



Franciscan Children's Community Health Initiative

Request for Proposals: Community Food Access

Background

In July 2023, Franciscan Children's and Boston Children's finalized their institutional affiliation to enhance the system of behavioral health care of children and youth and improve care for children with complex rehabilitation needs. Consistent with their complementary charitable missions, Franciscan Children's and Boston Children's are working to expand access to compassionate, equitable, family-centered, and evidence-based care for children in Massachusetts and across New England.

As a result of this partnership and plans for a new clinical building in Brighton, there is a new funding opportunity for community organizations in Boston. The **Franciscan Children's Community Health Initiative**, a part of *Boston Children's Collaboration for Community Health*, aims to improve the health and well-being of children, youth, and families impacted by inequities in health and the social determinants of health. Our community-identified goal for this funding opportunity is to help children, youth, and families to access fresh, nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods where they live.

Need

Studies show one in three households with children in Massachusetts have a child who went hungry, skipped a meal or did not eat for a full day because there was not enough money for food (Greater Boston Food Bank, 2024). Households with individuals who identify as Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and LGBTQ+ experience higher levels of food insecurity compared to other populations.

Due to high food, housing, and utility costs, families are choosing between paying bills and buying food. Improving access to nutritious food supports children's overall health today and reduces chronic disease in the future. Community-based solutions that address the rising costs of food and provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables that meet cultural, dietary, and religious needs can help promote equitable access to food. (Greater Boston Food Bank, 2024)

Funding Opportunity

This Request for Proposals (RFP) will prioritize investments in innovative, family-centered, and community-led food access interventions. Interventions will do one or more of the following:

- Improve access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally acceptable food for children, youth, and families.
- Provide nutrition education, classes and workshops in community settings.
- Increase community-led advocacy, organizing, and/or civic engagement on food and climate issues.
- Support local farmers markets, mobile markets, and initiatives/partnerships that provide fresh farmed food to children, youth, and families.

Examples of community-based projects include but are not limited to:

- Increasing opportunities for children, youth, and families to grow food in underserved neighborhoods.
- Increasing farmed fresh foods that meet cultural, dietary, and religious needs at food pantries, food banks, meal sites, and other community settings.
- Maximizing enrollment and addressing stigma around accessing public food benefits and pantries.
- Developing multilingual and multicultural nutrition education/cooking classes and workshops in community settings.
- Instituting child, youth, and family-friendly programming at farmers markets.
- Promoting organizational nutrition and food procurement standards to align with good food procurement practices.

Youth and/or family engagement should be a key aspect of any effort. Projects can support the expansion of an existing program or service, create a new program or services within an existing organization, or support the launch of a first-time community-led effort. **The deadline for applications is Friday, February 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

Total Funding

- A total of \$1.68 million will be available for this funding opportunity.
- Funding will support projects for 4 years from June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2029.
- Applicants may apply for funding between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year commensurate to the scope of the project. Total requests should not exceed \$200,000 over 4 years.
- We anticipate funding up to 12 organizations through this competitive RFP process.
- All applications will be competitively reviewed.

Eligibility and Priorities

- Applicants must be 501(c)3 tax-exempt organizations that serve Boston children and families. If the organization is not a 501(c)3 nonprofit, they can apply with a tax-exempt fiscal sponsor.
- Priority for family-centered and/or community-led projects.
- Priority will be given to projects located in the following Boston neighborhoods: Allston, Brighton, Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Mission Hill, and Roxbury.
- Private foundations are not eligible.
- Practices or entities owned by Boston Children's are not eligible to apply or receive funds but may serve as collaborators. Franciscan Children's is not eligible to apply or receive funds but may serve as a collaborator.

Support for Applicants

Boston Children's will hold an optional virtual information session on **Wednesday, December 18, 2:00 - 3:00 pm** via Zoom (register [here](#)). There will be an opportunity to have your questions answered during this session. The session will be recorded and responses to questions will be posted online in the application portal. Applicants can also sign up for office hours with Boston Children's staff (register [here](#)). Applicants can also email questions to Haley.Piette@childrens.harvard.edu at any point in the application process.

Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, and other direct expenses, including a limited amount of equipment deemed essential to the project. Indirect expenses (e.g. rent, utilities) may not exceed 10% of the total request. Grant funds may not be used to provide medical services, support clinical trials, construct or renovate healthcare facilities, or substitute funds currently being used to support similar activities.

Evaluation

A report evaluating the project and sharing progress and results is required at the midpoint and end of each grant year. The Franciscan Children's Community Health Initiative evaluation partner, Health Resources in Action, will work with successful grant recipients to design and finalize an evaluation plan and identify indicators.

Sharing and Learning

Selected projects will be expected to participate in at least two sharing and learning activities annually hosted by Boston Children's. Organizational leadership and project staff should attend.

Key Dates

Item	Date
Request for Proposals released	By December 10, 2024
Virtual information session	Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 2:00-3:00 p.m. Register here
Office hours with Boston Children's	January 6 to February 4, 2025 Register here
Proposals due	Friday, February 7, 2025 by 5:00 p.m.
Awardees notified	By Monday, April 14, 2025
Funded Partner Kick Off Meeting	Thursday, May 29, 2025, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Grant period (4 years)	June 1, 2025 – May 30, 2029
Collaboration for Community Health Annual Funded Partner Convening	Tuesday, June 10, 2025, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Year 1 reports due	December 2025/June 2026
Year 2 reports due	December 2026/June 2027
Year 3 reports due	December 2027/June 2028
Year 4 reports due	December 2028/June 2029

Contact name and email:

Haley Piette, Project Coordinator, Office of Community Health,
Haley.Piette@childrens.harvard.edu.

Application Instructions

Deadline

The deadline to submit applications is **Friday, February 7, 2025 by 5 p.m.** All applications must be submitted online at <https://bostonchildrens.smapply.io/>. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email by April 14, 2025.

Submission Instructions

Applications will be accepted using our [online application portal](#). Sign up for an account if you are a new user of the [Survey Monkey Apply portal](#). Once you have logged in, select the initiative you are applying for to start your application. If you are a grant writer, please register using the name and email address for the primary contact of the application. Once you have completed the application, you must click 'Submit' to formally submit your application. You will receive notification by email that the submission was received. Use Google Chrome for the best experience. See Survey Monkey Apply frequently asked questions for applicants [here](#).

Application Requirements

Application Components:

- Cover Letter (Please include the total amount of funding requested and key contact information)
- Proposal Narrative (See application questions below)
- Project Budget (Use [template provided](#))
- W-9 Tax Form for organization or fiscal sponsor (Use [provided form](#). Must include the address where payment should be mailed)
- One Letter of Support (From someone outside of your organization)

Application Questions:

1. Describe your organization, mission, and connection to the community you serve. (250 words)
2. Describe the population of children and families you work with, and a recent project related to food access where you engaged children, youth and/or families in a significant and meaningful way. (350 words)
3. Describe your proposed project in detail, highlighting one or more of the interventions noted above, including the need for this project. Be sure to discuss the specific inequities experienced by children, youth and/or families to be addressed with your project and how your project will be family-centered and/or community-led. (750 words)

4. Identify the anticipated number of children, youth, and/or families you plan to reach over the four years of your proposed project. (100 words)
5. Identify the community/geography where the project activities will occur, and the anticipated demographics of the populations of children, youth, and/or families to be engaged. (250 words)
6. Reflect on what success looks like for this project and what you hope to achieve over the next 4 years. Please include expected outcomes for Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 and how you plan to measure those outcomes. (300 words)
7. Describe the skills and capabilities of the staff who will implement and evaluate your project's activities including experience working with food access initiatives. If there are new staff roles to be filled, describe your strategies for hiring, including how you will make progress on your project should there be a hiring delay (i.e., if new staff are not able to be hired within 3 months of the grant award). (250 words)
8. Describe the racial/ethnic, gender and geographic identities of your organization's management, staff, and board and how this diversity might inform or benefit the project. (200 words)
9. Optional: Please share any other information you would like us to know about your organization or your proposed project. (150 words)

Required Documents (for all applicants):

Submit the following documents with your completed application. If you need assistance, contact haley.piette@childrens.harvard.edu.

1. Cover Letter (please include the total amount of funding requested and key project and reporting contact information)
2. Project Budget (Use template provided [here](#))
3. Completed W-9 tax form for organization or from fiscal sponsor (Use form provided [here](#). W-9 submitted must include the specific address where payment should be mailed.)
4. One Letter of Support (One page, single spaced. Must be from someone outside of your organization, such as a community partner or program participant.)

Selection Criteria

All applications will be evaluated using the criteria below.

- Track record of meaningful food access work and engagement with the community (Q 1, 2, and uploaded Letter of Support)
- Alignment with the initiative's strategy and priority populations (Q 3, 4, 5, 8)
- Clear and comprehensive description of the project and the need, including equity focus (Q3)
- Family-centered and/or community-led project (Q3)
- How the project proposes to engage with children, youth, families, and the community (Q 2, 3)
- Potential for positive impact on food access for children, youth, families, and the community (Q 3, 4, 5, 6)
- Outcome metrics that are relevant, measurable, and achievable (Q 6)
- Sufficient staff capacity to successfully implement and evaluate project (Q 7, 8)
- Budget that accurately reflects the level of project effort (uploaded Project Budget)