

Request for Proposals

Supporting Community-Serving Organizations to Provide Basic Swimming and Water Safety Skills Training for School-Aged Children in Select States – Summer 2026 and/or Fall 2026

Date Issued:

November 20, 2025 | 12:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

Due Date:

January 30, 2026 | 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

Proposal Submission Form:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/019a07684f377eadb8bfcfeccd34de2a6>

CDC FOUNDATION CONTACT
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SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The CDC Foundation is announcing a Request for Proposals (RFP) from [eligible](#) community-serving organizations interested in partnering with the CDC Foundation to expand access to basic swimming and water safety skills training among children aged 5 to 17 years. Eligible applicants will operate in Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawai'i, Louisiana, Michigan, New York, Oklahoma and Texas. Applicants must work collaboratively with local schools or school systems to facilitate program activities. Priority consideration will be given to programs that [reach communities with people who have limited access to swimming and water safety training](#).

With support from the CDC Foundation, award recipients will work with their local schools or school systems to implement basic swimming and water safety skills training programs and evaluate skill attainment among children and youth. Interested organizations are asked to respond to the RFP with a proposal narrative, budget and budget narrative.

1. ABOUT THE CDC FOUNDATION

The CDC Foundation is an independent, 501(c)(3) organization based in the United States. The CDC Foundation's mission is to save and improve lives around the world by unleashing the power of collaboration between public health systems and philanthropies, corporations, organizations and individuals to protect the health, safety and security of people across the globe.

The CDC Foundation has flexibility to engage in cross-sector partnerships and can move quickly to support public health challenges across the globe. Since 1995, the CDC Foundation has launched more than 1,450 programs and partnerships in over 110 countries to protect communities from health threats like cardiovascular disease, maternal mortality, malaria, HIV, Ebola, Zika and more. Visit www.cdcfoundation.org for more information.

2. BACKGROUND AND NEED

In the United States, about 4,500 people die from unintentional drowning each year¹. From 2023–2025, the CDC Foundation and partners supported drowning data strengthening and drowning prevention programs in 10 states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, New York, Oklahoma and Texas).

¹ Clemens T, Moreland B, Mack KA, Thomas K, Bergen G, Lee R. *Vital Signs: Drowning Death Rates, Self-Reported Swimming Skill, Swimming Lesson Participation, and Recreational Water Exposure – United States, 2019–2023*. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2024;73:467–473. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7320e1>

During 2025–2027, the CDC Foundation and its partners aim to expand their current efforts in the 10 states and expand to Hawai'i.

Teaching school-aged children basic swimming and water safety skills has been shown to be an effective drowning prevention strategy. According to the World Health Organization, basic swimming and water safety training programs are better suited for school-aged children as such programs can be incorporated at scale within school systems, require fewer instructors and are associated with faster skill acquisition. In seeking to reduce drowning among youth, the CDC Foundation plans to partner with community-serving organizations and school systems across the United States to deliver basic swimming and water safety skills training programs in states and communities with high incidences of drowning.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work for this engagement is expected to include, but may not be limited to, the following services and deliverables:

3.1 Administrative

3.1.1 Provide banking and authorization information through a secure online platform and enter into a subgrantee agreement with the CDC Foundation.

3.1.2 Provide required supporting documentation prior to payment:

3.1.2.1 School letter(s) of support – written acknowledgement from a school or school district indicating their intent to engage with the grantee to provide swim lessons. A template is attached to the RFP Announcement for organizations to follow. Examples of school support during the academic year may include transportation, teacher supervision and provision of pool facilities. Examples of school support during the summer may include enrichment programs facilitated by school districts, summer camps provided through school districts and special events provided in partnership with school districts.

3.1.2.2 Staff certifications – list of staff certifications for those engaged in the program. Certification documents are not required but can be provided in lieu of a summary list. Personnel must be appropriately certified based on their role: instructors must possess a swimming and water safety certification from the American Red Cross, YMCA

or equivalent; lifeguards must possess a lifeguarding certification from the American Red Cross, YMCA or equivalent.

- 3.1.3 Complete a final narrative and financial report using the template provided by the CDC Foundation by the end date of the award.
- 3.1.4 Return any unspent funds to the CDC Foundation within 30 days following the end date of the award.
- 3.1.5 Agreements resulting from this RFP are expected to begin June 1, 2026, for summer programming or September 1, 2026, for fall programming. Organizations must participate in an evaluation training prior to program launch; therefore, they are asked to budget at least three weeks between contract start and program launch. Programming must conclude by November 30, 2026, with final data and reports due December 31, 2026.
- 3.1.6 Organizations may request funding to support summer and/or fall programming, as long as the total request does not exceed the Maximum Payable Amount for this RFP. Both summer and fall programming must include a school partnership, although involvement by period can vary.

3.2 Evaluation Training

- 3.2.1 Grantees will be expected to evaluate participants' swim skills on the first and last lesson of the program and submit these data to the CDC Foundation. All personnel participating in the evaluation process, such as instructors and program administrators, must attend a two-hour virtual training to learn the swim skills evaluation process. The training will include an overview of the evaluation metrics, data collection and data submission processes. Ongoing support will be available as needed.
- 3.2.2 The CDC Foundation requests grantees designate one staff person to serve in a data manager role to organize and process collected data and a second staff person in a quality control role to oversee the evaluation process and collection of data, when feasible. These individuals will receive an additional one-hour training to support quality control and provide evaluation guidance for onsite staff.

3.3 Metrics Reporting and Engagement Requirements

- 3.3.1 Collect swim skills data on the first and last lesson using an evaluation form provided by the CDC Foundation.

- 3.3.2 Participate in a site visit with CDC Foundation program staff, at a site determined by the grantee.
- 3.3.3 Submit monthly evaluation data and key metrics through forms provided by the CDC Foundation.
- 3.3.4 Attend a monthly status update meeting, and may attend an *optional* monthly development session with other participating grantees.
- 3.3.5 Respond to CDC Foundation email inquiries within five business days.

4. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 Applicants must partner with a school, multiple schools or a school district to serve children ages 5–17 only.
- 4.2 Eligible programs must have an in-water component to their swim skills program. A minimum of 240 minutes of in-water time per participant is required.
- 4.3 Applicants should not have any affiliation with or received support from the tobacco industry or its associates in the past five years.
- 4.4 Community-serving organizations include but are not limited to 501(c)(3) organizations, schools and school districts, universities and municipal governments operating in Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawai'i, Louisiana, Michigan, New York, Oklahoma and Texas.
- 4.5 Previous grantees awarded under the June 2023 Request for Interest and June 2025 Request for Proposals, "Supporting Community-Based Organizations to Pilot Basic Swimming and Water Safety Training for School-Aged Children in Select States" are eligible to apply and asked to complete the updated submission process. Priority will be given to new grantees in states where fewer applications were received.

5. FUNDING

5.1 Funding Available

The CDC Foundation will pay the grantee a fee not to exceed a Maximum Payable Amount or ceiling price. The Maximum Payable Amount will be based on the fee proposed and awarded and will be negotiated as part of the resulting contract. The

Maximum Payable Amount will not exceed \$100,000 USD per community-serving organization.

5.2 Funding Source

Funding for this initiative is provided by the CDC Foundation through a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

6.1 Submitting a Proposal

6.1.1 Proposal materials should be submitted by **5:00pm Eastern Time on January 30, 2026**. Proposals will not be accepted after this date and time. Proposals must be submitted via online form here: [Proposal Submission Form](#).

6.1.2 The CDC Foundation is committed to providing accessibility for people with disabilities and is working towards making our materials more accessible. If this document presents accessibility challenges, [email us](#) with the subject line "Accessibility Assistance." We will gladly work with you on providing the information in a different format.

6.1.3 The CDC Foundation will not be responsible for any proposal which does not follow the instructions in this RFP, and may, at its discretion, reject any such non-compliant proposal. Further, this solicitation does not commit the CDC Foundation to pay any cost for the preparation and submission of a proposal.

6.2 Proposal Section 1: Organization Overview

Information should be provided directly in the [Proposal Submission Form](#).

6.3 Proposal Section 2: Proposal Narrative, Budget and Budget Narrative

Applicants should upload the proposal narrative, budget and budget narrative as attachments to the [Proposal Submission Form](#). The proposal narrative and budget narrative should be uploaded as pdf files. The budget should be uploaded as an Excel file. Note that the maximum file size that can be uploaded is 30MB.

Proposal Narrative

A proposal narrative should be submitted using the attached template. The proposal narrative should not exceed three pages, single-spaced, and must include the following:

- 6.3.1 Describe your organization, mission and year established.
- 6.3.2 Briefly detail the community your organization supports, including drowning burden (if known) and demographics, and how your organization will reach communities with people who have limited access to swimming and water safety training.
- 6.3.3 Describe the proposed program, including:
- a. How children will be recruited and enrolled and potential reach to communities with people who have limited access to swimming and water safety training.
 - b. The target number of participants.
 - c. Age range of program participants.
 - d. Frequency and duration of swim lessons.
 - e. Curriculum.
 - f. Who will serve as instructors.
 - g. What aquatic facility or facilities you will use, your affiliation with them and safety measures implemented (i.e., instructor to participant ratio, lifeguard to participant ratio, first aid or AED on site, etc.).
 - h. Transportation plan.
 - i. Implementation timeline.
- 6.3.4 Explain which school or school district will be engaged in the program, and how they will support the program (e.g., provide bussing, pool facilities, teacher supervision, recruitment/enrollment support).

Budget and Budget Narrative

- 6.3.5 Budget estimates should not exceed **\$100,000 USD**.
- 6.3.6 An overall proposed budget and budget narrative should be submitted using the attached templates.
- 6.3.7 The budget should account for personnel hours for data training, collection and management. All personnel participating in the evaluation process must attend a two-hour virtual training course to learn the swim skills evaluation process.

6.3.8 The CDC Foundation requests grantees designate one staff person to serve in a data manager role and a second staff person in a quality control role, when feasible. These team members will coordinate with other staff on data collection, submission, cleaning, and overall management. Please include a dedicated line item in the budget for these roles. The estimated time commitment is approximately five percent level of effort per person across the grant period. The time commitment will vary based on the number of participants and associated volume of data.

7. SELECTION PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

7.1 Anticipated Timeline

The timeline below is subject to change at the sole discretion of the CDC Foundation:

Project Phase	Estimated Completion
Proposals Due	January 30, 2026
Anticipated Selection Notification	Beginning April 15, 2026
Effective Date of Resulting Agreement	Beginning June 1, 2026 (Summer Start) or September 1, 2026 (Fall Start)

7.2 Communication During the Application Period

All questions and requests for clarification regarding this RFP should be submitted via email to drowningprevention@cdcfoundation.org, with a subject line of: Community-Serving Organizations RFP.

7.3 Notification

All applicants will receive notification of whether they are selected. The CDC Foundation will not provide scores or specific review feedback.

8. ATTACHMENTS

8.1 Required and Optional Templates

The following templates can be downloaded from the CDC Foundation [Request for Proposals](#) page. Attachments marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

8.1.1 Proposal Narrative Template*

8.1.2 Budget Narrative Template*

8.1.3 Budget Template*

8.1.4 School Letter Template