



Funding Announcement

FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

2026-2028 Behavioral Health Initiative: Mind Thrive

Release Date – October 7, 2025

This document provides detailed information about an invitation to participate in a model to improve youth behavioral health. Featured in this document are the purpose, goals, outcomes and funding guidelines, along with selection criteria, application instructions, and deadlines.

SECTION I: DESCRIPTION OF GRANTS PROGRAM

Introduction

The mission of Cottage Health is to provide superior health care for and improve the health of our communities through a commitment to our core values of excellence, integrity, and compassion. The Community Partnership Grants program is one way Cottage Health strives to achieve this mission and invest in the community. For the past 30 years, Cottage Health has been providing grants totaling more than \$20 million in funding to support our community's health and wellbeing.

The 2026-2028 Behavioral Health Initiative: Mind Thrive builds on a successful pilot by deepening collaborations through a multi-year partnership focused on adolescents (12-18 years old) with mild to moderate behavioral health needs.

Behavioral Health Needs

Since 2017, behavioral health has been the focus of the Community Partnership Grants. The term behavioral health includes mental health needs, such as depression and anxiety, and substance use needs, such as with alcohol or drugs. Behavioral health was identified as a priority area in the Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) in 2016, 2019, and 2022.

The 2026-2028 Behavioral Health Initiative (BHI) will continue the development of the Mind Thrive model to support those with behavioral health needs in achieving improved outcomes and quality of life in south Santa Barbara County. Careful review of data from previous BHI grant cycles, stakeholder feedback, and 2022 CHNA findings illuminated the growing behavioral health needs among youth and adolescents. Specifically, four key themes emerged related to youth behavioral health:

- Structural: Youth are struggling to access counseling and therapy services.
- Seeking Care: Mental health stigma prevents youth from accessing the care they need.
- Providing Care: An increase in mental health needs and substance use, coupled with mental health stigma, makes providing care challenging.
- Recommendations: Increase service providers, centralize care, and provide more accessible preventative care.

Mind Thrive launched in early 2024 as an innovative approach to addressing these needs and increasing timely, supportive access to behavioral healthcare for youth and their families.

Behavioral Health Initiative: Mind Thrive

Purpose and Framework

The 2026-2028 BHI will build on the success of Mind Thrive to address gaps and barriers in the existing youth behavioral health system and create more coordinated, accessible pathways to care. Mind Thrive brings a systems-change approach that offers an integrated, collaborative model to make behavioral health services more accessible, provide comprehensive family support, achieve improved outcomes, and enhance quality of life in south Santa Barbara County.

Mind Thrive seeks to strengthen behavioral health care for adolescents and their families by providing:

- Behavioral health navigation support to create ease of access and address barriers and
- Direct access to psychiatry/psychology, buffering supports, and community based-behavioral health services.

Mind Thrive Overview

Cottage Center for Population Health serves as a backbone leader, convener, and partner. Working collaboratively with grantees, Population Health facilitates communication across partners, evaluates the initiative, and provides resources and expertise as needed. Additionally, Population Health serves as a thought partner, actively working through challenges and leading continuous quality improvement processes.

Referrals originate from pediatric healthcare providers, junior high schools, and high schools. These entities refer to the Behavioral Health Coordination Center as a central source of support. Referrals for Mind Thrive must meet the following criteria:

- Adolescents (ages 12 – 18 years old)
- Residents of South Santa Barbara County (Carpinteria through the Santa Ynez Valley)
- Mild to moderate behavioral health needs
- Insurance status of privately insured, underinsured, CenCal/MediCal, or uninsured
- Have one or more of the following conditions/needs:
 - ADHD
 - Adjustment Disorder
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Disordered Eating
 - Family Conflict
 - Mood Disorder
 - ODD/Conduct Disorder
 - Suicidal Thoughts
 - Self-harm
 - Substance Abuse (including early substance use)
 - Trauma

The **Behavioral Health Coordination Center (BHCC)** serves as the central navigation hub for Mind Thrive, receiving referrals, conducting intake assessments, and connecting adolescents and families to appropriate behavioral health services. It acts as a trusted guide that helps families overcome barriers to accessing care, coordinates services across multiple partner organizations, and provides ongoing support throughout the treatment process. The BHCC functions as the gateway to behavioral health support, transforming what was previously a fragmented and overwhelming process into a streamlined, supportive pathway to care. Through the Everything Fund, the BHCC connects families with financial support to overcome cost barriers, ensuring families can access the full spectrum of services needed for comprehensive care.

Services, including psychiatry, community-based behavioral health, and buffering supports, are offered to adolescents and families through connections made from the BHCC. Families are matched with appropriate providers based on their specific needs, including psychiatric services for medication management, community-based therapy providers for individual and group counseling, and specialists for conditions like ADHD, Tics/Tourette's, and disordered eating. Additionally, service connections are made to buffering supports, such as academic tutoring and other wraparound services that strengthen overall well-being.

Funding Opportunities

Three funding opportunities are available for the 2026-2028 BHI in the areas of Behavioral Health Coordination Center, Psychiatry, and Community-Based Behavioral Health Services. Funded proposals will work collaboratively with Cottage Health to support successful implementation of efforts. Buffering services will be funded through the Behavioral Health Coordination Center role and are not a grant opportunity in this Funding Announcement.

Funding Opportunities: Behavioral Health Coordination Center

Applications will be accepted for the BHCC and its external support by invitation only. The BHCC partner will respond to referrals within 48 hours by connecting with families and students and triaging needs. The BHCC will support adolescents and families in accessing services through the following BHCC **activities**:

1. Triage needs
2. Connect to services
3. Utilize ConnectSBC.org/Findhelp and VerticalChange
4. Facilitate case consult meetings for referred clients
5. Participate in monthly Mind Thrive Coordination Meetings and biannual in-person strategy meetings
6. Coordinate with partners and providers
7. Document policies and processes to create standardized systems and workflows

Additionally, the BHCC will include the following **components**:

8. Dedicated navigators/care coordinators, a data analyst, and licensed clinical oversight (e.g., LCSW, MFT, psychologist)
9. Everything Fund, which are resources available to address barriers to accessing care (e.g., transportation, cost of care, co-pays) and buffering services, such as supportive relationships, quality sleep, balanced sleep, physical activity, mindfulness practices, access to nature, and mental health care
10. External support for a subset of patients through a funded partner to provide BHCC activities and components.

The BHCC, the organization providing external support for a subset of patients, and Cottage Center for Population Health will collaborate on service provision, mutually learn from each other's experiences and expertise, and work together to identify criteria for the subset of patients served by the external support organization. In addition, the three organizations will create streamlined workflows, consistent practices, policies, approaches, and seamless support systems for all patients and referral patterns. The BHCC and organization applying to provide external support for a subset of patients will submit separate applications and budgets. The Everything Fund housed at the BHCC would be accessible to the BHCC and the organization providing external support for a subset of patients.

The BHCC should submit a budget to include the following per year for a two-year period:

- Everything Fund – up to \$100,000 annually with opportunity for additional funds added as needed
- Total request – up to \$500,000 annually, including the Everything Fund

The organization providing external support for a subset of patients should submit a budget to include up to \$85,000 annually for a two-year period. Additional funds in support of direct services will be made available as needed through the Everything Fund outside of this funding announcement.

Funding Opportunities: Psychiatry Services

Applications will be accepted for psychiatry service providers. This partner will respond to referrals within 48 hours by connecting with families and students and triaging needs. The psychiatry service provider(s) will support adolescents and families in accessing services through the following **activities**:

1. Clinical assessment and treatment of patients
2. Medication management
3. Utilize ConnectSBC.org/Findhelp

4. Organizational participation in case consult meetings for referred clients, monthly Mind Thrive Coordination Meetings, and biannual in-person strategy meetings
5. Coordinate with partners and providers, including psychiatrist coordination as needed

Additionally, the psychiatry service provider(s) will include the following **components**:

1. Minimum of one half-time psychiatrist
2. Program manager (FTE allocation to be recommended by applicant) to support with grant coordination, data reporting, and other grant requirements as needed

Case load capacity, workflow, and processes would be reassessed through the continuous quality improvement process.

Psychiatry services will be funded for up to \$150,000 annually for a two-year period.

Funding Opportunities: Community-based Behavioral Health Services

Applications will be accepted for community-based behavioral health services. These partners will respond to referrals within 48 hours by connecting with families and students and triaging needs. The community-based behavioral health service providers will support adolescents and families in accessing services through the following **activities**:

1. Clinical assessment and behavioral health treatment for patients
2. Individual, family and/or group therapy
3. Utilize ConnectSBC.org/Findhelp
4. Organizational participation in case consult meetings for referred clients, monthly Mind Thrive Coordination Meetings, and biannual in-person strategy meetings
5. Coordinate with partners and providers, including therapy provider coordination as needed

Additionally, the community-based behavioral health service provider(s) will include the following **components**:

1. Licensed clinical staff
2. Program manager (FTE allocation to be recommended by applicant) to support with grant coordination, data reporting, and other grant requirements as needed

Recommended caseloads are 8-10 active patients at any given time, which would be reassessed through the continuous quality improvement process. These mental health providers would have capacity to see new referrals within two weeks. Case load capacity, workflow, and processes would be reassessed through the continuous quality improvement process.

Direct grant awards for the community-based behavioral health services will provide funding only for partnership/collaboration activities and components. Services provided to patients/clients will be funded through insurance and/or the Everything Fund. Each community-based behavioral health service provider will be funded for up to \$35,000 annually for a two-year period.

Key Principles

Foundational to this grant program are access, evidence-based strategies, sustainability, and collaboration. These principles are highlighted below:

- **Access:** All funded programs should ensure access for all patients/clients.
- **Evidence-based or evidence informed:** It is critical to achieving population-level change that programs be informed by lived experiences of community members, research, and data demonstrating positive impact on behavioral health status.
- **Sustainability:** All funded programs must show commitment to long-term viability through avenues such as diversified funding sources, embedded systems changes, and documented cost-benefit outcomes that support continued operation long-term.

- **Collaboration:** Collaboration is one of the most effective ways to address complex issues, such as behavioral health. All funded programs must demonstrate the capacity and a track record of working well with other organizations.

Target Population and Outcomes

A. Target Population

All adolescents (12-18 years), and their families, who need assistance with mental health and/or substance use issues in south Santa Barbara County

B. Outcomes

The initiative is working toward the following outcomes. These will be measured collectively and no single organization is responsible for all outcomes:

Participant Changes (adolescents and families)

- Increased knowledge/awareness of behavioral health, social, and buffering support needs and services
- Increased access to/utilization of behavioral health services
- Increased access to/utilization of buffering supports
- Increased access to/utilization of social services
- Improved self-navigation of services
- Reduced family challenges/hardships
- Increased health-seeking behaviors
- Improved behavioral health
- Improved quality of life for individuals suffering from behavioral health
- Improved overall health and wellbeing

Systems Change (policies, practices, resources, mental models, relationships)

- Increased collaboration/coordination of care, including the Behavioral Health Coordination Center processes
- Reduced barriers to accessing behavioral health, social and buffering support services
- Shifts in partners thinking (mental model) about the behavioral health system
- Improve policies and systems (e.g., reimbursement, collaboration on grants)
- Increased understanding among all healthcare and service providers of the interaction between social, physical, mental health needs
- Increased sustainability

Partner Collaboration

Grantees will work with Cottage Center for Population Health to define workflows, protocols, processes, and evaluation plans. Grantees are required to participate in monthly Mind Thrive Coordination Meetings, case consult meetings, and biannual in-person strategy meetings as well as provide feedback and input on coordinated efforts and documentation. To carry forward coordination efforts, grantees may be required to execute specific activities outlined in planning and/or process documents and ongoing continuous quality improvement.

Funding Allocation and Duration

Funds should be aligned with proposed strategies outlined in this funding announcement and the application. An interdisciplinary group from Cottage Health will review applications and may allocate grant dollars at its discretion. Indirect costs are allowed, but must not exceed 10% of the project budget. Additionally, up to 20% of the grant may be spent on capital projects that support the purchase of equipment or creating new spaces for behavioral health services. The grant period is 24 months, beginning April 1, 2026 and ending March 31, 2028.

Evaluation and Technical Assistance

As a part of this grants program, Cottage Health will provide support with evaluation and technical assistance through ongoing data collection and management, peer learning opportunities and one-on-one technical assistance. Specifics around the frequency and content of these support activities will be determined in collaboration with grantees and customized to meet the needs of grantees during the grant cycle. Evaluation consultants will provide guidance to grantees in implementing their evaluation plan that can capture process milestones as well as the impacts of strategies implemented. Grantees will be responsible for data collection.

SECTION II: GENERAL GUIDELINES

Application Process

Please download the required application form at www.cottagehealth.org/BHI. Evaluation technical assistance will be provided upon request by Population Health from Monday, October 13 – Friday, November 7. Finalists may be invited to provide a brief virtual presentation.

Applications are due Monday, November 10. For any questions about the Funding Announcement and application, or to request evaluation technical assistance, please contact ListenPopHealth@sbch.org.

Timeline

Evaluation Technical Assistance Available	Monday, October 13 – Friday, November 7, 2025
Applications Due	Monday, November 10, 2025
Grantees Notified	Friday, December 12, 2025
Grants Begin	Wednesday, April 1, 2026
Grant Cycle	Wednesday, April 1, 2026 – Friday, March 31, 2028

Eligibility

Funds can be awarded to community organizations within Santa Barbara County that have an existing behavioral health program. This includes:

- Nonprofit organizations, universities, hospitals, and government agencies
- Organizations that are not a 501(c)(3) entity can apply through partnership with a tax-exempt organization acting as the fiscal sponsor

Grant Requirements

Grantees approved for funding are required to:

- Coordinate with funded and unfunded partners and Cottage Center for Population Health to support patients/clients and Mind Thrive, such as through workflows, protocols, processes, and evaluation plans.
- Participate in case consult meetings for referred clients, monthly Mind Thrive Coordination Meetings, and biannual in-person strategy meetings.
- Execute specific activities outlined through process improvement, related to grantees' respective roles.
- Support evaluation activities throughout the grant period that are tailored to the needs of the grantees. Technical assistance meetings will be offered as needed.
- Grantees will include at least one leadership representative and one front-line staff member in grant activities (e.g., coordination meetings, technical assistance and evaluation activities).
- Submit progress and expenditure reports on October 30, 2026, April 30, 2027, and October 29, 2027. A final report will also be required one month after the conclusion of the grant on April 28, 2028.

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