

YOUTH MENTAL WELLNESS CHAMPIONS

Sharing the tools, knowledge, and experience to make a lasting impact

2026-27 COHORT

Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health



Youth Mental Wellness Champions

Each academic year, 15 high school Juniors and Seniors with varied lived experiences across Wisconsin are selected to join a cohort and engage in monthly virtual meetings to expand their knowledge, skills, and network.

"If you like being a leader and learning about mental health and actionable solutions to create systems that better support this crucial part of overall wellness, this cohort is for you!"

- 2025-26 Champion

MONTHLY MEETING TOPICS TO INSPIRE & ENGAGE

- ▶ Mental Health: Past & Present
- ▶ School-Based Mental Health
- ▶ Wellness & Belonging
- ▶ Advocacy Strategies
- ▶ Data for Change
- ▶ Sharing Stories for Impact

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ Attend virtual meetings the **third Thursday of each month** from **7:00 pm – 8:45 pm** on the following dates:
 - September 17, 2026
 - October 15, 2026
 - November 19, 2026
 - December 17, 2026
 - January 21, 2027
 - February 18, 2027
 - March 18, 2027
 - April 8, 2027*
- ▶ Attend and present at an in-person completion ceremony in Madison on **May 13, 2027**.*

* Final two sessions are held the second Thursday of the month

WHY APPLY?

"It helped give me self confidence on speaking up about the issues that matter to me most."

"This program has taught me how to lead and advocate for mental health."

"It is a great way to meet new people and talk about something that you are passionate about."

"Getting to elaborate and talk through real world issues with people my own age helped me feel so much more empowered."

"The cohort is a warm, safe, loving environment."

Quotes from the 2025-26 Youth Mental Wellness Champions Cohort (below).



continued >>

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2026-27 Cohort Application Details

Applications due
Sunday, August 23, 2026
by midnight

WHO CAN APPLY?

OCMH prioritizes youth voice and seeks to have diverse Youth Mental Wellness Champions with a representative mix of experiences and identities. Each academic year, a rising high school Junior or Senior from each of the 12 CESAs will be chosen for the Wisconsin Youth Mental Wellness Champions Cohort. An additional three seats will be filled by applicants from any region in Wisconsin, for a total of 15 members.

Applicants must include the name and email address of a school staff member to sponsor their application (for example, school counselor, teacher, administrator, program advisor, or coach). This sponsor will not participate in monthly meetings and will only be contacted if OCMH has difficulties contacting the selected Champion.

No member may serve more than one academic year. Only one student will be selected in any given school district. Students can reapply with a new application if they were not selected in their Junior year.

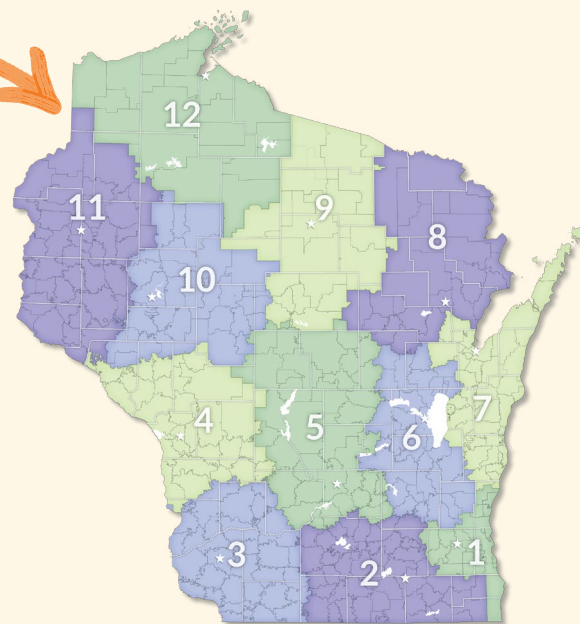
HOW TO APPLY

Students entering their Junior or Senior year of high school can apply via a short online form. Student leaders will be asked to provide the following information:

- Name, email address, mailing address
- Name of high school, CESA Region
- Brief description of interest and/or personal experience with mental health/wellness
- Short list of relevant extracurricular, volunteer, or work experiences
- 1 – 3 minute video explaining why the student would like to participate in the Youth Mental Wellness Champions Cohort

Finalists will be contacted to participate in a 15-minute virtual interview to confirm their commitment to the program.

MAP OF WISCONSIN'S CESAs



CESA stands for Cooperative Educational Service Agency. There are 12 CESAs in the state of Wisconsin.

Not sure which CESA you are in?

Ask a School Administrator or search for your **School District on the Department of Public Instruction website.**

DEADLINE

All applications must be submitted by **MIDNIGHT, SUNDAY, AUG. 23**

APPLY HERE!

or find the application at **CHILDREN.WI.GOV**



For questions about the Wisconsin Youth Mental Wellness Champions, please contact OCMH@wi.gov.



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