



Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth, and Families - Children's Bureau

Building Early Childhood-Child Welfare Partnerships to Support the Well-Being of Young
Children, Families, and Caregivers
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0011
Application Due Date: 03/13/2023

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Funding Opportunity Title:

Building Early Childhood-Child Welfare Partnerships to Support the Well-Being of Young Children, Families, and Caregivers

Announcement Type:

Initial

Funding Opportunity Number:

HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0011

Primary CFDA Number:

93.670

Due Date for Applications:

03/13/2023

Executive Summary**Notice:**

- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) carefully and observe the application formatting requirements listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. For more information on applying for grants, please visit "How to Apply for a Grant" on the ACF Grants & Funding Page at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant>.**

In every state and community, early care and education (ECE) and child welfare systems have common goals to promote the social, emotional, developmental, mental health, and educational needs of young children while focusing on family and community well-being. As such, there is significant potential for meaningful collaboration and partnership among those systems. Research has demonstrated that participation in Early Head Start (EHS), a high-quality ECE program, [improves key factors known to prevent child maltreatment](#) and that the benefits of participation in high-quality ECE programs extend well beyond the enrolled child. Despite this natural alignment, strategic and effective coordination between child welfare agencies and ECE has proven difficult to achieve in many states and local jurisdictions due to a variety of long-standing challenges, many of which have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, despite the fact that children in foster care are categorically eligible for enrollment in [Head Start/Early Head Start](#) (HS/EHS), and the benefits of engagement in such high-quality ECE programs are [well-documented](#), enrollment in HS/EHS for this population nationally remains low. Of particular concern are the [barriers to ECE access faced by families of color](#) due to factors such as income, employment, and geography. While [studies have shown](#) the specific positive impacts of participation in high-quality ECE services for children and of color, [racial disparities in young children's access to high-quality ECE](#) services persist. Child welfare and ECE systems must work together to address these long-standing inequities.

Support provided through this opportunity will allow grant recipients to develop and/or enhance strategic multi-system collaboration among child welfare agencies, ECE, and other partners to effectively prevent child abuse and neglect and provide comprehensive supports to children and families, including those who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. Grant recipients will support effective

collaboration between partners at multiple levels, including coordination and collaboration between state, agency, and parent leaders; managers and direct services staff; families; and community partners. Grant funding will support the development of policy, procedures, quality practice, and other strategies to address systemic racial inequities across systems that work to support children and families at-risk of or with current engagement with the child welfare system. Grant recipients will implement strategies to ensure that partnerships are established, enhanced, and/or institutionalized.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

Title I, section 105(b)(5) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106(b)(5)).

Description

BACKGROUND

The [Children's Bureau](#) (CB) is the federal agency charged with administering funding to states, tribes, and territories to operate child welfare systems, providing guidance, monitoring outcomes, and promoting continuous quality improvement in the delivery of child welfare services. A key focus of CB's work is a commitment to partnership with others in the field to examine and improve child welfare and other human service systems to yield more equitable outcomes for children and families. CB encourages child welfare agencies and their partners to collaborate to provide comprehensive supports that create the conditions for strong, safe, and thriving families.

Collaboration between child welfare agencies and partners that support early childhood development, such as HS/EHS, child care providers, early intervention, parents/caregivers, and other ECE providers are key to successful prevention approaches. These entities are well-positioned to know the strengths, resources, and needs of the children and families in their communities, and the types of supports and services that will be most responsive, culturally relevant, and appropriate. Partnerships between child welfare agencies and ECE [can support young children and their families](#) by providing a safe and enriched learning environment; connections to holistic, family-centered, and culturally appropriate services; and early identification of developmental delays and access to early intervention.

Current data reinforce the importance of these partnerships and the need to strategically coordinate methods for effectively supporting families with young children, and particularly young children of color. In 2020, more than 25 percent of victims of maltreatment were in the age range of 0-2, and victimization rates were highest for children younger than 1 at 25.1 per 1,000 children. In the same time period, American-Indian or Alaska Native children had the highest rate of victimization at 15.5 per 1,000 children, and Black children had the second highest victimization rate at 13.2 per 1,000 children ([Child Maltreatment, 2020](#)).

[Head Start Program Information Report Enrollment Statistics](#) from 2019-2020 show that 28,692 of the children who received HS/EHS services during this time were eligible because of their placement in foster care. This figure represents roughly 16 percent of children ages birth to 5 years who were in foster care on September 30, 2019 ([AFCARS, 2019](#)). While there is little data on the reasons for these low rates of enrollment, practice information suggests that gaps may be

due to 1) a lack of awareness of HS/EHS programs among foster parents; 2) transportation and location challenges in some areas; and 3) lack of local identification and referral pathways for children in foster care.

Such low enrollment rates in quality ECE programs are concerning given the known benefits of engagement in these programs yields for young children with or at-risk of child welfare involvement and their families, and particularly for [children of color](#). Research has demonstrated that participation in EHS [improves key factors known to prevent child maltreatment](#), and a growing number of studies has found that children enrolled in quality ECE programs are [less likely to be involved](#) in the child welfare system. [One such study](#) found that participation in EHS led to a long-term reduction in the likelihood of children becoming involved with the child welfare system as the result of program impacts on parenting and child development.

Federal Policies and Communications

The importance of collaboration between child welfare agencies and ECE; the benefits of enrollment in ECE programs for young children and their families with, or at-risk, of child welfare involvement; and the need to ensure improved service access for children and families of color are well-documented through federal policies and communications, including the following:

- Children in foster care are [categorically eligible for enrollment in HS/EHS](#), even if family income exceeds income guidelines. In addition, the ACF Office of Head Start (OHS) [encourages HS/EHS programs to prioritize the enrollment of children with any level of child welfare involvement](#).
- All children in need of protective services are eligible for subsidies through the [Child Care Development Fund](#), and Title IV-E agencies [can be reimbursed for childcare costs for children in foster care](#) under specified circumstances.
- The [Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act](#) requires that child protective services agencies refer all cases involving substantiated victims of child maltreatment under the age of 3 to [Part C of the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) to be evaluated for the receipt of early intervention services such as speech, language, and physical therapy; family counseling and home visits; medical care; nursing; and nutrition services.
- CB and OHS collaborated to [issue messaging to the field](#) reinforcing the importance of coordination between their respective fields and providing examples of strategies to support such work moving forward.
- ACF [released a statement](#) demonstrating its commitment to advancing racial equity for all, and encouraging its grant recipients to assess and address how programs and policies may perpetuate systemic barriers for children and families of color.

Child Welfare-Early Education Partnerships Grants

CB's commitment to the importance of strategic relationships between child welfare and ECE has also been demonstrated through its funding of two rounds of [Child Welfare-Early Education Partnerships grants](#) from 2011 to 2014. The 17 grant recipients funded through these

opportunities built capacity and collaboration among child welfare agencies and early childhood systems to increase the enrollment of infants and young children in foster care into comprehensive, high-quality ECE services. Grant recipients implemented infrastructure-building strategies designed to enhance their capacity to deliver multi-disciplinary interventions and improve the socio-emotional and behavioral well-being of infants and young children and their families through collaborative service delivery.

While grant recipients' specific funded activities varied based on the identified needs of their communities, they experienced a number of common successes related to improved collaboration and increased rates of referrals and enrollment. A [synthesis of findings](#) from the first cohort of these grant recipients provides additional information on success, challenges, and lessons learned.

To mark the tenth anniversary of the original funding of these grants, CB and ACF's Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD) [held conversations](#) with a number of these grant recipients to learn about the lasting impacts of their funded efforts. Conversation participants indicated that the following strategies and efforts had contributed to their success in developing infrastructure that allowed for lasting change, leadership and staff buy-in to the importance of collaborative efforts, the presence of a "champion" to advocate for the importance of the work, a clear vision for the goals and impacts of the project, early and consistent implementation of evaluation processes, codification of project elements (e.g., policy enactment), and documented commitment (e.g., signed memorandum of understanding) from all pertinent partners.

Role of Child Welfare and ECE Collaboration in Advancing Equity

In 2021, President Biden released the [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#), which explains the ways that federal agencies should work to advance equity for underserved communities. This directive has spurred federal agencies, including ACF, to provide support to the field in implementing parallel efforts. In jurisdictions throughout the country, child welfare and ECE systems have demonstrated a commitment to implementing strategies designed to dismantle systemic racism and actively advance equity for historically overrepresented and underserved families of color. [Coordination between these two systems](#) can serve to further strengthen both systems' efforts to advance equity in a complementary and strategic manner. As both child welfare and ECE entities work to restructure and revise the ways in which they carry out their work to advance equity, it will be essential for them to engage in ongoing communication as changes are implemented. Also essential to these efforts' success is including the voice of parents with lived experience in the project planning and implementation process. Including this expertise throughout project processes will help to ensure that grant recipients' efforts are responsive to parent needs and provide supports in ways that are most beneficial.

In alignment with the Executive Order, CB is committed to a comprehensive approach to [advancing equity for all](#), including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. Racial inequity has been [historically present within the child welfare system](#). Disproportionate numbers of families of color have been exposed to the trauma, stress, and stigma of child welfare

involvement, family disruption, and placement in foster care. Racial disparities occur across the continuum of the child welfare system and have led to overrepresentation in reports of suspected maltreatment and disproportionately higher rates of child protective services' investigations for African American families. African American and American Indian and Alaska Native children are also at [higher risk of maltreatment substantiation and placement in out-of-home care than other children](#). Children and families of color have also historically experienced oversurveillance as a direct result of systemic racism within the child welfare system.

Similarly, ECE systems are [grappling with institutionalized racism and working to promote equity](#) through strategies including improving access to quality ECE for African American families, addressing disparities in maternal health, and reducing exclusionary disciplinary practices and policies in ECE settings. At the federal level, [OHS](#) and [ECD](#) have also committed to implementing strategies to advance equity within their service populations.

Strategic coordination among child welfare system, ECE, and partner efforts can create a more streamlined and effective prevention infrastructure to address the underlying inequities in both systems by supporting families before they face the trauma of maltreatment, family disruption, or placement in foster care.

PROJECT GOALS

The purpose of this NOFO is to fund eight grant recipients for 3-year projects to support the development and/or enhancement of strategic multi-system and multi-level collaboration between child welfare, ECE, and other relevant partners. Such efforts will support infrastructure- and capacity-building to deliver complementary, coordinated, and holistic services to young children and their families and caregivers. Grant funding will support the development of policy, coordination mechanisms and procedures, quality practice, and other strategies across systems that work to support children and families with or at-risk of involvement with the child welfare system, including children of color and their families. This will include efforts to maximize the identification, referral, enrollment, and attendance of infants and young children with or at-risk of child welfare involvement into comprehensive high-quality ECE services. Oversurveillance of children and families of color is not a goal of this NOFO, and grant recipients must be mindful of this fact when planning and implementing their funded efforts.

Grant recipients will focus on meeting the following project goals:

1. Develop and/or enhance strategic coordination and communication among child welfare, ECE, families and caregivers with young children, and other relevant partners.
2. Support the development and institutionalization of policies and/or procedures within a jurisdiction to increase the identification, enrollment, and attendance of infants and young children, with or at-risk, of child welfare involvement into comprehensive, high-quality ECE services.
3. Build infrastructure capacity to ensure the provision of comprehensive and holistic services to young children and their families with or at-risk of child welfare system involvement.
4. Create, implement, and/or strengthen joint efforts to advance racial equity within the child welfare, ECE, and partner systems to ensure that historically underserved and

marginalized populations of color have access to high-quality ECE services that build on their strengths and are responsive to their individualized needs.

5. Conduct a program evaluation to determine the extent to which funded efforts have contributed to improved coordination and communication; strengthened networks; and increased referrals, enrollments, and engagement in quality ECE programs, particularly for historically underserved populations.
6. Disseminate information and knowledge gained from project findings and support efforts to allow for programs and policymakers to broadly integrate project knowledge into policy and practice within the child welfare, ECE, and other relevant fields.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

This section highlights project requirements in the following areas:

- Target Population
- Collaboration
- Project Activities and Strategies
- Evaluation Plan
- Project Sustainability Plan
- Dissemination Plan

Target Population

The target population for this project includes the range of young children ages 0-5 and their families and caregivers across the child welfare continuum (from prevention to permanency), including children that are at-risk of being reported to child welfare systems, have been reported to child welfare systems, are receiving in-home prevention services, are in foster care or kinship care, are receiving post-adoption services, or any combination thereof. Grant recipients must involve parents with lived experience in the child welfare system purposefully and meaningfully in project planning and implementation, and ensure that their funded approach includes strategies to advance equity for people of color and others who have been historically marginalized and overrepresented in the child welfare system.

Collaboration

Strategic and purposeful collaboration is central to the work of sites funded through this NOFO. Grant recipients will be required to demonstrate that the appropriate state, local, or tribal child welfare agency and an appropriate ECE agency(ies) are committed to undertaking the proposed work under this NOFO. Other relevant partners may include, but are not limited to, the following: early childhood coordinating councils, Head Start state collaboration offices/programs, family leadership networks, health, mental and behavioral health, court systems, home visiting, early intervention, housing, food and nutrition assistance, and other community-based agencies.

Project Activities and Strategies

Grant recipients will build infrastructure capacity between state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies and ECE systems to ensure that infants and young children, ages birth to 5, with or at-risk of child welfare involvement, have access to comprehensive, high-quality ECE services through collaborative service delivery.

Grant recipients will be expected to demonstrate how system changes result in improved experiences for infants and young children, ages birth to 5, their families and caregivers, and ECE and child welfare staff who work directly with children and families. This may include: meaningful involvement of biological, foster, adoptive parents, kinship care providers, and other caregivers; strengthened relationships between child-serving agencies; and improved well-being outcomes. These efforts are expected to build on the current knowledge base about the strengths and needs of young children and their parents/caregivers with or at-risk of child welfare involvement, particularly those of children and families of color and others historically marginalized and underserved; the benefits of receiving holistic services through ECE providers; and strategies for successful multi-system and multi-level coordination.

These projects may develop new models or replicate existing models of collaborative policies, procedures, and/or practices for identifying and addressing the needs of the target population that can be addressed through ECE and relevant partner agencies. The lessons from these initiatives will inform the field of effective strategies to support the optimal development of young children and their families with, or at-risk of, child welfare involvement through the provision of continuous, comprehensive, and high-quality ECE services.

This initiative provides an opportunity for child welfare and ECE systems to develop successful partnerships and collaborations, improve system functioning, and collectively provide holistic supports to young children and their families and caregivers. Under this funding opportunity, state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies and ECE partners may engage in efforts including, but not limited to, the following:

- Develop collaborative relationships among child welfare systems, ECE systems, and other relevant partners that include, and are informed by, the lived experiences and perspectives of families who have been involved with these systems;
- Promote or develop data-sharing capacity between ECE systems, child welfare, and other partners utilizing data sharing agreements, integrated databases, or data exchanges across agencies to support the early educational success of children in the child welfare system;
- Promote awareness of and enrollment in high-quality ECE services for young children, ages birth to 5 years old, and their families, particularly for young children of color and others who have faced systemic challenges in accessing ECE services;
- Develop training, shared data collection methods, interagency forms, procedures, and policies that support collaborative service delivery;
- Foster strategic coordination and institutionalized communication among child welfare and ECE systems; and

- Provide resource materials and regular updates regarding collaborative efforts to the legal community, especially judges and guardians ad litem/children's attorneys, to ensure that ECE concerns are regularly addressed in child welfare judicial proceedings and that attorneys for children are fully informed of policy and practice to effectively advocate for their clients' needs.

Evaluation Plan

Evaluation is an important component of this project. CB expects grant recipients to be meaningful contributors to building the knowledge base about how to effectively develop and enhance multi-system and multi-level collaboratives, and how to facilitate effective engagement of young children and their families with quality ECE services. To that end, grant recipients will develop and implement project activities that are outcome-focused and include measurable objectives or steps to assess progress in meeting desired outcomes via an evaluation plan, as well as a plan to use data for the purposes of continuous quality improvement. Grant recipients must implement an evaluation plan that includes methods and criteria to evaluate the results and benefits of the project in terms of its stated objectives.

Evaluation plans must measure project progress and, to the extent applicable based on the goals and objectives of the proposed project, identifies evidence of the project's impact and outcomes.

If the grant recipient does not have the in-house capacity or experience to conduct an objective, comprehensive evaluation of the project, it must contract with a third-party evaluator to conduct the evaluation. It is important that the evaluator has the necessary independence from the project to ensure objectivity. A skilled evaluator can help develop a logic model and assist in designing an evaluation strategy that is appropriate given the goals and objectives of the proposed project. The evaluation plan will have a clear description of the participants and be based on a sound plan for engagement with relevant partners (e.g., ECE providers, state or local child welfare agencies, HS/EHS grants, parents/caregivers, etc.). The evaluation plan will clearly describe each stage of evaluation from determining evaluation priorities and identifying research questions, to deciding the evaluation design, collecting data and analysis, and interpretation and dissemination. Grant recipients may continue to finalize the evaluation plan during the first three months following grant award.

Project Sustainability Plan

CB is interested in the specific strategies, practices, and activities that will move child welfare and ECE systems towards improved coordination and collaboration, and increase the rates and ease with which young children and their families are referred to, and enrolled in, quality ECE services. Grant recipient sites will prepare for sustaining key elements of their grant (e.g., strategies or services, funding flexibilities, policy/practice changes) that have been effective in improving coordination and service access as determined by their program evaluation. Grant recipients will also plan for maintaining the momentum and collaboration with key project partners after the end of federal funding.

Dissemination Plan

CB and its federal partners in ACF expect that information and knowledge generated by these projects will be shared with the field and that grant recipients will make efforts to integrate project knowledge into each of their respective jurisdiction's policy and practice. Grant recipients will be expected to disseminate this information and knowledge strategically and effectively to ensure that project information and knowledge reaches key target audiences. This includes the dissemination of project products and findings, as well as joint dissemination efforts conducted in partnership with other grant recipients funded through this opportunity. This may include collaboration with [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) to share, archive, and disseminate relevant project materials.

SUBAWARDS

Recipients under this grant program may opt to transfer a portion of substantive programmatic work to other organizations through subaward(s). The prime recipient must maintain a substantive role in the project. ACF defines a substantive role as conducting activities and/or providing services funded under the award that are necessary and integral to the completion of the project. Subrecipient monitoring activities alone, as specified in 45 CFR § 75.352, do not constitute a substantive role. Furthermore, ACF does not fund awards where the role of the applicant is primarily to serve as a conduit for passing funds to other organizations unless that arrangement is authorized by statute.

Subrecipient(s) must meet the eligibility requirements identified in the NOFO, Section III.1. Eligible Applicants. Additionally, all subrecipient(s) must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number assigned by the System for Award Management (SAM), if they do not already have one. Prime recipients are required to check SAM to verify that the subrecipient(s) is/are not debarred, suspended, or ineligible.

Please reference the [Award Term and Condition on Subawards](#) on the [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#) website for further requirements involving subawards.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:

G (Grant)

Estimated Total Funding:

\$2,200,000

Expected Number of Awards:

8

Award Ceiling:

\$275,000

Per Budget Period

Award Floor:

\$250,000

Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:

\$275,000

Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:

09/30/2023

Length of Project Periods:

36-month project period with three 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'

Additional Information on Awards:

Awards made under this funding opportunity are subject to the availability of federal funds.

Applications requesting an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period, or per project period, as stated in this section, will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period. Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A recipient's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** For more information on these requirements, see *Section III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching*.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Per the statute, “The Secretary may make grants to, and enter into contracts with, entities that are states, Indian tribes, or tribal organizations, or public agencies or private agencies or organizations (or combinations of such entities)...” (42 U.S.C. 5106(a)).

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity. Faith-based organizations may apply for this award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at and, subject to the protections and requirements of 45 CFR Part 87 and 42 U.S.C. 2000bb *et seq.*, ACF will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, affiliation, or exercise.

Reference to Legal Status

See *Section IV.2. Legal Status of Applicant Entity* for documentation required to support eligibility.

Funding Restrictions Reference

Please see *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions* for any limitations on the use of federal funds that could affect the eligibility of an applicant or project.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:

No

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where "cost sharing" refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by a recipient or subrecipient and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the recipient will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NoA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

III.3. Other

Application Disqualification Factors

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

Applications that request an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period or per project period ("per project period" refers only to fully funded awards), as stated in *Section II. Federal Award Information*, will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period.

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at Grants.gov. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.**

Applicants that do not have an internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "[ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission](#)."

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 pm ET on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. Electronic applications submitted to Grants.gov after 11:59 pm ET on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. That is, applications submitted to Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 am ET on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Applications submitted to Grants.gov at any time during the open application period, and prior to the due date and time, which fail the Grants.gov validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by ACF.

Each time an application is submitted via Grants.gov, the submission will generate a new date and time-stamp email notification. Only those applications with on-time date and time stamps that result in a validated application, which is transmitted to ACF will be acknowledged.

The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. Paper applications received after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.**

Notification of Application Disqualification

Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this NOFO.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0011
6000 Executive Boulevard
Suite 410
Rockville
MD
20852
888-203-6161
cb@grantreview.org
Application Packages

Electronic Application Submission:

The electronic application submission package is available in the NOFO's listing at Grants.gov.

Applications in Paper Format:

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications are available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" available in the NOFO's Grants.gov Synopsis under the Package tab at Grants.gov. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* if applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to Grants.gov.

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) for assistance at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

Each applicant applying electronically via Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding SFs and Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)

AOR is the designated representative of the applicant/recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the award and administration of grants. In signing a grant application, this individual agrees that the organization will assume the obligations imposed by applicable Federal statutes and regulations and other terms and conditions of the award, including any assurances, if a grant is awarded.

Point of Contact

In addition to the AOR, a point of contact on matters involving the application must also be

identified. The point of contact, known as the Project Director or Principal Investigator, should not be identical to the person identified as the AOR. The point of contact must be available to answer any questions pertaining to the application.

Application Checklist

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials.

Accepted Font Style

Applications must be in Times New Roman (TNR), 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be TNR 10-point font. Pages that contain blurred text, or text that is too small to read comfortably, will be removed.

English Language

Applications must be submitted in the English language and must be in the terms of United States (U.S.) dollars. If applications are submitted using another currency, ACF will convert the foreign currency to U.S. currency using the date of receipt of the application to determine the rate of exchange.

Page Limitations

Applicants must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:." Page limitation(s) do not include SFs and OMB-approved forms.

All applications must be double-spaced. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the Project Description file or the Appendices file will have extra pages removed, and those pages will not be reviewed.

Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced: the table of contents, the one-page Project Summary, required Assurances and Certifications, required SFs, required OMB-approved forms, resumes, logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, third-party agreements, letters of support, footnotes, tables, the line-item budget and/or the budget justification.

Adherence to NOFO Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements

Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the application. Pages will be removed before the objective review and will not be made available to reviewers.

Applications that have more than one scanned page of a document on a single page will have the page(s) removed from the review.

For applicants that submit paper applications, double-sided pages will be counted as two pages. When the maximum allowed number of pages is reached, excess pages will be removed and will not be made available to reviewers.

NOTE: Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended. The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

Corrections/Updates to Submitted Applications

When applicants make revisions to a previously submitted application, ACF will accept only the last on-time application for pre-review under the Application Disqualification Factors. The Application Disqualification Factors determine the application's acceptance for competitive review. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors* and *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options*.

Copies Required

Applicants must submit one complete copy of the application package electronically. Applicants submitting electronic applications need not provide additional copies of their application package.

Applicants submitting applications in paper format must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all SFs and OMB-approved forms. The original copy must have original signatures.

Signatures

Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at Grants.gov.

The original of a paper format application must include original signatures of the authorized representatives.

Accepted Application Format

With the exception of the required SFs and OMB-approved forms, all application materials must be formatted so that they are 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins all around.

If possible, applicants are encouraged to include page numbers for each page within the application.

ACF generally does not encourage submission of scanned documents as they tend to have reduced clarity and readability. If documents must be scanned, the font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. Documents must be scanned page-for-page, meaning that applicants may not scan more than one page of a document onto a single page. Pages with blurred text will be removed from the application.

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

The application submission is limited to **75 pages** in its entirety, excluding SFs and OMB-approved forms. The two files that applicants must submit are:

File One: Project Description must include the following items in this order:

- Table of Contents
- Project Summary
- Project Description
- Project Timeline and Milestones
- Organizational Capacity
- Program Performance Evaluation Plan
- Project Budget and Budget Justification

File Two: Appendices must include the following items in this order:

- Certifications and Assurances
- Proof of Legal Status (if applicable)
- Third-Party Agreements
- Staff and Position Data (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
- Letters of Support
- Indirect Cost Rate Letter (if applicable)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically unless they have received an exemption that will allow submission in paper format. See *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options* for information about requesting an exemption.

Electronic applications will only be accepted via Grants.gov. **ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.**

Each applicant is required to upload ONLY two electronic files, excluding SFs and OMB-approved forms.

File One: Must contain the entire Project Description, and the Budget and Budget Justification (including a line-item budget and a budget narrative).

File Two: Must contain all documents required in the Appendices.

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement

No more than two files will be accepted for the review. Applications with additional files will be amended and files will be removed from the review. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

Application Upload Requirements

ACF strongly recommends that electronic applications be uploaded as Portable Document Files

(PDFs). One file must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification; the other file must contain all documents required in the Appendices. Details on the content of each of the two files, as well as page limitations, are listed earlier in this section.

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Acrobat Reader software will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Acrobat Reader they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on “Applicants” at the top bar menu and select “Adobe Software Compatibility”, which is listed under "Applicant Resources." The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their version of the software by opening a test Workspace PDF form. Grants.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions for use, if an applicant is unable to open the test form.

The Adobe Software Compatibility page located on Grants.gov also provides guidance for applicants on filling out a Workspace PDF form. In addition, it addresses local network and/or computer security settings and the impact this has on use of Adobe software.

Required SFs and OMB-approved Forms

SFs and OMB-approved forms are uploaded separately at Grants.gov. These forms are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files. See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* for the listing of required SFs, OMB-approved forms, and required assurances and certifications.

Naming Application Submission Files

Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Please also see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

Use only file formats supported by ACF

Applicants must submit applications using only the supported file formats listed here. While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two application submission files (Project Description and Appendices) are uploaded as PDFs in order to comply with the two-file upload limitation.** Documents in file formats that are not supported by ACF will be removed from the application and will not be used in the competitive review. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make any awards based on an incomplete application.

ACF supports the following file formats:

- Adobe PDF – Portable Document Format (.pdf)

- Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
- Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt)
- Image Formats (.JPG, .GIF, .TIFF, or .BMP only)

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the affected file will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This removal may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be accepted for review. For more information on the exemption, see "*ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*" at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6.

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single NOFO, or multiple applications under separate NOFOs, each application submission must be packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled with the NOFO title and Funding Opportunity Number.

Applicants using paper format should download the application forms package associated with the NOFO's Synopsis on Grants.gov under the Package tab.

Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the federal government for review. **All application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes. All pages in the application submission must be sequentially numbered.**

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking an award under this funding opportunity must submit the listed SFs, assurances, and certifications with the application. All required SFs, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this NOFO at Grants.gov.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
Certificate of Good Standing	Submission is required for all for-	Sole proprietorships are not eligible applicants. The

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	profit organizations.	submission of the Certificate of Good Standing, along with the current list of board members, and organizational documents that require the establishment and maintenance of a Board of Directors, provide proof of eligibility for for-profit organizations.
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview and Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> . If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Form is available at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html . General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/ . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email (OHRP@HHS.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900).
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Required of all applicants. Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application and	See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> for more information.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	project award period. Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at: http://www.sam.gov .	
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. SFs must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants must cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

Mandatory Grant Disclosure

All applicants and recipients are required to submit, in writing, to the awarding agency and to the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG), all information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. (Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR § 75.113)

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Grants Management, ATTN: Grants Management Specialist, 330 C Street, SW., Switzer Building, Corridor 3200, Washington, DC 20201

And to:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, ATTN: Mandatory Grant Disclosures, Intake Coordinator, 330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen Building, Room 5527, Washington, DC 20201

Fax: (202) 205-0604 (Include “Mandatory Grant Disclosures” in subject line) or

Email: grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov

Non-Federal Reviewers

Since ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information. If applications are submitted electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review process.

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions

The Project Description provides the information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for financial assistance. It must address all activities for which federal funds are being requested and all application requirements as stated in this section. The Project Description must explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in *Section I. Program Description*. As a reminder, reviewers will be evaluating this section in accordance with *Section V.1. Criteria*.

The Project Description must be clear, concise, and complete. ACF is particularly interested in Project Descriptions that convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project Descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length.

Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting documents designated as required must be included in the Appendix of the application.

Letter of Intent

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this funding opportunity. Please submit a letter of intent by the deadline date listed in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. The letter of intent should include the following information: number and title of this funding opportunity; the name and address of the applicant organization; and the name, phone number, fax number and email address of a contact person.

Letter of intent information will be used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to evaluate applications. **The letter of intent is optional.** Failure to submit a letter of intent **will not** impact eligibility to submit an application and **will not** disqualify an application from competitive review.

The letter of intent should be submitted to:

CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0011
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: 888-203-6161
Email: cb@grantreview.org

Table of Contents

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers. The table of contents may be single spaced.

Project Summary

Provide a summary of the application project description. It must be clear, accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. The summary must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.

Please place the following at the top of the Project Summary:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax, Cell)
- Email Address
- Website Address, if applicable

The Project Summary must be single-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, and limited to one page in length. Additional pages will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Geographic Location

Describe the precise physical location of the project and boundaries of the area to be served by the proposed project.

Non-Profit Organizations

Proof of Non-Profit Status Options:

Option 1: 501(c)(3) and non-501(c)(3) non-profit organizations are eligible

Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate.
- A statement from a state taxing body, state attorney general, or other appropriate state official certifying that the applicant organization has non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholders or individuals.
- A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes non-profit status.
- Any of the items in the subparagraphs immediately above for a state or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant organization is a local non-profit affiliate.

Unless directed otherwise, applicants must include proof of non-profit status in the *Appendices* file of the application submission.

For-Profits and Small Businesses

For-profit organizations (including small businesses) applying for funding must submit the following to provide proof of their legal status: Documentation establishing the power granted to the entity to enter into contractual relationships and/or accept awards (i.e., articles of incorporation, bylaws).

Small Businesses

Small businesses must submit a certification signed by the chief executive officer or designee that states that the entity qualifies as a small business under 13 CFR §§ 121.101- 121.201.

Need for Assistance

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance, including the nature and scope of the problem, must be demonstrated. Supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned parties, may be included in the Appendix. Any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments should be included or referred to in the endnotes or footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as available.

Objectives

Clearly state the principal and subordinate objectives of the project. Applicants must address how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of the program and describe how objectives will be achieved.

Applicants must describe how the stated objectives support the development and/or enhancement of strategic partnerships between child welfare agencies, ECE, and other partners to meet the project goals as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Goals*.

Expected Outcomes

Identify the outcomes to be achieved from the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall program as described in *Section I. Program Description*. If research is part of the proposed work, outcomes must include hypothesized results and implications of the proposed research.

Approach

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must account for all functions or activities identified in the application.

Cite potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies that will be used to address these challenges.

Target Population

Applicants must describe a project approach that includes the range of young children, ages birth to 5, and their families and caregivers across the child welfare continuum (from prevention to permanency), as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Requirements*. Applicants must describe an approach that includes plans to meaningfully engage parents with lived experience in the child welfare system, strategies to advance equity, and an understanding of the cultural background of the target population as included in *Section I. Program Description, Project Requirements*.

Collaboration

Applicants must describe how strategic and purposeful collaboration will be a focus of its funded efforts. Applications must include clear evidence that the proposed project will involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of collaborative service delivery and that there will be an effective administration and organizational interface between the applicant, the relevant child welfare agency, and an appropriate ECE partner. Applicants must demonstrate the commitment of the appropriate state, local, or tribal child welfare agency and ECE system to undertake the proposed work under this NOFO. Although not required, applicants may strengthen their application by identifying plans for the involvement and commitment of other relevant agencies including: early childhood coordinating councils; Head Start state collaboration; family leadership networks; health, mental health, and behavioral health; court systems; home visiting; early intervention; housing; food and nutrition assistance; and other community-based agencies. Applicants must demonstrate that relevant efforts for collaborative service delivery for the target population have already been undertaken prior to reviewing and responding to this NOFO, or demonstrate that there is considerable community interest and commitment to developing these collaborative practices.

Applicants must demonstrate that the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) or appropriate agency(ies) within the ECE system is either the lead agency for the proposed project, or is committed to collaborative efforts related to the grant. Such commitments must be documented through a memorandum of understanding with the child welfare agency(ies) and/or ECE agency(ies) that:

- describes the roles and responsibilities of the project partners clearly;
- provides evidence that the child welfare agency(ies) and ECE agency(ies) fully understands and is fully committed to the proposed project;
- demonstrates that the child welfare agency(ies) and/or ECE agency(ies) is willing to be fully engaged in the activities that are described in the application;
- includes evidence that the child welfare agency(ies) and/or ECE agency(ies) will follow through on commitments, regardless of changes in administration, economic status, or other foreseeable factors; and
- provides any other evidence that would demonstrate the full commitment of the child welfare agency(ies) and/or ECE agency(ies) to making the proposed project a success.

Although not required, applicants may strengthen their application by documenting the commitment and support of local school districts, the courts, or other relevant public and private agencies that will be involved in the proposed work. Such letters of commitment must include a demonstrated understanding of the work to be undertaken through the proposed project, as well as an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each respective partner. Letters of commitment must include evidence that each partner will follow through on commitments, regardless of changes in administration, economic status, or other foreseeable factors that may arise. See also *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Third Party Agreements*.

Project Activities and Strategies

Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will build infrastructure capacity between

state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies, ECE systems, and other relevant partners, to ensure that infants and young children, ages birth to 5, with or at-risk of child welfare involvement, have access to comprehensive, high-quality ECE services through collaborative service delivery. Applicants must also demonstrate how the proposed project will specifically enhance the capacity of the relevant child welfare agency(ies) to develop and implement effective policies and procedures for identifying, coordinating, and providing multidisciplinary interventions for the target population in this NOFO, including children and families of color and other underserved populations that have traditionally faced barriers in accessing quality ECE services.

Applicants must clearly describe how expected system changes will result in improved experiences for infants and young children, ages birth to 5, their families and caregivers, and ECE and child welfare staff, as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Requirements*. Applicants must also describe how funded efforts will build on the current knowledge base in this field of study as included in *Section I. Program Description, Project Requirements*.

Applications must demonstrate an awareness and understanding of racial disparities historically experienced by families of color and other marginalized groups within the target population as it relates to child welfare system involvement and access to high-quality ECE services. In addition, applicants must clearly describe how funded efforts would serve to advance racial equity within the child welfare, ECE, and other partner systems.

Applicants must clearly indicate whether they will develop new models or replicate existing models of collaboration, and how findings from these funded initiatives will inform the field of effective strategies to support the optimal development of young children and their families with or at-risk of child welfare involvement in such ways as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Requirements*.

Applicants must describe how they will use funding provided through this opportunity to develop successful partnerships between child welfare and ECE systems, improve system functioning, and collectively provide holistic supports. Applicants must describe how they will use funding provided through this opportunity to allow state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies and ECE partners to engage in efforts that may include, but are not limited to, the specific strategies included in *Section I. Program Description, Project Requirements*.

Project Timeline and Milestones

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections (for the entire project period) of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity, in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. Data may be organized and presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

Organizational Capacity

Provide the following information on the applicant organization and, if applicable, on any cooperating partners:

- Organizational charts.
- Resumes.
- Curricula Vitae (CV).
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description).
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this funding opportunity.
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.
- Information on compliance with federal/state/local government standards.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Applicants must submit a list of their current and pending funded support for ongoing projects and proposals from all sources including federal, state and local governments, public or private foundations, for-profit organizations, etc. All projects and proposals requiring a committed portion of time for the Project Director, Principal Investigator, or key personnel must be included. Indicate the total award amount, awarding entity, and amount of time staff will devote to each project.

Applicants must describe factors that may speed or hinder project implementation and proposed timeline and address how such factors would be managed.

If known at the time of application submission, the applicant must disclose their intent to enter into subaward arrangements in their application. For each proposed subaward, the applicant must include a description of the work to be performed by the subrecipient(s).

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

Recipients are required to ensure proper oversight in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D.

These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

- Financial and Program Management
- Property (if applicable by program legislation)
- Procurement
- Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting
- Subrecipient Monitoring and Management
- Record Retention and Access
- Remedies for Noncompliance

Describe the framework (e.g., governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) in place to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D. The description must include: system(s) for record-keeping and financial management; procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues (e.g., audit findings, continuous program performance assessment findings, program monitoring); and those key staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff, and, if applicable, partner(s) and/or subrecipient(s).

Program Performance Evaluation Plan

Applicants must describe a plan for the program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement. The program performance evaluation must monitor ongoing activities and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project. Include descriptions of the inputs (e.g., organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, budget, and other resources), key activities, and expected outcomes of the funded activities. The plan must explain how the inputs, activities, and outcomes will be measured; how the resulting information will be used to inform improvement of funded activities; and any processes that support the overall data quality of the performance outcomes.

Applicants must describe the organizational systems and processes that will effectively track performance outcomes, including a description of how the organization will collect and manage data (e.g., assign skilled staff, data management software, data integrity, etc.) in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles for implementing the program performance evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed. Applicants must include a timeline for how information from the quality improvement evaluation will be reviewed and applied to the ongoing project.

Applicants must sufficiently demonstrate that they will develop and implement project activities that are outcome-focused and include measurable objectives or steps that can measure progress in meeting desired outcomes. At a minimum, applicants must describe their intent to implement an evaluation plan that measures progress and, to the extent applicable based on the goals and objectives of the proposed project, identifies evidence of the project's impact and outcomes.

Applications must demonstrate how findings generated through proposed efforts will meaningfully contribute to building the knowledge base about how to effectively develop and enhance multi-system and multi-level collaboratives, and how to facilitate effective engagement of young children and their families with quality ECE services.

Applicants must provide a clear plan for evaluation or the development of an evaluation that includes methods and criteria to evaluate the results and benefits of the project in terms of its stated objectives. While the applicant must include sufficient information in their submission to demonstrate how proposed work will be evaluated, they may also include a plan to finalize the evaluation plan during the first 3 months after award. Applicants must describe any potential barriers to implementing the evaluation plan, and how such barriers would be addressed. The proposed evaluation plan must describe how performance feedback and periodic assessment of program progress will be used to modify the program and serve as a basis for program adjustments, as necessary.

If the applicant does not have the in-house capacity and experience to conduct an objective,

comprehensive evaluation of the project, it must describe plans to contract with [a third-party evaluator](#) to conduct the evaluation. The applicant must include information to demonstrate that the [proposed evaluator has the necessary independence](#) from the project to ensure objectivity. The applicant must clearly describe relevant partners that will participate in the evaluation and how they will be engaged (e.g., ECE providers, state or local child welfare agencies, HS/EHS grant recipients, parents/caregivers, etc.). The applicant's plan for evaluation must demonstrate an understanding of each stage of evaluation from determining evaluation priorities and identifying research questions, to deciding the evaluation design, collecting data and analysis, and interpretation and dissemination. The applicant must include sufficient information to demonstrate how proposed work will be evaluated but may continue to finalize the evaluation plan during the first 3 months following grant award.

Logic Model

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their projects. A logic model is a diagram that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the links among program elements. Logic models must target the identified objectives and goals of the grant program. While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this funding opportunity, the logic model may include connections between the following items:

- Inputs (e.g., additional resources, organizational profile, collaborative partner(s), key staff, budget);
- Target population (e.g., the individuals to be served, identified needs);
- Activities, Mechanisms, Processes (e.g., evidence-based practices, best practices, approach, key intervention and evaluation components, continuous quality improvement efforts);
- Outputs (i.e., the immediate and direct results of program activities);
- Outcomes (i.e., the expected short and long-term results the project is designed to achieve, typically described as changes in people or systems), and
- Goals of the project (e.g., overarching objectives, reasons for proposing the project).

See [Change and Implementation in Practice: Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings Brief](#) and the [Logic Model Builder](#) for more information about how to develop a logic model.

Project Sustainability Plan

Applicants must propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. Recipients are expected to sustain key elements of their grant projects, e.g., strategies or services and interventions, which have been effective in improving practices and outcomes.

Describe the approach to project sustainability that will be most effective and feasible. Provide a description of key individuals and/or organizations whose support will be required. Address the types of alternative support that will be required to maintain the program. If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how their cooperation and/or collaboration will be maintained after the end of federal funding.

Dissemination Plan

Applicants must propose a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or grant project outputs so that project information is provided to key target audiences. Dissemination plans must include:

- Dissemination goals and objectives;
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences;
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes;
- A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended, and
- The timeline for dissemination.

Third-Party Agreements

Third-party agreements include Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Letters of Commitment. Letters of Commitment and MOUs must both clearly describe the roles and responsibilities for project activities and the support and/or resources that the third-party (i.e., subrecipient, contractor, or other cooperating entity) is committing. The Letters of Commitment and MOUs must be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments on behalf of their organization. General letters of support are **not** considered to be third-party agreements.

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment or MOUs between recipients and third-parties (i.e., subrecipients, contractors, or other cooperating entities). In addition to clearly describing the roles and responsibilities for project activities and support and/or resources that the third-party is committing, these agreements must detail work schedules and estimated remuneration with an understanding that a finalized agreement will be negotiated once the successful applicant is awarded the grant.

Letters of Support

Provide statements from community, public, and/or commercial leaders that support the project proposed for funding. All submissions must be included in the application package. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the individual writing the letter, the organization they represent, the date, and reason(s) for supporting the project.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is entered on the Budget Information SF, either SF- 424A or SF-424C. Applicants are encouraged to review the form instructions in addition to the guidance in this section. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form. Applicants must indicate the method they are selecting for their indirect cost rate. See Indirect Charges for further information.

Project budget calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If cost sharing or matching is a requirement, applicants must include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance). See the table in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* listing the appropriate budget forms to use in this application.

Special Note: *The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2022 and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this funding opportunity may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. For the Executive Level II salary, please see "Executive & Senior Level Employee Pay Tables" under <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>. The salary limitation reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits, indirect costs and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

Provide a budget using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable, for each year of the proposed project.

Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for each year of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

Applicants must allocate a sufficient percentage of their proposed total budget to implementation of the evaluation plan and must include rationale showing that the budgeted amount is appropriate based on evaluation activities to be conducted.

Applicants must allocate reasonable funds in their budgets to support travel for the project director, evaluator, and one or two key staff (e.g., representatives from partnering agencies) to attend the kick-off meeting and annual grantee meetings in Washington, DC. Should the option to travel be unavailable, the option to meet virtually may be made available.

For applicants proposing to use subaward(s), if the total amount budgeted for subawards exceeds 50 percent of total direct costs for the budget period, the applicant must provide a justification for subawarding the portion of the project and must explain how the prime recipient plans to maintain a substantive role in the project. Applicants must explain why the participation of the subrecipient is necessary, and why the applicant cannot achieve the objectives without the subrecipient(s)' participation.

General

Use the following guidelines for preparing the project budget and budget justification. The budget justification includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail. Applications should only include allowable costs in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages. See 45 CFR § 75.430 for more information on allowable personnel costs. Do not include the personnel costs of consultants, contractors and subrecipients under this category.

Justification: For each position, provide: the name of the individual (if known), their title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-

time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application.

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees in addition to regular salaries and wages. For more information on Fringe Benefits please refer to 45 CFR § 75.431. Do not include the fringe benefits of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients.

Typically, fringe benefit amounts are determined by applying a calculated rate for a particular class of employee (full-time or part-time) to the salary and wages requested. Fringe rates are often specified in the approved indirect cost rate agreement. Fringe benefits may be treated as a direct cost or indirect cost in accordance with the applicant's accounting practices. Only fringe benefits as a direct cost should be entered under this category.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act taxes, retirement, taxes, etc.

Travel

Description: Costs of project-related travel (i.e., transportation, lodging, subsistence) by employees of the applicant organization who are in travel status on official business. Travel by non-employees such as consultants, contractors or subrecipients should be included under the Contractual line item. Local travel for employees in non-travel status should be listed on the Other line. Travel costs should be developed in accordance with the applicant's travel policies and 45 CFR § 75.474.

Justification: For each trip show: the total number of travelers; travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used to travel out of town; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key project staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops/conferences/recipient orientations should be detailed in the budget justification.

Equipment

Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in, or excluded from, acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.) See 45 CFR §75.439 for more information.

Justification: For each type of equipment requested provide: a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use on the project; as well as use and/or disposition of the equipment after the project ends.

Supplies

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property, other than included under the Equipment category. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than \$5,000. See 45 CFR § 75.453 for more information.

Justification: Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

Contractual

Description: Cost of all contracts and subawards except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contract or subawards with secondary recipient organizations (with budget detail), including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. Costs related to individual consultants should be listed on the Other line. Recipients are required to use 45 CFR §§ 75.326-.340 procurement procedures, and subawards are subject to the requirements at 45 CFR §§ 75.351-.353.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Applicants must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold stated in 48 CFR § 2.101(b). Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

Indicate whether the proposed agreement qualifies as a subaward or contract in accordance with 45 CFR § 75.351. Provide the name of the contractor/subrecipient (if known), a description of anticipated services, a justification for why they are necessary, a breakdown of estimated costs, and an explanation of the selection process. In addition, for subawards, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each subaward, by entity name, along with the same justifications referred to in these budget and budget justification instructions.

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel, insurance, food (when allowable), medical and dental costs (non-personnel), professional service costs (including audit charges), space and equipment rentals, printing and publications, computer use, training costs (such as tuition and stipends), staff development costs, and administrative costs. Please note costs must be allowable per 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of costs, computations, a narrative description, and a justification for each cost under this category.

Indirect Charges

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category has one of two methods that an applicant can select. An applicant may only select one.

1. The applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by HHS or another cognizant federal agency.

Justification: An applicant must enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. If the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed. Choosing to charge a lower rate will not be considered during the objective review or award selection process.

2. Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f) Indirect (F&A) costs, "any non-Federal entity [i.e., applicant] that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, ... may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in Section 75.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as the non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time."

Justification: This method only applies to applicants that have never received an approved negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposal may request the 10 percent *de minimis* rate. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424. This line should be used to indicate required and/or voluntary committed cost sharing or matching, if applicable.

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching or cost sharing by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources (at or above the statutory requirement) in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching or cost sharing amount (and any voluntary committed amount in excess) may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, recipients are not expected to provide cost sharing or matching. However, recipients are allowed to voluntarily propose a commitment of non-federal resources. If an applicant decides to voluntarily contribute non-federal resources towards project costs and the costs are accepted by ACF, the non-federal resources will be included in the approved project budget. The applicant will be held accountable for all proposed non-federal resources as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to meet the voluntary amount of non-federal resources that was accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that was identified in the approved budget in the NoA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

Justification: If an applicant is relying on cost share or match from a third-party, then a firm commitment of these resources (letter(s) or other documentation) is required to be submitted with the application. Detailed budget information must be provided for every funding source identified in Item 18. "Estimated Funding (\$)" on the SF-424.

Applicants are required to fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions they propose in order to meet a matching requirement. Applicants are also required to provide documentation in their applications on the sources of funding or contribution(s). In-kind contributions must be accompanied by a justification of how the stated valuation was determined. Matching or cost sharing must be documented by budget period (or by project period for fully funded awards).

Applications that lack the required supporting documentation will not be disqualified from competitive review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity.

Paperwork Reduction Act Disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 03/31/2025. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via Grants.gov

This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for ACF program applications. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic Delivery

ACF is participating in the Grants.gov initiative to provide the grant community with a single site to find and apply for funding opportunities. ACF applicants are required to submit their applications online through Grants.gov.

How to Register and Apply through Grants.gov

Read the following instructions about registering to apply for ACF funds. Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

Organizations must have an active System for Award (SAM) registration which provides a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and Grants.gov account to apply for grants.

Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but SAM registration may take several weeks. Therefore, an organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact the entities ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions

here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

Register with SAM: All organizations (entities) applying online through Grants.gov must register with SAM. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. For detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer

to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

Create a Grants.gov Account: The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Follow the on-screen instructions provided on the registration page.

Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account: A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant). If you work for or consult with multiple organizations, you can have a profile for each organization under one Grants.gov account. In such cases, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all your grant profiles. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the UEI for the organization in the UEI field. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html>

EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles: After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC is then expected to log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been assigned the AOR role. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer

to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>

Track Role Status: To track your role request, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>

When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role; this step is often missed and is crucial for valid and timely submissions.

How to Submit an Application to ACF via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each NOFO, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

For an overview of applying on Grants.gov using Workspaces, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete an application online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

Adobe Reader: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drive(s), then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>

Mandatory Fields in Forms: In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

Complete SF-424 Fields First: These forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and SAM UEI. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

Submit a Workspace: An application may be submitted through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

Track a Workspace: After successfully submitting a Workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific funding opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist ACF with tracking and understanding background information on the issue.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

All applications must be received by 11:59 pm ET on the due date established for each program. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgment of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ACF successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submission, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by ACF.

Applicants with slow internet connections should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Therefore, applicants should allow enough time to prepare and submit the application before the package closing date.

Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received submission message in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role.

Issues with Federal Systems

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "[Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues](#)" document for complete guidance.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

To request an exemption from required electronic submission, please refer to ACF's "[Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission](#)" document for complete guidance.

Paper Format Application Submission

An exemption is required for the submission of paper applications. See the preceding section on "[Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission](#)."

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application

must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* of this funding opportunity for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 pm ET on the due date.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times* in this funding opportunity.

IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants must have a UEI and an active registration with SAM (<https://www.sam.gov>) prior to applying to a funding opportunity.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, the SAM registration must be active throughout the life of the award. Your SAM registration must be renewed every 365 days to keep it active.

Plan ahead. Allow at least 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM and at least an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems, i.e., Grants.gov.

This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application through Grants.gov or prevent the award of a grant. Applicants should maintain documentation (with dates) of their efforts to request a UEI, register for, or renew a registration, at SAM.

Please see the “Help” tab at <https://sam.gov/content/help> for more information and assistance with this process.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal grant funds from any HHS Agency to:

- Be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration by an OPDIV;
- Provide its UEI in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV; and
- Ensure any proposed subrecipient(s) have obtained and provided to the recipient their UEI(s) prior to making any subawards (**Note:** Subrecipients are not required to complete full SAM registration.).

ACF is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. At the time an award is ready to be made, if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements, ACF:

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and
- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Letter of Intent

Number of Days from Publication 30

02/11/2023

Number of Days from Publication 60

Due Date for Applications

03/13/2023

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* section and in this section. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Electronic Applications

The deadline for submission of electronic applications via Grants.gov is 11:59 pm ET on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 am ET on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically via Grants.gov unless they received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

ACF does not accommodate transmission of applications by email or facsimile.

Instructions for electronic submission via Grants.gov are available at:

www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

Applications submitted to Grants.gov at any time during the open application period prior to the due date and time that fail the Grants.gov validation check will not be received at ACF. These applications will not be acknowledged.

Mailed Paper Format Applications

The deadline for receipt of mailed, paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date. Mailed paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

Hand-delivered applications must be received on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 am ET and 4:30 pm ET Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays).

Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

Hand-delivered paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Hand-delivered paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

No appeals will be considered for applications classified as late under the following circumstances:

- Applications submitted electronically via Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 pm ET on the due date.
- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Paper format applications received from applicant organizations that were not approved for an exemption from required electronic application submission under the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Submission* will be disqualified.

Emergency Extensions

ACF may extend an application due date when circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit their applications on time. Only events such as documented natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc.), or a verifiable widespread disruption of electrical service, or mail service, will be considered. The determination to extend or waive the due date, and/or receipt time, requirements in an emergency situation rests with the Grants Management Officer listed as the Office of Grants Management Contact in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)*.

Acknowledgement of Received Application

Acknowledgement from Grants.gov

Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to Grants.gov. This email will provide a **Grants.gov Tracking Number**. Applicants should refer to this tracking number in all communication with Grants.gov. The email will also provide a **date and time stamp**, which serves as the official record of the application's submission. Receipt of this email does not indicate that the application is accepted or that it has passed the validation check.

Applicants will also receive an email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process**, after which a third email is sent with the information that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, the series of checks and validations.

Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged by ACF.

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

Applicants will be sent additional email(s) from ACF acknowledging that the application has been retrieved from Grants.gov by ACF. Receipt of these emails is not an indication that the application is accepted for competition.

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:

ACF will not provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

This program is covered under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," and 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." Under the Executive Order, States may design their own processes for reviewing and commenting on proposed Federal assistance under covered programs.

Applicants should go to the following URL for the official list of the jurisdictions that have elected to participate in E.O. 12372 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>.

Applicants from participating jurisdictions should contact their SPOC, as soon as possible, to alert them of their prospective applications and to receive instructions on their jurisdiction's procedures. Applicants must submit all required application materials to the SPOC and indicate the date of submission on the SF-424 at item 19.

Under 45 CFR § 100.8(a)(2), a SPOC has 60 days from the application due date to comment on proposed new awards.

SPOC comments may be submitted directly to ACF at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management, 330 C St. SW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20201.

Entities that meet the eligibility requirements of this funding opportunity are still eligible to apply for a grant even if a State, Territory or Commonwealth, etc., does not have a SPOC or has chosen not to participate in the process. Applicants from non-participating jurisdictions need take no action with regard to E.O. 12372. Applications from Federally-recognized Indian Tribal governments are not subject to E.O. 12372.

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable. Fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting the Federal program objectives are allowable with prior written approval from the Federal awarding agency. (45 CFR § 75.442)

Proposal costs are the costs of preparing bids, proposals, or applications on potential Federal and non-Federal awards or projects, including the development of data necessary to support the non-Federal entity's bids or proposals. Proposal costs of the current accounting period of both successful and unsuccessful bids and proposals normally should be treated as indirect (F&A) costs and allocated currently to all activities of the non-Federal entity. No proposal costs of past accounting periods will be allocable to the current period. (45 CFR § 75.460)

Pre-award costs are not allowable.

Construction is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.

Purchase of real property is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. Also see *ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6.

Submission by Mail

CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0011
6000 Executive Boulevard
Suite 410
Rockville
MD
20852

Hand Delivery

Same as Above

Electronic Submission

See *Section IV.2.* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via Grants.gov.

For all submissions, see *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: With the exception of the notice of funding opportunity and relevant statutes and regulations, reviewers must not access, or review, any materials that are not part of the application documents. This includes information accessible on websites via hyperlinks that are referenced, or embedded, in the application. Though an application may include web links, or embedded hyperlinks, reviewers must not review this information as it is not considered to be part of the application documents. Nor will the information on websites be taken into consideration in scoring of evaluation criteria presented in this section. Reviewers must evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and must not refer to, or access, external links during the objective review.

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. The corresponding point values indicate the relative importance placed on each review criterion. Points will be allocated based on the extent to which the application proposal addresses each of the criteria listed. Applicants should address these criteria in their application materials, particularly in the project description and budget justification, as they are the basis upon which competing applications will be judged during the objective review. The required elements of the project description and budget justification may be found in *Section IV.2. The Project Description* of this funding opportunity.

Objectives and Need for Assistance

Maximum Points: 20

In reviewing the objectives and need for assistance, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The application demonstrates that the applicant and its partner agencies have a clear understanding of the nature and scope of the problem and the goal of this NOFO as described in *Section I. Program Description, Background and Project Goals*.
2. The application demonstrates how the project will contribute to achieving the goals and objectives stated in this NOFO as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Goals* through their proposed partnership with all proposed partner agencies.
3. The application presents a clear description of the proposed project, including a clear statement of the goals (i.e., the intended end products of an effective project) and objectives (i.e., measurable steps for reaching these goals). The proposed project clearly addresses each of the items listed in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Objectives*.
4. The application clearly demonstrates that the applicant and all proposed partner agencies have an understanding of the need for partnership and collaborative service delivery between child welfare agencies, ECE systems, and other relevant child serving agencies as a means of supporting the well-being of young children, their families, and caregivers and preventing child maltreatment of children ages birth to 5.
5. The application clearly defines the geographic and demographic characteristics of the agency's service population and the target population to be affected by the implementation of the proposed project, including information on racial disparities experienced by families of color in child welfare system involvement and access to high-quality ECE services. The application clearly defines how the proposed target population meets the requirements described in this NOFO.

Approach

Maximum Points: 35

In reviewing the approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant and its partners present a clear description of the proposed project to develop and/or enhance strategic multi-system collaboration between child welfare, ECE, and other relevant partners to effectively prevent child abuse and neglect and provide comprehensive supports to children and families.
2. The application provides a timeline for implementing the proposed project that is reasonable and realistic in scope and budget and includes major milestones and target dates for all partner agencies.
3. The application describes the factors that could speed or hinder project implementation and explains how these factors would be managed by the partnership.
4. There is a sound and reasonable management plan for the applicant and its partners to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality.
5. There is a well-defined logic model illustrated through a graphic model and evident throughout the narrative, which will guide the proposed project. The logic model

demonstrates strong links between proposed inputs and activities and intended short- and long-term outcomes.

6. The application demonstrates that the proposed project and partnership would enhance the capacity of the state and/or local child welfare agency(ies) to develop and implement effective policies and procedures for identifying, coordinating, and providing multi-disciplinary interventions for the target population in this NOFO.
7. The application delineates how the proposed project will involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of collaborative service delivery and demonstrates that there will be an effective administration and organizational interface between the applicant and the appropriate state, local, or tribal child welfare agency, ECE, and other relevant child serving agencies.
8. The application demonstrates that the applicant and all partners possess an understanding of racial disparities historically experienced by families of color and other marginalized groups within the target population as it relates to child welfare system involvement and access to high-quality ECE services, and how they will be addressed. The application also includes clear information on how the funded partnership's efforts will advance racial equity within the child welfare, ECE, and partner systems.
9. The application clearly articulates a reasonable plan and process for the applicant and its partners to meaningfully engage and involve community members and parents with lived expertise in the child welfare system throughout the planning and implementation of the proposed project.
10. The application outlines how the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from the research and literature on known effective practices and builds on current theory, research, evaluation data, and best practices.
11. The application demonstrates how the project is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies for interagency collaboration and contribute to and promote evaluation, research, and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing of these strategies in other settings.
12. The application includes a sound plan for how all partner agencies will work to continue the proposed project beyond the period of federal funding under this NOFO, including how key pieces of the project would be institutionalized or otherwise sustained.
13. The application presents a detailed and sound plan, addressing the factors described in this NOFO, for how the applicant and its partners will strategically and effectively disseminate project information and findings.

Evaluation

Maximum Points: 15

In reviewing the evaluation, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The application demonstrates an understanding of the need for a clear plan for evaluating the project that satisfies evaluation requirements as described in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Program Performance Evaluation Plan*.
2. The application describes methods of evaluation that are feasible, comprehensive, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and context of the project. The application demonstrates a commitment to develop research questions that are clearly defined and

to rigorously measure achievement of project goals and objectives, changes in collaborative practices, and other outcomes as appropriate.

3. The application demonstrates an understanding of the use of appropriate measurement tools for tracking inputs, outputs, and outcomes; the use of key variables that are valid, reliable, and culturally appropriate; and the inclusion of a feasible timeline to collect or access data.
4. The application provides an appropriate, feasible, and realistic plan for how all partner agencies will use evaluation findings to produce ongoing documentation of project activities and results, including for the purposes of continuous quality improvement. The evaluation plan in the application includes performance feedback and periodic assessment of program progress that can be used to modify the program, as necessary, and serve as a basis for program adjustments.
5. The application includes a clear and realistic approach to maintain agreements to provide any necessary administrative data for the purpose of program evaluation, including establishing MOUs for cross-sector data sharing, and timelines and data points for analysis and reporting.
6. The applicant describes any potential barriers for implementing the evaluation plan and how those barriers will be addressed.
7. The applicant either demonstrates that they have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective and rigorous evaluation of the project or presents a sound plan for contracting with a third-party evaluator.
8. The applicant clearly indicates that the proposed evaluator has sufficient experience with research and/or evaluation, understands the population of interest, and demonstrates the necessary independence from the project to assure objectivity.

Organizational Capacity

Maximum Points: 15

In reviewing organizational capacity, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant's organization and all partnering organizations collectively have relevant experience and expertise with the administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of similar projects related to children ages birth to 5 years, and in supporting collaboration among the child welfare, early education, and other relevant child serving agencies. Each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) possesses the organizational capability to fulfill its assigned roles and functions effectively.
2. The application demonstrates that the proposed project director and key project staff possess sufficient and relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities (e.g., resume) to effectively institute and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity. The role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors, and/or partners, is clearly defined (e.g., job description) and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project.
3. The application clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency and includes a clear description of how activities carried out by all partners, subcontractors, and consultants (if applicable) will be effectively managed.

4. The application demonstrates that efforts for collaborative service delivery have already been undertaken prior to reviewing and responding to this NOFO or it demonstrates that there is considerable community interest and commitment to developing these practices.

Budget and Budget Justification

Maximum Points: 5

In reviewing the budget and budget justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. There is a line-item budget and a detailed budget narrative for each year of the project. The costs of the proposed project are reasonable, in view of the activities to be conducted and expected results and benefits.
2. The budget allocates reasonable and sufficient funds to support the proposed activities of both the lead applicant and all partner agencies, as necessary.
3. The applicant presents the percentage of the total budget that will be allocated to evaluation and provides a reasonable rationale showing that the budgeted amount is sufficient to conduct the proposed evaluation.
4. The applicant details reasonable costs associated with travel for the project director, evaluator, and one or two key staff (e.g., representatives from partnering agencies) to attend the kick-off meeting and annual grantee meetings in Washington, DC.
5. There is reasonable and relevant evidence that the applicant's fiscal controls would ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of funds received under this NOFO.

Documentation of Child Welfare and ECE Agency Commitment

Maximum Points: 10

In reviewing documentation of commitment, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant details its own role and commitment as a collaborating partner, and:

1. The application includes documented commitment from the public child welfare agency(ies) with the responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s) (if the agency is not the primary applicant). This documentation must include those items as listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Collaboration*.
2. The applicant includes documented commitment from an appropriate agency(ies) within the ECE system (if the agency is not the primary applicant). This documentation must include those items as listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Collaboration*.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this funding opportunity on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant that does not have a UEI and an active SAM registration. See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)*.

Initial ACF Screening

Each application will be screened to determine whether it meets any of the disqualification factors described in *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Disqualified applications are considered to be “non-responsive” and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this NOFO.

Objective Review and Results

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include three reviewers and one chairperson.

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process. If identified in *Section I. Program Description*, ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. In addition, ACF reserves the right to evaluate applications in the larger context of the overall portfolio by considering geographic distribution of federal funds (e.g., ensuring coverage of states, counties, or service areas) in its pre-award decisions.

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. In addition, ACF may elect to not allow a prime recipient to subaward if there is any indication that they are unable to properly monitor and manage subrecipients.

Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested.

ACF may refuse funding for projects with what it regards as unreasonably high start-up costs for facilities or equipment, or for projects with unreasonably high operating costs.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), www.fapiis.gov/, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in [45 CFR § 75.205\(a\)\(2\) Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants](#).

Non-Federal Reviewers Reference

Please refer to *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* of this funding opportunity for information on non-federal reviewers in the review process.

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval in the objective review process, but not selected for award may receive funding if additional funds become available in the current Fiscal Year. For those applications determined as “approved but unfunded,” notice will be given of the determination by email.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Announcement of awards and the disposition of applications will be provided to applicants at a later date. ACF staff cannot respond to requests for information regarding funding decisions prior to the official applicant notification.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a NoA that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The NoA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via email or by GrantSolutions, or the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), whichever is relevant.

Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

Information on allowable pre-award costs and the time period under which they may be incurred is available in *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions*, if applicable. Project costs that are incurred prior to the receipt of the NoA are at the recipient's risk.

Recipients may translate the Federal award and other documents into another language. In the event of inconsistency between any terms and conditions of the Federal award and any translation into another language, the English language meaning will control. Where a significant portion of the recipient's employees who are working on the Federal award are not fluent in English, the recipient must provide the Federal award in English and in the language(s) with which employees are more familiar.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Awards issued under this funding opportunity are subject to 45 CFR Part 75 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards currently in effect or implemented during the period of award, other Department regulations and policies in effect at the time of award, and applicable statutory provisions. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is available at www.ecfr.gov. Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are available at: www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements.

An application funded with the release of federal funds through a grant award does not constitute or imply compliance with federal regulations. Funded organizations are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations.

Please review all HHS regulatory provisions for Termination at 2 CFR § 200.340.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services' single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. ACF grant awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS GPS, which covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. The general terms and conditions in the HHS GPS will apply as indicated unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary that are specified in the NoA. The HHS GPS is available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/discretionary-post-award-requirements#book_content_0.

Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations

A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the federal government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom, nondiscrimination, and conscience protections in federal law, including the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (42 U.S.C. 2000bb *et seq.*), the Coats-Snowe Amendment (42 U.S.C. 238n), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e–1(a) and 2000e–2(e)), Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12113(d)(2), section 1553 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18113), the Weldon Amendment (e.g., Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, Public Law 116–94, 133 Stat. 2534, 2607, div. A, sec. 507(d) (Dec. 20, 2019)), or any related or similar federal laws or regulations. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

Consistent with 45 CFR § 87.3(b), a faith-based organization that receives direct financial assistance from HHS may not engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the HHS awarding agency. Such an organization, whether faith-based or not, also shall not, in providing services funded by HHS, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice, as provided in 45 CFR § 87.3(d).

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports:

Semi-Annually

Reporting Requirements

Recipients under this funding opportunity will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting requirements is available on the ACF website at www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-2.

For planning purposes, the frequency of required reporting for awards made under this funding opportunity are as follows:

Financial Reports:
Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Lauren
Fischman
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau
CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410
Rockville,
MD
20852
(888) 203-6161
CB@grantsreview.org

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget Shea
Westfall
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Grants Management
CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410
Rockville
MD
20852
(888) 203-6161
CB@grantreview.org

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) www.hhs.gov/.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) www.acf.hhs.gov/.

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs www.grants.gov/.

ACF "How To Apply For A Grant" <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant>.

ACF Property Guidance <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/real-property-and-tangible-personal-property>

Grants.gov Accessibility Information www.grants.gov/web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) <http://www.ecfr.gov/>.

United States Code (U.S.C.) <http://uscode.house.gov/>.

Application Checklist

Applicants may use this checklist as a guide when preparing an application package.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Certificate of Good Standing	See <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications</i> and <i>The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity</i> .	Submission is required with the application by the Application Due Date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . See http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html for additional information. This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> . If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the funding opportunity.	A UEI and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	To obtain a UEI and SAM registration, go to http://www.sam.gov .	
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . These forms are available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. They are required for applications that include only non-construction activities.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification.</i>	<p>Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C.</p> <p>Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i>	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i>