

Please write a Problem Statement focusing on the health benefits of time spent in nature. The project funded would be our direct in-person programming (Nature Communities, events on our calendar, campouts, day activities, etc. which are led by our staff, educators and key volunteers). (200 word limit)

Limited accessibility to greenspaces, coupled with the cultural shift toward more sedentary lifestyles, makes children vulnerable to negative health outcomes that can lead to further complications in adulthood. In 2024, Texas A&M SPH introduced the innovative NatureScore system, linking access to nature with mental health outcomes across 1,169 Texas zip codes. The study found that “Nature Adequate” neighborhoods have 51% and 63% lower likelihoods of depression and bipolar encounters.

Families in Nature (FiN) aims to increase time spent in nature and educate families about ecology and conservation through in-person programming—Nature Communities, campouts, outdoor skills lessons, and day activities—led by dedicated staff and volunteers. This project's urgency is heightened by the increasing mental health challenges our communities face, especially in underserved areas. In the past decade, reports of anxiety, depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation have surged among adolescents.

FiN’s direct in-person programming offers essential opportunities for residents to connect with nature, promoting healthier lifestyles and fostering a sense of community. FiN’s programs are uniquely suited to increase local knowledge and help all participants see themselves as experts in their regions. By cultivating a deeper connection with nature, we will improve health outcomes and build stronger, more resilient communities.

In addition to the Problem Statement, please send the names of 2 entities (supporters/funders/grantors) to whom you would submit this request and a sentence or two about why they would be a good fit for this project.

The [Meadows Foundation](#) focuses on initiatives in areas of education, environment, homelessness, and mental health. They also prioritize environmental preservation and public health - former recipients include the Sierra Club, Kids Inc of Amarillo, and the National Wildlife Federation.

The [National Environmental Education Foundation \(NEEF\)](#) supports lifelong environmental learning. Their emphasis on environmental education and community engagement aligns with FiN’s mission and programming - former recipients include Citizen Science at Shenandoah National Park, Silverton Middle and High Schools in partnership with Mountain Studies Institute, and Colorado Canyons Association in partnership with McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area.

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