Notification of Funding Availability (NOFA)
2027 Request for Initial Proposal Ideas
JAMS Foundation-ACR Initiative for Students and Youth

The Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) is pleased to announce this Notification of Funding Availability (NOFA) and request for initial proposal ideas for the 2027 funding cycle of the JAMS Foundation-ACR Initiative for Students and Youth.

Mission: This JAMS Foundation-ACR Initiative seeks to provide financial support for conflict resolution education and training (CRE) for Pre-K through 12th grade students and youth. The populations to be served by the funding streams will be both (1) youth in Pre-K through 12th grade age range and (2) adults working with these youth populations in ways that directly transfer CRE skills for adults to the youth populations.

Funding Contexts: The contexts for projects may include community, schools, alternative education (online education, charter schools, after school programs), government (juvenile justice facilities, courts) and NGO settings. While some proposals may be able to secure and guarantee access to or cooperation from traditional K-12 school districts/schools, this funding opportunity is intended to provide potential financial support for CRE work in other contexts as well.

2027 Funding Focus

The 2027 funding cycle focuses on policy-level efforts to introduce and/or expand conflict resolution approaches in school settings to address issues at the intersection of student mental health and conflict. The program will seek to implement district-wide policy changes that advance or introduce conflict resolution skills to help address mental health challenges among students in the 7th to 12th grade or a subset population thereof, with the goal of reducing social isolation, hopelessness, anxiety and depression. The policy changes will equip students and school personnel charged with supporting students' mental and emotional wellbeing with the necessary skills to de-escalate and resolve conflict and prepare school staff to facilitate students' conflict resolution efforts. The program will evaluate whether or not a school culture that is conducive to effective conflict resolution will, in turn, lead to a reduction in hostility, alienation, unproductive conflict, and other stressors that adversely affect students' mental health. The goal is to enact an institutional policy or procedure that supports students experiencing mental health challenges, by creating an empathetic school environment that teaches students conflict resolution skills to help them exercise their agency and to address conflict related to adverse impacts on their mental health.

There are four priorities:

- Increase the effectiveness of district-wide policy changes that advance or introduce conflict resolution skills to students in the 7th to 12th grade or a subset population thereof in addressing issues that can lead to or result from social isolation, anxiety, depression, or hopelessness among youth.

- Increase the connection and communication within the school district that facilitates adoption of the use of conflict resolution practices by all members of the school system and student body.
- Increase use of conflict resolution skills with and by youth (grades 7-12 or a subset) to address their feelings of anxiety, depression, or hopelessness and by school personnel, in particular school counselors and others charged with supporting students' emotional and mental wellbeing
- Reduce incidences of conflict escalation, detentions, suspensions and school referrals regarding youth involved in conflicts at school.

Selection Parameters and Criteria for the 2026 Funding Cycle

- Requests for Year 1 funding may be up to $20,000 of the potential two-year funding cycle.
- While the proposed projects are two-year projects, decisions on funding for a second year will be contingent on evidence of benchmark accomplishments at the end of the first year of funding with a focus on the integration of the new service or expansion of the current services. For those who may seek a second year of funding, those requests may be for up to $40,000.
- ACR seeks to recommend a small number of high-quality projects with likely or proven impact and the potential of regional and national impact upon completion to the JAMS Foundation for their review and selection.
- Preference for funding is given for those that may bring existing programs or exciting new ideas to a level of scalability and sustainability on a regional or national basis.
- Eligible organizations include nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations, educational institutions, and public agencies working in conjunction with nonprofit educational institutions or organizations.

Please Note:

- If the proposal does not include conflict resolution education, training or services in a substantial way, the proposal will not move beyond the technical review.

The Grant Process

An informational conference call will be held on **Tuesday December 1st, 2026 at 3:30 PM EST**. Day-of registrations may not be accepted and because space is limited, spots are not guaranteed. **Accordingly, attendance is strongly advised but is not mandatory to apply**. You may register by going to the following link: 2027 NOFA Registration

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. The meeting is scheduled to last 90 minutes. **This call will not be recorded.**

- Interested organizations or individuals are required to submit a 13-page Initial Project Idea description (using the guidelines on the following page) to ACR no later than 11:59 PM local time of the organization's legal/main location, **Friday, January 8th, 2027,** to grants@acrnet.org.

- The JAMS Foundation - ACR Grant review committee will notify applicants if they have been selected to develop a full proposal for submission and review by **February 19th, 2027**.
- A Full Proposal Submission Convening will be offered on Friday **March 12th, 2027, at 3:30 PM EST.** The link for attendance will be sent to those applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal. *Please note this date, as attendance is mandatory for this session in order to continue with the application process.*
- Full proposals that are responsive to the application protocol provided upon notification, will be due to the JAMS Foundation - ACR Grant review committee no later than 11:59 PM local time of the organization's legal/main location on **May 7th, 2027**.
- Funding decisions will be approved by the JAMS Foundation Board at its August meeting and all grantees will be notified of their status.
- The selected grantees will be formally announced during ACR's 2027 Annual Conference; location and date to be announced. Selected grant recipients should plan on attending.

Please address questions about the grant program to D.G. Mawn at grants@acrnet.org.

Initial Proposal Ideas Description

Please note, incomplete submissions and those which do not adhere to the specifications contained within this NOFA will not be considered.

MANDATORY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

The Initial Project Idea Description must be submitted electronically through the Internet. The subject line of the email **must read**: JAMS Foundation/ACR Grant and the name of the submitting organization.

Applications must be submitted **electronically by 11:59 P.M.**, **local time of applicant on January 8th, 2027,** to grants@acrnet.org.

In the body of the email, provide **only** the following information:

1. Name of the organization and the complete mailing address of the organization; and the city and state where the project will take place.
2. Name of the proposed project.
3. Name of the contact person and necessary contact information, including a) telephone number of contact person, and b) electronic mail (email) address of contact person.
4. Indicate if you (the submitter) or someone on your team is a member of ACR. Being a member is not a guarantee you may receive an invitation to submit a full proposal, but will be a consideration factor.

The proposed project description shall be **no more than three pages**, single spaced, 12-point font, in Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins and page numbered. The document must be submitted in **Word**.

Please note**, incomplete submissions and those which do not adhere to the specifications will not be considered**. This includes but is not limited to proposals which do not include conflict resolution education, training, or services in a substantial way.

Project Description: In **<u>your 1-3-page description</u>** of the project please discuss the following:

1. Briefly highlight your previous or present work, or that of your partner, which demonstrates the knowledge and experience you have working with institutional systems to develop policy or procedural changes that impact the institutional climate and culture.

2. Briefly highlight your previous or present work, or that of your partner with students in grades 7–12 or a subset, who are experiencing mental health challenges resulting in conflict with others in the school setting.

3. Briefly describe your proposed school district's current detention, suspension, and expulsion rates. Include herein, how, if at all, the school district measures regarding youth feelings of social isolation, anxiety, depression, or hopelessness. Include with these data points the appropriate citations. Then provide a possible barrier, you would like to address to increasing the use of CRE techniques by both students and school personnel instead of detention, suspension or expulsion and how would that increase in usage impact youth feelings of social isolation, anxiety, depression, or hopelessness.

4. Briefly note the steps you would take or have taken with youth (grades 7–12 or a subset) to learn and use these conflict resolution skills in a manner that provides them with a sense of agency and enables them to address conflicts that may exacerbate their feelings of social isolation, anxiety, depression, or hopelessness.

5. Provide an example of a previous project that was grant funded and has been sustained after the original funding ended. Include in this example one to two practices the organization has in place to assure project viability, sustainability, and replicability at the end of a project granted funded term.