



October 31, 2025

Dear Community Provider,

Capitol County Children's Collaborative, Inc. (CCCC) provides care management services to children and youth experiencing emotional, behavioral, developmental, intellectual, and substance use needs, and their families. As part of our contract with the New Jersey Children's System of Care (CSOC), CCCC has access to limited funds designated for one time use by community organizations to promote and develop new, additional, and/or unique resources addressing an unmet or under-served need in Mercer County.

**This letter serves as a "Request for Proposals" (RFP) to develop and/or increase the availability of community based resources to Mercer County youth experiencing emotional, behavioral, developmental, intellectual, and substance use needs, and their families.**

A maximum total of **\$67,697.00** is available to fund one or more projects. Funding is to be used for expansion or creation of resources available to Mercer County youth experiencing emotional, behavioral, developmental, intellectual, and substance use needs, and their families. Please note that only projects offered **in-person** to youth and families will be considered. All types of projects that result in the expansion or creation of community-based resources will be considered with preference given to those programs that address needs related to:

- Mental and Behavioral Health intervention programming (specifically serving youth birth to 7 years of age)
- I/DD and neurodiverse social and therapeutic groups, respite programming, transition support
- Mentorship Programming supporting youth in or at risk for entering restrictive/intensive settings (i.e. Youth Detention, Partial Hospitalization, Inpatient)
- Health and Wellness programming targeting healthy eating, recreational activities, fitness, and healthy body and mind connections
- Social Skills groups which include psychoeducation, socialization, recreation
- LGBTQ+ Community programming in support of this population and allies
- After-school enrichment programming, inclusive of tutoring opportunities
- Vocational programming for at-risk, aging-out (17+) populations includes life skills, financial literacy, coaching, etc.

This funding solicitation reflects current needs of youth served by Mercer County's Children's System of Care and the NJ Children's System of Care Community Resource Development (CRD) funding guidelines. Collaborative applications that maximize the impact of these limited funds are encouraged as well as projects that include family participation. The overall goal of this RFP is twofold: to develop and/or increase the availability of resources to Mercer County youth and their families; and to increase positive outcomes for youth experiencing emotional, behavioral, developmental, intellectual, and substance use needs. Applicants must commit to working in partnership with Capitol County Children's Collaborative (CCCC), other system partners, and community-based resources. They must embody the values of the NJ Children's System of Care.

*Funds are not intended to purchase services directly for specific individuals or families and funds cannot be used to supplement contracted DCF services. CRD funds cannot be used to acquire or maintain fixed assets, such as land, buildings, vehicles, and equipment. Please note only proposals with in-person service delivery components will be considered and all awards are contingent upon the sufficiency and availability of CSOC funding.* All proposals with attachments shall include the following information specific to this solicitation and will be evaluated based on the "Rating Scale" included with this announcement. Final decisions regarding grant awards will be at the discretion of the CSOC.



**RFP Timeline**

**Bidders Virtual Conference (via Zoom)**

Capitol County will host two (2) opportunities for perspective bidders as an informational meeting where questions regarding the RFP process will be addressed. The meeting is not mandatory, but attendance is encouraged. Interested parties may use this meeting to ask questions and receive information regarding the scope, implementation and requirements of the grant.

*Registration Links provided below*

**Wednesday, November 19, 2025, 11:00a.m.**

[REGISTER HERE](#)

**Tuesday, December 16, 2025, 2:00p.m.**

[REGISTER HERE](#)

**Submission Deadline: Tuesday, January 16, 2026 at 5:00 PM**

Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. The preferred method for submission for the Request for Proposal is a Word or PDF document attachment via email sent to:

[abright@capitolkids.org](mailto:abright@capitolkids.org)

**To ensure email delivery, please leave a phone message at 609-584-0888 ext 143 indicating proposal was sent  
Submitted proposals will receive a confirmation email of acceptance**

*Applicants will receive an email confirmation of receipt on the following business day of submission of proposal*

Select applicants may be invited to present their proposals. Proposals will be evaluated by a review team consisting of members of the Mercer County CIACC, Mercer County Youth Services Commissions, and Capitol County Children's Collaborative (CCCC). Due to time constraints and the volume of applications, not all proposals may be selected for presentation.

**Scoring and Review**

All applications will be reviewed and scored via a panel consisting of CCCC Chief Community Development Officer, CCCC employees, and various members of the Mercer County Children's Interagency Coordinating Council (CIACC) and Youth Services Commission.

Applicants should expect to hear back regarding the status of their proposal no earlier than **May 15, 2026**

**Program Implementation and Reporting**

The duration of the grant runs from **July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027**

*\*\*Funding is no longer accessible after June 30, 2027\*\**

Capitol County and awardee will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) affirming the service commitment including deliverables, effective dates of services, and funding commitment.

Funded proposals must adhere to a schedule/timeline of 3 reports which are due to Capitol County and the NJ Children's System of Care. Funded proposals will be provided this timeline upon award determination.

***All awards are contingent on the sufficiency and availability of State funding***



Please find the attached pages of this RFP packet which include the application, Background & Rationale, and example of scoring guidelines. Any questions you may have can be directed to my attention at 609-584-0888 ext. 143 or via email at [abright@capitolkids.org](mailto:abright@capitolkids.org)

Sincerely,

Ashlee Bright, MSW  
Chief Community Development Officer  
Capitol County Children's Collaborative

cc: Joseph Rizzello, LPC, Chief Executive Officer (Capitol County Children's Collaborative)

Additional enclosures:

Dale Mooney, DCF Children's System of Care Statewide System Partner Lead  
Wyndee Davis, DCF Children's System of Care Assistant Director, Community Based Services  
Lisa Billotti, DCF Program Coordinator – CMO Support  
Board of Trustees, Capitol County Children's Collaborative

Distribution:

CCCC Community Provider List  
MC CIACC  
MC Youth Services Commission

Post: [www.capitolkids.org](http://www.capitolkids.org)  
[www.mercerresourcenet.org](http://www.mercerresourcenet.org)



## Exclusionary Criteria

- CRD funds are not intended to purchase items for specific individuals or families. All purchased items must be equitably accessible to all participants and relevant to the program content.
  - EX; gift cards, personal bills, electronics etc.
- CRD funds cannot be used for capital expenditures, including the acquisition or maintenance of fixed assets such as land, buildings, vehicles, and equipment not directly related to the provision of the service.
- Families cannot incur any cost or fees when receiving CRD funded service
- Initiation of services cannot be dependent on procurement of unsecured funding and/or partnerships that are not yet established.
- Funds cannot be used to pay for services currently being funded by DCF or other sources.
- Administrative costs are allowable – but must be reasonable and outlined in detail within the budget.
- Operations of the program cannot be directly funded by the work and contributions of participating youth and families it serves – without appropriate compensation for hours worked.
- Services provided directly through CRD funds cannot also be billed through Medicaid or other established funding sources such as private insurance – causing payment duplication

NEW FOR FY2027: Completion of CARI (Child Abuse Record Information) checks for all staff working directly with youth is required for agencies whose proposals are recommended for award. Detailed guidance is provided in with Application.

## Data Sources:

- Mercer County CIACC Needs Assessment 2025
- Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership Community Health Needs Assessment 2024
- Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) 2025
- Kids Count: New Jersey Kids Count 2023 Data Book
- Advocates for Children of NJ – Trenton Kids Count 2023; A City Profile of Child Well-Being
- National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics
- National Institute of Mental Health
- Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC)
- Mercer County Data Profile – Needs Assessment 2020
- Mercer County HSAC County Data Profile
  - Mercer County – A Profile of Family and Community Indicators (updated June 2023) – in conjunction with Rutgers School of Social Work and DCF
- Mercer County Youth Services Commission (YSC)
- The Community Guide – Community Preventative Services Task Force
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Behavioral Health Resolutions (American Psychological Assoc.)  
<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/child-adolescent-mental-behavioral-health>



## **Mercer County Community Resource Development Funds Background and Rationale – Fiscal Year 2026-2027**

The NJ Children's System of Care (CSOC), Mercer County, and Capitol County Children's Collaborative (CCCC), are interested in expanding services and programs for youth in the county with mental health, behavioral health, intellectual disabilities, and substance use needs. **This one-time funding of \$67,697.00 (less may be applied for) must be utilized in full by: June 30, 2027 and will become unavailable to the awardee(s) after that date.** Funding is intended to support new or existing activities or services through collaboration with community partners that reduces risks to youth and adolescents (and their families) and promote safety, health, and connections at home and in the community. *Funds are not intended to purchase services for specific individuals or families.* Applicants must commit to working in partnership with Capitol County Children's Collaborative (CCCC), other system partners, and community-based resources. They must embody the values of the NJ Children's System of Care. Please note that only projects offered **in-person** to youth and families will be considered.

There have been noted gaps and needs in quality, community-based mental health services through various system-wide surveys and needs assessments. Capitol County has reviewed recent county and State data and needs assessments and while the proposals do not have to narrowly target any one population or area of service need, keeping with the identified needs of our county is advised and applicants considering proposals for this funding should be able to tie their proposed services or programs to the needs cited within the RFP and any need identified should be supported with documentation within the RFP narrative.

**Consideration for proposals target the identified needs (in no specific order or limitation to):**

- Mental and Behavioral Health intervention programming (specifically serving youth birth to 7 years of age)
- I/DD and neurodiverse social and therapeutic groups, respite programming, transition support
- Mentorship Programming supporting youth in or at risk for entering restrictive/intensive settings (i.e. Youth Detention, Partial Hospitalization, Inpatient)
- Health and Wellness programming targeting healthy eating, recreational activities, fitness, and healthy body and mind connections
- Social Skills groups which include psychoeducation, socialization, recreation
- LGBTQ+ Community programming in support of this population and allies
- After-school enrichment programming, inclusive of tutoring opportunities
- Vocational programming for at-risk, aging-out (17+) populations includes life skills, financial literacy, coaching, etc.

*Mental Health Services*

- Access to increased bilingual services (Mental Health and Behavioral Health (clinical and psychiatric))
- Intensive Outpatient Programs and Partial Hospitalization Programs (under 10 years of age)
- Bilingual Mental Health and Behavioral Health Services
- Reducing barriers to transportation needs (access)
- Services for youth awaiting Screening for CCIS admissions (hospitalization/inpatient care)

*Socials Skills and Enrichment Programming*

- Services that support youth in a group setting – inclusive based on levels of functioning
- Provides psychoeducation in a wide range of areas including but not limited to safety, well-being, positive social interactions
- Health and Wellness enrichment

*Needs related to Mentorship and Community-based programming*

- Delinquency prevention programs
- Increase Violence prevention programs and initiatives
- Affordable before/after school programming

*Substance Use Treatment*

- Accessibility to programming for youth beginning in Grade 5 through Middle School
- Increased screening and treatment for substance use among youth and adolescents
- Programs which support Co-occurring diagnosis with substance use and mental health

*Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*

- Developmental testing and resources (youth ages 3-5)
- Services and interventions for behavior modification
- Resources supporting priority groups: families applying for services, youth transitioning into adult system (DDD)

*LGBTQI+ Community*

- Peer Support programming (to include online communities for healthy discussions and allyship)
- Identifying affirming spaces and services (with an increase in suicide rates nationally, LGBTQ+ youth experience higher prevalence)

Data Sources:

- Mercer County CIACC Needs Assessment 2025
- Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership Community Health Needs Assessment 2024
- Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) 2025
- Kids Count: New Jersey Kids Count 2023 Data Book
- Advocates for Children of NJ – Trenton Kids Count 2023; A City Profile of Child Well-Being
- National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics
- National Institute of Mental Health
- Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC)
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- Mercer County Youth Services Commission (YSC)
- The Community Guide – Community Preventative Services Task Force
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Behavioral Health Resolutions (American Psychological Assoc.)  
<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/child-adolescent-mental-behavioral-health>

All applications will be reviewed and scored via a panel consisting of CCCC Chief Community Development Officer, CCCC employees, and various members of the Mercer County Children’s Interagency Coordinating Council (CIACC) and Youth Services Commission.

**Only complete packets will be eligible for review. Packets must be in Word or PDF format and emailed no later than **5:00 PM on January 16, 2026** to [abright@capitolkids.org](mailto:abright@capitolkids.org).**

**Anticipated implementation date for awarded proposal(s) is July 1, 2026**

Thank you,

Ashlee Bright, MSW  
Chief Community Development Officer  
Capitol County Children’s Collaborative  
609-584-0888 ext. 143  
[abright@capitolkids.org](mailto:abright@capitolkids.org)

*All awards are contingent on the sufficiency and availability of State funding*



**2026-27 Mercer County Community Resource Development Funds Application**

Legal Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact for Application \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Website \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Submission \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Status:       Non-profit                       for profit

Has your organization applied for Community Resource Development Funds for the FY2026-27 within another county?  Yes                       No

*If yes, please affirm that services can be delivered in Mercer County with no barriers to access.*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please use additional sheets of paper to respond to the following questions:  
For further descriptions of requests, please see RFP notice document*

**NARRATIVE:**

1. State your organization's mission.
2. Provide a brief history of your organization including incorporation, tax status, and experience with the proposed project.
  - a. Provide information regarding Medicaid provider status.
  - b. Disclose any other funding your organization receives from the NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF).
3. Project Description:
  - a. Describe the unmet need(s) you are targeting with any experiential or statistical data you may have.
  - b. Describe how your organization proposes to meet the need:
    - i. Describe the target group served; needs ages, number of individuals to be served
    - ii. Describe relevant details such as hours of operation, staff qualifications, location, etc.
    - iii. Describe the activity/service. Explain how this proposal addresses the goal as explained in the request for proposals Background and Rationale Statement (Notice).
  - c. Describe the outcomes expected and how you will measure them
    - i. the deliverables are the specific services that will be provided to the youth and families. The level of service should define who and how many will receive the service, and the frequency and length of service. The outcomes should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely and should demonstrate the impact and benefit of the service to youth and families.
  - d. Explain how this project will be sustained on an ongoing basis after the grant money has been used.
    - i. Bidders must demonstrate a reasonable plan that outlines relevant strategies to pursue funding after the grant period, and that includes leveraging existing community capacity.
    - ii. Agency history and proven fund-raising ability and donation procurement are acceptable proof of sustainability when combined with a current plan.



4. Assurance of equitable access of the services/supports to the identified population
  - a. Explain the referral process. This process should ensure equitable access to services or supports for the youth and families that are eligible to receive them and the access process should be free from any form of discrimination.
  - b. Demonstration of how the service will be announced to the community should be included.
  - c. All purchased items must be equally accessible to all participants and relevant to the program content (i.e., gift cards, electronics, etc.)
  - d. Families cannot incur any cost or fees when receiving CRD funded service
5. Provide any additional information about your organization, program or experience which will be helpful to the selection process.

### PROJECT BUDGET

Submit a line item budget, describing each item, the total cost, and the amount you are requesting for Capitol County Children's Collaborative (CCCC). Include a brief justification for the amounts you have included. Funds should not be used to supplement existing funds. Applicants can apply for the full amount \$67,697.00 or a lesser amount.

- Funds are not intended to purchase items for specific individuals or families.
- Initiation of services cannot be dependent on procurement of unsecured funding and/or partnerships that are not yet established.
- Funds cannot be used to pay for services currently being funded by DCF or other sources.
- Administrative costs are allowable – but must be reasonable and outlined in detail within the budget.
- Operations of the program cannot be directly funded by the work and contributions of participating youth and families it serves – without appropriate compensation for hours worked.
- Services provided directly through CRD funds cannot also be billed through Medicaid or other established funding sources such as private insurance – causing payment duplication

**The following must also be included with this application:**

- List of Board Members
- Set of recent financial statements (at least six months)
- CARI Check Attestation Form

***All awards are contingent on the sufficiency and availability of State funding***

**Only complete packets will be eligible for review. Packets must be in Word or PDF format and emailed no later than **5:00 PM on January 16, 2026** to [abright@capitolkids.org](mailto:abright@capitolkids.org).**

Additional questions and inquiries can be directed to:  
Ashlee Bright, MSW  
Chief Community Development Officer – Capitol County Children's Collaborative  
**609-584-0888 ext. 143**



## CARI INSTRUCTIONS AND CERTIFICATION FORM

### Rationale and Process for CARI checks

Any agencies funded by DCF, are subject to the Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) background check requirement mandated by N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10f. As of October 1, 2019, the CARI Online Application System is available to DCF affiliated agencies to create an account and submit CARI applications. Please review the following information regarding the Online Application System and submission of your CARI applications for CRD 27 award recommended agencies. Some agencies may have an existing structure that already requires they submit CARI checks as part of their current operations or based on a separate law that preceded N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10f. If that is the case, they do NOT need to submit additional CARI applications under this law. Please ask them to provide the CARI certification form within this document that states all staff who will work in direct contact with youth under 18 years of age have passed the CARI requirements.

### Steps to register for CARI checks

When CMO identifies an agency as the potential CRD awardee they will direct the awardee to follow the process as listed below.

1. The applicant will register as a business with the State of NJ and receive an Employee Identification number (75.00 fee) and a tax ID number. The step by step process is provided at <https://business.nj.gov/> where you can both register your business to receive your EIN and receive a tax ID number.
2. Once these numbers have been assigned, please visit <https://www.njstart.gov/bsoc/> to create a record, and acquire a vendor identification number. (150.00 fee)
3. The final step will be to follow the instructions and register with the CARI unit and submit for CARI checks (see below).
4. CARI will notify the agency if their staff are clear or if they need to be terminated. CARI will require a signed verification that the unapproved staff are no longer with the organization.
5. Once the agency has completed this process, they will submit the CARI Certification form to the CMO, as it will need to be included in the submission of the Proposal and recommendation to CSOC. (Certification form is included at the end of this guidance)
6. Fees associated with the registration process for CARI may be included in the agencies budget proposal.

### Accessing the CARI System

To access the CARI Online Application System, each agency will need to set up a facility account by visiting <https://www.njportal.com/dcf/cari> Agencies will identify an administrator to create and maintain the facility account, and who will be responsible for submitting and receiving CARI applications and results. The abovementioned website will prompt the identified administrator to "Create a New CARI Account" and will provide tutorials for setting up the facility account. When creating an account, select "Department of Children and Families – Community Partners" from the drop-down selection of Program/Application Types. To set up a CARI account, the agency administrator will then need to provide their agency's Vendor Identification Number, which is the letter "V" followed by 8 digits. Next, the administrator will be prompted to create a My New Jersey account username. This will be the username and password used by the account administrator to log in to the Online Application System moving forward. The Online Application System will allow the account administrator to invite agency staff to complete an online CARI form and to check the status of submitted applications. Employees will be able to complete the electronic CARI application through an emailed link, or on-site at the agency. The employee can complete the application using a personal computer or smart phone; however, the email invitation link will expire after two weeks. All completed CARI checks are returned through the Online Application System, and the results will be emailed directly to the facility account administrator.

### Time frames and next Steps

Once submitted CARI checks are expected to be completed within a week. Once an agency's CARI checks are completed and clear, please send the checks to [abright@capitolkids.org](mailto:abright@capitolkids.org) and the recommended proposals for funding with all required documents and the CARI check certification form along with the recommended proposal will be submitted to CSOC. Should CCCC be notified by a potential awardee that they have staff who did not meet the CARI requirements and this will jeopardize their ability to move forward, CCCC will notify CSOC to meet and discuss next steps.



**CRD CARI CHECKS ATTENTATION FORM**

By my signature below, I attest I am authorized to sign this document on behalf of my organization. I agree that as of this date below my organization has met all the requirements of the CARI check process. Should my agency acquire any additional staff during this CRD award period, that staff will be required to submit CARI checks and be approved by the CARI unit.

If any staff within this organization are found to be ineligible for employment under this grant by the CARI Unit, they will be separated from the agency as per CARI policy.

Signature:

Date:

Printed Name:

Organization name:

CMO Name:



**2026-27 Mercer County Community Resource Development Funds Request for Proposal Rating Scale**

1. Needs Statement: (10 points)
  - Understanding needs of Mercer County youth with emotional, behavioral, developmental, intellectual, and substance use needs especially in regards to Medicaid and Evidence Based Practices (EBPs), promising practices, or best practices, where applicable.
  - Understanding of referral needs for all NJ Children's System of Care Partners;
  - General and specific knowledge of cultural competencies necessary to be successful in Mercer County
2. Description of Agency and History of Service to Youth and Families: (10 points)
  - Organizational capability to initiate and sustain current and proposed program, preferably Evidence Based Practices (EBPs), promising practices, or best practices, where applicable.
3. Description of Service(s) to be funded: (25 points)
  - Specific implementation plan, informed by a qualified purveyor of that best practice, promising practice, and EBP particularly around fidelity to the model when applicable;
  - Activities and services to be provided during the funding period, and those to commence beyond the funding period;
  - Background, qualifications, and justification of organization to provide work as part of this proposal;
  - Agreement to serve Medicaid-eligible youth and their families;
  - Agreement to serve all eligible NJ Children's System of Care youth (No eject - No reject).
  - Assurance of equitable access of the service(s) to the identified population
  - The effective period or term of the service or activity;
4. Anticipated Outcomes (25 points)
  - Sustainability plan. All projects must demonstrate sustainability after initial funding. Demonstrate that the service is sustainable after the end of the effective term and provide a plan outlining relevant strategies. Please describe how these services will continue into the future, including plans for third party reimbursement and/or client fees.
  - Defined anticipated quantifiable deliverables, level of service, and/or outcomes.
  - Affirmation of required periodic fiscal and or program reports to demonstrate compliance with the bid requirements
5. Evaluation Methods (10 points)
  - Evaluation of practice or program adherence/fidelity/effectiveness and participation in ongoing outcomes research, if applicable, to the practice or program proposed.
  - Documentation of a quality assurance effort and outcomes monitoring plan;
6. Budget (20 points)
  - Is a complete and clear budget included?
  - Is the budget reasonable based on established rates for services and the amount of funds available?
  - Does the budget account for all staff, supplies, and services included in the description of service(s) or program element to be funded (either through fund request or match by other funding source)?
  - Are other funding sources cited viable to be applied as a match to community resource development funds?