



**Administration for Children and Families**

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

**The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute**

**HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CT-0012**

**Application Due Date: 07/31/2023**

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**Funding Opportunity Title:**

The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute

**Announcement Type:**

Initial

**Funding Opportunity Number:**

HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CT-0012

**Primary CFDA Number:**

93.648

**Due Date for Applications:**

07/31/2023

**Executive Summary****Notice:**

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

The purpose of this NOFO is to establish, by awarding, one cooperative agreement, a National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI), aligned with federal goals to prioritize equity, civil rights, and racial justice and to improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families. NCWWI will be a national leader in providing jurisdictions concrete support to engage in culturally competent and de-colonizing work within their organization to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. NCWWI will become the premier leadership and workforce development organization for public child welfare agencies.

Workforce development initiatives are critical to addressing child welfare recruitment and retention challenges. There is a paramount need for concrete support to the public agencies charged with serving children and families and removing systemic barriers that perpetuate disproportionate minority representation and disparate outcomes for Black, Brown, and Indigenous children and families. Furthermore, many staff and leaders who make up the child welfare system experience moral injury and high-level burnout. This has created a critical need to provide expert technical assistance and support to improve the well-being and performance of the child welfare workforce.

NCWWI will:

- Provide career advancement through acceleration strategies and leadership development for staff and emerging leaders of diverse backgrounds committed to social justice and advancing understanding of child welfare systems. These leaders will work to effectively improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families who are overrepresented and have disparate outcomes in child welfare. The leadership development strategy must be delivered to jurisdictions through an organization-wide

approach, supporting staff and leaders who represent the populations disproportionately overrepresented in the child welfare system in a transformational and holistic way.

- Provide concrete support to jurisdictions through training and technical assistance in the implementation of clinical supervision and/or coaching supervision models to improve practice and to create a supervision paradigm shift that supports holistic workforce development.
- Assist jurisdictions in establishing partnerships with universities to increase awareness of the title IV-E stipends opportunities and develop diversified recruitment strategies.
- Serve as the child welfare workforce and leadership development hub, where knowledge, content, and resources can be accessed and disseminated to the child welfare workforce.
- Support national recruitment and retention efforts by developing a national campaign to address the negative public perception regarding careers in child welfare.

## I. Program Description

### Statutory Authority

Section 426 (a)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 626 (a)(1)(A))

### Description

#### BACKGROUND

For many years in child welfare, efforts to address workforce issues have been disconnected from the root causes. Addressing systemic oppression, bias, and many other inequities must be foundational to truly change the culture and climate of child welfare agencies. To get to different outcomes, the work must be done differently to address root causes. Workforce development initiatives are critical to addressing child welfare recruitment and retention challenges. There is a paramount need for concrete support for the public agencies charged with serving children and families and removing systemic barriers that perpetuate disproportionate minority representation and disparate outcomes for Black, Brown, and Indigenous children and families.

Across the federal government, agencies are assessing what more we can do to address systemic racial barriers to meeting the needs of people of color, particularly those who are underserved. On his first day in office, President Joseph Biden issued an [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#) setting racial equity as a critical priority. The executive order states:

**“The Federal Government’s goal in advancing equity is to provide everyone with the opportunity to reach their full potential. Consistent with these aims, each agency must assess whether, and to what extent, its programs and policies perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities and benefits for people of color and other underserved groups.”**

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has a “commitment to addressing inequities and advancing equity through assessing and changing policies, programs, and processes across the Department. Additionally, ACF is working to shift the culture, resources, and approaches to institutionalize and sustain a focus on equity over time” ([ACF Strategic Plan, 2022](#)). In concert with the agency-wide efforts, the Children’s Bureau (CB) has established a new vision that centers our work on love and serving families with intentional equity.

**“A loving approach to helping children obtain what they need to live with dignity by comprehensively supporting families through a collaborative network of carefully selected resources and effective public and private investments, grounded in community and culture and workforce fully devoted to serving with intentional equity.”**

A goal of CB throughout much of its history has been to ensure that the workforce in public child welfare across all jurisdictions is educated and trained to serve children and families who are experiencing the child welfare system. Today, the child welfare workforce landscape is different and requires CB to lead a new vision for the staff and leaders serving families. More than ever before, there is a need for a diverse workforce focused on prevention who honors families staying together, keeping kin and community connections when separation is the only option, and sees culture as a protective factor.

### **Strengthening the Workforce through Advancing Racial Equity and Tribal Sovereignty**

A history of oppression and discrimination in America are the platform for systemic inequities in our child welfare system. National data show that in 2020 Black Children had a 1.65 disproportionality index, and Native American children had a 2.78 disproportionality index. Although the national disproportionality index for Hispanic children is below 1.0, many states have a disproportionate index of up to 1.90 for Hispanic children ([Puzzanchera, C., Taylor, M., Kang, W. and Smith, J, 2020](#)). For additional information on disproportionality and disparities data within the child welfare system, see [Disproportionality Data](#). This data demands new interventions in how we serve children and families. In alignment with the President’s Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity, Associate Commissioner Schomburg has established **“that equity is the foundation for and is threaded through all priority goals for the Children’s Bureau.”** One of the key priority goals for the CB is to improve the competency of the child welfare workforce to assess and address disproportional outcomes for families.

In child welfare specifically, it is critically important to move from simply having a conversation about the outcomes of practice to addressing disproportionality and disparities for Black, Brown, and Indigenous children and families. This will only be possible if the people (the workforce) who serve in these systems are trained and supported in innovative ways.

Many jurisdictions cannot lead the transformational change necessary to address systemic oppression without innovative technical assistance. Often, Black, Brown, and Indigenous staff are faced with the burden of leading racial equity and tribal sovereignty efforts without meaningful agency leadership support and appropriate compensation. The public child welfare system needs more agents of change, disruptors who are willing to challenge the status quo and approach the work differently. Complex issues require multifaceted solutions, and NCWWI will be expected to provide multipronged approaches to address various child welfare agencies’ workforce needs.

### **Improving Retention, Performance, Well-Being**

Specifically, NCWWI will address the retention, performance, and well-being of the child welfare workforce. More than ever, human service workers are under acute stress. A news release issued on October 20, 2022, announced that the U.S. Surgeon General issued a new framework for Mental Health and Well-Being in the workplace. The latest release highlights that

“the COVID-19 pandemic brought the relationship between work and well-being into clearer focus for many U.S. workers.” According to recent surveys:

- 76 percent of U.S. workers in a 2021 survey reported at least one symptom of a mental health condition (anxiety, depression), an increase of 17 percentage points in just 2 years;
- 81 percent of workers reported that they would be looking for workplaces that support mental health in the future; and
- 84 percent of respondents reported at least one workplace factor that harmed (Source: Mind Share Partners’ 2021 Mental Health at Work Report).

Retention of the child welfare workforce also demands that we think about the needs of the child welfare workforce in new ways. For example, another salient issue is the importance of leadership's responsibility to address the well-being of the current generations that comprise our workforce. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that most of the employed civilian labor force is between the ages of 20 and 44. Millennials and Gen Z make up most of that age group. According to Pew research, Millennials and Gen Z are the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the nation’s history ([Dimock, 2022](#)). Recognizing that the current workforce crisis is dire and that the needs of the workforce have changed in the last 5 years, NCWWI will support our child welfare workforce by creating pathways to recruit, retain, and nurture a diverse and well-equipped workforce. In addition, as child welfare jurisdictions continue to recruit staff with lived expertise, it will be imperative that systems are prepared to attend to the well-being and avoid further harm.

## **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**

### **Site Selection for Targeted Technical Assistance and Intervention**

Employing a culturally and linguistically responsive methodology approved by CB, NCWWI will develop a selection criterion for serving a minimum of ten diverse jurisdictional (counties, states, territories, and tribes) child welfare sites. Selected sites will participate in at least one of the three project strategies listed below (Leadership Development Model, Tribal Relational Leadership, or Clinical Supervision Program) but may engage in multiple strategies if they desire and have the organizational capacity. Priority must be given to sites with high disproportionality and disproportionate rates of children involved in the child welfare system and/or where workforce demographics indicate a lack of diverse workforce representation, especially in key leadership positions.

### **Project Strategies**

NCWWI project strategies and activities must be connected to recruitment, retention, and well-being outcomes. NCWWI will work directly with jurisdictions to address issues of organizational culture and climate that reinforce inequities for children and families by diversifying their leadership structures. NCWWI will design interventions to assist jurisdictions in addressing the issues of culture and climate that impact the current workforce crisis as it relates to turnover and vacancy rates. NCWWI will work with individual sites to determine which strategy best matches their needs.

NCWWI strategies must include the following recruitment and retention activities:

### **Retention Strategy: Leadership Development and Advancement to Diversify Child Welfare Leaders**

Jurisdictions must design or adapt existing models that address the issues of [structural oppression](#) that lead to a toxic and oppressive organizational culture and climate to meet the leadership needs of their workforce. An important change needed is to diversify jurisdiction leaders who have a seat at the decision-making tables across the country and for these spaces to be inclusive, where these leaders have input, and their voice is valued and respected. This lack of diversity and inclusion throughout the child welfare system leads to making decisions that could potentially negatively impact children and families of color. Staff and emerging leaders of color need a feasible career path that can lead them to key positions and have a voice to advocate for children and families of color ([Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2021](#)).

**Goal:** To design and implement a comprehensive leadership development model that includes an acceleration plan for staff and leaders from diverse backgrounds. The model must employ an organizational approach that will be implemented across multiple jurisdictions. This model must include components that address and remove barriers faced by staff and leaders of color in child welfare.

### **Retention Strategy: Tribal Relational Leadership and Cultural Keepers Fellowship**

NCWWI will engage tribal communities and offer a tribal relational leadership and culture keepers fellowship. This fellowship will offer tribes the opportunity to select a group of tribal members currently working in their child welfare or social service programs to build a relational leadership collective. These cultural keepers will work together with tribal elders to identify the members of the collective and select a project that will work best for the tribal child welfare or social service programs.

**Goal:** To design and implement a tribal relationship leadership development model based on the specific tribal community culture.

### **Retention Strategy: Clinical Supervision and Coaching Supervision**

The work of child welfare staff serving children and families is clinical in nature and requires specific skills that must be developed and sharpened. Many child welfare supervisors seek knowledge and tools that will aid them in the delivery of supervision. Competent clinical supervision practices enable the supervisor to guide workers on issues of ethics and cultural and linguistic competence. These practices can improve outcomes for children and families and focus on growth and professional development for staff. In addition, providing competent clinical supervision will allow staff to work towards their clinical license, a well-researched retention strategy.

**Goal:** To implement a clinical supervision program in jurisdictions that includes coaching and mentorship needed to build a collaborative relationship based on trust, confidentiality, support, and empathy. This strategy will be instrumental in providing the appropriate support for the current workforce including those with lived expertise. This clinical supervision and coaching program must be culturally and linguistically competent and adaptable to meet the specific needs across each area of child welfare practice.

**Goal:** To assist jurisdictions with designing an organizational structure that will identify a

qualified licensed clinical social worker who can offer clinical supervision hours toward licensure; provide guidance on developing supervision contracts; and partner with direct supervisors as task supervisor if they do not hold the credentials for licensure (for jurisdictions where this is an option).

### **Recruitment Strategy: Public Child Welfare Agency and University Partnerships**

Like in education, there are unprecedentedly high vacancy rates in public child welfare agencies. Currently, many public child welfare agencies do not have applicants for their open positions. Child welfare jurisdictions need to recruit more staff to serve across all areas of the child welfare continuum. Historically, the CB-funded title IV-E stipend programs have partnered with schools of social work and jurisdictions to identify human capital through recruiting recent social work graduate students ready to join the child welfare workforce. Today, many jurisdictions report that schools of social work are not able to meet the demand for new child welfare workers on their own.

**Goal:** To provide technical assistance to develop new university partnerships between local colleges and universities and the public child welfare agency. The plans will include identifying and coordinating with a diverse group of educational institutions that are willing to create new career paths and to work in partnership with jurisdictions to identify internship and new employee opportunities. This work will lead to identifying a workforce dedicated to culturally and linguistically competent child welfare, and supporting by providing financial stipends, educational support, and new career opportunities. Innovative plans may expand beyond schools of social work and will require new collaborations and a fresh approach to recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting the child welfare workforce.

**Goal:** To fund stipends for social work and non-social work programs through university partnerships and provide support to students as they transition into workplace placements.

### **Recruitment and Retention Strategy: National Campaign and Knowledge Development, Management, and Dissemination**

As it implements the program activities and strategies listed above, NCWWI will build and share knowledge about the child welfare workforce nationally. Specifically, NCWWI will examine the relationship between the quality of the workforce and well-being outcomes of children, youth, and families.

**Goal:** To provide information to jurisdictions through new technologies and innovative strategies such as, but not limited to, newsletters, publications, webinars, podcasts, and other media on workforce development topics, such as best practices in child welfare workforce leadership, recruitment, selection, retention, and organizational effectiveness. These efforts must include a repository of resources for child welfare leaders of color who participate in the leadership development model through NCWWI.

Public engagement and partnerships contribute to a healthy workforce, and agencies must acknowledge the strong influence public perceptions have on the workforce. Agencies must begin or improve their communication strategies to build public support, strengthen the workforce, improve partnerships, increase community collaborations, and enhance perceptions. Communication and strategies informed by individuals with lived expertise and those who work



directly with children and families also support sustainable systemic change in service of equitable and just outcomes for children, youth, and families.

**Goal:** To create a child welfare workforce campaign and digital marketing strategy designed and led by individuals with lived expertise and those who work directly with children and families to support public child welfare systems and improve public perception.

### **Outreach and Engagement**

NCWWI must communicate clear and deliberate plans for outreach and engagement of child welfare agencies selected to participate as pilot sites. The applicant will include a preliminary description of site selection criteria and a review process. Applicants will have conducted a preliminary analysis of prospective sites, including disproportionality index data, a workforce landscape, and a needs assessment. The applicant must demonstrate a deep understanding of (and provide examples) of meaningful diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging practices in their respective agency and across partnerships. The recipient of this funding must develop a disparity impact statement for each site/jurisdiction as part of the selection strategy, using local data and input to identify specific populations by jurisdictions where disproportionality and disparities rates are high. The disparity impact statement will identify social, policy, historical, and context associated with root causes and drivers of disparities. It will also provide the framework and plan for an ongoing action, accountability, monitoring, and assessment of the impact of the project on the program's equity goals. NCWWI will demonstrate its ability to develop a mechanism for seeking ongoing feedback from each project site throughout the project period to anticipate potential barriers to project success, inform project activities, and the agency's going implementation needs.

NCWWI will be expected to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with each project site. MOUs must receive final approval from the CB Federal Project Officer.

### **Equity Impact Statement**

The recipient of this funding must develop a disparity impact statement for each site/jurisdiction as part of the selection strategy, using local data and input to identify specific populations by jurisdictions where disproportionality and disparity rates are high. The disparity impact statement will identify social, policy, historical, and context associated with root causes and drivers of disparities. It will also provide the framework and plan for an ongoing action, accountability, monitoring, and assessment of the impact of the project on the program's equity goals. NCWWI will demonstrate its ability to develop a mechanism for seeking ongoing feedback from each project site throughout the project period to anticipate potential barriers to project success, inform project activities, and the agency's ongoing implementation needs.

### **Collaboration**

Applicants for NCWWI must include partnerships with agencies who have expertise in the specific project strategies identified in this NOFO. One partnership in the application must be a tribal organization or tribal jurisdiction.

In addition, after award, NCWWI will be expected to actively collaborate with CB and other CB partners to achieve the purposes of the NOFO. This includes, but is not limited to, the Capacity Building Center for States, the Capacity Building Center for Tribes, the Capacity Building

Center for Courts, the Child Welfare Information Gateway, the Quality Improvement Center on Workforce Analytics, and other CB-funded and federal interagency projects aimed at increasing the capacity of the workforce, addressing issues of racial equity and tribal sovereignty, disproportionality, and disparities to meet the needs of children and families.

### **Program Performance Evaluation Plan**

NCWWI will develop a culturally and linguistically responsive evaluation plan using multiple measures to document and determine the effectiveness of NCWWI and major project strategies (Leadership Development Model; Tribal Relational Leadership and Cultural Keepers Fellowship; Clinical Supervision Program; Public Child Welfare Agency and University Partnerships; National Campaign; and Knowledge Development, Management, and Dissemination).

NCWWI is expected to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods in its evaluation of process and outcome measures. CB expects NCWWI to measure short-term outcomes specifically related to the leadership development model. Specifically, leadership development interventions must demonstrate outcomes on workforce performance, retention, and well-being measures.

The grant recipient will have the flexibility to implement an evaluation plan for NCWWI that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices, and programs. NCWWI's evaluation plan must include a detailed description of both process and outcomes evaluation components:

- The evaluation component to examine process will assess the implementation of the integrated project, including linkages between the collaborative partners that will help ensure that the identified needs of the child welfare workforce are met. The evaluation component to examine outcomes will investigate how the strategies and activities carried out in the demonstration project influence key outcomes of interest.
- Evaluation is an important component of this project. CB expects grant recipients to be meaningful contributors to building the knowledge base about how to effectively develop and enhance multi-system and multi-level collaboratives and how to facilitate effective engagement of young children and their families with quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) services. To that end, grant recipients will develop and implement project activities that are outcome-focused and include measurable objectives or steps to assess progress in meeting desired outcomes via an evaluation plan. Grant recipients must implement an evaluation plan that includes methods and criteria to evaluate the results and benefits of the project in terms of its stated objectives.
- If the grant recipient does not have the in-house capacity or experience to conduct an objective, comprehensive evaluation of the project, it must contract with a third-party evaluator to conduct the evaluation. It is important that the evaluator has the necessary independence from the project to ensure objectivity. A skilled evaluator can help develop a logic model and assist in designing an evaluation strategy that is appropriate given the goals and objectives of the proposed project. The evaluation plan will have a clear description of the participants and be based on a sound plan for engagement with relevant partners (e.g., ECE providers, state or local child welfare agencies, Head Start/Early

Head Start (EHS) grants, parents/caregivers, etc.). The evaluation plan will clearly describe each stage of evaluation, from determining evaluation priorities to deciding the evaluation design, to collecting data, to analysis, and then to interpretation and dissemination. Grant recipients may continue to finalize the evaluation plan during the first 3 months following the grant award.

## **Project Phases**

Thoughtful planning is a prerequisite to the successful implementation of NCWWI program activities and strategies. The project team must be fully functioning within 90 days following the notification of the grant award. While an ongoing revision of implementation strategies may be appropriate later in the project period, CB requires that initial planning phases for NCWWI's major activity areas will be completed within 6 to 9 months following the award. In general, this funding is intended to provide shorter interventions across more sites versus longer 5-year interventions in fewer sites. Thus, the implementation plan should reflect shorter implementation periods. During the final 6 months of the project, NCWWI will compile evaluation data, present findings, and prepare final reports to CB. The grant recipient will plan in the budget for annual face-to-face meetings with the FPO, including the evaluator and leadership from each of the major NCWWI project strategies, to review the work that has taken place and plan for the next year.

The grant recipient will present preliminary plans for proposed planning, implementation, and sustainability activities for each of NCWWI's project strategies (Leadership Development Model; Tribal Relational Leadership and Cultural Keepers Fellowship; Clinical Supervision Program; Public Child Welfare Agency and University Partnerships; National Campaign; and Knowledge Development, Management, and Dissemination). Immediately after the award and prior to implementation, the grant recipient's planning work plan will be subject to review, revision, and final approval by CB. Due to the nature of its tasks, NCCWI will not be required to organize all of the activities into a single planning phase and subsequent implementation phase. For example, planning for the leadership development model of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and people of color (BBIPOC) and tribal leaders may require additional planning. Once the plan is approved, NCWWI may request additional time for recruitment and site selection for the leadership advancement component.

## **Dissemination**

CB expects that information and knowledge generated by this project will be shared throughout the grant period and efforts will be made to integrate project knowledge into policy and practice. CB expects specific information and knowledge pertaining to advancing racial equity and tribal sovereignty in child welfare as well as specific information and knowledge on culturally responsive and equitable leadership and workforce policies and practices. The grant recipient is expected to establish a national dissemination strategy and incorporate dissemination activities into their work. The dissemination activities will focus on key audiences, for specific purposes, understanding what these specific audiences need to know and effectively getting this information to them. The project will disseminate products and findings. The grant recipient will evaluate the extent to which the specific audiences have received project knowledge and used it as intended and assess the impact of dissemination. The grant recipient will allocate sufficient staff time for dissemination.

The grant recipient will be expected to work throughout the course of this project with the FPO and CB training and technical assistance providers to:

- Finalize dissemination goals and objectives;
- Identify and engage with target audiences for dissemination;
- Produce detailed procedures, materials, and other products based on the program evaluation;
- Develop and disseminate summarized/synthesized information about the project;
- Produce a high-quality comprehensive final report suitable for archiving in the CB Discretionary Grant Library; and
- NCWWI is strongly encouraged to consider using section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 749d) to ensure that products, publications, web content, and communications materials are accessible and in conformity with applicable accessibility standards described in section 508. Section 508 standards will be required for any materials distributed through the Child Welfare Information Gateway and CB's website. NCWWI should use the [508 Tips Sheet](#) to guide 508 compliance. Please reference the Award Terms and Conditions on Requirements for Recipient Electronic and Information Technology on the [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements website](#) for further requirements involving recipient electronic and information technology.

## **SUBAWARDS**

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

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

## **II. Federal Award Information**

**Funding Instrument Type:**

CA (Cooperative Agreement)

**Estimated Total Funding:**

\$5,000,000

**Expected Number of Awards:**

1

**Award Ceiling:**

\$5,000,000  
Per Budget Period

**Award Floor:**

\$4,000,000  
Per Budget Period

**Average Projected Award Amount:**

\$5,000,000  
Per Budget Period

**Anticipated Project Start Date:**

09/29/2023

**Length of Project Periods:**

60-month project period with five 12-month budget periods

**Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'**

**Additional Information on Awards:**

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

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

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

The initial award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award continuation beyond each 12-month budget period will be the subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee (i.e., demonstrating a commitment to achieving expected outcomes and collaborating with CB to overcome any barriers), and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the federal government.

**Description of ACF's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement Award**

A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding federal assistance in which substantial federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of CB and the awardee prior to the award. CB anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. A signed cooperative agreement between the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF)/CB and the Authorized Organizational Representative

(AOR) will be submitted prior to the beginning of Year 1. CB involvement and collaboration with the grantee includes:

- CB collaborations with the grant recipient in the planning process, as described in Section 1. Program Description, Project Requirements. This includes review of the application to potentially seek clarification of the approach, interventions, and evaluation plan presented in the grant recipient's application.
- CB review and support of the grant recipient's implementation and evaluation activities.
- CB and the grant recipient jointly collaborate (including active collaboration with the designated evaluation TA provider) in the performance of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, TA, publications or products, and evaluation).
- CB closely monitoring the grant recipient during performance, which may exceed those federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities to ensure compliance with the intent of this funding.
- CB review and approval of equity impact statements.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **III.1. Eligible Applicants**

Eligibility is open to public or other non-profit institutions of higher learning and to public or other non-profit agencies and organizations engaged in research or child welfare activities (Section 426 (a)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 626(a)(1)(A)). Institutions of higher education may receive awards provided they are not for-profit entities.

CB will accept applications that represent partnerships among organizations with relevant experience. Applicants may collaborate with organizations specializing in their assigned tasks. Applications from collaborations must identify a primary applicant responsible for administering the cooperative agreement.

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

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

#### **Reference to Legal Status**

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

#### **III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:

No

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

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

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

### III.3. Other

#### **Application Disqualification Factors**

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

#### **Award Ceiling Disqualification**

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

#### **Required Electronic Application Submission**

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

## opportunity.

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

### Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

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

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

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

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

### Notification of Application Disqualification

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

## IV. Application and Submission Information

### IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

CB Operations Center  
c/o LCG, Inc.  
ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CT-0012



6000 Executive Boulevard  
Suite 410  
Rockville  
MD  
20852  
888-203-6161  
CB@grantreview.org  
**Application Packages**

### **Electronic Application Submission:**

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

### **Applications in Paper Format:**

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

### **Federal Relay Service:**

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

## **IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

### **FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS**

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

### ***FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:***

#### **Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)**

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

#### **Point of Contact**

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

### **Application Checklist**

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

### **Accepted Font Style**

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

### **English Language**

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

### **Page Limitations**

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

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

### **Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements**

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

### **Adherence to NOFO Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements**

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

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

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

**NOTE:** Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended.

The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

### **Corrections/Updates to Submitted Applications**

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

### **Copies Required**

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

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

### **Signatures**

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

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

### **Accepted Application Format**

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

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

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

### **PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:**

With the exception of SFs and OMB-approved forms, the application submission is limited to 75 pages in its entirety. Applicants must submit a Project Description file and an Appendices file.

The Project Description file must include the following items in this order:

1. Table of Contents

2. Project Summary
3. Need for Assistance and Objectives
4. Approach
5. Program Performance Evaluation
6. Organizational Capacity
7. Line-Item Budget and Budget Justification

The Appendices file must include the following items in this order:

1. Documentation (e.g., data reports)
2. Other third-party agreements
3. Staff and position information (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
4. Certifications and Assurances
5. Proof of Legal Status (if applicable)
6. Indirect Cost Rate Letter (if applicable)

### **ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Adherence to the Two-File Requirement**

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

### **Application Upload Requirements**

ACF strongly recommends that electronic applications be uploaded as Portable Document Files (PDFs). One file must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification; the other file must contain all documents required in the Appendices. Details on the content of each of the two files, as well as page limitations, are listed earlier in this section.

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the

ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Acrobat Reader software will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

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

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

### **Required SFs and OMB-approved Forms**

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

### **Naming Application Submission Files**

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

### **Use only file formats supported by ACF**

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

### **ACF supports the following file formats:**

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

### **Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files**

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

### **FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:**

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

### **Format Requirements for Paper Applications**

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

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

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

### **Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications**

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

## **Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications**

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

<b>Forms/Assurances/Certifications</b>	<b>Submission Requirement</b>	<b>Notes/Description</b>
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
<p>Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.</p>	<p>Required of all applicants.</p> <p>Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application and project award period.</p> <p>Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at: <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a></p> <p>.</p>	<p><i>See Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) for more information.</i></p>
<p>Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)</p>	<p>Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>	<p>Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.</p>
<p>SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs</p>	<p>Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. SFs must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.</p> <p>By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their</p>	<p>Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project.</p>

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

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

**Mandatory Grant Disclosure**

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

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

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

**And to:**



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

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

**Email:** [grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov](mailto:grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov)

### **Non-Federal Reviewers**

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

## **The Project Description**

### **The Project Description Overview**

#### **General Expectations and Instructions**

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

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

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

#### **Letter of Intent**

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

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

The letter of intent should be submitted to:

CB Operations Center  
c/o LCG, Inc.  
Attn: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CT-0012  
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410  
Rockville, MD 20852  
Phone: 888-203-6161  
Email: cb@grantreview.org

### **Table of Contents**

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

### **Project Summary**

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

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

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

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

### **Geographic Location**

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

### **Legal Status of Applicant Entity**

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

#### **Non-Profit Organizations**

#### **Proof of Non-Profit Status Options:**

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

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

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate.
- A statement from a state taxing body, state attorney general, or other appropriate state official certifying that the applicant organization has non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholders or individuals.

- A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes non-profit status.
- Any of the items in the subparagraphs immediately above for a state or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant organization is a local non-profit affiliate.

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

### **Need for Assistance**

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

### **Objectives**

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

1. The applicant must demonstrate a clear understanding of the purpose of this NOFO, as described in *Section I., Program Description, BACKGROUND*,
2. The applicant must demonstrate how workforce strategies will lead to improved workforce recruitment, retention, performance, and well-being.
3. The applicant must include a description of the relevant research, best practices, and partnerships necessary to achieve the project objectives listed in *Section I., Program Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Project Strategies*.

### **Expected Outcomes**

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

### **Approach**

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

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

The applicant must describe their planned approach and how they will become a national leader in providing concrete support to child welfare agencies (state, county, territories, and tribal) to engage in anti-racist and de-colonizing work within their organization to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. The design of the proposed projects must be culturally and linguistically competent and responsive to the needs of each jurisdiction. The applicant must address how they will manage any challenges that may impede project activities and resource sharing on a national level. The applicant will clearly delineate their approach for the following:

1. Developing and advancing child welfare leaders to diversify key leadership positions across child welfare organizations. The applicant must:
  - describe how the project will produce clear, precise, and specific definitions, meaningful operational actions to advance racial equity and transparency to address organizational culture and climate and systemic racial barriers for staff and leaders of color.
  - demonstrate how the project will assist the jurisdiction in doing a thorough data analysis of the disproportionality rates.
  - develop a plan that will demonstrate an increase in advancement for emerging leaders from underserved communities, including those with lived experience who can address the disproportionality rates of children and families served.
  - define and demonstrate how to achieve a diverse and equitable workforce; and describe and discuss the benefits of a diverse and equitable workforce.
2. Advancing tribal leaders as culture keepers in a fellowship program. The applicant must:
  - include a clear and detailed approach to how the NCWWI will engage with tribal communities through a culturally responsive process that honors the sacred underpinning of tribal collective culture and ways of knowing.
  - delineate how NCWWI will engage with tribes from different regions, size, and capacity.
  - include a culturally responsive engagement strategy for tribal leaders.
  - demonstrate how they will engage with a tribal consultant or designate an experienced tribal member as a key staff.
  - include a blueprint designed specifically for the needs of each tribal community.
  - demonstrate an established partnership with a tribal agency or tribal community or consortium to lead this work.
3. Implementing a clinical and coaching supervision program in each selected jurisdiction. The applicant must include a clear pathway for licensure (where applicable) and delineate innovative implementation to alleviate the burden of an intense project from the jurisdiction being served. For example, the plan will describe how NCWWI will assist jurisdictions to design and implement a process for identifying a qualified licensed clinical social worker who can offer clinical supervision hours toward licensure; provide guidance on developing supervision contracts; and partner with direct supervisors, if they do not hold the credentials for licensure, as task supervisor.
4. Identifying and developing new partnerships between public child welfare agencies and local college and universities. The applicant must:
  - include rationale for how the applicant will conduct outreach to a diverse list of educational institutions to address the workforce crisis.
  - include a specific focus on partnerships to increase a diverse pool of candidates and a broad selection of schools (community colleges, schools of social work, and other social science disciplines).
  - outline how the applicant will engage with university partners who are willing to create new career pathways and work in partnership with jurisdictions.
  - address how to be innovative in expanding beyond schools of social work to meet the vacancies in public child welfare agencies.

- address how recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting the child welfare workforce will be different as a result of new collaborations.
5. Developing a national campaign to improve public perception and an innovative digital marketing strategy to support the child welfare system and improve public perception of child welfare work that is focused on prevention, honoring families' connections, and culture as a protective factor. The applicant must:
- demonstrate how their approach is informed and designed by individuals with lived expertise and those who work directly with children and families.
  - develop a plan to create a national repository of resources. This should include the applicant's strategy to build and disseminate knowledge and resources to advance racial equity and tribal sovereignty, diversity, inclusion, belonging, and disproportionality and disparities in child welfare.

### **Site Selection for Targeted Technical Assistance and Intervention**

Applicant must provide a plan that outlines the intended population using a culturally and linguistically responsive methodology. The plan must include a clear outline of a selection criterion with a plan to engage a minimum of 10 diverse jurisdictions. A plan that delineates a culturally and linguistically responsive process for outreach and engagement of sites and that is informed by the preliminary analysis of disproportionality data. Site selection process must include states, counties, territories, and tribal child welfare sites.

### **Dissemination Plan**

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

- Dissemination goals and objectives;
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences;
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes;
- Preliminary plan to evaluate the extent that target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended;
- The timeline for dissemination; and
- Plan that includes innovative and current digital communication practices to share knowledge and practices that will benefit the national child welfare community.

### **Project Timeline and Milestones**

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

### **Organizational Capacity**

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

- Resumes.
- Curricula Vitae (CV).
- College transcripts for graduate student research fellows.
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this funding opportunity.
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's personnel policies.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- A staffing plan that includes established partnerships and collaborations that will bring expertise within the relevant subject areas as partners.
- Applicants must demonstrate that key staff leading NCWWI or potential candidates will reflect underserved communities.
- Applicants must provide partnering agencies strategic plans and goals that demonstrate diversity, equity and inclusion and evidence of implementation and meaningful practices (including organizational racial equity audits, assessments, and action plans).

### **Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities**

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

These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

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

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

### **Program Performance Evaluation Plan**

Applicants must describe a plan for the program performance evaluation that will contribute to

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

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

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

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

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

If the applicant does not have the in-house capacity and experience to conduct an objective, comprehensive evaluation of the project, it must describe plans to contract with a third-party evaluator to conduct the evaluation. The applicant must include information to demonstrate that the proposed evaluator has the necessary independence from the project to ensure objectivity. The applicant's plan for evaluation must clearly describe relevant partners that will participate in the evaluation and how they will be engaged (e.g., ECE providers, state or local child welfare agencies, Head Start/EHS grant recipients, parents/caregivers, etc.). The applicant's plan for evaluation must demonstrate an understanding of each stage of evaluation that will take place while evaluating their funded efforts, from determining evaluation priorities to deciding the evaluation design, to collecting data, to analysis, and then to interpretation and dissemination. The applicant must include sufficient information to demonstrate how proposed work will be

evaluated but may continue to finalize the evaluation plan during the first 3 months following grant award.

Applicants must provide a culturally responsive evaluation plan for each program strategy and activity. The plan must include both quantitative and qualitative methods in its evaluation of process and outcomes.

Applicants must describe how they plan to assess:

- Short-term outcomes related to the development and advancement of diverse leaders participating in the program;
- Process and outcomes on recruitment efforts through the university partnership program, including assessing the quality and effectiveness of technical assistance;
- Process and retention outcomes for clinical supervision and coaching model; and
- Analytic data on engagement with dissemination of content and public perception campaign.

The following are key research questions:

1. To what extent does the delivery of a leadership development and acceleration model influence retention and advancement of diverse staff?
2. To what extent does the delivery of a clinical supervision model influence retention?
3. To what extent does the delivery of a coaching model influence retention?
4. To what extent does the delivery of technical assistance and support to jurisdictions in developing university partnerships influence staff recruitment and a more diverse pool of students?

Applicant must provide a separate evaluation plan for tribal relationship leadership program that is grounded in humility, cultural and linguistic competence, and knowledge of indigenous research norms and methods.

### **Project Sustainability Plan**

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

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

### **Third-Party Agreements**

Third-party agreements include Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Letters of Commitment. Letters of Commitment and MOUs must both clearly describe the roles and responsibilities for project activities and the support and/or resources that the third-party (i.e., subrecipient, contractor, or other cooperating entity) is committing. The Letters of Commitment and MOUs must be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to



make such commitments on behalf of their organization. General letters of support are **not** considered to be third-party agreements.

## **The Project Budget and Budget Justification**

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

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

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

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

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

### **General**

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

### **Personnel**

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

**Justification:** For each position, provide: the name of the individual (if known), their title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application.

### **Fringe Benefits**

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

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

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

### **Travel**

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

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

### **Equipment**

**Description:** "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for

which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in, or excluded from, acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.) See 45 CFR §75.439 for more information.

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

## **Supplies**

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

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

## **Contractual**

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

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

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

## **Other**

**Description:** Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel, insurance, food (when allowable), medical and dental costs (non-personnel), professional service costs (including audit charges), space and equipment rentals, printing and publications, computer use, training costs (such as

tuition and stipends), staff development costs, and administrative costs. Please note costs must be allowable per 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

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

### **Indirect Charges**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Commitment of Non-Federal Resources**

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

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

**For awards that require matching or cost sharing by statute,** recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources (at or above the statutory requirement) in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by

project period for fully funded awards. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching or cost sharing amount (and any voluntary committed amount in excess) may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

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

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

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

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

#### **Paperwork Reduction Act Disclaimer**

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

### **Application Submission Options**

#### **Electronic Submission via Grants.gov**

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

#### **Electronic Delivery**

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

### **How to Register and Apply through Grants.gov**

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

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

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

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **How to Submit an Application to ACF via Grants.gov**

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

For an overview of applying on Grants.gov using Workspaces, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

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

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

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

**NOTE:** Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>

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

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

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

**Track a Workspace:** After successfully submitting a Workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the

tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

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

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

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

### **Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Issues with Federal Systems**

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

### **Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission**

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

### **Paper Format Application Submission**

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



Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* of this funding opportunity for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 pm ET on the due date.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

### Due Date for Letter of Intent

06/30/2023

### Due Date for Applications

07/31/2023

### Explanation of Due Dates

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

#### Electronic Applications

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

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

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

Instructions for electronic submission via Grants.gov are available at:  
[www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html](http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

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

#### Mailed Paper Format Applications

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

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

#### Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Emergency Extensions**

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

**Acknowledgement of Received Application**

**Acknowledgement from Grants.gov**

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

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

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

**Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:**

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

**Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:**

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

**IV.5. Intergovernmental Review**

This program is not subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," or 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." No action is required of applicants under this funding opportunity with regard to E.O. 12372.

**IV.6. Funding Restrictions**

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

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

Pre-award costs are not allowable.

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

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

**IV.7. Other Submission Requirements**

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

**Submission by Mail**

CB Operations Center

c/o LCG, Inc.

ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CT-0012

6000 Executive Boulevard

Suite 410

Rockville

MD

20852

**Hand Delivery**

Same as Above

## Electronic Submission

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

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

## V. Application Review Information

### V.1. Criteria

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

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

#### Need for Assistance and Objectives

**Maximum Points: 15**

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

1. The applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the nature and scope of the problem and the goal of this NOFO, as described in *Section I. Program Description.*
2. The applicant clearly states the principal and subordinate objectives of this project and describes how the goals will be achieved in measurable, actionable steps.
3. The applicant includes a description of the best practices and strategies necessary to achieve each of the five project strategies listed in *Section I. Program Description, Project Strategies.*

#### Approach

**Maximum Points: 40**

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

1. The applicant outlines a plan of action that reflects relevant knowledge and deep understanding and capability to implement this project, including a demonstration of a profound commitment to advancing racial equity as evidenced by meaningful anti-racist and de-colonizing actions.
2. The applicant describes potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing the project goals and explains reasonable strategies that will be used to address these challenges.

3. The applicant clearly articulates a plan and methods to develop a culturally and linguistically competent, anti-racist leadership development and acceleration model. The plan must address systemic racial barriers from an organizational approach. The plan demonstrates the applicants' understanding of a diversified workforce and the concrete benefits of diversified leaders in key positions.
4. The applicant clearly describes a plan for advancement for tribal leaders. The plan includes a clear and detailed approach to how the applicant will engage tribal communities through a culturally responsive process that honors the sacred underpinning of tribal collective culture.
5. The applicant describes a compelling plan for the provision of technical assistance to jurisdictions to increase university partnership through the title IV-E stipend program. The applicant clearly delineates a plan to include a diverse pool of schools including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, tribal programs, and schools located in diverse communities.
6. The applicant describes a realistic plan for how the project will implement clinical supervision and coaching models in jurisdictions. The plan provides a clear process on how to select supervision models that are culturally and linguistically competent.
7. The applicant describes a clear action plan with culturally and linguistically responsive methods to conduct outreach, meaningful engagement in site selection. The plan is informed by a preliminary analysis of sites and clearly outlines how data on disproportionality will drive this decision.
8. The applicant describes a clear and realistic plan to develop a national messaging campaign to improve public perception with an innovate digital marketing strategy, which supports the child welfare system and improve public perception of child welfare work, that is focused on prevention, honoring families' connections, and culture as a protective factor. The plan clearly describes how it will be informed and designed by individuals with lived expertise and those who work directly with children and families.
9. The applicant describes a clear plan for dissemination that includes innovative ways to share information from curated knowledge, project findings, and lessons learned through project implementation.
10. The applicant provides a clear project timeline and milestones for the entire project period that account for the completion of each project goals and all deliverables.

### **Organizational Capacity**

**Maximum Points: 20**

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

1. The applicant's organization and any partnering organizations collectively demonstrate adequate experience with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of similar projects (e.g., leadership development, advancing racial equity, and tribal sovereignty) that would enable them to implement the proposed project successfully.
2. The applicant's proposed key project staff reflect underserved communities and demonstrate sufficient knowledge and experience in leading anti-racist, decolonizing program development and implementation (e.g., resumes) to successfully institute a project of this size, scope, and complexity.
3. The applicant clearly defines the role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each organization and each proposed project staff position, including consultants,

subcontractors, and/or partners (e.g., job description), and the proposal is realistic and appropriate for successful implementation of the proposed project. This includes accounting for time-commitments to projects funded by other federal, state, and local governments; public or private foundations; for-profit organizations; etc.

4. The applicants provide partnering agency's strategic plans and goals that demonstrate diversity, equity and inclusion, and evidence of implementation and meaningful practices (including organizational racial equity audits; staff demographics by race, ethnicity, and title; assessments; and action plans).
5. The applicant provides a strategic plan and goals that clearly demonstrate evidence of meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion practices, and ongoing efforts (including organizational racial equity audits, assessments, and action plans) for the lead agency and any potential partners.

### **Program Performance Evaluation Plan**

**Maximum Points: 20**

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

1. The applicant's plan clearly describes how they will evaluate process and program delivery, including ongoing assessment of technical assistance.
2. The applicant's evaluation plan addresses four key research questions outlined in Section IV.2. Project Description, Program Performance Evaluation Plan.
3. The applicant describes a clear plan for evaluation that describes each stage of evaluation including determining evaluation priorities; and deciding the evaluation design, collecting data, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of findings to support project objectives.
4. The applicant describes any potential obstacles to implementing the program performance evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed.
5. The applicant provides a separate evaluation plan that demonstrates a clear and deep understanding of how to engage tribal communities in the evaluation process in a manner that will respect tribal and data sovereignty and not cause harm.
6. The applicant demonstrates sufficient in-house capacity to conduct an objective evaluation of the project or presents a sound plan for contracting with a third-party evaluator.
7. The applicant includes a timeline for how information from the evaluation will be reviewed and applied as part of continuous quality improvement of the project.
8. The applicant proposes a comprehensive plan to disseminate reports, products, and evaluation outputs to key intended audiences.

### **Budget and Budget Justification**

**Maximum Points: 5**

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

1. There is a clear and accurate line-item budget and budget justification narrative for each year of the proposed project.
2. The costs of the proposed project are reasonable and programmatically justified, in view of the activities to be conducted to meet project objectives.
3. There is evidence that the applicant's fiscal controls and accounting procedures would ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of funds received under this NOFO.

## V.2. Review and Selection Process

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

### Initial ACF Screening

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

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

### Objective Review and Results

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

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

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

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

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

### Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), [www.fapiis.gov/](http://www.fapiis.gov/), before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold over the period of



performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in [45 CFR § 75.205\(a\)\(2\) Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants](#).

### **Non-Federal Reviewers Reference**

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

### **Approved but Unfunded Applications**

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

## **V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates**

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

## **VI. Federal Award Administration Information**

### **VI.1. Federal Award Notices**

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

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

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

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

### **VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

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

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

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

### **HHS Grants Policy Statement**

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services' single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. ACF grant awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS GPS, which covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. The general terms and conditions in the HHS GPS will apply as indicated unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary that are specified in the NoA. The HHS GPS is available at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/discretionary-post-award-requirements#book\\_content\\_0](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/discretionary-post-award-requirements#book_content_0).

### **Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations**

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

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

## **VI.3. Reporting**

Performance Progress Reports:  
Semi-Annually

### **Reporting Requirements**

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

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

Financial Reports:  
Semi-Annually

## **VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)**

### **Program Office Contact**

Arleen  
Rodriguez-Jacoby  
CB Operations Center  
c/o LCG, Inc.  
6000 Executive Boulevard  
Suite 410  
Rockville  
MD  
20852  
888-203-6161  
CB@grantreview.org

### **Office of Grants Management Contact**

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

### **Federal Relay Service:**

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

## **VIII. Other Information**

## Reference Websites

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

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) [www.acf.hhs.gov/](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/).

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs [www.grants.gov/](http://www.grants.gov/).

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

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

Grants.gov Accessibility Information [www.grants.gov/ web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html](http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html).

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

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

## Application Checklist

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

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> .  This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> in the Mandatory section.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the funding opportunity.  To obtain a UEI and SAM registration, go to <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a> .	A UEI and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants.  Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> .  This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> .	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.

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

<b>What to Submit</b>	<b>Where Found</b>	<b>When to Submit</b>
The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .