the potential to benefit the most staff and clients in a system, network, or community. Huge organizations are not a priority. We encourage small organizations to apply in coalition with other community partners. An individual organization may be included in multiple funding applications if it is part of more than one proposed collaborative project.

Use of Funds

The foundation will award grants of up to \$50,000 annually to implement projects. The foundation may consider requests for continued support based on progress.

Allowable costs. Funds may be used for personnel, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, and contractors or consultants. The foundation prefers to support staffing and program expenses over equipment. However, the equipment needed to support a project's implementation directly can be included as a cost component.

Indirect costs. The foundation will consider supporting indirect expenses, provided they are fully justified.

Exclusions

- Academic research or writing
- General operating expenses
- Capital campaigns or improvements
- Conferences or one-time workshops
- Political lobbying
- Marketing
- Policy campaigns addressing reimbursement policies, regulation of licensure/certification, or state workforce monitoring.
- Revenue/billing of professionals while participating in training

Award Information

- A. **Notification of Award Recipients.** Depending on the grant cycle, we will notify grant recipients no later than July or December. We will post the list of grant recipients on the [Celia Lipton Farris and Victor W. Farris Foundation](#) website.
- B. **Grantee Expectations** Recipients funding should expect and plan on the following:
 1. **Peer Exchange:** We hope that grantees can learn from each other. We may support in-person convening for peer exchanges. Grantees should expect to join calls or webinars with other grantees.
 2. **Grant Reporting:** We will ask grantees to provide short, mid-grant updates and a final written report.
 3. **Long-Term Tracking:** We may ask you to fill out a survey or participate in follow-up calls after the project period.

How to Apply

The fund will accept letters of inquiry for grants up to \$50,000.

Letters of inquiry are due by 5:00 PM Eastern on September 5, 2025.

Please use our [Online Application System](#) and fill out the LOI form **(Access Code: farris)**.

We will invite a limited number of proposals for each proposal deadline.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Can a regional or national organization apply to replicate or pilot projects in one or more of the target communities?

We are open to all forms of collaboration as long as an organization in the target community leads or initiates the proposal and project, and the proposed has a set of long-term objectives.

If my request was denied in the Fall cycle, can I apply again in the Spring?

Yes. You can submit a new letter of interest by the next deadline.