

MAIN PATH ADVISORY

Funding Criteria Inclusion Review

Worked example: Youth Mental Health Grant Programme

Public-document demonstration

This example is based only on publicly available grant materials. It is not a commissioned assessment of any foundation, staff, or grantees. It demonstrates the diagnostic lens Main Path Advisory applies to any foundation's RFP, grant criteria, MEL expectations, or partner reporting templates.

SECTION 1

Public RFP Context

The grant programme supports community-based organisations serving young people ages 5–18 and the adults who care for them, as part of a multi-year youth mental health commitment that has already funded dozens of nonprofits across multiple grant cycles.

The grant funds organisations delivering services across priority states. Requests are for a fixed amount, with a 12-month term. Applicants are expected to align with at least one goal: expand social-emotional programming, equip parents, caregivers, or youth-serving professionals, or increase pathways to mental health intervention and access to care.

Key finding

The public materials do not explicitly name disability, accessibility, accommodations, developmental conditions, or disability-disaggregated measurement — even though the youth mental health evidence base centrally includes mental, emotional, developmental, and behavioural conditions. The U.S. Surgeon General's advisory on youth mental health identifies these conditions as core to the population this grant aims to serve.

SECTION 2

Inclusion Heat Map

Six dimensions reviewed against the public RFP. Red = priority gap requiring immediate action. Amber = inclusion risk worth strengthening before next cycle. Green = relative strength.

Dimension	RAG Status	What appears strong	Inclusion risk to review
Strategy alignment	● Amber	Youth mental health, underserved communities, SEL, trauma-focused services, access to care.	Disability is relevant but not explicitly named as part of the underserved youth frame.
Applicant guidance	● Amber	Clear programme goals and evidence-informed approach.	Applicants are not asked how they will identify, reach, or adapt programming for disabled youth.
Programme design	● Amber	Schools, after-school settings, caregivers, teachers, coaches, and trauma-informed services.	No explicit prompt on accessible SEL, trauma services, or family-school partnerships.
Data and MEL	● Red	Strong measurement language: outputs, outcomes, and evaluation methodology.	No explicit disability-disaggregated reach, participation, access, or outcome measure.
Partnerships	● Amber	Recognises family, school, community, and youth-service touchpoints.	No explicit prompt on disability-led, special education, family advocate, or disability-informed partners.
Budget and accessibility	● Red	Programme implementation salaries are allowable.	Accessibility and accommodation costs are not clearly named as eligible.

SECTION 3

Three Priority Gaps

The review frames gaps as practical grantmaking improvements, not criticism of the foundation or its staff.

Gap 1 Disability is relevant to the target population but not visible in the equity frame

The RFP prioritises underserved youth and recognises reduced access to high-quality care, but disability is not explicitly named as a dimension applicants should consider when defining underserved youth. The Surgeon General advisory identifies mental, emotional, developmental, and behavioural conditions as central to youth mental health.

Practical improvement

Add a sentence stating that underserved youth includes youth with disabilities, developmental differences, learning differences, sensory disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and co-occurring mental health and disability-related support needs.

Gap 2 Measurement is strong but does not explicitly test inclusive reach

The RFP asks applicants to articulate progress and impact measurement, activity tracking, evaluation methodology, and the link between outputs, short-term outcomes, and long-term youth mental health. The missing test is whether disabled youth are reached, retained, supported, and benefiting.

Practical improvement

Ask applicants how they will monitor whether youth with disabilities or developmental differences are reached and supported, using safe, ethical, and age-appropriate methods.

Gap 3 Accessibility and accommodations are not clearly budgeted

The RFP sets a fixed grant request amount and names allowable and non-allowable costs, but does not clearly state whether accessibility and accommodation costs are eligible.

Practical improvement

Add a budget note stating that reasonable accessibility and accommodation costs directly connected to programme delivery are eligible within the grant request.

Suggested inclusion statement for the RFP:

"The Foundation encourages applicants to describe how their programmes will include youth who may face additional barriers to mental health support, including youth with disabilities, developmental differences, learning differences, sensory disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and youth with co-occurring mental health and disability-related support needs."

SECTION 4

Ready-to-Use Revisions

Suggested applicant questions

Area	Revised question
Identifying reach	How will your programme identify and include youth with disabilities or developmental differences, including youth whose needs may not be formally diagnosed?
Barrier analysis	What barriers might prevent youth with disabilities from participating in or benefiting from this programme, and how will your team reduce those barriers?
Programme adaptation	How will SEL, trauma-focused services, or family-school partnership activities be adapted for youth with diverse communication, sensory, cognitive, mobility, or behavioural support needs?
Partnerships	Will you consult or partner with disability-led organisations, special education teams, family advocates, disability-informed clinicians, or other relevant experts?
Measurement	What indicators will you use to understand whether youth with disabilities are reached, participate meaningfully, and benefit from the programme?
Budget	Have you included direct programme costs for accessibility, reasonable accommodations, adapted materials, interpretation, assistive supports, transportation, caregiver participation, or disability-informed technical assistance?

Suggested scoring rubric additions

Criterion	What to look for
Equity and reach	Applicant demonstrates a credible plan to reach underserved youth, including youth with disabilities and developmental differences.
Evidence-informed design	Applicant explains how the model will be adapted for youth with diverse functional needs.
Measurement	Applicant includes at least one measure or learning question related to disability-inclusive reach, participation, or outcomes.
Budget	Applicant includes reasonable accessibility or accommodation costs where needed for equitable participation.

SECTION 5

90-Day Action Plan

Timing	Action	What changes
Days 1–30	Make disability visible	Add disability, developmental differences, and accessibility to the underserved youth framing. Add two to three disability inclusion questions to the RFP or full application.
Days 31–60	Make inclusive reach measurable	Add one disability-related reach question to the reporting template and one learning question on reaching youth with disabilities. Align with the RFP's existing measurement expectations.
Days 61–90	Make inclusion operational	Create a one-page applicant guidance note, add disability-informed expertise to the reviewer checklist, and identify two to three external advisors or organisations for consultation.

How to use this with prospects

"This worked example shows the type of review Main Path Advisory can complete in 10 business days using your public or internal grantmaking documents. The output is a concise heat map, three priority gaps, revised grant questions, and a 90-day action plan your team can apply before the next funding cycle."