



Franciscan Children's Community Health Initiative

Request for Proposals: Promoting Mental Health Through Intentional Youth Engagement

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. The community-identified goal for this funding opportunity is to improve the mental and behavioral health of Boston youth through positive social connections.

Funding Opportunity

Youth mental health consistently ranks at or near the top as an issue that the community, parents, and youth prioritize. While other efforts are simultaneously ongoing to support the increase of mental and behavioral health resources for children and young people, as well as to support the infrastructure of the mental and behavioral health workforce, these efforts are predicated on youth being connected to and engaged enough to receive these services. The consequences of young people not accessing resources and being engaged in activities can be profound, consequently impacting education, life trajectory, a sense of belonging in their community, and overall health and well-being.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) will fund efforts to reach Boston youth ages 11-24, who are not currently engaged through the typical channels: community-based organizations, out-of-school time activities, school-based activities, church activities, and general community engagement activities. Youth-serving organizations should apply for this funding opportunity with a community partner who will help to identify hard-to-engage young people and work to connect them to programs/services. These projects have the potential to provide youth with an increased sense of belonging and support

for their mental health and wellbeing. Particular gaps in services were identified during our community engagement process. As a result, priority populations include: youth in foster care, court-involved youth, LGBTQ+ youth, immigrant youth, and neurodivergent youth.

Proposals should:

- Describe the ways in which hard-to-engage youth will be identified, for example, through partnerships with housing developments, organizations that work with court-involved youth, schools, welcome centers that serve newly arrived immigrants, and shelters.
- Discuss ways that your organization/partnership understands, and is positioned to, engage youth in activities/services when other efforts may not have been successful.
- Describe what activities/services your organization can provide to these particular youth and how family and community engagement will be included in your work.
- Discuss the short- and long-term plan for positively impacting the mental and behavioral health and overall wellbeing of the youth that participate as well as what criteria your project will use as it considers youth “engaged” or on the continuum of engagement.

Examples of projects include but are not limited to:

- A youth development organization partnering with its local housing development to identify youth that may not be engaged in other community activities and families who have not participated in community events.
- A youth arts program partnering with a specific school to identify youth who are not engaged in any extracurricular activities.
- A youth mentoring program partnering with a public agency that works with court-involved youth and their families to provide wraparound services and support.
- A faith-based organization partnering with a welcome center that serves newly arrived immigrant families to get youth connected to programs/services and embedded in their community.
- An LGBTQ+ youth organization partnering with a foster care organization to provide identity-affirming academic and social support services.
- A neurodiversity support group partnering with a neighborhood coalition to activate community spaces for inclusive programming.

Total Funding

- A total of \$1.2 million will be available for this funding opportunity.
- Funding will support projects for 3 years from June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2028.
- Applicants may apply for \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year (\$150,000 to \$300,000 total) commensurate to the scope of the project.
- We anticipate funding up to 6 partnerships through this competitive RFP process.

Eligibility and Priorities

- Projects will benefit youth in the City of Boston. 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.
- Youth-serving organizations should be the lead applicant and must apply with a partner. Public agencies cannot be lead applicants.
- Partner organizations can include community-based organizations, community health centers, intermediary organizations, coalitions, advocacy organizations, or public agencies, including schools.
- Organizations must serve youth year-round or throughout the school year. Summer camps are not eligible.
- Organizations must have been in existence for at least two years.
- Tax-exempt organizations and groups with a tax-exempt fiscal agent are eligible to apply. Private foundations are not eligible.
- Practices or entities owned by Boston Children's and Franciscan Children's are not eligible to apply or receive funds but may serve as collaborators.

Support for Applicants

Boston Children's will hold an optional information session on **Thursday, December 19, 2024 from 1:00 - 2:00 PM** via Zoom (register [here](#)). There will be an opportunity to have your questions answered during this session. This session will be recorded. Applicants can also sign up for office hours with Boston Children's staff (register [here](#)). Applicants may email questions to Haley.Piette@childrens.harvard.edu at any point in the application process. Answers to questions will be posted online in the application portal.

Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, youth stipends, and other direct expenses, including a limited amount of equipment deemed essential to the project. Indirect expenses may not exceed 10% of 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 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	Tuesday, December 10, 2024
Virtual information session	Thursday, December 19, 2024 1:00-2:00 PM Register here
Office hours with Boston Children's	January 6 to February 7, 2025 Register here
Proposals due	Friday, February 7, 2025 by 5:00 PM
Awardees notified	By Monday, April 14, 2025
Virtual kickoff meeting	Thursday, May 29, 2025 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Grant period	June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2028
Collaboration for Community Health Annual Funded Partner Convening	Tuesday, June 10, 2025 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Year 1 reports due	December 2025 / June 2026
Year 2 reports due	December 2026 / June 2027
Year 3 reports due	December 2027 / June 2028

Contact Information

Haley Piette, Project Coordinator, Office of Community Health, Boston Children's Hospital
Haley.Piette@childrens.harvard.edu

Application Instructions

Deadline

The deadline to submit applications is **Friday, February 7, 2025 by 5:00 PM**. All applications must be submitted online at <https://bostonchildrens.smapply.io/>. All applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email by Monday, 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 amount of funding requested and key contact information)
- Proposal Narrative (see application questions below)
- Project Budget (template provided [here](#))
- W-9 Tax Form for organization or fiscal sponsor (must include the address where payment should be mailed)
- Letter of Support (from someone outside of your organization)
- Partnership Letter (from all partners listed on this application)

Application Questions:

Please answer the eleven questions below using our [online application portal](#).

1. Describe your organization as the lead applicant, your mission, and connection to the community you serve and its culture. (250 words)
2. Identify your partner organization(s) and describe their mission and connection to the community they serve. (250 words)
3. Describe a project that you and your partner(s) have worked on together. If you have not partnered before, please discuss the priorities you share. (250 words)
4. Describe the population of youth that you currently work with. Please include demographic (race/ethnicity, age) and geographic information. (250 words)

5. Describe the population of non-engaged youth that you will focus your proposal on and the estimated reach over 3 years. Be sure to discuss how your organization/partnership understands the barriers to engagement and is well-positioned to engage these youth. (300 words)
6. Describe your proposed project and the role of each partner organization. Be sure to discuss the programs, services, or activities you will provide to youth and how family engagement is included in that work. (750 words)
7. Discuss how your project will support the mental health and overall well-being of the youth participants. (300 words)
8. Reflect on what success looks like for this project and what criteria you will use to consider youth “engaged” or on the continuum of engagement. Please include expected outcomes for Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3 and how you plan to measure those outcomes. (300 words)
9. Describe the skills and capabilities of the staff who will implement and evaluate your project’s activities. If there are new staff roles to be filled, describe your plans 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)
10. Describe the racial/ethnic, gender and geographic identities of your organization’s leadership and how this diversity might inform or benefit the project. (200 words)
11. Please share any other information you would like us to know about your organization, partnership, or proposed project. (150 words)

Required Documents:

Submit the following five documents with your completed application.

1. Cover Letter (One page, single spaced. Include amount of funding requested and key contact information.)
2. Project Budget (Use template provided [here](#).)
3. W-9 Tax Form (Use form provided [here](#) or upload own form for organization or fiscal sponsor. The W-9 submitted must include the specific address where payment should be mailed.)
4. Letter of Support (One page, single spaced. Must be from someone outside of your organization such as a community partner or program participant.)
5. Partnership Letter (One page, single spaced. Must be from all partners listed on this application.)

Selection Criteria

All applications will be evaluated using the criteria below.

- Track record of meaningful youth engagement and connection to the community (Q 1, 2, 5 and uploaded Letter of Support)
- Strong partnership with clearly defined roles and evidence of (or potential for) successful collaboration (Q 2, 3, 5, 6)
- Alignment with the initiative's strategy and priority populations (Q 4, 5, 6, 10)
- Clear and comprehensive description of the project and how it will engage new youth (Q 5, 6)
- Potential for positive impact on youth mental health and wellbeing (Q 7)
- Outcome metrics that are relevant, measurable, and achievable (Q 8)
- Sufficient staff capacity to successfully implement and evaluate project (Q 9)
- Budget that accurately reflects the level of project effort (uploaded Project Budget)