



Requester Information

Legislator Name: Escamilla, Luz

Created Date: January 21st 2026

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Section 1: Requester Details

Description:

As the only organization in the state providing infant and early childhood mental health services exclusively to children birth through six and their parents and caregivers, The Children's Center Utah requests \$1,000,000 in ongoing funds to support critical Center-based Clinical Services, including outpatient clinical services and the Therapeutic Preschool Program, which help children develop skills to be successful in traditional group settings and reduce long-term costs associated with untreated childhood mental health needs. Utah is among a group of states with the highest prevalence of child and adolescent mental health disorders and untreated mental health needs. Up to 20% of Utah's 458,000 children ages 0 - 8 could experience mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral health challenges. Children with untreated childhood trauma carry burden with negative lifelong consequences—higher rates of poverty, homelessness, and involvement in criminal justice system, at estimated \$247 billion annual national cost. Investing in upstream early childhood mental health services saves money later in life when it is more expensive to treat a crisis and gives children and families a better lived experience.

Legislative designee contact information:

Name: Stephanie Warner

Organization: The Children's Center Utah

Position: Government Relations Manager

Section 2: Funding Information

How will the appropriation be used?



Early Childhood Mental Health Services

Social Services

Category	One-time	Ongoing	
Personnel Services	2026:	\$0.00	\$1,000,000.00
	2027:	\$0.00	
In-State Travel	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$0.00	
Out-of-State Travel	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$0.00	
Supplies and Equipment	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$0.00	
Technology Purchases	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$0.00	
Infrastructure/Capital Investments	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$0.00	
Other Charges/Pass Thru	2026:	\$0.00	\$0.00
	2027:	\$0.00	

Expenditure Total

One-time 2026	One-time 2027	Ongoing 2027
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000,000.00

Funding Sources:

Income Tax Fund

Amount Requested:

2026 (One-time)	\$0.00
2027 (One-time)	\$0.00
2027 (Ongoing)	\$1,000,000.00

Revenue Total



Early Childhood Mental Health Services

Social Services

One-time 2026	One-time 2027	Ongoing 2027
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000,000.00

Is this a multi-year project?

Yes

Is this project scalable if the Legislature does not fund the full requested amount?

Yes

A short explanation describing how the project might be scaled?

While the full amount is needed to continue current levels of operation and planned statewide expansion of services, any amount of support will benefit Utah children birth through 6 who are experiencing mental health concerns, including those who have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, and other early childhood stressors. The Children's Center Utah benefits from ongoing annual support of individuals, foundations, and corporations as well as state and federal grants. Additionally, The Children's Center Utah continually seeks new investors, works to cultivate and maintain relationships with current supporters, maximizes revenue through reimbursements, and creates cost efficiencies to leverage the effectiveness of existing resources.

Section 3: Agency Information

Subjects:

Health and Wellbeing

Agency:

250 / Department of Health and Human Services

Type of entity to receive pass-through funding:

Private Not for Profit



Grant recipient

Yes

Requested Direct Award Grant Recipient

The Children's Center Utah

Section 4: Performance Outcome Measurement

Who would benefit the most from this request (who is the target audience)?

This request will benefit Utah children experiencing mental or behavioral health challenges and their parents and caregivers. Many of the infants, toddlers, and preschoolers served by The Children's Center Utah come from vulnerable, marginalized, or disenfranchised populations and have experienced trauma, such as witnessing domestic violence or having been victims of abuse or neglect. In the most recent year, 84% of clients came from families earning 80% or less than Area Median Income organization-wide, and 96% of children served in our Therapeutic Preschool Program came from families earning 80% or less than Area Median Income.

What is this project or program intended to accomplish?

Funds will support children's mental health treatment through Clinical Outpatient and Therapeutic Preschool Program Services. During Clinical Outpatient services, children birth through six and their families receive evidence-based, trauma-informed outpatient therapy, and the Therapeutic Preschool Program provides comprehensive mental health services to young children ages two through five who need additional mental health treatment and support beyond outpatient services. In this program, children receive intensive group therapy to gain resilience and learn essential skills that will allow them to succeed in traditional preschool and kindergarten settings. State funding will complement revenue secured through federal grants, program services revenue, and private fundraising.



How will the Legislature know whether the project or program achieved its intended purpose?

The following annual performance measures will be used to track outcomes for this request: • ~ 5,700 hours of family therapy services to 993 children • ~ 7,600 hours of Outpatient Clinical Services • ~ 47,000 hours of Therapeutic Preschool Program services to 160 children • ~ 475 Mental health assessments/consultations • ~ 70 psychiatric evaluations • ~ 135 psychological evaluations

Section 5: Other Supporting Documents

Intent Language Documents

Previous Funding Documents

Yes

Full Time Employees

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