ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Children's Bureau

Tribal Court Improvement Program

Opportunity number: HHS-2024-ACF-ACYF-CS-0053

Contents

Before you begin

If you believe you are a good candidate for this funding opportunity, secure your SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations now. If you are already registered, make sure your registration is active and up-to-date.

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

You must have an active Grants.gov registration. Doing so requires a Login.gov registration as well.

See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

Apply by July 9, 2024

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 9, 2024.

> To help you find what you need, this NOFO uses internal links. In Adobe Reader, you can go back to where you were by pressing Alt + Left Arrow (Windows) or Command + Left Arrow (Mac) on your keyboard.

Step 1:
Review the Opportunity

In this step

Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Children's Bureau

Helping tribal courts handle child welfare cases

Summary

This award, provided by the Children's Bureau, will help tribal courts assess and improve how they handle American Indian and Alaska Native child welfare cases. Recipients will use this award to conduct assessments or use the results of prior assessments to improve tribal court hearings and legal representation.

Funding details

Type: Grant

Estimated total program funding: $410,000

Total expected awards: 4

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): $50,000

Maximum award amount for the first budget period (award ceiling): $150,000

Funding periods: 48-month period of performance with four 12-month budget periods

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

> **Have questions?**
> See Contacts and Support.

Key facts

Opportunity name:
Tribal Court Improvement Program

Opportunity number:
HHS-2024-ACF-ACYF-CS-0053

Federal assistance listing:
93.586

Statutory authority number:
Title IV, part B, subpart 2—MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families, section 438 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629h)

Key dates

Application deadline:
July 9, 2024

Optional notice of intent deadline:
June 10, 2024

Expected award date:
September 30, 2024

Expected start date:
September 30, 2024

See deadlines.

Eligibility

Who can apply

Eligible applicants

These types of entities may apply:

- Indian tribes, as defined by [subsections (e) and (l) of section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)](#), or tribal consortia that meet one of these conditions:
  - Are operating an approved title IV-E program in accordance with section [479B of the Social Security Act](#) (42 U.S.C. 679c).
  - Plan to operate a title IV-E program and have received a [Tribal Title IV-E Plan Development Grant](#), as authorized by [section 476 of the Social Security Act](#) (42 U.S.C. 676).
  - Have a court that handles foster care or adoption cases.

Individuals, including sole proprietorships, and foreign entities may not apply.

See the [initial review](#) section for disqualification factors.

> A **tribal consortium** is a partnership between two or more tribes that work together to achieve a common objective.

Cost sharing

This program has no cost-sharing requirement. If you choose to include cost-sharing funds, we (ACF's Children's Bureau) won't consider it during review.

Cost–sharing commitments

You must follow through on your promise of cost-sharing funds even if you promise more than required. We put these commitments in the [Notice of Award](#) (NoA). You'll have to include your funds when you fill out your [federal financial reports](#).

If you don't provide your promised amount, we may have to decrease your award amount or use other enforcement actions.

Program description

ACF's Children's Bureau will make up to four awards for up to 48 months each. These projects will assess the effectiveness of and support improvements to how tribal courts and/or legal representation handle American Indian and Alaska Native child welfare cases, including family preservation, family reunification, guardianship, and adoption.

Goals

You will assess how tribal courts handle child welfare proceedings and make changes based on that assessment. Alternatively, if you already have an existing assessment, you can begin supporting those changes. These changes can include:

- Ensuring that children's safety, permanency, and well-being are met in a timely and complete manner.
- Improving the quality of court hearings and legal representation, including engagement of parties, through training and efforts to increase substantive and procedural justice.

Program activities

Assessments and implementation

Note: This activity contains two tracks—one for awardees who are completing an assessment as part of this project (A) and one for awardees who already have a recently completed assessment (B).

Before beginning work, you will identify the tribes' priorities and needs.

Track A: Projects that will use award funds to assess their tribal courts' child welfare practices

In the first year of the award, you must assess the effectiveness of tribal courts and/or legal representation in cases concerning child welfare, family preservation, family reunification, guardianship, and adoption. You may continue conducting assessments into the second through fourth years of the award.

During the second through fourth years of the award, you must also use your assessment to make an implementation plan and then make changes to improve the work of the courts. The Children's Bureau will review and approve your implementation plan.

You must base your assessment on what the tribe considers is important and needs review or correction.

Track B: Projects that have recently completed an assessment of their tribal courts' child welfare practices

In the first year of this award, you must develop a plan for how you will make changes based on the results of the assessment. Once the Children's Bureau approves your plan, you can begin making these changes.

You must base your strategies on what the tribe considers is important and needs correction.

> The following resources may be helpful:
>
> - Synthesis of Tribal Court Assessment Strategies—Strategies that prior Tribal Court Improvement Program recipients have used to assess their tribal court systems.
>
> - Judicial, Court, and Attorney Measures of Performance—A set of model court measures, developed in part by the Children's Bureau, that includes templates for a needs assessment. These tools were developed with many experts in the Indian Child Welfare Act and tribal court practice. The measures were tested with a tribe and several states.

Collaboration

Your project must show meaningful, ongoing collaboration with the tribal child welfare agency. This means you will identify and work on shared goals and activities with tribal courts and the agency that provides child welfare services. The goal of this collaboration is to increase the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and youth in the child welfare system, as specified in section 438 of the Social Security Act.

Many recipients under this program collaborate with others outside the court. Common collaborators include:

- Treatment providers.
- School representatives.
- Foster parents.
- Parents whose children have been in foster care.
- Foster care alumni.
- Other relevant tribal entities, agencies, or community members.

Dissemination

The goal of this program is to help tribes or tribal consortia make improvements that will benefit children and families. Those efforts may also benefit other tribal communities. You may share information and knowledge generated by these projects so lessons learned can be integrated into policy and practice. You will have opportunities to work with the Children's Bureau to share your project findings, and work with other Tribal Court Improvement Program projects to share products and findings. You do not need to discuss this activity in your application.

Funding policies and limitations

We do not allow the following costs under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO):

- Construction.
- Purchase of real property.
- Major renovation.
- Hiring attorneys or judges for regular client representation or judicial duties, filling routine court personnel positions, or otherwise replacing funding for tribal government positions. This funding may not replace required tribal funding.

See 45 CFR §§ 75.420 to 75.475 for information on costs that are always unallowable or have restrictions.

You may use award funds to increase the capacity of tribal courts to receive transfers of Indian Child Welfare Act cases from state courts. You may also use funds to ensure that important decisions about tribal children and families are made in tribal courts.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those for a common or joint purpose across more than one project that cannot be easily separated by project. Learn more at 45 CFR § 75.414, Indirect Costs and Indirect Cost Negotiations: Contact Us.

To charge indirect costs you can select one of two methods:

Method 1—Approved rate. You currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency.

Method 2—*De minimis* rate. Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f), if you have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate. If you are awaiting approval of an indirect cost proposal, you may also use the *de minimis* rate. If you choose this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs.

This rate is 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See 45 CFR § 75.2 for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

Subawards

The prime recipient must maintain a substantive role in the project. We define a substantive role as conducting funded activities and providing services that are necessary and integral to completing the project. Monitoring your subrecipient's activities alone is not a substantive role. See 45 CFR § 75.352 for information on subrecipient monitoring.

We do 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.

Subrecipients must meet the eligibility requirements of this funding opportunity.

Statutory authority

Title IV, part B, subpart 2—MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families, section 438 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 629h)

Step 2:
Get Ready to Apply

In this step

Get registered	[12](#)
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Learn more	[12](#)

Get registered

SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier. SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. Begin that process today.

To register, go to SAM.gov Entity Registration and select Get Started. From the same page, you can also select the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register.

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with Grants.gov. You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov Quick Start Guide for Applicants.

Need help? See Contacts and Support.

Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to Search Grants at Grants.gov and search for opportunity number HHS-2024-ACF-ACYF-CS-0053. Then, select the Package tab.

If you can't use Grants.gov to download application materials, you may request them from the grants management contact.

If you are also unable to apply through Grants.gov, see the section on exemptions for paper submissions.

Learn more

Visit Applying for an ACF Grant Award on the ACF Grants page.

Step 3: Prepare Your Application

In this step

Application contents and format

Application components

You will submit two files plus the other required forms in the application package.

File one: Project Narrative Attachment form

Includes:

- Table of contents
- Project summary, one page
- Project narrative
- Line-item budget and budget narrative

File two: Other Attachments form

Includes all attachments.

Forms

Includes other required forms.

Required format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 100 pages

File format: Portable Document File (PDF) is recommended, but not required. ACF supports the following file formats when you attach files to the Project Narrative Attachment form and the Other Attachments form:

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

Paper size: 8 ½ inches x 11 inches

Margins: 1 inch all around

Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

Do not include external links to information you want reviewers to assess.

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

Size: 12-point font

Footnotes and text in tables and graphics may be 10-point.

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced

Project summary: Must be single-spaced

Project narrative: Must be double-spaced

Project timeline and milestones: Can be single-spaced

Line-item budget and budget narrative: Can be single-spaced

Attachments: As needed

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

Table of contents

At the beginning of file one, insert a table of contents that guides a reader through the contents of both files in your application. If possible, include links to the relevant content in file one.

Project summary

Provide a one-page summary of the project description. Do not cross-reference to other parts of the application. The summary must include:

- At the top, the project title, applicant name, address, phone numbers, email addresses, and any website URL.
- A brief description of the project, including the needs and population you will address and your proposed services.

Project narrative

The project narrative is where you address all your proposed activities. It is a critical section of your application, which we evaluate and rank against other applications using the merit review criteria. Remember that substance is more important than length.

In it, you must:

- Explain how the project will meet the purpose of the funding opportunity, as described in the program description.

- Make sure your narrative is clear, concise, and complete.

- Use cross-referencing rather than repetition.

- Be sure to include any required supporting documents noted. You generally provide these in your attachments.

- Use the headings and order of the sections that follow.

If you already have an assessment of your courts, you can attach either the entire document, relevant sections, or a summary. This will be included in your page count.

> **Note:** This program lasts for four 12-month periods. However, in many sections of the application we only ask for plans for the first year. This is because those doing assessments in the first year likely do not have plans for their activities in years 2 and beyond. Focusing on the first year makes the process fair for applicants on both tracks.

Geographic location and scope

Provide the precise physical location of your project. Provide the boundaries of the area you will serve or the criteria for clients served. For example, you might serve all members or citizens regardless of location.

Need for assistance

Identify the problems you plan to solve. These problems could be physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, etc. To do so:

- Demonstrate the need, including the nature and scope of the problem.

- Include any relevant data or information based on planning studies or needs assessments. You may refer to them in the endnotes or footnotes.

- Use demographic data and participant or beneficiary information where you can.

Objectives

State your main objectives and any sub-objectives for the first year of the project. Address how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of this program and describe how you will achieve the objectives.

Expected outcomes

Identify the outcomes you plan to achieve from the first year of the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall program as described in the program description. If research is part of the proposed work, outcomes must include hypothesized results and implications of the proposed research.

Approach

> **Note:** This application contains two tracks—one for applicants who are completing an assessment as part of this project (A) and one for applicants who already have a recently completed assessment (B). In the approach section of your application, you should include tracks A or B, as well as the items that apply to both tracks.

1. Action plan and obstacles

Both tracks: Outline your action plan. Describe the scope and detail of how you will accomplish your proposed project. Account for all functions or activities you identify in your application.

Both tracks: Explain potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing your project goals. Explain the strategies you will use to address them.

2. Identify a team

- **Track A:** If you will complete an assessment in year one, describe who will conduct the assessment.
- **Track B:** If you already have a completed assessment, identify who will plan and carry out the changes you will make.

Tip: Beyond court and other legal staff, we recommend creating a broad multidisciplinary team. Consider the groups mentioned in the collaboration section.

3. Identify and prioritize tribal needs

Both tracks: The tribe's priorities and needs should drive the assessment or strategies. Describe your plan for identifying these needs.

4. Identify assessment questions or strategies

- **Track A:** If you are conducting an assessment, provide the questions you will ask. Also provide a full plan for conducting the assessment. This assessment may be completed by you internally or by an external provider.

- The plan should describe how you will manage the assessment so that it meets the program's purpose and the tribes' needs.
    - Include an action plan for the first year of the project.
- **Track B:** If you already have a completed assessment, identify the strategies you will use to improve court practice based on that assessment. Include a tentative action plan.

5. Identify how you will collect data

- **Track A:** If you are performing an assessment, identify how you will collect data and information.
- **Track B:** If you are implementing a strategy, identify the data you will collect to measure your progress. Measures could include effectiveness, outcomes, and the strategy's current or future effects on families.

Tip: The Children's Bureau defines "data" broadly. It can include administrative data from a child welfare agency or court, as well as information obtained through surveys, focus groups, interviews, community forums, and other Indigenous Ways of Knowing (see page 9 of "A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities"). The data should be meaningful in your community and context.

6. Use your new or existing assessment to inform strategies for improvement

Both tracks: Describe how you will improve the courts' child welfare practices, based on the results of your new or existing assessment. Your plans may be based on the cultural or linguistic needs of the tribe, prioritized by the tribe's team.

7. Implement and monitor improvements

- **Track A:** None.
- **Track B:** If you have an existing assessment, describe how you will improve court hearings and legal representation, including engagement of parties, through training and efforts to increase substantive and procedural justice.
    - Describe the ongoing approach for monitoring.

Tip: Improvements may be grounded in cultural or linguistic structures, values, and traditions.

8. Collaborate with tribal child welfare agencies

Both tracks: Describe how you will collaborate meaningfully with tribal child welfare agency and other key community members, if applicable. Refer to the collaboration section of the program description.

Project timeline and milestones

Provide a timeline for your project that includes milestones. To do so:

- Organize the information by task and subtask, showing related milestones.
- Provide monthly or quarterly projections for what you plan to accomplish and by when. For example, provide the milestones or the number of a certain activity you plan to complete.
- Cover the first year of performance in your timeline.

Organizational capacity

Provide the following information for your full project team, including the applicant staff and any cooperating partners, contractors, and subrecipients:

- Provide evidence that your team has the relevant experience and expertise needed to carry out your project.
- Describe your team's experience with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- Provide evidence that your team has the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions effectively, or describe how you would build that capacity.
- Provide evidence that your organization has appropriate staffing, effective data management systems, and an organizational process that will enable you to successfully collect and use data to inform and improve program quality.
- Provide supporting information in the [organizational capacity supporting information](#) section of the attachments.

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

You must ensure proper award oversight. The regulation that governs this oversight is [45 CFR part 75 subpart D](#). It includes standards for:

- Financial and program management.
- Property management.
- Procurement.
- Performance and financial monitoring and reporting.
- Subrecipient monitoring and management.
- Record retention and access.
- Remedies for noncompliance.
- Prior written approval.

Describe your framework to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities. Include:

- A description of the governance, policies and procedures, and systems you use for record keeping and financial management.
- A description of the procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues. These might include audit findings, continuous performance assessment findings, and monitoring.
- The key staff who will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff and any partners or subrecipients.

Project performance evaluation plan

Describe a plan for how you will evaluate your project's performance and how it will contribute to continuous quality improvement. This plan must describe:

- How you will monitor ongoing activities and the progress toward the project's goals and objectives.
- The inputs, key activities, and expected outcomes of the funded activities. Inputs might include your collaborative partners, key staff, budget, service processes, or other resources.
- How you will measure the inputs, activities, and outcomes.
- How you will use the resulting information to inform improvement of funded activities.
- Any processes that support the overall data quality.
- The systems and processes that will track performance outcomes.
- How you will collect and manage data in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. This might include assigned skilled staff, data management software, and data integrity.
- Any potential obstacles to implementing the project performance evaluation and how you will address them.
- A timeline for how you will review information from the performance evaluation and apply it to your ongoing project.

Project sustainability plan

You must propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. We expect you to sustain key elements of your project. These elements can include strategies or services and interventions that have been effective in improving practices and outcomes.

- Provide an approach to project sustainability that is effective and feasible. Describe:
    - The key people and organizations whose support you will require.
    - The types of alternative support you will require to maintain the project.
- If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how you will maintain their cooperation or collaboration after the federal funding ends.

Protection of sensitive or confidential information

Describe how you will collect and safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive. Make sure your approach is consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality. Provide:

- The methods and systems you will use to ensure that you properly handle confidential and sensitive information, including of any subrecipients or contractors.
- A plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the period of performance.

See [45 CFR § 75.303(e)](#) for more information.

Line-item budget and budget narrative

The line-item budget and budget justification support the information you provide in the Budget Information Standard Form SF-424A. See the [other required forms](#). The line-item budget and budget justification justify the costs you ask for and include added detail, including detailed calculations for the "object class categories" in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for the initial budget period only. See information on [funding periods](#).

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See the [funding policies and limitations](#).

We encourage you also to review the Standard Form instructions.

To create your line-item budget and justification, see detailed budget instructions on our website.

In general, you must:

- Indicate the method you will use for your indirect cost rate. See the section on indirect costs for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- For any cost-sharing, include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance.

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

In your application, you may identify salary or other proprietary information or personally identifiable information. We will remove this information from applications before they go to reviewers.

If you have an exemption for a paper submission, you can protect salary information and any proprietary information by placing that information only in the original application. You can remove the information from the copies, keeping summary information.

Attachments

You will upload attachments in Grants.gov using the Other Attachments form. These attachments are included in the overall application page limit, unless it says otherwise in the following sections.

Completed tribal court assessment

If you are using an existing assessment of your tribal courts in child welfare cases, include either the entire document, relevant sections, or a summary.

Indirect cost agreement

If you include indirect costs in your budget using an approved rate, include a copy of your current agreement approved by your cognizant agency for indirect costs. If you use the *de minimis* rate, you do not need to submit this attachment.

See the section on indirect costs for more information.

Organizational capacity supporting information

You must attach the following information to support the information in your organizational capacity section:

- Organizational charts, including all partners.
- Resumes or curricula vitae (CV) for all key personnel.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- Copy or description of your organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.
- Information on compliance with federal, state, and local government standards.

Third-party agreements

You must submit agreements with all third parties involved in the project. Third parties include subrecipients, contractors, and other cooperating entities. Third-party agreements include letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, and memoranda of agreement. We do not consider general letters of support to be third-party agreements.

Any such agreement must:

- Describe the roles and responsibilities for project activities.
- Describe the support and resources that the third party is committing to the proposed project.
- Be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments.
- Identify the primary applicant and all collaborators responsible for project activities if for a collaboration or consortia application.

Maintenance of effort certification

Not included in the page limit.

You will self-certify your maintenance of effort. Place this certification on your organization's letterhead. See the maintenance of effort wording at ACF's website.

Other required forms

You will need to complete some other required forms. Upload the following forms at Grants.gov. You can find them in the NOFO application package or review them and their instructions at Grants.gov Forms.

Forms	Submission requirement
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With the application.
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With the application.
Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	With the application.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable, with the application or before award.
Key Contacts	With the application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	With the application or before award.
Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	With the application. Cite your primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
Protection of Human Subjects	With the application.

Step 4: Learn About Review and Award

In this step

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Application review

Initial review

We review each application to make sure it meets basic requirements. We won't consider an application that:

- Requests funding above the award ceiling.

- Is submitted after the deadline.

- Is from an individual, including a sole proprietorship, or a foreign entity.

- Is received in paper format that didn't have a previously approved exemption for paper submission from ACF.

We will let you know if your application is disqualified within 30 days of the application deadline. You won't receive any notice from ACF if your application fails Grants.gov validation checks.

If you submit more than two files in addition to your forms, we will remove the extra files. We will let you know if this happens.

We will also remove blurred or illegible pages and any file formats that are not supported.

We will not review any pages that exceed the page limit.

If your application fails to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements, we will adjust your application by removing page(s) from the application. We will remove the pages before the merit review and will not send them to reviewers.

If we do so, we will send you a letter after we make awards to notify you that we amended your application.

Merit review

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The members use the criteria in this section.

Additionally, our reviewers typically are not federal employees. See the section on proprietary and personally identifiable information.

Criteria

Criterion	Total number of points = 100
1. Need for assistance, objectives, and expected outcomes	15 points
2. Approach	40 points
3. Organizational capacity	20 points
4. Project performance evaluation plan	20 points
5. Project budget and budget justification	5 points

Note: This application contains two tracks—one for applicants who are completing an assessment as part of this project (A) and one for applicants who already have a recently completed assessment (B). Reviewers will judge applications on responses to tracks A or B, plus items that apply to both tracks.

1. Need for assistance, objectives, and expected outcomes (Maximum points: 15)

Please refer to the need for assistance, objectives, and expected outcomes sections to view full requirements. Reviewers will consider the extent to which you do the following.

1.1. Both tracks: You describe the problem you wish to solve in child welfare legal, judicial, or court practice.

1.2. Both tracks: You provide compelling data, defined broadly, that demonstrates the need for assistance.

1.3. You clearly describe your objective in your first year of the award.

- **Track A:** Your objective describes assessing needs.
- **Track B:** Your objective describes carrying out strategies to improve child welfare legal, judicial, or court practice.

1.4. You clearly describe your planned or expected outcomes.

- **Track A:** If you will conduct an assessment in the first year, you clearly describe the planned outcomes. This should include which aspects of child welfare legal, judicial, or court practice you hope to learn more about.

- **Track B:** If you have a completed assessment, you clearly describe the outcomes you hope to achieve by improving legal, judicial, or court practice in child welfare.

2. Approach (Maximum points: 40)

Please refer to the approach section to view full requirements. In reviewing the approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which you do the following.

2.1. Both tracks: You describe anticipated obstacles to accomplishing your plan and include strategies to address them.

2.2. You identify a project team.

- **Track A:** If you plan to complete an assessment in year one, you identify a team to oversee the assessment.

- **Track B:** If you already have a completed assessment, you identify a team to plan and carry out your activities.

2.3. Both tracks: You identify and prioritize tribal needs.

2.4. You identify assessment questions or strategies.

- **Track A:** If you are performing an assessment in the first year, you clearly identify assessment questions and provide a clear plan for the assessment.

- **Track B:** If you already have an assessment, you identify the strategies that flow from that assessment to improve the court.

2.5. You identify how you will collect data.

- **Track A:** If you are performing an assessment in the first year, you identify how you will collect data and information.

- **Track B:** If you already have an assessment, you describe the data you will use to gauge how the implementation is going.

2.6. You describe how you plan to use assessment results to inform strategies to improve the courts.

- **Track A:** This plan is based on the assessment you plan to conduct.

- **Track B:** This plan is based on your existing assessment.

2.7. Track B only: You describe how you will implement and monitor your planned improvements. **Track A can skip.**

2.8. Both tracks: You describe how you plan to <u>engage the child welfare agency</u> or agencies in your approach.

2.9. Both tracks: You include a <u>plan for fulfilling your goals on time</u>, including milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality.

3. Organizational capacity (Maximum points: 20)

All items apply to both tracks. Please refer to the <u>organizational capacity</u> section to view full requirements. Reviewers will consider the extent to which you do the following.

3.1. You show experience carrying out similar projects that will enable you to carry out the project effectively.

3.2. Your proposed staff has enough relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities to plan and carry out a project of this size, scope, and complexity.

3.3. You have appropriate staffing, effective data management approaches, and an organizational process that enables you to successfully collect and use data to inform and improve program quality.

3.4. You clearly define the role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each project staffer, including consultants, subcontractors, and partners. You explain how they are needed to successfully carry out the project.

3.5. You describe how you will sustain the project after the federal funding ends. You include the sources of support for continuing those efforts beyond the project period.

4. Project performance evaluation plan (Maximum points: 20)

All items apply to both tracks. Please refer to the <u>project performance evaluation plan</u> section to view full requirements. Reviewers will consider the extent to which you do the following.

4.1. You provide a clear plan for how you will evaluate your project's performance and how this evaluation will contribute to continuous quality improvement.

4.2. You describe how you will collect and manage data in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes.

4.3. You identify any potential obstacles to implementing the project performance evaluation and how you will address them.

4.4. You provide a timeline for how you will review information from the performance evaluation and apply it to your ongoing project.

5. Project budget and budget justification (Maximum points: 5)

All items apply to both tracks. Please refer to the budget and budget justification section to view full requirements. Reviewers will consider the extent to which you do the following.

5.1. You provide a line-item budget (up to $150,000) for the first year of the project period. You provide a narrative justifying the budget and explaining how award funds will be spent for the first year.

5.2. The costs of the project are reasonable, considering the target population, the planned activities, and the expected results.

5.3. Your fiscal controls and accounting procedures ensure prudent use of funds, timely disbursement, and accurate accounting.

Risk review

Before making an award, we review the risk that you will not prudently manage federal funds. We need to make sure you've handled any past federal awards well and demonstrated sound business practices. We use SAM.gov Responsibility / Qualification to check this history for all awards likely to be over $250,000.

If we find a significant risk, we may choose not to fund your application or to place specific conditions on the award.

For more details, see 45 CFR 75.205.

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review results. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- Organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution.
- The past performance of the applicant.

We may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Decide not to fund a project with high start-up costs or unreasonably high operating costs.

- Choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems.

- Designate your application as "approved but unfunded" if it was successful, but there was not sufficient funding to make an award. You may receive funding if additional funds become available within the fiscal year.

- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.

We will not fund:

- An incomplete application.

- A disqualified application.

Award notices

How we make awards

If you are successful, we will email or transmit through our grant systems a Notice of Award (NoA) to your authorized official. We will email you if your application is disqualified or unsuccessful.

The NoA is the only official award document. The NoA tells you about the amount of the award, important dates, and the terms and conditions you need to follow. Until you receive the NoA, you have not received an award. Project costs that you incur before you receive a NoA are at your risk.

If you want to know more about NoA contents, go to Notice of Award at ACF's website.

Step 5:
Submit Your Application

In this step

Application submission and deadlines

Deadlines

Optional notice of intent

Due on June 10, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).

Application

Due on July 9, 2024.

- For electronic submissions, the due time is 11:59 p.m. ET.
- If you receive an exemption from electronic submission, the due time is 4:30 p.m. ET. See information on underline exemptions for paper submissions.

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application. If you submit the same application more than once, we will accept only the last on-time submission.

The grants management officer may extend an application due date based on emergency situations such as documented natural disasters or a verifiable widespread disruption of electric or mail service.

Submission methods

Grants.gov

You must submit your application through Grants.gov unless we give you an exemption for a paper submission. See information on getting registered.

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the Quick Start Guide for Applicants. Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.

See Contacts and Support if you need help.

Issues with federal systems

If you experience a systems issue with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues [PDF].

Exemptions for paper submissions

We need to give you an exemption before you can apply on paper. See the [ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission \[PDF\]](#). Once we have approved your exemption, download your forms package under the Package tab in Grants.gov.

To submit your application, mail it to:

Children's Bureau Operations Center

c/o LCG, Inc.

1400 Key Blvd., Suite 900

Arlington, VA 22209

The requirements include:

- Print your application and all copies one-sided.
- Submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all standard forms and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved forms.
- Submit the original and both copies in a single package. If you plan to submit more than one application under this NOFO or others, you must submit them separately. Clearly label each package with the NOFO title and funding opportunity number.
- Your authorized organization official must sign the application. One application copy must include an original signature.

Other submissions

Intergovernmental review

This NOFO is not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. No action is needed.

Optional notice of intent

We ask that you let us know if you plan to apply for this opportunity. We do this to plan for the number of expert reviewers we will need to evaluate applications. You do not have to submit a notice of intent to apply.

Please email your notice to CB@grantreview.org. In your email, include:

- The notice of funding opportunity number and title.
- Your organization's name and address.
- A contact name, phone number, and email address.

See the [deadline](#) for notices of intent.

Mandatory disclosure

You must submit any information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. See Mandatory Disclosures, [45 CFR 75.113](#).

Send written disclosures to us at CB@grantreview.org **and** to the Office of Inspector General at grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov.

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

Component	How to upload	Included in page limit?
File one: Narratives	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.	
☐ Table of contents		Yes
☐ Project summary		Yes
☐ Project narrative		Yes
☐ Line-item budget and budget narrative		Yes
File two: Attachments	Insert each in the Other Attachments form.	
☐ Completed tribal court assessment document, relevant sections, or summary (if applicable)		Yes
☐ Indirect cost agreement		Yes
☐ Organizational capacity supporting information		Yes
☐ Third-party agreements		Yes
☐ Maintenance of effort certification		No
Other required forms	Upload using each required form.	
☐ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)		No
☐ Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)		No
☐ Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)		No
☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)		No
☐ Key Contacts		No
☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form		No
☐ Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)		No
☐ Protection of Human Subjects		No

Step 6:
Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post–award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

There are important rules you'll need to follow if you get an award. You must follow:

- All terms and conditions in the NoA.

- The rules listed in 45 CFR part 75, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards in effect at the time of award and any updates.

- The HHS Grants Policy Statement [PDF] (GPS). This document has terms and conditions tied to your award. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your NoA.

- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in the HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements [PDF]. See also ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

- Applicable program statute and regulations at 42 U.S.C. 629h (2021).

Reporting

If you are successful, you will have to submit financial and performance reports. To learn more about reporting, see Reporting at the ACF website.

- Performance report forms: SF-PPR
  - Performance report frequency: Semiannually
- Financial report forms: SF-425
  - Financial report frequency: Semiannually

Nondiscrimination and assurance

If you receive an award, you must follow all applicable nondiscrimination laws. You agree to this when you register in SAM.gov. You must also submit an Assurance of Compliance [PDF] (HHS-690). To learn more, see the Laws and Regulations Enforced by the HHS Office for Civil Rights.

Contacts and Support

In this step

Agency contacts

Program

Scott Trowbridge

CB@grantreview.org

888-203-6161

Grants management

Sarah Viola

CB@grantreview.org

888-203-6161

Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. You can call 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. Hold on to your ticket number.

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can call 866-606-8220 or live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

Reference websites

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)](#)
- [Administration for Children and Families (ACF)](#)
- [ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs](#)
- [Applying for an ACF Grant Award](#)
- [ACF Property Guidance](#)
- [Grants.gov Accessibility Information](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)](#)
- [United States Code (U.S.C.)](#)
- [Synthesis of Tribal Court Assessment Strategies](#)
- [CIP Share](#)

FAQ page

Need help? Contact ACF if you have questions.

We will post all applicant questions and their answers on an FAQ page. We encourage you to check it periodically for updates. No additional FAQs will be posted 30 days from the application due date. If there is a discrepancy between the NOFO and FAQ, the NOFO takes precedence.

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 (project narrative, line-item budget, and justification) is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The project description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 03/31/2026. 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.