



EQUITY IMPACT ZONE – NEW JERSEY

Grant Process and
Timeline Guidelines





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Welcome! Thank you for your interest in Mental Health America’s Equity Impact Zone - New Jersey. Please read through this document carefully to understand the grant application process.

GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

The application is a 3-step process designed to be as simple as possible while ensuring MHA clearly understands your project/program proposal.

1 ELIGIBILITY

There are several eligibility requirements for grantees. To determine if your organization is eligible for this grant, you must first successfully complete [the eligibility assessment](#). This tool will help you understand the grant application requirements and determine if your organization is eligible for this grant opportunity.

2 DEVELOP AND SUBMIT CONCEPT PROPOSAL

After confirming your eligibility, you will receive an email providing you with access to the online portal to submit a concept proposal. The concept proposal application will require organizations to respond to 12 questions about their proposed program or initiative. The questions are broken down into two parts, with eight narrative responses and four yes/no response questions.

Concept proposals will be reviewed to determine their alignment with the goals and objectives of the Equity Impact Zone - New Jersey project. Concept proposals may choose to address the community assessment findings below or another mental health or social equity gap impacting the well-being of the community. For example, programs that address the [social drivers of mental health](#) are eligible when they can demonstrate outcomes tied to mental health and well-being. Your proposal should outline how your project, program, or initiative addresses these issues and aligns with your organization’s mission.



NEW JERSEY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Leveraging [MHA's National Screening and Prevention Program \(MHA Screening\)](#) data and other government sources of health data, MHA completed a community assessment of Burlington County and the city of Trenton, New Jersey.

At the highest level, we know:

- Communities with higher mental health needs within these counties reported experiencing trauma, violence, grief or loss, financial problems, and loneliness more often than average in the state of New Jersey.
- Poor education outcomes, lower household income, and higher unemployment and incarceration rates were correlated with higher mental health risk.
- Individuals from communities with higher rates of routine or preventative health care were less likely to screen at risk for a mental health condition.
- Individuals from communities with higher rates of chronic health conditions like stroke, heart disease, COPD, and asthma had a higher chance of screening at risk for a mental health condition.

MHA Screening population demographics in Burlington County and Mercer county, where Trenton is located:

- Individuals who identified as LGBTQ+, Hispanic or Latino, or “more than one race” screened at risk for a mental health condition at higher rates than the general population in these two counties.
- Youth under age 18 also screened at risk for a mental health condition at higher rates than any other age group in Burlington and Mercer counties.
- 77% of screeners who identified as Black or African American or Hispanic or Latino reported household incomes less than \$80,000 a year, compared to 53% of white screeners in Burlington and Mercer counties.



CONCEPT PROPOSAL FORMAT GUIDELINES FOR NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

You can select any **one** of the following formats to submit your responses to narrative-based concept proposal questions. Follow the guidelines below when developing your responses:

1. WRITTEN RESPONSE

Written responses should be limited to 200 words per question. You can create one comprehensive written response that addresses all eight narrative questions.

2. VIDEO RESPONSE

Video responses should be limited to roughly 30–90 seconds in length per narrative question. You do not need to create a separate video response per question; you can create one comprehensive video that addresses all eight narrative questions.

There is a maximum file size of 1 GB when uploading. If your video is too large to upload, please email specialprojects@mhanational.org, and we will provide an alternative uploading option.

3. PRESENTATION RESPONSE

Presentation responses (e.g., deck, slideshow, PowerPoint) should be limited to 1–2 slides per narrative question.

For all formats, you will need to respond to questions 9–12 directly in the grant portal before submitting.

CONCEPT PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS (1–8)

1. **WHAT:** Describe the program, project, initiative, and the mental health and social equity gaps you seek to solve in your community.



2. **WHO:** Share the demographics of the audience you will serve, highlighting any of the following primary audiences:

- Estimated number of people served
- Estimated percentage of those that identify as:
 - Individuals living with a mental health and/or substance use condition
 - BIPOC
 - LGBTQ+
 - Disabled
 - Elderly
 - Youth
 - Low income
 - Rural or low access to services
 - English as a second language
 - Alternative demographic

3. **WHERE:** Location of audience you will serve. Be specific if your program/project will cover more than one area.

4. **HOW:** What measurable outcomes and outputs would you aim to achieve if you were awarded a two-year grant of \$100,000 – \$330,000 per year?

5. **RISK:** What do you see as the greatest challenge of this program or project?

6. **WHY ME:** What do you consider your most significant strength in addressing the mental health equity gap you've identified?

7. **PARTNERSHIPS/COLLECTIVE IMPACT:** Do you currently work with other partners to solve the mental health equity gap you've identified in your community? If not, with funding, who would you enlist to work with you on this project?

8. **EVALUATION:** Does your organization currently track outcomes and outputs related to this project or other similar projects? If yes, please share some of the measures you have in place or a link to a report where this information is included (e.g., annual report, project/program dashboard, etc.).



YES/NO QUESTIONS (9-12)

9. **SUSTAINABILITY:** Have you ever received funding to the scale of \$100,000 – \$330,000 per year? Have you ever received multi-year funding within this range?

10. **IMPLEMENTATION:** Which of the following best describes the stage of your project and your experience around implementation? (select one)

- *Research and idea development:* Your organization is working on a new project but has yet to start implementing it with any participants.
- *Proof of concept:* Your organization has created a new project and is testing and refining it with a small group of participants, gathering evidence of its impact.
- *Scaling:* You have evidence that your project is successful, and your organization has experience delivering it. You're now expanding and adapting the project to more participants, possibly in new locations.
- *Operating at scale:* Your project has proven impact, and your organization is experienced in delivering it. You are currently implementing the project on a larger scale and are not actively expanding the number of participants significantly.

11. **EQUITY:** How is your organization focused on the betterment of community mental health? Please check one or more of the [social drivers of health](#) that you seek to address:

- Adequate and nutritious food
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Educational inequality
- Environmental pollution and climate change
- Maternal health
- Poverty
- Quality health care
- Social exclusion and discrimination
- Safe and secure housing
- Violence and community safety

12. **ENGAGEMENT:** If applicable, are there volunteer opportunities for funders to engage in this project or program, or generally with your organization, where participation is not critical to service delivery or program outcomes?



Detailed instructions on how to edit, review, and submit your concept proposal are listed in the grant submission platform.

Concept proposals will be accepted from April 22 until May 20, 2024; they will be reviewed by early June 2024.

3 WRITTEN PROPOSAL (INVITE ONLY)

Select concept proposal applicants will be invited to submit full written, in-depth proposals, including a budget narrative. Prior to submitting this proposal, applicants will have an opportunity to meet with Mental Health America to help shape their proposal, including their evaluation outcomes and outputs. **The written proposal period will occur in early June and submissions are due on July 19, 2024.**

QUESTIONS

Please refer back to the FAQs section at www.mhanational.org/EIZNJ.

If you have additional questions, please email specialprojects@mhanational.org. We will do our best to respond within 48 business hours.

TIMELINE

STEP	TIMELINE
1 ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT	April 22 – May 20 at 9 a.m. ET
2 CONCEPT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PERIOD	April 22 – May 20 at 5 p.m. ET
INVITATION TO SUBMIT WRITTEN PROPOSAL	Early June
3 WRITTEN PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PERIOD (INVITE ONLY)	Mid June – July 19 at 5 p.m. ET