



Request for Proposals
Mental Health Peer Services
Deadline: August 7, 2026

The Patrick P. Lee Foundation invites peer-run organizations operating in one or more of the eight counties in Western New York to submit proposals for initiatives that support peer-delivered services for adults living with mental health challenges and their families.

I. About the Foundation

The Patrick P. Lee Foundation (Lee Foundation) is a private foundation committed to achieving immediate and measurable impact in the areas of education and mental health.

In education, we envision a community where individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency without experiencing undue financial burden. Our work focuses on post-secondary scholarships for students studying engineering and other STEM majors. We also fund scholarships for students training in mental health fields.

In mental health, we are committed to improving the lives of people living with serious mental illnesses – not only through funding programs and partners but by advancing systems-level change that strengthens how communities respond to behavioral health needs.

II. The Funding Opportunity

The Foundation recognizes lived experience as a form of expertise and considers peers an essential partner to building a more responsive and recovery-oriented behavioral health system.

For purposes of this RFP, a peer is a trained and certified individual with lived experience of mental health challenges who uses that experience to support, educate, mentor, and/or advocate for others in recovery. Through shared experience, peers help individuals build connections, access services, develop recovery goals, strengthen community connections, and reduce isolation.

A peer-run organization is a nonprofit that is planned, operated, and governed by individuals with direct lived experience of mental health challenges. These organizations provide non-clinical community-based services and support. At least 51% of the organization's board members, leadership, and staff must identify as peers.

The Foundation is open to a broad range of opportunities and invites nonprofits to identify and propose areas of greatest need within their workforce and organizational structure.

Applications may request funding for a variety of programs and initiatives, including but not limited to:

- Programs that build the capacity of the peer workforce
 - Including peer supervision, training, professional development, leadership development, career pathways, and workforce wellness initiatives.
- Plans to expand peer-delivered services and support
 - Including increasing peer staffing, expanding outreach and engagement, improving access to transportation, or strengthening services that promote recovery and community integration.
- Programs that enhance community connections and reduce isolation
 - Including peer-led outreach and engagement efforts that strengthen relationships within the communities they serve and improve recovery outcomes.
- Services providing system navigation, care transitions, and follow-up support
 - Including helping individuals access resources, navigate systems of care, and remain connected to services and recovery supports.
- Support for families and caregivers of adults living with mental health challenges
 - Including peer support, education, navigation, and resources that strengthen their ability to support an individual's recovery.
- Crisis response, diversion, and community-based support services
 - Including peer roles to promote engagement, recovery, and successful transitions following a behavioral health crisis.

III. Eligibility and Funding Guidelines

- Applicants must be peer-run organizations serving individuals in one or more of the following Western New York Counties: Erie, Niagara, Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Orleans, and Wyoming.
- Peers must be NYS Board certified or working on their certification within the first year after hire.
- Peer support services funded through this opportunity should complement—not replace—clinical services.
- Preference may be given to requests that enhance or expand the peer support services of the agency and/or the sustainability of peer support services of the agency.
- Funding requests may be up to \$100,000 (\$50,000 for projects up to one year and \$100,000 for those up to two years.) Awards will be announced in November 2026.

Please contact Katie Walsh, Program Officer at kwalsh@lee.foundation or call (716) 844-3100 with questions concerning eligibility or the Foundation's funding objectives.

IV. Application Process

The Lee Foundation uses a grant management system (Foundant). From the [Foundation's home page](#), applicants have the opportunity to 1) preview the application questions, 2) create a registered account and 3) submit an application.

1. **Preview the application questions** by following the instructions in the gray box on the Foundation's home page. When prompted for the Enter Code, type the word **Peer**. Next, select the RFP process **Mental Health Peer Services**.

2. **Applicants must have a registered account to submit a proposal.**

For New Users: To register, follow the directions for "new users" in the gray box on the right side of the [Foundation's home page](#). Please note, you will be required to enter a federal tax identification number.

For Existing Users: Visit the [Foundation's home page](#) to enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, select the "Forgot your Password?" link to reset your password.

3. **To submit an application**, you must be logged into a registered account. On your dashboard, select the Apply Page and type the word **Peer** when asked for the Enter Code. Click on the blue Apply button for the Mental Health Peer Services.

V. Timeline:

- July 6 – RFP Announced
- August 7 (5pm EST) – Submission Deadline
- November– Grant Awards Announced

For technical assistance registering an account or submitting an application, please contact Katie Walsh at 716-844-3100, or by email at kwash@lee.foundation