

Mental Health First Aid Funding Opportunities Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Mental Health First Aid Funding Announcements

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Grant Information

1. Where can I find detailed information about and apply for the 2023 SAMHSA grant opportunities?

Please reference the following links to apply for 2023 SAMHSA grants:

- [FY23 Project AWARE \(Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education\) NOFO# SM-23-001](#) (Application deadline: April 28, 2023)
 - [FY23 Mental Health Awareness Training \(MHAT\) Grants NOFO# SM-23-002](#) (Application deadline: May 1, 2023)
 - [FY23 Cooperative Agreements for School-based Trauma-Informed Support Services and Mental Health Care for Children and Youth NOFO# SM-23-025](#) (Application deadline: May 8, 2023)
2. Who is eligible to apply for these grants?
 - Project AWARE State Education Agency Grants
 - i. [FY23 Project AWARE \(Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education\) NOFO# SM-23-001](#) (Application deadline: April 28, 2023)
 - ii. **Eligibility:** Eligible applicants are States and Territories, including the District of Columbia, political subdivisions of States (e.g., county, LEA), Indian tribes, or tribal organizations (as such terms are defined in section 5304 of title 25), health facilities, or programs operated by or in accordance with a contract or award with the Indian Health Service, or other public or private non-profit entities.
 - Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) Grants
 - i. [FY23 Mental Health Awareness Training \(MHAT\) Grants NOFO# SM-23-002](#) (Application deadline: May 1, 2023)
 - ii. **Eligibility:** Eligible applicants are States and Territories, including the District of Columbia, political subdivisions of States, Indian tribes, or tribal organizations (as such terms are defined in section 5304 of title 25), and non-profit private entities.

- Cooperative Agreements for School-based Trauma-informed Support Services and Mental Health Care for Children and Youth (TISS)
 - i. [FY23 Cooperative Agreements for School-based Trauma-Informed Support Services and Mental Health Care for Children and Youth NOFO# SM-23-025](#) (Application deadline: May 8, 2023)
 - ii. **Eligibility:** State education agencies, local educational agencies, and Indian tribes or their Tribal Educational Agencies, a school operated by the Bureau of Indian Education, a regional corporation, or a native Hawaiian educational organization.
- 3. **What are the application requirements and how does Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) meet those requirements?**

Project AWARE and Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) grant applicants must demonstrate several required activities. Those most applicable to Mental Health First Aid include:

- **Population of Focus** – Mental Health First Aid has community-specific courses available for Spanish-speaking individuals, higher education, school personnel, first responders, law enforcement, military, veterans and their families, tribal communities and indigenous populations, and older adults.
- **Evidence-based MHAT** – Over the past decade, there has been a growing body of research on the efficacy of MHFA in various populations across the United States. [Peer-reviewed studies](#) show that individuals trained in the program:
 - a. Increase their knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental health and substance use challenges.
 - b. Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental health or substance use challenge.
 - c. Show reduced stigma and increased empathy toward individuals experiencing mental health challenges.
 - d. Increase their confidence and likelihood to help an individual in distress.
 - e. Use the skills and information they learn in MHFA to manage their own mental wellbeing.
- **Community Resources, Supports and Materials** – All Mental Health First Aid Instructors have knowledge of local resources and provide a resource guide to each learner who takes the course. Once trained, First Aiders become a part of a national network and receive monthly communication from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. Some organizations have also developed regular communications to keep certified First Aiders engaged.
- **Referral and Tracking Process** – First Aider information and evaluation data is available to Instructors through Mental Health First Aid Connect, our one-stop-shop for managing courses and materials. This information will support the quarterly reporting requirements

related to tracking the number of individuals trained in mental health promotion and prevention. Organizations have also used a variety of methods to track referrals, including paper and web-based surveys as well as periodic focus groups to support the data collection and tracking requirements of the grant.

- **Licensed Mental Health Provider Organization** – The National Council for Mental Wellbeing is a membership organization that drives policy and social change on behalf of over 3,100 mental health and substance use treatment organizations across the nation. If you do not already have a relationship with a local provider, the “[Find a Provider](#)” feature on the National Council’s website permits you to search by state to locate an experienced provider in your area. At least one experienced and licensed mental health provider needs to be identified in the proposal.
 - **Collaborative Partnerships** – Partnerships are key to the strategic growth of Mental Health First Aid nationally. Communities that have been successful in implementation have multiple partners. Many of the [case studies](#) featured on the MHFA website describe the types of partnerships that have contributed to the growth of local training programs.
4. **Can we use funding from SAMHSA to train more Instructors at our organization?**
Absolutely! If you are new to Mental Health First Aid, you can use part of the funding to train Instructors. If your organization is already implementing Mental Health First Aid, you may need to train additional Instructors depending on your organization’s capacity and the scope of your plan.
5. **Would SAMHSA funding cover the costs of hiring a Mental Health First Aid Coordinator to manage the administrative needs of training?**
Absolutely! Be sure to include this in your submitted detailed budget.
6. **Can we use the grant to focus on multiple populations?**
- The Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) grant announcement stipulates that applicants must identify at least one population target and must describe the extent of the problem, including service gaps and need, for the population target. For further clarity, please attend one of SAMHSA’s technical assistance webinars or email SAMHSA directly at mhat_nof@samhsa.hhs.gov.
 - The Project AWARE grant announcement states the following regarding population of focus: Identify and describe the proposed geographic catchment area where the project will be implemented and how school-aged children and youth will be impacted by this project. For further clarity, please attend one of SAMHSA’s technical assistance webinars or email SAMHSA directly at sea_aware@samhsa.hhs.gov.
7. **How can I make myself competitive for this grant if I am an independent Instructor?**
The Project AWARE, MHAT and Cooperative Agreement grants are designed for non-profit organizations and will only be awarded to organizations. If you are an independent Instructor, we advise you to partner with a community organization such as a mental health center, a local police department, a faith-based organization, etc.

8. **If I don't have a relationship with a local mental health provider, where can I find one?**

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing is a membership organization that drives policy and social change on behalf of over 3,100 mental health and substance use treatment organizations across the nation. If you do not already have a relationship with a local provider, the "[Find a Provider](#)" feature on the National Council's website permits you to search by state to locate an experienced provider in your area. At least one experienced and licensed mental health provider needs to be identified in the proposal. permits you to search by state to locate an experienced provider in your area. At least one experienced and licensed mental health provider needs to be identified in the proposal.

9. **How can I find other organizations or MHFA Instructors to partner with?**

If you are an Instructor, you can find other Instructors in your area using the Forum in Mental Health First Aid Connect or the Instructor Facebook Group. You can also find an Instructor using the [MHFA website](#).

Mental Health First Aid Curriculum

1. **How is Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) different from Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)?**

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based training that teaches individuals how to identify, understand and respond to mental health and substance use challenges. Mental Health First Aid's community-specific courses have specialized content for specific populations, including law enforcement. CIT, a five-day, 40-hour training program specifically for law enforcement, and Mental Health First Aid are complementary programs. Best practices endorsed by CIT International and the International Association of Chiefs of Police suggest that at least 25% of a police force should be trained in CIT and the remainder in Mental Health First Aid. For more information about Mental Health First Aid, visit www.MHFA.org.

2. **Does Mental Health First Aid offer community-specific courses?**

The following Youth MHFA and Adult MHFA community-specific courses are available.

- i. MHFA for Higher Education
- ii. MHFA for Fire/ EMS
- iii. MHFA for Public Safety
- iv. MHFA for Military, Veterans and Their Families
- v. MHFA for Older Adults
- vi. MHFA for Rural Communities
- vii. Youth MHFA for Tribal Communities and Indigenous Peoples
- viii. MHFA for Spanish-speaking Communities
- ix. Youth MHFA for Spanish-speaking Communities

3. **Is the Opioid Response Supplement available as part of Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid?**
The Opioid Response Supplement is currently only available as part of the Adult Mental Health First Aid curriculum.
4. **Would college students benefit more from Adult MHFA or Youth MHFA?**
This depends on your audience. If your audience is young people ages 12-18, it may be helpful to train adults in Youth Mental Health First Aid, so they have the skills to work with the youth. However, if you are working with adults 18 and older, Adult MHFA for Higher Education may be most useful. More information about these courses is available at www.MHFA.org.
5. **Do existing Instructors charge a fee for Mental Health First Aid training?**
 - Many Instructors do not charge a fee to provide Mental Health First Aid training when they've received funding to cover the costs of the course. However, we strongly encourage all Instructors and their organizations to note the value of the course is estimated at \$170 per First Aider. The National Council does not set a national standard for what is charged for courses. The fixed costs are the cost of materials per First Aider.
6. **What is the Cost estimate of MHFA implementation?**
 - See the budget guidance and spreadsheet on Page 12 of the [Grant Toolkit](#).

Course Materials and Evaluation

1. **Can learners share manuals or does every learner need a manual?**
One requirement for fidelity to the MHFA course is that each learner must receive a manual. This allows learners to reference the information discussed in the manual after they leave the training.
2. **How can Coordinators who manage multiple Instructors pull data about all the courses their Instructors have taught?**
Instructors can provide Coordinator-level access to a trusted individual by submitting a Coordinator-level access request form available on MHFA Connect. Coordinator-level access is the set of permissions a Coordinator receives that allows them to complete the outlined functions of the role in MHFA Connect.
 - Create an In-person or Blended course on behalf of an Instructor for whom they coordinate.
 - Invite learners to join your group in MHFA Connect.
 - Mark attendance for Instructor-led training sessions.
 - Monitor the status of learners' pre-work.
 - Unenroll a learner from a course before an Instructor-led training.
 - Cancel a course.
 - Reschedule a course.

Individuals with Coordinator-level access can pull training data in two ways:

- i. **Reports in MHFA Connect** -- Coordinators can track the progress of a specific learner or class and see trends in exam and survey answers. These reports can be generated using the Reports or the Reports Beta feature in MHFA Connect.
- ii. **Data Request Form** -- Complete and submit a Data Request Form in MHFA Connect and we'll be happy to provide you with the information you need!

Becoming a MHFA Instructor

1. Who can become a MHFA Instructor?

Any individual over age 18 can become a Mental Health First Aid Instructor – no specific academic or professional credentials are required for Instructor applicants. However, candidates should have knowledge of or experience with mental health challenges (personally, professionally or both), prior experience in training adult learners and a commitment and strategic plan to roll out Mental Health First Aid in their community. To teach the Youth MHFA curriculum, candidates must also specifically work with youth ages 12-18 under the specific requirements of the grant.

It is required that an Instructor candidate:

- a. Has knowledge of mental health and substance use challenges (i.e. is a mental health/substance use professional, has worked with individuals experiencing mental health challenges, etc.).
- b. Has prior experience in training adult learners.
- c. Understands best practices in adult learning.
- d. Has experience facilitating groups.
- e. Has a commitment and strategic plan to roll out MHFA in the community.

Instructor candidates must also identify financial and operational support to schedule and deliver their classes. Therefore, we highly recommend that Instructor candidates demonstrate appropriate external support for tasks related to the program.

2. What is the Instructor's role in teaching a MHFA course?

Every MHFA Instructor serves as a presenter, facilitator and -- most importantly -- an ambassador of Mental Health First Aid. Following their certification, Instructors are permitted to teach MHFA and to certify First Aiders in their communities.

3. What responsibilities do Instructors have?

Mental Health First Aid USA provides resources and support to assist Instructors along their journey. Instructors are responsible for the following tasks:

- a. Planning MHFA courses (including creating business plans, forming community partnerships and reaching out to local organizations or individuals).
- b. Setting a course schedule.
- c. Setting and collecting course fees.
- d. Marketing and media outreach.
- e. Course registration.
- f. Event planning (e.g., catering, logistics).
- g. Collecting and entering course evaluations and incorporating feedback.

Submitting an Instructor application

1. Does everyone need to submit an application to become an Instructor?

Yes. Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor candidates must successfully complete an application that ensures they have a general understanding of the program and the skills that make an Instructor successful, and affirms the requirements of the course. More information about the application process is available at www.MHFA.org.

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing screens all applications, so please select candidates carefully and according to the guidance provided.

2. How does someone apply to become an Instructor?

Please visit www.MHFA.org for more information about the Instructor application process.

3. When will the candidate hear back about their application?

We will notify you of your applicant status in seven to 10 business days.

Instructor Certification

1. How are Instructors certified?

To attain certification, Instructor candidates must attend MHFA Instructor Training and demonstrate mastery of the program through a written exam and an evaluated presentation. Please note that not all Instructor candidates pass the course.

When an individual becomes a certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor, they commit to

teaching the full course with fidelity to the core program model and key messages. Instructors are responsible for almost all components of their trainings, including:

- a. Recruiting learners and securing a training location.
- b. Ordering manuals for all learners.
- c. Preparing course materials.
- d. Compiling local resources.
- e. Providing learner evaluations to the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, Mental Health First Aid USA.

2. How do Instructors maintain certification?

Instructors must agree to preserve the fidelity of the program by following the National Council for Mental Wellbeing's guidelines and must deliver Mental Health First Aid three times a year to remain certified.

3. If I am an Instructor, may I certify other Instructors?

No. Instructor certification only qualifies Instructors to conduct the MHFA First Aider course. National Trainers are the only individuals authorized to certify Instructors through training offered by the National Council of Mental Wellbeing.

4. Can a certification be transferred to another employee?

No. Instructor certification is only for the individual who has completed and passed Instructor Training.

5. Is MHFA offered in other languages?

Adult and Youth MHFA have both been translated into Spanish, and other cultural translations will be available in the future.

You may not translate MHFA curricula into any additional languages -- translations must be developed and released by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

Bilingual Instructors can help their learners and bridge understanding by explaining concepts in other languages, but the course needs to be taught in the language of the curriculum. We support having interpreters in the room, if desired, to help with explanations in other languages.

We do not authorize any outside alternations or translations of PowerPoints or other materials, and copyright parameters prohibit alterations such as subtitles to videos.

6. How do I get certified to teach Adult or Youth MHFA for Spanish-speaking Communities?

To be eligible for a designation in Adult or Youth MHFA for Spanish-speaking Communities, an Instructor must already be certified as an Adult or Youth MHFA Instructor. They must also be fluent in Spanish and English. To obtain the community-specific course designation, Instructors must:

- a. Be bilingual (Spanish and English).
- b. Complete the Adult or Youth MHFA for Spanish-speaking Communities Instructor curriculum.
- c. Successfully pass a quiz for the Adult or Youth Spanish curriculum (with a score of 100%).

More information can be found on MHFA Connect.

7. **How can I become dual certified in Adult and Youth MHFA?**

To teach both Adult and Youth MHFA courses, you must become certified in each course individually. After your first certification, you must teach at least one course in that curriculum before you can apply to become certified in the second curriculum. Once your Instructor application is accepted, you can attend an in-person or remote 3-day Instructor training.

8. **How can I become certified in a MHFA community-specific course?**

Community-specific courses, formerly known as “supplements,” “inserts” or “modules,” are courses that include additional content to tailor MHFA to a specific population or market, and include translations (e.g., Higher Ed, First Responder, Spanish-speaking communities).

2nd Edition In-Person Adult MHFA Instructors can access the following community-specific certification Trainings for \$50.00 each through the MHFA Connect [Storefront](#):

- In-Person Adult MHFA for Older Adults Version 2.0.
- In-Person Adult MHFA for Rural Communities Version 2.0.
- In-Person Adult MHFA for Fire/EMS Version 2.0.
- In-Person Adult MHFA for Higher Education Version 2.0.
- In-Person Adult MHFA for Military, Veterans, and their Families Version 2.0.

Allow at least 24 hours after completing the Adult MHFA 2nd Edition Curriculum Updates course, before accessing the community-specific training courses through the MHFA Connect Storefront.

NOTE: The MHFA for Public Safety community-specific course still utilizes the 1st Edition curriculum. While there are plans to update this curriculum, we do not have an estimated availability date at this time. Instructors interested in becoming certified in this curriculum can access the certification training by selecting CSC Trainings Version 1.0 from the Community Specific Course Trainings menu (found on the top right center of the page) in the MHFA Connect Storefront.

Please follow the steps below to purchase and begin your certification to teach a community-specific Course.

1. Log into the **MHFA Connect Storefront** (<https://store.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>).
2. From the Storefront homepage, select **CSC Trainings Version 2.0** from the **Community-specific course trainings** menu (top right center of the page). To access

**MHFA for Law Enforcement, MHFA for Corrections, and MHFA for Public Safety
Version 1.0, select CSC Trainings Version 1.0.**

3. Select the appropriate community-specific course training.
4. Select **Add to Cart** to continue shopping or **Buy it Now** to proceed to checkout.
5. Confirm your contact information and select **Continue to Payment**.
6. To pay by credit card, enter your credit card information and select **Pay Now**.
7. You will be redirected to MHFA Connect, where you can launch the course by clicking **Start** on your **My Courses** page on your MHFA Connect Dashboard.
8. You will receive access to the community-specific course teaching materials on the **Resources** page in MHFA Connect 24 hours after completing the course.

Course Delivery

1. **Can Instructors split curriculum into sections?**
MHFA curricula are typically taught in a single day. However, they can easily be taught over two days (pausing at the halfway point) or over four days (pausing after two units/segments).
2. **Once I'm an Instructor, how many people can I train at a time?**
The minimum number of learners is five and the maximum number is 30. We recommend 15-25 learners as an ideal class size.
3. **How much time can elapse between these sections?**
Courses taught in two four-hour sections should not be scheduled more than two weeks apart, weekly if taught in four two-hour sections. If course sections must be scheduled further apart, add time at the start of the next section to review the content and concepts discussed previously.
4. **Can I teach the course alone, or do I need a training partner?**
Although an Instructor may teach the course alone, we recommend that Instructors co-teach with another certified Instructor. This gives learners the opportunity to experience different teaching styles; also, some exercises are more effective when facilitated by a team. Co-teaching also provides Instructors flexibility to respond to anyone who needs one-on-one time to process the material due to the sensitive nature of the content. Please note that no more than two certified Mental Health First Aid instructors can be credited for teaching any single course.

Course Materials and Evaluation

1. **How should I set up the space for my training?**
Rooms should accommodate: six learners per table (up to 30 learners), a table for materials, projector, screen, chart paper and space to move around the room during the interactive exercises.

2. **Do I need to include mental health resource lists?**

Instructors are responsible for integrating local resources into each course, frequently referencing them throughout the course, and ensuring each learner leaves the course knowing how to connect with these resources.

3. **Does every learner need a manual?**

Yes, each learner must receive a manual to keep as part of the course materials.

4. **Does every learner need to fill out an evaluation?**

Yes. Learners complete the evaluations using MHFA Connect (or via paper/online link if attending an in-person class). Blended courses require learners to submit two post-evaluations before completing the course and accessing their certificate.

Course Preparation: As part of a Blended course's self-paced activities, a learner must complete a pre-evaluation and opinions quiz prior to the Instructor-led training.

End of coursework: A learner must complete a post-evaluation and final exam after the Instructor-led training. To finish their training and become Mental Health First Aiders, learners must complete the final exam and post-evaluation.

Follow-up evaluation: First Aiders complete a survey to measure information their retention and use of MHFA skills after the course is complete.

5. **Can I cut slides or other exercises to fit into the eight hours?**

No. All materials must be presented as outlined in the Teaching Notes to maintain fidelity to the course.

Additional Resources

- For additional information about MHFA, visit www.MHFA.org.
- For additional information about applying to funding opportunities, visit www.MHFA.org/funding-opportunities/ and read our [Grant Toolkit](#).