**Boston Children’s Hospital’s Collaboration for Community Health**

**Birth to Five  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**Updated May 23, 2024**

Click [here](https://bostonchildrens.zoom.us/rec/share/8qVVEhZBtMhuZKHgX3CvM5jnPS0uEWEyBlxmOJsDDEkVAb8frXTmokRkOa5p1Qg.D6pVsIOINx1x7n09) to view a recording of the April 30, 2024 information session

**How can I get more information and find out how to apply for funds?**Please visit [www.bostonchildrens.org/smapply.io](http://www.bostonchildrens.org/smapply.io) for more information and to apply.

**Who will make the funding decisions?**A review committee made up of 10 to 12 members will be convened to review the applications. The committee will be made up of community stakeholders, including residents and organizational leaders, content area experts, community residents, and staff from Boston Children’s, the Boston Public Health Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

**Will this funding opportunity replace existing funding for community health centers and community health programs supported by the Office of Community Health?**  
No. This new funding opportunity will not replace funding for community health center pediatric programs currently supported by the Office of Community Health. Community health center applicants will need to demonstrate benefits of the project that extend beyond the patient population. Projects will also need to be distinguished from activities currently supported with Boston Children’s funding. **How do you plan to work with other funders and hospitals making grants in similar areas?**We are actively in conversation with other funders and hospitals to identify opportunities to collaborate on grant making.

**Is this initiative primarily focused on the early childhood education space and working with the MA Department of Early Education and Care?**

This initiative is interested in all systems of support, formal and informal, for families of young children. Tier 3 projects should focus on cross-sector or multi-systems work and how these systems engage with young children and their families.

**ELIGIBILITY**

**What types of organizations are eligible to apply?**

Eligible organizations include 501(c)3 tax-exempt organizations or those with a tax-exempt fiscal sponsor. Examples include community-based organizations, early childhood education networks, community health centers, intermediary organizations, coalitions or advocacy organizations. Private foundations are not eligible.

**Are faith-based organizations eligible?**

Yes.

**Can family child care providers apply?**Family child care providers may apply in groups.

**What types of projects will be eligible for the funds?**Projects should focus on family engagement and/or health and well-being. Projects should accomplish this through at least one or more of the following approaches: 1) create or build on existing programs and services, with a link to advocacy efforts; 2) policy advocacy; and/or 3) systems change and coordination.

**Can projects be for new work or existing work?**

Projects may be for new work or to continue or expand upon existing work. If you are a current funded partner seeking to continue existing work, you are expected to allocate some grant funds to build on current activities.  
  
**Are government and city agencies eligible to apply?**Yes. Government and city agencies and schools may apply in partnership with community-based organizations.

**Can a larger agency with multiple member organizations apply as a lead applicant?**

Large agencies/organizations with multiple member or affiliate organizations are welcome to apply as a lead applicant. Individual members of those large agencies/organizations are also welcome to submit individual applications as a lead applicant.

**Can organizations that have previously received or currently receive funds from Boston Children’s apply for funds from the Collaboration for Community Health?**Yes. The organization will need to demonstrate how the funds will build on or expand upon existing work funded by Boston Children’s. Grant funds cannot substitute funding for existing work funded by Boston Children’s Hospital.

**Can current Collaboration for Community Health funded partners apply?**

Yes. Current Collaboration for Community Health funded partners may apply for either a continuation or new grant.

**Will current Collaboration for Community Health funded partners receive priority over new applicants?**

No. Our review committee will identify the strongest proposals from all applications we receive.

**For a continuation project, would reaching additional neighborhoods, reaching new families that are underserved, and/or including new partners be considered as “growth?”**

Yes.

**If we are a continuation project that has previously been funded in 2018 and 2021, should we reflect on the successes/challenges of our 2021 project or our 2018 project?**

You may include reflections from both to demonstrate your ability to adapt from 2018 to 2021.

**What qualifies as a “link to advocacy?”**

Your link to advocacy may depend on your project, your partners, and your organization’s experience with advocacy. Advocacy can range from formal legislative advocacy or less formal institutional advocacy that leads to internal changes within your organization(s) or ways of partnering with other organizations. Please sign up for office hours if you have further questions that relate to your project.

**Can you clarify the statement “Grant funds may not be used to substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities” in the Request for Proposals (RFP)?**

This statement refers to restrictions in the use of grant funds. Funds for this request may not be used to fund activities you are currently conducting and which are being supported by an existing funding source. Funds for this request should go towards activities that will build upon existing activities and generate new activities. Grant funds may not be used to provide medical services, support clinical trials, construct or renovate healthcare facilities, or to support any similar activities.

**GEOGRAPHY & POPULATION**

**What is the geographic focus for funding?**Preference will be given to proposals that benefit children and families located in Boston. Proposals for policy advocacy as well as systems change and coordination that have the potential for statewide applicability from areas outside of Greater Boston will be considered. Please refer to the RFP for details on the types of eligible organizations and projects.

**Will you focus on or prefer projects in specific neighborhoods?**We are prioritizing the following neighborhoods which have the highest concentration of children and families of color and highest rates of child poverty:

* Allston/Brighton
* Dorchester
* East Boston
* Hyde Park
* Jamaica Plain
* Mattapan
* Mission Hill
* Roxbury

**Will you consider projects with geographies outside of these neighborhoods?**

Yes, however we will consider projects impacting our priority neighborhoods first.

**If our organization also serves neighborhoods outside of Boston, should we include them in the application?**

This RFP is focused on the eight priority neighborhoods shared above. Neighborhoods outside of Boston will not be prioritized.

**How will projects with statewide activities or participants be considered?**

Applicants engaged in statewide activities or participants should emphasize how their work will impact the Collaboration for Community Health’s priority Boston neighborhoods.

**Our proposal seeks to work with children with a specific medical need. How would this be viewed?**

Consider the incidence of the medical need and any disparities (racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, etc.) that exist within the need. In application, provide specific data on the medical need that provides more background context for reviewers.

**We may be working with migrant families who are considered Boston residents since they were at the airport but may be re-located to other cities/towns such as Chelsea, etc. How would this be viewed?**

If migrant families are not a large percentage of the total population you anticipate reaching, there should not be any concerns.

**BUDGET**

**Can funds be used for reimbursable services or planning?**

Funds may not be used for reimbursable services.

**Will funds be disbursed in a lump sum or as installments?**Installments. We anticipate disbursing funds on an annual basis.

**Can funds be used for staff salaries?**Yes, as well as for community resident or youth stipends. The review committee reserves the right to ask questions about budget line items.

**Can funds be used for training programs, or to pay residents or participants for their time?**Yes, funds may be used for training and stipends.

**The RFP says indirect expenses can’t exceed 10% of the total. Different organizations treat indirect expenses differently. Could you give a clear definition of what is included in indirect expenses and what is not?**

We consider indirect expenses and overhead expenses to be synonymous. Indirect costs include costs which are frequently referred to as overhead expenses (e.g. lights, space, physical costs, expenses related to general operations). If the applicant is invited to submit a full proposal, 10% of the total funding request may be directed as indirect expense. Please contact the initiative lead directly if you have questions or concerns about this rate.

**Are there limitations on the use of funds?**There are limitations in administration costs (please see the question above).

**Should we include plans to leverage resources, including in-kind resources, in the application?**Yes, especially if leveraging resources is part of your project or sustainability plan.

**In terms of other funding to support the proposal, do they need to be secured prior to application submission?**It would be better to have it secured prior to application submission so that reviewers know the project has support.

**Can proposed budgets have an increase over the 4 years, especially for organizations launching new work?**

Yes. Organizations proposing an increase in annual budgets over the four-year grant period should apply for the tier that coincides with your highest annual budget.

**EVALUATION  
How will Boston Children’s assess the impact of this investment?**Boston Children’s has hired [Mathematica](https://mathematica-mpr.com/) to provide technical assistance to grant partners to evaluate their projects and to evaluate the impact of this investment. Boston Children’s is committed to sharing lessons learned and the results about how these investments have made a difference in the lives of children and families in the years ahead.

**What levels of evaluation are there and what will grantees be expected to do?**The Collaboration for Community Health will have two levels of evaluation – the initiative level and the grantee-level. For the initiative level, Mathematica and Boston Children’s Office of Community Health staff will periodically ask grantees to provide information on their experience with the initiative and resources provided. At the grantee-level, grantees are expected to identify and design ways to collect, track, and report on information for their individual projects and periodically check in with Boston Children’s Office of Community Health staff on project progress. Mathematica Policy Research will work with grantees on finalizing their project-specific evaluation plans in the first quarter of the grant period, ongoing reporting, and other areas that grantees identify where support is needed.  **Are you asking that grantees put in funds towards evaluation?**Detailed budget descriptions may reflect resources required to support project evaluation activities.

**Our proposal includes translating our existing materials to reach more families. Should we set this as an objective or a goal?**We do recommend highlighting components of your proposal that include language translation to demonstrate increased access. Whether you set this as an objective or a goal depends on the overall emphasis and impact, and how heavy of a lift it is to incorporate translation into your proposal.

**PARTNERSHIPS AND TIERING**

**Should the project staff include both those of the applicant organization and partners who will be working on the project?**Yes, please list all project staff.

**Can you define partner?**

A partner is defined as an organization you are working with that would be essential to the success of the project. With a higher tier, there is an expectation that a partner will receive some funding from the request.

**Can an organization apply in multiple funding categories?**An organization may only apply once as the lead applicant in the Birth to Five initiative. Organizations may be a partner on more than one Birth to Five application.

**What are you looking for in a strong partnership?**Examples to demonstrate a strong partnership could include:

* Clear commitment and contribution to the project via the letter of partnership
* Mutual added value between partners
* Sharing of resources (whether grant funding or in-kind support)
* High levels of buy-in from senior leadership
* Descriptions of how the partnership would be implemented operationally (work groups, meeting frequency, etc.)

**Would a situation where a lead and partner organization are collaborating on an initiative be classified as “applying jointly”?**Yes, if both lead and partner organization have integral roles on the project.

**If an organization is applying but the project involves a partnership with another organization and a small portion of funding will flow to that organization, would that qualify for Tier 2? Or does a Tier 2 application require two organizations to apply jointly and share funding?**The expectation and preference is that a Tier 2 application has two or more organizations applying jointly and sharing funding. The expectation of sharing funding for Tier 2 and Tier 3 proposals is to ensure partners are committed to the project.

**If an applicant already has a long-standing partnership that does not rely on the sharing of funds (i.e. sharing in-kind resources, etc.), can they still apply for Tier 2?**Yes. The sharing of funding described in the definition of Tier 2 is to ensure partners are committed to the project and have an existing relationship that includes a memorandum of understanding describing how they work together to achieve shared goals. While having a history of sharing resources is preferred, if partners have non-financial means of demonstrating shared goals and commitments, that is permitted.

**REQUIRED UPLOADS**

**Can your partner organizational letter also be the same organization submitting a letter of support?**No, letters of support should not be from partners on the project.

**We may have only one formalized partner. Can a letter of support also come from a participant of your services?**Yes.

**Is it appropriate to send more than 2 letters of support if relevant?**We recommend applicants limit it to just 2 letters of support.

**Are partnership letters required from ALL partners for tier 2 Birth to Five?**

For tier 2 and 3 projects, a letter a support from each partner would be required. This could be either an individual letter from each partner, or a single letter jointly signed by all partners.

**If we are a continuation application, should we list the same partners we continue to work with for the proposal , or just the new partners?**

Please list all partners, returning and new. All partners should contribute to the letter(s) of partnership.

**In the Scope of services document, who should be included in the project staff table?**

Include anyone who would work on the funded project, including those who would be paid through the grant funding and those who would be providing in-kind services.

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND ASSISTANCE**

**I am unable to access the Survey Monkey Apply platform. What should I do?**Please contact your IT specialist. Some servers may have a firewall that prevents access to Survey Monkey Apply. If you receive an error message, please contact your IT specialist as they may need to make sure the website is not blocked (<https://bostonchildrens.smapply.io>).Also, check your web browser: Survey Monkey Apply works best in Chrome. If you continue to have issues, please email [Debbie.lay@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:Debbie.lay@childrens.harvard.edu).