



2024 Request for Proposals: Youth Leaders for Mental and Behavioral Health

Background

[Boston Children's Collaboration for Community Health](#) aims to improve the health and well-being of children and families disproportionately impacted by systemic injustices and inequities in health and the social determinants of health. Our goal is to promote and support safe, stable, nurturing, healthy relationships and environments for infants, children, youth, and young adults so they can thrive.

Funding Opportunity

Mental and behavioral health is an essential component of good health and well-being. Recently, young people have experienced even greater mental and behavioral health challenges, exacerbating what was already an enormous need, leading the U.S. Surgeon General to issue a public health advisory on youth mental health in 2021. During that time, the COVID-19 pandemic had dramatically changed the experiences of youth at school, home, and in their communities. In addition, societal forces as well as other emerging issues continue to shape the lives of young people in distressing ways. Four topics in particular were identified by Boston youth and youth workers as issues that are causing increased stress, anxiety, depression, and isolation among young people today: climate change, social media, substance use, and war/global conflict.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) will support youth designed and led projects that address the impact of those four issues on the mental and behavioral health of young people (ages 11-22). Projects can focus on one or multiple issues and may integrate inequities, racism, discrimination and societal injustices as context for understanding the issues. Youth will engage, process, and learn together about these issues and then be empowered to advocate for change. Projects can take any form that is helpful and guiding to youth and must link to advocacy efforts for the issue(s). The project will strive to empower youth by building knowledge and support around managing and understanding these important topics. Youth voice and perspective should be embedded in every step of the project.

Examples of types of youth-led projects include but are not limited to:

- Peer-to-peer education or curriculum development
- Public awareness campaign
- Community forum to educate and act on the issue(s)
- Photovoice or other artistic avenues of expression (e.g., murals, music, creative writing)

Examples of types of advocacy efforts include but are not limited to:

- Voter registration drive and civic engagement education
- Community organizing
- Policy changes within your organization

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- Advocacy opportunities in city, state, and federal government (e.g., ask elected officials to cosponsor or vote on legislation, provide testimony, attend advocacy days or briefings)
- Local advocacy organizations and processes to get involved with, such as:
 - Massachusetts Public Health Association: advocacy opportunities for state legislative priorities focused on health equity
 - Mayor's Office of Youth Engagement & Advancement: Youth Lead the Change participatory budgeting process
 - City of Boston community engagement processes (e.g., housing development projects, transportation infrastructure improvement projects)
 - Boston Community Health Collaborative: 2025 community health needs assessment and community health improvement plan
 - Massachusetts Department of Public Health: The 84 Movement (in partnership with Health Resources in Action)
 - Mayor's Cabinet of Environment, Energy, and Open Space: Green New Deal and Climate Ready Boston
 - The Coalition for a Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront (50+ partner organizations)

This opportunity provides two years of grant funding to youth-serving organizations in Boston who work with young people (ages 11-22) year-round or throughout the school year. Youth-serving organizations should only apply for their proposed project and advocacy after engaging with and receiving input from the youth they serve. Program evaluation and sharing project outcomes are expected annually.

Total Funding

- A total of \$800,000 will be available for this funding opportunity.
- Funding will support projects for 2 years from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2026.
- Applicants may apply for up to \$50,000/year (\$100,000 total). The minimum grant size is \$25,000/year (\$50,000 total).
- We anticipate funding 8-10 organizations through this competitive RFP process.

Eligibility and Priorities

- Projects will benefit youth and communities in the City of Boston. Priority will be given to the following Boston neighborhoods: Allston-Brighton, Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Mission Hill, and Roxbury.
- Eligible institutions include community-based organizations, community health centers, intermediary organizations, coalitions, or advocacy organizations. Public agencies, including schools, are eligible to apply in partnership with at least one community-based partner.
- Organizations must have been in existence for at least two years.

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- 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 Hospital 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 Friday, March 8, 2024 from 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM via Zoom (register [here](#)). There will be an opportunity to have your questions answered during this session. Applicants can also email questions to TalkToUs@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, 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

An annual report evaluating the project and sharing progress and results is required at the end of Year 1 and Year 2. Boston Children's will work with successful applicants to design and finalize a program evaluation plan.

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 can attend.

Key Dates

Item	Date
RFP released	Monday, February 26, 2024
Information session	Friday, March 8, 2024 at 11:00 AM
Proposals due	Friday, March 29, 2024 by 5:00 PM
Awardees notified	Friday, April 26, 2024
Grant period	May 1, 2024 – April 30, 2026
Funded partner convening	May 2024
Year 1 report due	May 2025
Year 2 report due	May 2026



Application Instructions

Deadline

The deadline to submit applications is **Friday, March 29, 2024 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 Friday, April 26, 2024.

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 in the portal)
- 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)

Application Questions:

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

1. Describe your organization, mission, and connection to the community you serve. (200 words)
2. Describe the population of youth that you work with. Please include demographic (race/ethnicity, age) and geographic information as well as estimated reach for this project. (200 words)
3. Describe a recent project where you engaged youth in a significant and meaningful way. (200 words)
4. Identify which issue(s) you will focus on for this project (climate change, social media, substance use, war/global conflict). Describe how the issue(s) are impacting youth and their mental health. Be sure to address how inequities factor into the issue. (250 words)

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5. Describe your proposed project and the advocacy component. Be sure to discuss how it will address the mental and behavioral health concerns that stem from the issue(s). (500 words)
6. Discuss the ways in which youth will lead this work, including how they provided input on this proposal. (250 words)
7. Reflect on what success looks like for this project. Please include expected outcomes for Year 1 and Year 2 and how you plan to measure those outcomes. (250 words)
8. Describe the skills and capabilities of the staff who will implement 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). (200 words)
9. 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)

Required Documents:

Submit the following four 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 in the portal.)
3. W-9 Tax Form (Use form provided 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.)

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated using the criteria below.

- Track record of meaningful youth engagement and connection to the community (Q 1, 3, 6 and uploaded Letter of Support)
- Alignment with the initiative's strategy and priority populations (Q 2, 5, 6, 9)
- Clear and comprehensive description of the issue and how the proposed project will address it (Q 4, 5)
- Strong youth-led component to the project (Q 5, 6)
- Potential for positive impact on youth and their mental/behavioral health (Q 5, 6, 7)
- Outcome metrics that are relevant, measurable, and achievable (Q 7)
- Sufficient staff capacity to successfully implement project (Q 8)
- Budget that accurately reflects the level of project effort (uploaded Project Budget)