Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ will be updated as needed.

When will the Invitation to Apply for states be available?
The application will open to states on March 26, 2024, at 11 a.m. EST.

When is the Application due?
The application deadline is Friday May 3, 2024, at 8:00 p.m. EST.

Do States have to apply through the Forum’s website?
Applications may be filled out in the Forum’s BEST Youth Initiative webform (it is encouraged before submitting the application to complete each question in an external document) or submitted electronically to: BESTYouth@forumfyi.org.

Where can we find information about the BEST Youth Initiative and Invitation to Apply?
All materials related to the BEST Youth Initiative and the Invitation to Apply are posted on the Forum’s Cross-Systems Consulting site: forumfyi.org/BEST.

Will there be an informational webinar?
Yes. The Forum for Youth Investment, Cross-Systems Consulting Team will host an informational webinar for interested state applicants to ask questions and learn more about the Building Ecosystems Statewide for Thriving Youth Initiative and the Invitation to Apply on Monday April 8, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. EST.

Register now:
https://forumfyi.my.salesforcesites.com/eventsfyi/event/home/bestyouthwebinar

A recording will be posted to forumfyi.org/BEST by Wednesday April 10, 2024.
**Whom can I contact with questions?**

Email [BESTYouth@forumfyi.org](mailto:BESTYouth@forumfyi.org) with questions about the Building Ecosystems Statewide for Thriving Youth Initiative. The Cross-Systems Consulting staff will periodically post responses to questions by updating the Answers to FAQs and post on the Forum’s Cross-Systems Consulting site.

**Who is eligible to apply for the inaugural cohort of the Building Ecosystems Statewide for Thriving Youth Initiative?**

State applications must include at least three agencies within the youth-serving ecosystem (education, workforce development, human services, behavioral health, child welfare, and/or juvenile justice). At minimum, there needs to be one upstream system that affects all youth, such as education and workforce development. State Teams must also include at a minimum four individuals with lived experience, including at least one youth with lived experience from each represented system and a family member/caregiver from one of the systems.

**Can states submit more than one application to participate in the BEST Youth Initiative pilot?**

No. Only one submission per state is allowed. State System leadership should collaborate across the multiple systems (education, workforce development, human services, behavioral health, child welfare, and juvenile justice) ahead of time and present one unified application.

**How do States apply to participate in the BEST Youth Initiative pilot?**

1. Determine the lead state system and representative who will fill out and submit the application materials.
2. Applications must include a completed cover page, narrative and Letter of Participation.
3. Review the application questions and coordinate among your state agencies, departments and with any partners, if applicable, to answer all application questions. Applicants are strongly advised to write application responses in a separate document before filling out the application online.
4. Attend the informational webinar for additional information about the BEST Youth Initiative and application process (April 8, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. EST).
5. Direct any questions and requests for assistance to [BESTYouth@forumfyi.org](mailto:BESTYouth@forumfyi.org).
6. Submit the completed application by 8:00 p.m. EST on Friday, May 3, 2024.

**Is there an award amount associated with the BEST Youth Initiative opportunity?**

This is not a grant. State Teams will receive in-kind support throughout the Initiative and costs associated with identified technical assistance needs will be covered by the Forum.

- Travel and lodging expenses will be covered for up to 7 members to attend the National Launch on July 30–31, 2024, in Washington, D.C. and three additional in-person convenings of the Initiative Wide Peer Learning Community throughout the Initiative.
- The Forum will also provide compensation to participating youth and family/caregivers.
and cover childcare costs related to their in-person and virtual engagement.

**How long is the application?**

The application is designed to be simple and accessible. There are 5 core questions with 4–8 sub-questions under each. It is encouraged before submitting the application to complete each question in an external document.

**When will states be notified of their selection for the BEST Youth Initiative?**

The Forum and its national public sector partners will invite up to five states to participate. States will be notified by June 28, 2024.

**What is the activity period for the BEST Youth Initiative pilot?**

The BEST Youth Initiative is a three-year pilot. The activity period will kick-off with a National Launch convening July 30–31, 2024, in Washington, D.C. and culminate in the summer of 2027.