



COMMONWEALTH CHILDREN'S FUND

Bright Beginnings Breakthrough (B3) Fund Call for Concepts (C4C)

Updated 8-5-25

Introduction

The Commonwealth Children's Fund (CCF) is pleased to launch the inaugural round of the **Bright Beginnings Breakthrough (B3) Fund**, a new grant program created to support bold ideas that reimagine early childhood services in Massachusetts. As a Massachusetts funder dedicated to improving outcomes for young children in the Commonwealth, we believe that bold, creative solutions deserve the time, space, and support of a multi-year competitive grant program to thrive.

B3 is designed for Massachusetts-based 501(c)3 nonprofits with ideas about how service delivery could be improved and can reshape what's possible for Massachusetts families with children 0-5. We are looking for projects that will act as proof points and, if scaled, could ultimately impact effective policy, practice, or coordination.

This Call for Concepts (C4C) spells out the overall goals and application process for the program and details how organizations can apply to the program with their innovative proposals.

Objectives

We are seeking proposals for Massachusetts-based initiatives at **early childhood service providers** that further several interlocking goals:

- **Spark Innovation:** Introduce new or significantly adapted practices that improve quality, affordability, coordination, or access in early childhood systems.
- **Center Children and Families:** Serve and elevate the voices of families, including those historically underserved by current early childhood systems.

- **Catalyze Scalable Impact:** Test, validate, and advance best practices and/or shift public policy to bring durable improvements.
- **Build Field Capacity:** Strengthen the early childhood ecosystem by helping provider organizations reach their full potential.

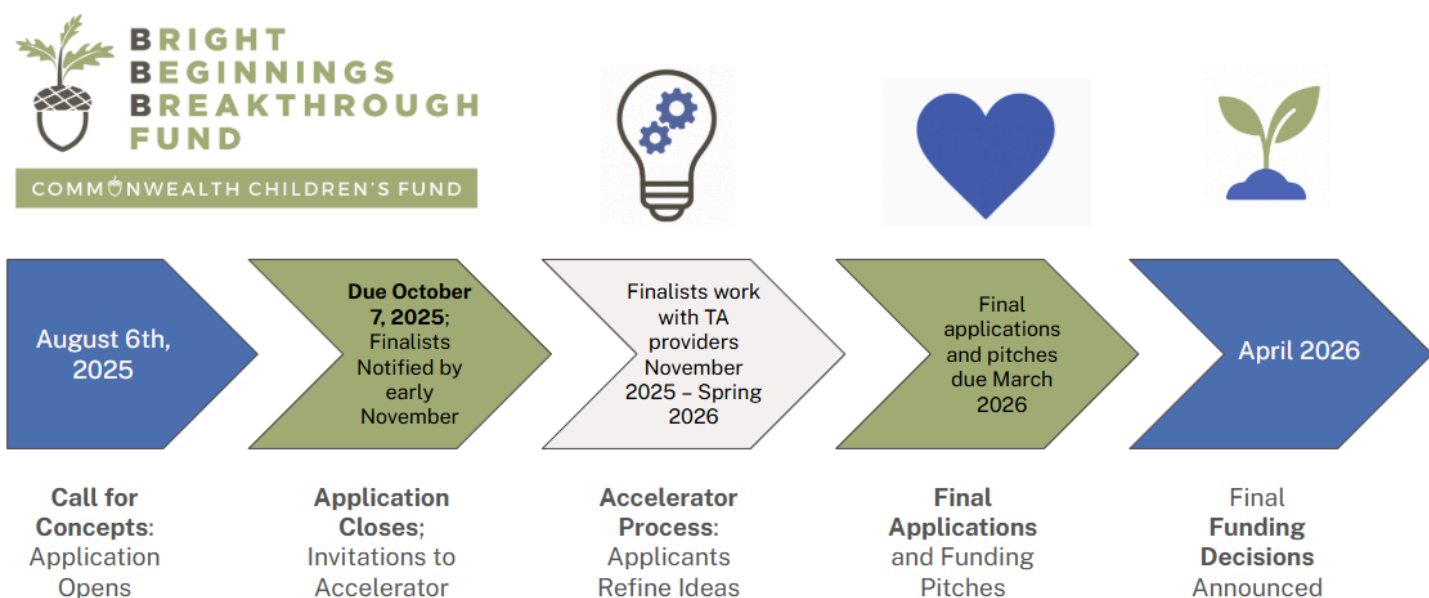
Program Details and Timeline

Program Mechanics

The B3 Fund is a **multiyear grant program** that is designed to partner with grantees for up to four years. For each project year, grantees may receive grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000. Funding levels will vary from project to project, based on scope and potential impact.

B3 will select successful grantees through a **two-step application process**:

- **Call for Concepts (C4C):** Applicants will submit their conceptual idea and articulate its importance to children and families, as well as to the early childhood field. C4Cs may be submitted by individual organizations or on behalf of partnerships between multiple organizations.
- **Project Accelerator:** Up to 20 concepts will advance into the B3 Accelerator. This three-month process will provide finalist applicants with a \$10,000 grant and the time and technical assistance to develop their concepts further, establish detailed budgets, and make a final pitch to funders.



Detailed Program Timeline

Milestone	Date
C4C Application Launched	Wednesday, August 6th, 2025 @ 10am EDT
Info Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tuesday, August 12th @ 10am - Monday, August 25 at 1pm - Monday, August 25 at 6:30pm - Tuesday, September 9th at 10am
Office Hours	9:30am-4pm Tuesdays and Thursdays between Thursday, August 7th and Thursday October 2nd, pending availability
C4C Proposals Due	Tuesday, October 7th, 2025 @ 6pm EDT
Up to 20 Finalists Notified	By early November, 2025
Accelerator Phase Begins	November, 2025
Final Pitches	March 2026
Grant Awards Announced	By April 2026
Pilot Launch for up to 10 Grantees	During Spring to Fall 2026, grantees begin implementation of their vision, building up staffing and service models as needed. Grantees work with embedded evaluators on data collection plans and develop evaluation storylines.
Pilot Scaling	From late 2026 through 2027 and 2028, projects operate at full capacity. Evaluation continues to assess outcomes and support narrative-building.
Transition and Sustainability	Around 2029 (or even earlier), grantees pivot toward long-term sustainability and capture learnings for replication and policy influence

Eligibility, Requirements, and Link to Application Portal

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following criteria in order for their C4C applications to be considered:

- Be a **501(c)3 nonprofit organization** with a focus on serving children 0-5 and/or their families. Mission-driven organizations that are not 501(c)3 nonprofits, including municipalities and government bodies, are encouraged to partner with nonprofit fiscal sponsors to develop fundable concepts. For-profit organizations, even those receiving public funding, cannot be funded directly through this program.
- Be based in Massachusetts or conduct significant early childhood-related operations within the Commonwealth. If applicants have operations in other states, the proposed work should cover operations serving Massachusetts families. B3 funding cannot be used for out-of-state operations.
- Propose work that aligns with at least one pillar of the [Early Childhood 101 systems framework](#). The four pillars of this framework are:
 - Early Education and Care
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Family and Caregiver Support
 - Community Engagement
- Propose work that represents a **new innovation or program**. This grant program is not designed to support general operations or programs that are well underway. This program can consider innovations that are already in an early stage of development or implementation, but core services that are well-established would not be eligible. B3 does not provide general operating funding.

Special Notes on Eligibility

- Applications can be proposals from single organizations or collaborations between several organizations
- CCF believes that important innovations and ideas can arise from anywhere, and B3 aims to elevate and accelerate the best possible ideas for Massachusetts' young children and their families

Application Requirements

All applications to B3 begin with a submitted C4C response via online platform. These C4C responses will consist of a) a short organizational profile AND b) a concept proposal document (PDF or Microsoft Word document, maximum 3 pages) OR video file (maximum 5 minutes - in lieu of a written concept proposal) detailing your organization's innovative idea and providing some additional context.

Application Portal

All applications must be submitted through our online portal with Survey Monkey's Apply service. [Our online application can be found here](#). Applicants will need to create an account with a username and password. Please keep in mind that with this user account, you may return to saved applications and add new information to the portal if your application moves through the initial stages of our process. If you have any IT issues with this portal, contact b3@theccfund.org.

Evaluation Criteria

Strong concept proposals will demonstrate both creativity and commitment to implementation — offering promising ideas that are grounded in reality and animated by a clear purpose. Initial concepts submitted during this first phase of the B3 Fund will be reviewed by a diverse team of expert reviewers using the following scoring rubric:

1. Early Childhood. **Does the concept focus on an important problem in the early childhood sector?** B3 will prioritize ideas that are focused on well-defined problems in early childhood service delivery.
2. Newness. **Does the concept represent a new idea or initiative at the organization, or is this already a going concern that needs additional funding?** The B3 Fund aims to support projects that are new undertakings for an organization and not to support initiatives that are already in flight.
3. Theory of Change. **How effectively does the submission connect the proposed work to outputs and outcomes that benefit young children and their families?** Successful applications will plausibly connect their proposed activities to an outcome and are concrete in defining the impact of the proposed work.
4. Feasibility. **How feasible is this proposal based on the information provided?** The B3 fund is looking for clear, focused projects that remain realistic and tied to real resources.
5. Systems Impact. **How much promise does this proposal hold to influence early childhood service practice or policy in Massachusetts?** The B3 Fund will prioritize concepts that are likely to influence best practice in service delivery practice or impact public policy.
6. Overall Program Fit. **How well does the overall proposal fit with the multifaceted goals of the B3 Fund?** The B3 Fund is looking for projects that have a clear,

compelling story for how they want to improve services for children and their families. Make sure you share your vision and why you are excited about it!

Idea Sharing and Intellectual Property

Commonwealth Children's Fund will maintain the confidentiality of sensitive organizational information submitted by applicants, including financials, staffing data, and operational details.

The B3 Fund is designed to foster a culture of shared learning and sector-wide improvement. This program is about spreading good ideas — not just funding them. While applicants keep ownership of any original materials or tools they create, we want to be clear that CCF and its partners may share the types of ideas submitted, in general terms, to help others in the field learn and grow.

By applying to the B3 Fund, you're agreeing that:

- Your idea may help inform how others think about early childhood work, even if it isn't selected.
- We may reference themes or concepts that come up in applications as we share what we're learning with others in the field.

We believe good ideas should travel. Thanks for helping us build a stronger system for young children and families.

Questions and Clarifications

Please direct all inquiries to b3@theccfund.org. We will continue to update our [online FAQ document](#) as new questions and clarifications are logged.