ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Children's Bureau

Standing Announcement for Tribal Title IV–E Plan Development Grants

Opportunity number: HHS-2025-ACF-ACYF-CS-0067

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 registrations are 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 the application due date

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on January 12, 2026.

> 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

Help for tribes to develop a title IV-E plan

Summary

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is intended to help Indian tribes, tribal organizations, or tribal consortia (tribes) develop a plan to implement a title IV-E program and submit it to the Children's Bureau (CB) for approval.

Tribes that want to implement a title IV-E program directly, as authorized in section 479B of the Social Security Act (the Act), may use this award for the costs of developing a title IV-E plan that meets the requirements of section 471 of the Act.

As a recipient, you:

- Must use the award to develop your plan for the mandatory title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance programs.
- May also use funds to address plan requirements for optional title IV-E programs, such as the Guardianship Assistance, Kinship Navigator, and Prevention programs.
- May use the award for developing a data collection system, a cost-allocation methodology, agency, and tribal court procedures needed to meet case review system requirements for children in foster care, as required by section 475(5) of the Act, or any other costs necessary for approval of a title IV-E plan.
- Must submit the title IV-E plan you develop (if applicable) to CB within 24 months of the award. If you don't, there is a statutory requirement (section 476(c)(2)(B) of the Act) that requires you to repay the award.

A tribe may receive only one title IV-E plan development grant.

Key facts

Opportunity name: Standing Announcement for Tribal Title IV-E Plan Development Grants

Opportunity number: HHS-2025-ACF-ACYF-CS-0067

Announcement type: Initial

Federal assistance listing: 93.658

Statutory authority number: Title IV, part E section 476(c)(2)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 676(c)(2)(A)(iii))

Key dates

Application submission deadline:

FY 2026: January 12, 2026

FY 2027: April 22, 2027

FY 2028: April 20, 2028

Expected project start date: April 1, 2026

See other submissions for other time frames that may apply to this NOFO.

Funding details

Type: Grant

Expected total program funding: $600,000

Total expected awards: 2

Minimum award amount (award floor): 150,000

Maximum award amount (award ceiling): 300,000

This is full funding. We plan to fund a two-year project period with one budget period.

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

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

Only Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal consortia (tribes) are eligible to apply.

An Indian tribe is defined as any recognized Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States, due to their status as Indians.

A tribal organization is defined as the recognized governing body of any Indian tribe or any legally established organization of Indians controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by such governing body. If a contract or grant benefits more than one tribe, approval from each tribe is required.

Consortia and collaborations must identify a primary applicant responsible for managing the grant.

These types of organizations are eligible for an award:

- Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal consortia.

Individuals, including sole proprietorships, and foreign entities are not eligible.

Disqualification factors

We will review your application to make sure it meets these responsiveness 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 from ACF.
- Is submitted on behalf of a tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortia but does not include a tribal resolution that directs the applicant to apply for the Tribal Title IV-E Plan Development Grant on their behalf.

Application limits

If you submit the same application more than once under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), we will only acknowledge the last on-time submission.

Cost sharing

This program has no cost-sharing requirement. If you choose to include cost-sharing funds, we won't consider it during review. However, we will hold you accountable for any funds you add, including through reporting. If you don't provide your promised amount, we may have to decrease your award amount or use other enforcement actions.

Program description

Statutory authority

[42 U.S.C. 676 (C)(2)(A)(iii)](#)

Background

Overview

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (the Act) reimburses states, territories, and tribes operating the title IV-E program (title IV-E agencies) for part of the cost of operating mandatory Foster Care and Adoption Assistance programs, and optional Guardianship Assistance, Kinship Navigator, and Prevention programs (the programs). To participate in title IV-E programs, a state, territory, or tribe must have a title IV-E plan approved by the Children's Bureau (CB).

The goal of this funding opportunity is to support the development of an approvable Title IV-E plan for the mandatory Foster Care and Adoption Assistance programs and, if applicable, optional programs. An approvable plan meets all federal requirements, ensuring eligibility for participation. Within 24 months of receiving the award, you'll be required to submit the title IV-E plan to CB for approval. (CB offers information, advice, educational materials, and technical assistance to help you meet this timeline.)

This award may be used for costs associated with meeting the requirements for the development and approval of a tribal title IV-E plan, including:

- Developing a data collection system.
- Case planning and case review systems.
- Foster care licensing and standards for tribal foster family homes and childcare facilities.
- Quality assurance systems.
- Court structure and procedures.
- Financial controls and financial management processes.
- Coordination with other related tribal or state agencies (for example, child support enforcement, schools, Medicaid, family assistance).
- A cost-allocation methodology.
- Tribal agency and court procedures needed to meet the statutory case review requirements for children in foster care (section 476(c)(2)(A)(iii) of the Act).

- Any additional areas you wish to address with this funding to develop an approvable plan.

Direct operation of a title IV–E program

The title IV-E program provides important financial resources for child welfare programs. Tribes can participate in the program either by entering into an agreement with a state title IV-E agency or by submitting a title IV-E plan to CB to operate the program directly. This NOFO is designed to support tribes that want to develop their own title IV-E plan to operate a title IV-program directly. The award should not be used for building capacity without a clear commitment to implement the title IV-E program after the plan is approved.

Because title IV-E is a complex program that requires significant administrative and financial resources, you should assess whether direct operation of the title IV-E program is a good fit for the tribe's operations before you apply for this award. Some factors you may want to consider include:

- Tribes implementing a title IV-E program must also participate in and meet the requirements of title IV-B, subpart 1 of the Act (the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services program). Title IV-B and IV-E of the Act require that title IV-E agencies have a continuum of child welfare services programs to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being. However, title IV-E only provides funding for some components of a comprehensive child welfare system. For instance, title IV-E does not pay for child protective services investigations.

- Title IV-E pays for a portion of foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and optional guardianship assistance payments, but only some children meet eligibility requirements. Tribes must identify other sources of funding to cover the non-federal share of program costs for eligible children and must have other resources to cover costs for those who aren't eligible for title IV-E.

- Operating a title IV-E program requires coordination among multiple partners, including tribal and state social services agencies, tribal and state courts, and tribal financial offices.

- Tribes must have systems for capturing and reporting required data. Once approved to operate the title IV-E program, you must submit data on children in foster care and children who are receiving adoption or guardianship assistance payments to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) every six months.

- To be successful, before you apply, we recommend that you've:
  - Assessed the readiness of your current child welfare program and capacities.
  - Gained a clear understanding of title IV-E requirements and the steps needed to prepare for direct operation.

◦ Developed a well-thought-out plan for using development grant funds to address the needs you've identified.

CB strongly encourages tribes to review our technical assistance resources. They can help you determine the feasibility of directly operating a title IV-E program and guide your decision on applying for this funding opportunity. The resources include:

- Tribal Title IV-E Program Considerations, a guide to important parts of title IV-E requirements, with suggested discussion questions. It can help a tribe decide if or when starting a title IV-E program is the right choice and identify areas to address through this award.

- Tribal Readiness Assessment Tool for Title IV-E helps tribes explore areas where they have significant infrastructure in place and areas where you need to develop additional capacity before operating a title IV-E program. The assessment covers federal title IV-E requirements related to the Foster Care, Adoption Assistance, and optional Guardianship Assistance programs to help you consider whether the tribe is ready to operate the programs.

What title IV–E pays for

Title IV-E reimburses title IV-E agencies a percentage of costs for specific items including, foster care maintenance payments (for example, room and board) for eligible children, administrative costs, and training costs. The federal reimbursement rate varies by cost category. In each cost category, the title IV-E agency is responsible for providing the non-federal share of program costs.

The federal reimbursement rates for each cost category are:

- Foster care maintenance costs and adoption and guardianship assistance costs for eligible children are reimbursed at the tribe's Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) rate. This rate is tribe-specific, based on per capita income, and ranges from 50 to 83 percent. The FMAP rate is reviewed annually and could change from year to year. To date, most tribes have had FMAP rates at or near the maximum of 83 percent. For reference, there's a FMAP Look-Up Table on CB's website.

- Allowable administrative costs are reimbursed at 50 percent. To claim administrative costs, you must develop a cost allocation methodology (see ACYF-CB-PI-10-13) and get it approved by ACF. For additional information on administrative costs, see federal regulations at 45 CFR 1356(c). Allowable costs include:
  - ◦ Eligibility determinations.
  - ◦ Case management for children in foster care.
  - ◦ Recruitment and licensing of foster homes.

- ◦ Data collection and reporting.
- ◦ Development and operation of automated information systems.
- ◦ Independent legal representation.
- Allowable training costs are reimbursed at 75%. Training topics must be closely related to administering the title IV-E program. In addition, you must develop a training plan with details about each training and submit it with the tribe's Child and Family Services Plan (which is required for Title IV-B funding). For more on the training plan, see page 32 and Attachment E of [ACYF-CB-PI-24-03](#). Costs may include training for:
  - ◦ Foster and adoptive parents.
  - ◦ Title IV-E agency staff.
  - ◦ Other professionals such as judges and staff members of child abuse and neglect courts, agency attorneys, and attorneys representing children or parents.

Title IV-E plan pre-print

In a title IV-E plan, a tribe agrees to administer the programs in accordance with title IV-E of the Act, and all applicable federal regulations, and other official issuances of the department. CB issues the instructions and requirements for the mandatory title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance programs and the optional Guardianship Assistance and Kinship Navigator programs together in a template document referred to as the title IV-E plan pre-print. The pre-print for these programs was recently updated and released through Information Memorandum [ACF-ACYF-CB-IM-24-10](#). The portion of title IV-E pre-print addressing requirements for the title IV-E Prevention Services Program is published separately and is available in Program Instruction [ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-24-11](#). Using the pre-print template is not required, but CB strongly encourages you to use it to make sure that all requirements are met.

The title IV-E plan pre-print lists each requirement for each of these programs. In the plan, you must document how the tribe has incorporated all the requirements of the programs into appropriate tribal codes, policies, court rules, procedure manuals, or other forms of guidance used by the tribe. When you submit the title IV-E plan for approval, it must include the completed pre-print template (or any alternative format), along with all the supporting laws, policies, procedures, etc. that are cited.

Given the limited time and funding provided under this award and the amount of work required to develop the mandatory Foster Care and Adoption Assistance programs, CB recommends that tribes focus on developing the plan for those programs first. However, many prior recipients have also been able to address the requirements for the optional Guardianship Assistance program during the award period.

Lessons learned

Lessons learned from previous rounds of the grant program may be helpful to you as you consider your application.

Collaboration, partnerships, and buy–in

Collaboration, partnerships, and buy-in are critical as you develop an approvable plan and implement the program. Successful recipients engage partners and leadership throughout implementation and have found the oversight and support of tribal leadership critical to success. Engaging all relevant tribal partners and getting the support of tribal leadership to assess existing capacity and readiness for a title IV-E program before applying will put you in a strong position. Some of the partners you need to achieve a successful title IV-E plan include:

- Social services.
- The courts.
- Agency finance staff.
- Other entities with which a tribe may want to have an agreement, such as the state social services agency.

Staffing

As a recipient, you may find it helpful to designate a full-time project director to oversee the day-to-day work and coordinate the title IV-E plan development grant. This approach allows the social services director to attend to their regular duties and limits their grant involvement to an oversight role.

Data collection and information technology (IT) systems

Title IV-E requires submitting data to AFCARS. While it's important for recipients to learn about AFCARS and begin planning how you'll approach data reporting, you're not required to submit data until your plan is approved and your program is implemented. At that time, reimbursement under title IV-E may be available to help fund development and implementation of the tribe's approved approach to data collection and IT development.

Some tribes are interested in developing IT capabilities to support case management as well as data collection. This is not a requirement of title IV-E, but if you're interested in developing a system, you're encouraged to develop the business process first. This involves seeking input from both program and IT staff to make sure that all program needs are met and to identify policy gaps.

CB encourages recipients to delay finalizing IT system plans and developing a system until you've finalized and received approval for your title IV-E program.

Federal guidance on AFCARS is available [on the CB website](). Information on the data title IV-E agencies must collect and report is available in [AFCARS Technical Bulletin 20: Data Elements for Out-of-Home Care & Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Data Files](). More information on automated child welfare information system options for tribal title IV-E agencies is available in the [Information Memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-23-10]().

Additional resources

For questions and answers on a range of policy issues, visit [CB's Child Welfare Policy Manual]().

Recipients may find it useful to review these two sections:

- Section 8 addresses policies applicable to all title IV-E agencies.
- Section 9 addresses policies applicable specifically to tribes on procedural requirements, tribal title IV-E agencies, and tribal IV-E agreements.

For information and detailed instructions about Form CB-496, the Title IV-E Programs Quarterly Financial Report, visit [ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-24-09]().

Funding policies and limitations

General policies

- We will only make awards if this program receives funding. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
- ACF does not allow funds awarded under this NOFO to support any costs related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities, including research in support of such initiatives, and any other initiatives that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or another protected characteristic. This also includes any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, and any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. The definition of "discriminatory equity ideology" is in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190 of January 29, 2025, which can be found here: [2025-02232.pdf]().
- For guidance on additional types of costs that we restrict or do not allow, see General Provisions for Selected Items of Costs of the Uniform Guidance, [45 CFR part 75]() (or, starting October 1, 2025, [2 CFR part 200]()).

Program-specific limitations and policies

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

- Construction.

- Purchase of real property.

- Major renovation.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are for a common or joint purpose across more than one project and that cannot be easily separated by project.

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 2 CFR 200.414(f), if you **do not** have a current federal negotiated indirect cost rate, (including a provisional rate), you may elect to charge a *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 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See 2 CFR 200.1 for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

Subawards

As the prime recipient, you 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 as described in 45 CFR 75.352 (or, starting October 1, 2025, 2 CFR 200.332) is not a substantive role.

We do not fund awards where your role primarily serves as a conduit for passing funds to other organizations unless that arrangement is authorized by statute.

If they do not have one, all subrecipients must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

Subrecipients must meet the eligibility requirements of this NOFO.

Salary rate limitation

The salary rate limitation in the current appropriations act applies to this program. You may not use awarded funds to pay a salary at a higher rate than the rate for Executive Level II. For the Executive Level II salary, please see guidance from the Office of Personnel Management on executive and senior level employee pay.

The salary limitation reflects a person's base salary (including any portion of the salary that is paid for with indirect costs). It does not include fringe benefits or any income the person is allowed to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards, contracts, and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

Step 2:
Get Ready to Apply

In this step

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.

When you register or update your SAM.gov registration, you must agree to the financial assistance general certifications and representations. You must agree to those for financial assistance specifically, as opposed to contracts, because the two sets of agreements are different. You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

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 Grants Search at Grants.gov and search for opportunity number HHS-2025-ACF-ACYF-CS-0067. Then select the Package tab.

After you select the opportunity, we recommend that you select the Subscribe button to get updates.

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 standard forms in the application package.

See requirements for [other submissions](#).

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application.

File one

To submit file one, you will use the Project Narrative Attachment form found in the Grants.gov application package for this NOFO.

This file includes:

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

File two

To submit file two, you will use the Other Attachments form found in the Grants.gov application package for this NOFO.

This file includes all [attachments](#).

Standard forms

The Grants.gov application package for this NOFO includes forms beyond those required for file one and file two. Complete all of these forms and submit through Grants.gov.

See the list of [standard forms](#).

Required format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 90 pages.

File format: Portable Document Format (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:

Accepted file formats

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

Document formats

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 because reviewers will score the application solely on information provided in the application.

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman
Color: Black
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
Line-item budget and budget narrative: Can be single-spaced
Attachments: Can be single-spaced
Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

See [disqualification factors](#) to understand what may disqualify your application from consideration.

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 your 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 using the merit review criteria and rank based upon application scores. Remember that substance and measurable outcomes are more important than length. We are particularly interested in project narratives that convey strategies for achieving intended performance.

In it, you must:

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

Geographic location

Provide the precise physical location of your project and boundaries of the area you will serve. If you will include any subrecipients in your project that will serve the geographic areas include their locations as well.

If applicable, include the state boundaries that overlap with the area you'll serve.

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.
- You may provide supporting documentation, such as testimonials, in an application appendix.

- Include any relevant data 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. Address how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of this program and describe how you will achieve the objectives.

Using available information:

- Explain the current structure of the tribe's child welfare system, the current roles and responsibilities of any other entities in operating the tribe's child welfare program, and any plans to change that structure. If you have an existing agreement with the state, describe the services the state provides and the state's anticipated role, if any, once the tribe has implemented a title IV-E program.

- Describe how the title IV-E program will benefit children and families involved in the tribe's child welfare program. Provide an estimate of the number of children in foster care likely to be served under a title IV-E program. This number may include both children currently in foster care, under the jurisdiction of the tribe and tribal court, and tribal children currently in the care of the state, if the tribe anticipates serving them directly once its title IV-E program is approved.

- Describe the areas you must address to be ready to submit a title IV-E plan and implement a title IV-E program, (for example, case review systems, judicial findings, foster parent standards, data collection systems), your current readiness and capacity in each of these areas, and your plan and rationale for using grant funds to address these areas.

Approach

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.

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

In your proposed work plan, include:

- The entire project period.
- **Timelines:** Provide a schedule showing when drafts of important documents (such as policies, procedures, codes, forms, title IV-E plan, and foster care licensing standards) will be completed. Outline the main tasks and smaller steps needed to complete the work.
- **Assigned responsibilities:** Identify who is responsible for each task.

In your application:

- Describe your plan to use grant funds to develop or modify services necessary to meet title IV-E requirements, and whether another entity would provide any of these services.

- Describe any expected challenges in carrying out the proposed activities and how you'll overcome them.

- Describe how you'll use the award to address key areas, for example:

  ◦ Case planning and case review systems.

  ◦ Quality assurance systems.

  ◦ Court structure and procedures.

  ◦ Data collection systems.

  ◦ Cost allocation methodology development.

  ◦ Financial controls and financial management processes.

  ◦ Training of child welfare staff, prospective foster and adoptive parents, and other stakeholders (for example, attorneys, court-appointed special advocates, and court staff).

  ◦ Coordination with other related tribal or state agencies (for example, child support enforcement, schools, Medicaid, family assistance).

  ◦ Any additional areas you wish to address with this award and how the use of funds would support your ability to develop and submit an approvable title IV-E plan by the end of the 24 months.

- Describe your tribal court system or, if your tribe does not have its own judicial system, how your tribe expects to address the title IV-E requirements for specific judicial findings and oversight.

Organizational capacity

Provide the following information for your full project team, including the applicant organization 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 (including any partnering organizations) with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.

- Provide evidence that your team, including partnering organizations, has the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions effectively.

- You must disclose your plan to enter into subaward agreements. If planning subawards, describe the work each subrecipient will complete.

- The role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each project staff position, including consultants, subaward recipients, or other partners.

- The proposed project director's and other key staff's knowledge of and previous experience in developing or administering a title IV-E program.

- How the proposed staff structure will ensure successful completion of the title IV-E plan, particularly if you propose a project director who will serve less than full-time on this project.

- Provide some supporting information in the organizational capacity supporting information section of your 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 (or, starting October 1, 2025, 2 CFR part 200). 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.

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.

HHS now uses the definitions for equipment and supplies in 2 CFR 200.1. The new definitions change the threshold for equipment to the lesser of the recipient's capitalization level or $10,000 and the threshold for supplies to below that amount.

Justify the costs you ask for and provide detail, including calculations for the "object class categories" in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for the full period of performance. 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.
- Grant recipient meetings:
  - Plan for three to five partners to attend two recipient meetings over the 24-month project period.
  - The meetings will be two days, in Washington, D.C.
  - Recipients and other tribal leaders, including the principal investigator or principal director, tribal leadership, a judicial or legal representative, and tribal child welfare director are expected to participate.
  - If the meeting location changes, or changes to virtual, we will work with you to make any budget adjustments after the grant award.

Please also 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 indirect costs section for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail necessary 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.

- For applicants planning to use subawards, if your subaward budget is more than 50% of total direct costs, justify why you are subawarding that portion of the project. Explain:
  - How you plan to maintain a substantive role in the project.
  - Why you cannot achieve your goals without the subrecipients' participation.

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 this section.

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 indirect costs section for more information.

Legal proof of nonprofit status

If your organization is a nonprofit, you need to attach proof. We will accept any of the following:

- A reference to your listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations.
- A copy of a current tax exemption certificate from the IRS.
- A letter from your state's tax department, attorney general, or another appropriate state official saying that your group is a nonprofit and that none of your net earnings go to private shareholders or others.
- A certified copy of your certificate of incorporation or similar document. This document must show that your group is a nonprofit.
- Any of these for a parent organization. Also include a statement signed by an official of the parent group that your organization is a nonprofit affiliate.

Additional eligibility documentation

Tribal resolutions

You're required to attach the tribal resolutions that apply to your [project](#):

- A tribal resolution stating that the tribe will implement a title IV-E program when the plan has been approved by CB and match funds when the plan is implemented (required for all).

- If you're submitting this application on behalf of a tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortia, include a tribal resolution that directs you to apply for the Tribal Title IV-E Plan Development Grant on the tribe's behalf.

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, biographical sketches, or curricula vitae for all key personnel.

- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

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.

- Detail work schedules and estimated compensation with an understanding that the parties will negotiate a final agreement after award.

- Identify the primary applicant and all collaborators responsible for project activities if for a collaboration or consortia application.

Standard forms

You will need to complete some other required standard 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.
Key Contacts	With the application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	With the application or before award.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable based on instructions, 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.

Important: public information

When filling out your SF-424 form, pay attention to Box 15: Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project.

We share what you put there with USAspending. This is where the public goes to learn how the federal government spends their money.

Instead of just a title, insert a short description of your project and what it will do.

See instructions and examples.

Step 4:
Learn About Review and Award

In this step

Application review

Initial review

We will review your application to make sure that it meets the responsiveness requirements listed in the [disqualification factors section](#). If your application does not meet these criteria, we will disqualify it and we will not move it to the merit review phase.

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 failed 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 panel members use the criteria in this section.

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

Criteria

Criterion	Total number of points = 100
1. Objectives and need for assistance	20 points
2. Approach	40 points
3. Organizational capacity	30 points
4. Budget and budget justification	10 points

Objectives and need for assistance

Maximum points: 20

The reviewer will assess how well you:

1.1 Identify and describe the population and/or geographic service area or areas in which the tribe proposes to operate the title IV-E program, including, if applicable, the state boundaries the service areas overlap.

1.2 State your main objectives and any sub-objectives. Address how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of this program. Describe how you will achieve the objectives.

1.3 Explain the current structure of the tribe's child welfare system, the current roles and responsibilities of any other entities in operating the tribe's child welfare program, and any plans to change that structure. If there is an existing agreement with the state, you describe the services the state is providing and the state's anticipated role, if any, once the tribe has implemented a title IV-E program.

1.4 Present a clear vision of how the title IV-E program will benefit children and families involved in the tribe's child welfare program. Provide estimates of the number of children likely to benefit from title IV-E foster care, adoption assistance, and/or guardianship assistance payments. The estimates can be based on existing numbers of children in out-of-home placements served by the tribe or the state.

1.5 Describe the key areas you must address to be ready to submit and implement a title IV-E plan, including case review systems, judicial findings, foster parent standards, and data collection systems.

1.6 Describe your current readiness and capacity to prepare and implement a title IV-E plan, ensuring alignment with title IV-E requirements and identifying opportunities for growth.

Approach

Maximum points: 40

The reviewer will assess how well you:

2.1 Describe a clear and feasible plan for using grant funds to achieve your goals, outlining major tasks, proposed timelines, clear milestones, and target dates to develop and submit an approvable title IV-E plan within two years of the grant award.

2.2 Describe how you will develop or change services to meet title IV-E requirements, and whether another entity would provide any of these services.

2.3 Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the challenges you expect in carrying out the proposed activities and in developing an approvable title IV-E plan within two years, and a sound plan for overcoming these challenges.

2.4 Describe how you'll use the grant funds to address key areas to develop and implement an approval title IV-E plan.

2.5 Describe your tribal court system or, if your tribe does not have its own judicial system, how your tribe expects to address the title IV-E requirements for specific judicial findings and oversight.

Organizational capacity

Maximum points: 30

The reviewer will assess how well you:

3.1 Demonstrate your team's relevant experience and expertise, including the ability to administer, implement, and evaluate similar projects effectively.

3.2 Demonstrate that the proposed project director and other key staff have knowledge of title IV-E and describe their prior experience in developing and/or administering a title IV-E program.

3.3 If a tribal consortium is applying, provide third-party agreements from each partner that authorize you to apply on behalf of the consortium and confirm their agreement to participate if the proposal is funded. Also explain how each agency's background and experience would support the project's planning and implementation.

3.4 Clearly describe the role, responsibilities, and time commitments for all project staff, including consultants, subcontractors, and partners. Ensure these align with the project's needs for successful implementation. If the project director works less than full time, explain how the project will still be successful.

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

Budget and budget justification

Maximum points: 10

The reviewer will assess how well you:

4.1 Provide a detailed line-item budget (not to exceed a total of $300,000) and a detailed budget justification (in narrative form) clearly explaining how grant funds would be spent over the two-year funding period.

4.2 Demonstrate that the costs of the proposed project are reasonable and justified in view of the program, the target population and community, the planned activities, and the expected results and benefits.

4.3 Provide a reasonable budget for travel for three to five staff members to attend two, two-day recipient meetings over the course of the project period, in Washington, D.C. If the meeting location is changed or virtual, CB will work with grant recipients to make any necessary budget adjustments after grant award.

Risk review

Before making an award, we review the risk that you will mismanage federal funds or fail to complete the project objectives. 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](#) (or, starting October 1, 2025, [2 CFR 200.206](#)).

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 underserved populations.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution.

- The past performance of the applicant.
- The application's compliance with this NOFO's prohibition on using funds awarded under this NOFO to support any costs related to:
  - Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities, including research in support of such initiatives,
  - Any other initiatives that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or another protected characteristic, and
  - Any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, and any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. The definition of "discriminatory equity ideology" is in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190 of January 29, 2025, which can be found here: 2025-02232.pdf.

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:

- A disqualified application.
- An incomplete application.
- A tribe that previously received a title IV-E plan development grant.

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.

By drawing down funds, you accept the terms and conditions of the award. The award incorporates the requirements of the program and funding authorities, the grant regulations, the GPS, and the NOFO.

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

Application

Due on January 12, 2026.

- 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 the section on exemptions for paper submissions.

For FY 2026, applications will be due January 12, 2026. For FY 2027, applications will be due April 22, 2027. For FY 2028, applications will be due April 20, 2028.

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. We encourage you to leave yourself plenty of time to upload documents.

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:

CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410
Rockville, MD
20852

Follow these requirements when you submit your paper application:

- Print your application and all copies one-sided.
- Submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all required forms.
- Submit both the original and additional copies in a single package. Clearly label the application package with the NOFO title and funding opportunity number. Your authorized organization official must sign the application. The original application 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.

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply.

Component	Grants.gov form	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.	
☐ Indirect cost agreement		Yes
☐ Legal proof of nonprofit status		Yes
☐ Tribal resolutions		Yes
☐ Organizational capacity supporting information		Yes
☐ Third-party agreements		Yes
Standard 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
☐ Key Contacts		No
☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form		No
☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)		No
☐ Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)		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 Notice of Award, including the [ACF Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and, if applicable, any program-specific terms and conditions. We incorporate this NOFO by reference.

- 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, or any superseding regulations.
  - Effective October 1, 2024, HHS adopted the following superseding provisions:
    - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Modified Total Direct Cost.
    - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Equipment.
    - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Supplies.
    - [2 CFR 200.313(e)](#), Equipment, Disposition.
    - [2 CFR 200.314(a)](#), Supplies.
    - [2 CFR 200.320](#), Methods of procurement to be followed.
    - [2 CFR 200.333](#), Fixed amount subawards.
    - [2 CFR 200.344](#), Closeout.
    - [2 CFR 200.414(f)](#), Indirect (F&A) costs.
    - [2 CFR 200.501](#), Audit requirements.
  - Effective October 1, 2025, HHS will adopt the remaining 2 CFR part 200 provisions, and the HHS-specific modifications located in 2 CFR part 300.

- 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 Notice of Award.

- 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](#).

- [45 CFR Part 87 Appendix A, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations](#).

- If you're selected for funding, your final work plan will be due no later than 90 days after the grant award date. If there's a conflict between the proposed work plan and the requirements in section 471 of the Act, the final work plan must meet the requirements.

Reporting

As a recipient, you will have to submit performance and financial reports. To learn more about reporting, see [Reporting at the ACF website](#).

- Performance report form: ACF-OGM-PPR
- Performance report frequency: Quarterly
- Financial report form: SF-425 FFR
- Financial report frequency: Quarterly

Contacts and Support

In this step

Agency contacts

Program

Carlette Randall, ACF

888-203-6161

CB@grantreview.org

Grants management

Sarah Viola

888-203-6161

CB@grantreview.org

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 1-866-606-8220 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)](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Applying for an ACF Grant Award](#)
- [Grants.gov Accessibility Information](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)](#)
- [United States Code (U.S.C.)](#)
- [Award Terms and Conditions](#) (see also the [ACF Standard Terms and Conditions [PDF]](#))
- [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#)
- [ACF Property Guidance](#)

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 March 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.

Modifications

Modification Description	Updated Date