

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Application due July 31, 2024



Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD)

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant

Opportunity number: HHS-2024-ACF-ECD-TP-0055



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Before you begin

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

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

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

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

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

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Apply by July 31, 2024

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 31, 2024.



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



Step 1:

Review the Opportunity

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Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD)



Have questions?
See [Contacts and Support](#).

Helping states strengthen early childhood systems to improve children's access to high-quality early care and education.

Summary

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education are soliciting applications from [states that received a Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five \(PDG B-5\) Planning Grant in December 2022](#) or an Initial Grant in December 2018 and are not currently implementing a PDG B-5 Renewal Grant.

The Renewal Grant award provides funding to:

- Strengthen early care and education (ECE)^[1] programs in a mixed delivery system.^[2]
- Support the ECE workforce.
- Increase equity and family involvement in ECE programs.
- Improve ECE program quality.
- Expand access to early childhood services.
- Create seamless learning experiences from birth to elementary school.

We encourage recipients to make [subgrants](#) that develop or broaden access to ECE programs within their mixed delivery system and improve the quality of existing ECE services among low-income and disadvantaged children.

Funding details

Type: Discretionary grant

Estimated total program funding: \$85 million

Total expected awards: 10

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): \$500,000

Key facts

Opportunity Name:

Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant

Opportunity Number:

HHS-2024-ACF-ECD-TP-0055

Federal Assistance

Listing:

93.434

Statutory authority number:

Section 9212 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Public Law 114-95 (December 10, 2015), [42 U.S.C. 9831 note](#)

Key dates

Application deadline:

July 31, 2024

Pre-application webinar:

May 22, 2024, 3 p.m. Eastern Time (ET)

Expected award date:

September 16, 2024

Expected start date:

September 30, 2024

See [deadlines](#).

Maximum award amount for the first budget period (award ceiling): \$11 million

Funding periods: 36-month period of performance with three 12-month budget periods

Funding formula

The [25 states or territories that are eligible for these awards](#) under this funding opportunity are grouped into six funding bands. These bands are based on their share of children from birth through five living under 200 percent of the federal poverty level, according to the [American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates](#). The maximum funding amount available to each state, if awarded, is:

- **Band 1:** Up to \$2 million per year for three years—Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands.
- **Band 2:** Up to \$5 million per year for three years—District of Columbia, New Hampshire, Rhode Island.
- **Band 3:** Up to \$7 million per year for three years—Connecticut, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, West Virginia.
- **Band 4:** Up to \$8 million per year for three years—Alabama, Colorado, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington.
- **Band 5:** Up to \$9 million per year for three years—Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, Tennessee.
- **Band 6:** Up to \$11 million per year for three years—California, New York.

You may not request more funding than the band amount assigned to your state. You may request less funding based on need or your ability to match funds. When deciding how much funding to request, consider your state's needs and your ability to carry out your project during the three years of the project period.

If funds are available and ACF determines that you are making good progress, you will receive the same amount of funding in years two and three as you did in year one.

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

Eligibility

Who can apply

Eligible applicants

These entities may apply:

- The 21 states that received a PDG B-5 Planning Grant in December 2022 but do not have a renewal grant, along with the one state, one district, and two territories that received an initial grant in 2018 but did not receive a renewal grant:
 - Alabama
 - California
 - Colorado
 - Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
 - Connecticut
 - District of Columbia
 - Illinois
 - Iowa
 - Kansas
 - Louisiana
 - Michigan
 - Minnesota
 - Missouri
 - Nebraska
 - New Hampshire
 - New Jersey
 - New York
 - North Carolina
 - Rhode Island
 - South Carolina
 - Tennessee
 - U.S. Virgin Islands
 - Virginia
 - Washington
 - West Virginia

Other eligibility criteria

The governor of the state must identify the state entity that will apply for funding and have the responsibility to administer and carry out the project.

The governor can allow the state entity to make subgrants to programs in the mixed delivery system across the state designed to benefit low-income and disadvantaged children prior to entering kindergarten.

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

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

Cost sharing

This program requires you to contribute 30% of the ACF federal share of the award, in accordance with section [9212\(g\)\(4\) of Every Student Succeeds Act \(42 U.S.C. 9831 note\)](#) [\[PDF\]](#).

Calculation: Multiply the federal share (in dollars) by 0.3.

For example: Multiply \$6 million by 0.3. This equals a match of \$1.8 million.

Types of cost sharing

You can meet your match requirement through any combination of:

- Cash contributed by your organization.
- Cash contributed by partners or other third parties.
- In-kind (non-cash) contributions from third parties.
- Nonfederal funding sources that are not being claimed as matching sources for another federal award.

Cost-sharing commitments

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

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

You must meet the match requirement by the end of each 12-month budget period.

Cost-sharing waiver

We waive cost sharing up to \$199,999 for awards to the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands (except for consolidated awards under [45 CFR Part 97](#)). You must meet any amount of cost sharing over \$199,999. See [48 U.S.C. 1469a\(d\) Congressional declaration of policy respecting “Insular Areas.”](#)

Program description

Program purpose

The PDG B-5 Renewal Grant aims to strengthen existing ECE programs in a mixed delivery system across the state and give children access to high-quality early childhood care and education from birth through kindergarten. The award focuses on the programs and systems that prepare and support [underserved children](#) to enter kindergarten. States will build on their PDG B-5 Initial or Planning grant efforts by investing in the early childhood workforce and expanding access to high-quality ECE programs through a mixed delivery system to address ongoing needs in preparing children to enter kindergarten. States should make sure that underserved children and their families—including those in high-poverty and rural communities—can access ECE services and support.

Program priorities

The priorities of the program are to ensure that needs assessments and strategic plans support efforts across the following areas:

Maximize family participation and engagement in the state's mixed delivery system

- **Increase access to ECE opportunities for infants and toddlers** across the state's mixed delivery system. This includes center-based care, family child care, early childhood home visiting, early intervention, and special education and related services (as required by Part C and section 619 of Part B of the [Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, Statute Chapter 33](#)).
- **Reach underserved children**, both by improving services and increasing their access to high-quality ECE. The term “underserved children” may include children:
 - In low-income families.
 - Living in high-poverty communities.
 - Learning two or multiple languages.
 - Experiencing homelessness.
 - Involved with the child welfare system.
 - In kinship care, such as those raised by grandparents.
 - With disabilities or at risk for disabilities.
 - With special health care needs.

- Whose parents or caregivers work nontraditional hours or are migrants or seasonal workers.
- From immigrant families.
- Whose parents or caregivers have a history of, or are at risk for, mental health or substance use disorders.
- Who have experienced trauma, such as the loss of a caregiver during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- With other needs identified in the [statewide needs assessment](#) and identified as a priority population by the state.
- **Increase the inclusion of children with, or at risk of, disabilities** through policies and practices that help these children and their families access and participate in any early childhood programs and services available to children without disabilities.
 - Ensure that children can participate fully in all learning and social activities and within daily routines.
- **Develop and use application, eligibility, and enrollment systems** that increase access to high-quality programs and services. These systems should help families find programs that meet their needs and apply for and receive benefits and services.
- **Expand meaningful participation and leadership** from parents, providers, community leaders, and faith-based partners, including participants from various cultures and those who speak various languages.

Support the early childhood workforce

- **Support the early childhood workforce** through:
 - Increased pay and benefits.
 - Professional development.
 - Support for gaining credentials and degrees.
 - Support for staff's health and well-being, including mental health.

Support ECE program alignment and quality improvements

- **Promote an integrated B-5 ECE system** where all types of ECE programs across the mixed delivery system, such as Head Start, child care centers, family child care, and public schools, work closely and in alignment with other programs and supportive services, such as early intervention services and home visiting, that strengthen and stabilize families to help ensure children grow up healthy and ready to learn.

- **Promote ECE program sustainability** so programs can succeed over the long term and children can continue to access high-quality programs and services.
- **Prevent or reduce suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices for young children**, especially in demographic groups that researchers have identified as being at higher risk for these practices, through policies and supports for the workforce and families. Provide early childhood providers and schools with resources to meet young children's social-emotional and mental health needs.
- **Incorporate approaches that promote the mental health and well-being** of children, families, and providers and address trauma and adverse childhood experiences.
- **Support effective and appropriate transitions** for children and families among ECE programs and into kindergarten.

Program activities

This program has five required activities, one optional activity, and two bonus activities. Activities 3 through 6 build on activities 1 and 2.

In addition, the program has an overarching goal of strengthening ECE systems across program activities. You must make efforts to:

- Consider lessons learned from previous PDG B-5 award activities and build on them.
- Identify additional funding sources to increase the impact of this award.
- Link your state's early childhood data systems with information systems across health and early learning programs, such as, but not limited to:
 - Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C and Part B.
 - Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting.
 - State pre-K.
 - Head Start.
 - Public primary education K-3 (Title I, Title II, and Title III).
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
 - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.
 - Medicaid.
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
 - Healthy Start.

Activity 1: Update comprehensive statewide B-5 needs assessment

You must review and, if necessary, update your state's comprehensive B-5 needs assessment. You should consult with people who participate in the B-5 system, including families and providers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Depending on which positions exist in your state, you should work with:

- The CCDF administrator.
- The Head Start collaboration director.
- Child care licensing, state home visiting, and pre-K directors.
- IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619, coordinators.
- The State Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council (SAC).
- The State Education Agency (SEA) and local education agencies (LEAs).
- Other coordinating bodies and agencies that advise on early childhood policies and programs.

If you have recently conducted or updated the statewide B-5 needs assessment in a way that meets the requirements of this activity **within the past five years**, you should [state this in your application](#). Explain how it will guide your approach to your program plans.

If you have not conducted or updated the assessment within the past five years, you must do so in the first year of the award, unless your federal project officer approves a different plan. This assessment should explore elements not covered in previous PDG B-5 needs assessments or provide updates based on changes in your state or information that was not previously available. You should build on needs assessments or relevant data from other programs, leveraging and coordinating with other existing state needs assessments, and include data to identify new or previously unidentified needs.

Your B-5 needs assessment should cover:

- Any significant shifts in demographics, needs, and resources that may impact program design and service delivery.
- Quality and availability of ECE programs and services for underserved or other populations prioritized by your state.
- Information on why families may not be able to access high-quality care.
- If available, statistics on:
 - The approximate number and demographics of children B-5 being served in existing programs.

- The approximate number and demographics of children B-5 waiting for service in such programs by age.
- Mental and behavioral health needs of young children, their families, and the ECE workforce, including needs due to trauma and [adverse childhood experiences](#).
- Information on children receiving early intervention services under Part C or special education and related services under section 619 of the IDEA and their families, including the approximate number and demographics of such children, the types of services provided, and whether there are enough qualified personnel providing these services.
- Gaps and needs related to your state's integrated data systems, and how you share data to increase access to information about the needs of children, families, and the ECE workforce.
- Gaps in how health and early learning systems work together to meet families' needs.

Activity 2: Update comprehensive statewide B-5 strategic plan

You must review and, if necessary, update your state's comprehensive B-5 strategic plan. This plan should recommend opportunities for collaboration, coordination, partnership, and quality improvement across the state's B-5 ECE system. You should base the plan on the updated needs assessment findings. To update the plan, you should consult with people who participate in the B-5 system, including families and providers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. You should also [consult with the groups and officials discussed in activity 1](#).

If you have developed or updated a strategic plan that meets the requirements of this activity **within the past five years**, you should [state this in your application](#). Explain how the plan will guide your approach to your program activities.

If you have not developed or updated the strategic plan within the past five years, you must update your strategic plan and address any recent changes in your state. In addition, you should use existing B-5 strategic plans or relevant data from other programs. Include additional data to address the findings of your needs assessment.

Your strategic plan must be updated each time a needs assessment provides updated information.

Your comprehensive statewide B-5 strategic plan should cover:

- Plans to expand access to ECE programs and services for eligible children through a mixed delivery system. This may include expanding existing programs or creating new programs in underserved communities. These plans should provide

equitable access to high-quality, inclusive early childhood programs for children with disabilities.

- Plans to provide additional support to address the needs of the ECE workforce.
- Plans to improve the quality of ECE programs to meet the diverse needs of children and families.
- Plans to address needs based on any recent and significant shifts in demographics, needs, and resources.
- Recommendations for new partnerships to support transitions of children among ECE programs and elementary schools, and to improve program quality and delivery of services.
- Plans to align with CCDF plans and activities to:
 - Stabilize the child care sector.
 - Increase pay and benefits for the child care workforce.
 - Increase provider payment rates.
 - Improve subsidy payment policies.
 - Reduce costs for families.
 - Develop networks and participate in state efforts to connect children and families to comprehensive services.
- Plans to coordinate with Head Start programs to align supports and services, including through state [Head Start Collaboration Offices](#).

Activity 3: Maximize family participation and engagement in the B-5 system

You should make efforts to maximize family knowledge about, and enrollment in, the state ECE and B-5 programs, identify gaps in program access that respond to families' needs, and involve families equitably and in culturally and linguistically responsive ways to inform system-level priorities—including families who are not native English speakers. You should propose plans for improving or expanding programs and program systems that have been designed in collaboration with families and based on needs and opportunities identified in your needs assessment and strategic plan. Possible strategies include:

- Maximizing enrollment in programs across the mixed delivery system, including through:
 - Process improvements that can make it easier for families to enroll in available programs.
 - Targeted expansion of specific programs that meet families' needs and demands.

- Ensuring that all children can access and fully participate in high-quality, inclusive ECE programs, especially:
 - [Priority and underserved populations](#).
 - Infants, toddlers, and young children at risk for, or with, disabilities.
 - Children who have special health care needs.
 - Children with developmental or mental health needs.
 - Children living in rural or remote areas with limited ECE options.
- Involving families and caregivers in state and program decisions about policies, practices, and plans—including when developing the needs assessment and strategic plan.
- Taking into account the lived experiences of parents and caregivers when making decisions about programs.
- Developing systems to connect parents and caregivers of children with disabilities or those who have concerns about their children’s development to helpful resources; high-quality, inclusive early childhood programs; and [IDEA Part C](#) and [IDEA Part B](#), Section 619 services, including developmental screenings and referrals to services for children, such as Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment.
- Improving families’ access to information about the quality, type, and location of available programs and services, including health, mental health, early intervention, and early childhood special education services.
 - Using inspection reports or program quality ratings to share information.
 - Collaborating with existing programs to share information.
- Focusing on family well-being and increasing parents’ knowledge, skills, and resources to nurture parent-child relationships and improve children’s social-emotional development, mental health, and well-being.
- Improving systems to connect parents with other state and local services they can use to support their children’s healthy development, such as housing, food, parent training or employment programs, caregiver mental health, and income support.

Activity 4: Support the B-5 workforce

Strategies to support the ECE workforce and share successful strategies across programs and services may include:

- Improving compensation, benefits, and other critical ECE workforce supports.^[3]
- Strengthening career pathways and professional development opportunities for the ECE workforce to build a pipeline of effective early educators.
- Supporting the mental health and well-being of the workforce.

- Maintaining or strengthening the diversity of the workforce.
- Helping the workforce use inclusive and culturally and linguistically responsive practices by sharing best practices and providing professional development.

Activity 5: Support program quality improvements

Your plans to support program quality improvements should be equitable and inclusive. Strategies may include:

- Equitably increasing capacity of high-quality, inclusive, full-day, and year-round services and supports across ECE settings and the mixed delivery system.
- Integrating best practices around health and safety in ECE programs.
- Supporting providers' role in developmental monitoring and ensuring that children are receiving early preventive services and well visits.
- Supporting equitable and culturally responsive practices of providers across the mixed delivery system for all children and families—including those who speak multiple languages or come from historically marginalized communities.
- Preventing and reducing suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary practices.
- Supporting providers to use best practices to address trauma, support children's mental health needs, and meet the needs of underserved children, including children with disabilities.

Activity 6 (optional): Subaward (subgrant) to enhance quality and expand access to programs and services

We encourage you to propose using your award funds for subawards (subgrants) for ECE services. You may subgrant up to 60% of funds in the first year, and up to 75% in each of the second and third years. You can use subgrants to:

- Test strategies to expand access to existing programs and services.
- Pilot new programs to address unmet family needs.
- Improve the quality of existing programs.

This activity must focus on increasing access to or improving programs and services for underserved children. In deciding how to use subgrants, the state must prioritize activities to improve services for low-income and disadvantaged children living in rural areas, according to needs identified by the state. You should make subgrant opportunities available to groups that are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, disability, housing status, and geography. We also encourage you to consider using subgrants to build capacity for high-quality infant-toddler services, if that is needed in your state.

You may fund activities within any, or all three, of the options.

Subgrant option A: Test strategies to expand access to existing programs and services

Strategies may include:

- Funding additional slots in existing ECE programs using new, alternative strategies.
- Increasing the length of existing programs to full-day or full-year to meet family needs.

Subgrant option B: Pilot new programs to address unmet family needs

Note: If a state uses subgrants to develop new programs, the state must ensure that the distribution of subgrants supports a mixed delivery system, and that funds made available through the subgrant are not being used to supplant any other federal, state, or local funds that would otherwise be available to carry out the activities assisted by the new program development.

Strategies may include creating new capacity in ECE programs for children and families who are eligible for, but not currently served by, early childhood programs due to existing barriers.

Subgrant option C: Improve the quality of existing programs

Strategies may include:

- Addressing the needs of the workforce by:
 - Providing multilingual resources and professional development to providers and educators so they can support early learning and development of children who are dual language learners.
 - Supporting professional development, coaching, higher wages, and better benefits for educators to recruit and ensure a qualified ECE workforce.
- Promoting inclusion in all early childhood settings by:
 - Providing or improving culturally and linguistically responsive developmental and behavioral screening, assessment, and referral processes.
 - Increasing coordination and services to support the needs of children with disabilities.
- Improving coordination across providers and services by:
 - Working with health service providers, including mental and behavioral health providers, to coordinate or combine services and simplify referrals.
 - Making early childhood health or mental health specialists available, and increasing access to health, dental, and mental health services.

- Supporting family child care provider hubs, partnerships, and shared services.
- Improving intake, screening, eligibility, enrollment, and referral systems to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to priority populations.
- Improving and expanding use of your state's early childhood integrated data system, including connecting to the State Longitudinal Data System.
- Making other investments that will lead to more effective, efficient, and coordinated ECE services with a plan for sustainability.

Bonus options

Including these options in your proposed project can earn you additional points. Please see the [bonus options section of the project narrative](#) and [bonus options section of the merit review criteria](#) for more information.

Bonus option 1: Increase workforce pay and benefits

You may develop a pilot or expand existing efforts to improve the pay and benefits of the early childhood workforce. As part of this activity, you should evaluate how these efforts are carried out and, if possible, evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of the efforts. These activities should directly impact early educators and caregivers with increased pay and/or benefits and should not overlap with other activities that you are proposing in response to activities 1-6. We encourage you to use PDG B-5 funds along with other sources of funding, such as CCDF, state preschool, or Head Start.

Example efforts include:

- Using strategies such as braiding funds to increase pay and/or benefits for the ECE workforce, based on local cost of living and community context.
- Identifying and increasing investments from the state, developing public-private partnerships, or using resources and funding from systems such as health, education, and economic development to increase workforce wages.
- Creating insurance, retirement, or other types of benefit pools for ECE providers.

Bonus option 2: Support social-emotional development and mental health

You may develop a pilot or expand existing activities to promote children's social-emotional development and mental health, which, in turn, should improve the overall quality of early childhood education programs in the state. As part of this activity, you should evaluate how these efforts are carried out and, if possible, evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of the efforts. These activities should not overlap with other activities that you are proposing in response to activities 1-6. Example efforts include:

- Training and supporting ECE providers and families on social-emotional development.
- Providing mental health supports and resources on how to support children ages birth through five.
- Developing processes to ensure children across the mixed delivery system are screened for social, emotional, and developmental needs and are referred to providers.
- Developing processes and policies that prevent providers from suspending or expelling young children whom researchers have identified as being at higher risk for these practices.
- Building the infant and early childhood mental health workforce to support the mental health of young children.

Spending requirements and options

The award funds must supplement, not replace, existing federal funding in the state.

You may choose to allocate a portion of the award during each of the three years of the project period to refine and implement your [project performance evaluation plan](#).

These funds can be used for:

- Developing or enhancing a data system to collect, store, and use data.
- Monitoring how services are implemented, how much services cost, and coordination across services.

We encourage you to use some of your PDG B-5 funds for one or more full-time employees to lead efforts to strengthen the ECE workforce and enable participation in relevant technical assistance opportunities.

Funding policies and limitations

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

- Pre-award costs—the costs of preparing bids, proposals, or applications.
- Construction.
- Purchase of real property.
- Major renovation.

See 45 CFR [75.420 – 75.475](#) for information on costs that are always unallowable or have restrictions.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those for a common or joint purpose across more than one project and that cannot be easily separated by project. See [45 CFR 75.412-75.415](#) for information on classification of costs. Learn more at [45 CFR 75.414](#), Indirect Costs.

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

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

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

This rate is 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See [45 CFR 75.2](#) for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely. You can also apply to negotiate for a rate at any time.

Subawards (subgrants)

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

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

Subrecipients must meet the [eligibility requirements](#) of this NOFO.

Statutory authority

This grant program is authorized by section 9212 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Public Law 114-95 (December 10, 2015), [42 U.S.C. 9831 note](#).



Step 2:

Get Ready to Apply

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Get registered

SAM.gov

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

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

Grants.gov

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

Need help? See [Contacts and Support](#).

Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to [Search Grants](#) at Grants.gov and search for opportunity number HHS-2024-ACF-ECD-TP-0055. Then select the Package tab.

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

If you are also unable to apply through Grants.gov, see [exemptions for paper submissions](#).

Learn more

Visit [Applying for an ACF Grant Award](#) on the ACF Grants page.

Join the webinar

ACF's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) will conduct a pre-application webinar on May 22, 2024, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET. You can [join the webinar on Zoom](#).

If you are not able to join through your computer, you can call in.

- Phone number: 1-669-254-5252
- Meeting ID: 161 967 4677

The goal of this webinar is to walk interested parties through the funding opportunity.

We will record the webinar. If you are not able to join live, you can replay it at ACF's [Preschool Development Birth through Five webpage](#).



Step 3:

Prepare Your Application

In this step

Application contents and format

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Application contents and format

Application components

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

File 1: Project Narrative Attachment form

Includes:

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

File 2: Other Attachments form

Includes all [attachments](#).

Other required forms

Includes [other required forms](#).

Required format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 75 pages

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

- Adobe PDF (.pdf)
- Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
- Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt)
- Image formats (.jpg, .gif, .tiff, or .bmp only)

Paper size: 8 ½ inches x 11 inches

Margins: 1 inch all around

Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

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

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

Size: 12-point font

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

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced

Project summary: Must be single-spaced

Project narrative: Must be double-spaced

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

Attachments: As needed

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

Table of contents

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

Project summary

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

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

Project narrative

The project narrative is where you address all your proposed activities. It is a critical section of your application, which we evaluate and rank against other applications using the [merit review criteria](#). Remember that substance and measurable outcomes are more important than length. We are particularly interested in project narratives that convey strategies for achieving intended performance.

In it, you must:

- Explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in the [program description](#) section.
- Make sure your narrative is clear, concise, and complete.
- Use cross-referencing rather than repetition.
- Be sure to include any required supporting documents noted. You generally provide these in your [attachments](#).
- Use the headings and order of the sections that follow.

Need for assistance

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

- Demonstrate the need, including the nature and scope of the problem.
- You may provide supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials, in an application appendix.
 - **Note:** These letters and testimonials count toward the [75-page limit](#).
- Include any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments. You may refer to them in the endnotes or footnotes.
- Use demographic data and participant or beneficiary information where you can.

Expected outcomes

Identify the outcomes to be achieved from the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall program. If research is part of the proposed work, outcomes must include hypothesized results and implications of the proposed research.

Approach

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

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

Within each activity, describe how you will involve partners in the B-5 ECE systems, including:

- Families.
- Underserved people, such as those with limited English proficiency or disabilities.
- Key statewide advisory councils and groups, including the SAC designated or established under section 642B(b)(1)(A) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)(1)(A)).

Activity 1: Update comprehensive statewide B-5 needs assessment

Building on your prior PDG B-5 award and other state efforts, either:

- Provide an assurance that you have reviewed your state's comprehensive B-5 needs assessment and determined that it reflects current state needs.
- Confirm that within the past five years, you have conducted or updated a statewide B-5 needs assessment that meets the requirements outlined in [activity 1 of the program description](#). Confirm that the findings will guide your proposed program approach.

OR

- Describe how you will conduct or update a statewide B-5 needs assessment in the first year of the award, if you have not done so in the past five years.
- Describe how this updated assessment will align with the requirements outlined in [activity 1 of the program description](#), and how it will build on earlier work or needs assessments from other programs.
- Describe how you will meaningfully involve key partners in the update.

Activity 2: Update comprehensive statewide B-5 strategic plan

Building on your prior PDG B-5 award and other state efforts, reflect on the findings from your needs assessment and either:

- Provide an assurance that, within the past five years, you developed or updated a statewide B-5 strategic plan that meets the requirements outlined in [activity 2 of the program description](#). Confirm that the strategic plan guides your proposed program approach.

OR

- Describe how you will conduct or update a statewide B-5 strategic plan, if you have not done so in the past five years.
 - Describe how your approach to updating your strategic plan aligns with the requirements outlined in [activity 2 of the program description](#). Explain how this approach builds on previous work and addresses new and ongoing issues you identified in the needs assessment.
 - Describe how you will meaningfully involve key partners in the update.
 - Describe how you plan to measure your progress in carrying out the strategic plan.

Activity 3: Maximize family participation and engagement in the B-5 system

- Describe how you will maximize family enrollment and involvement in the B-5 system, referring to the activities outlined in [activity 3 of the program description](#).
- Describe how you will make sure that families are involved in ways that are accessible to them. Involvement opportunities should be equitable, sensitive to cultural and language needs, and responsive to families' diverse needs.
- Describe how you will measure the processes and results of this activity.

Activity 4: Support the B-5 workforce

- Describe how you will support the B-5 early care and education workforce, considering the activities outlined in [activity 4 of the program description](#). Describe specific strategies, including how you will:
 - Confront workforce shortages, including recruitment and retainment strategies to limit staff turnover.
 - Support the mental health and well-being of the ECE workforce.
 - Provide more professional development opportunities for providers. This can include strengthening career pathways and interdisciplinary professional development opportunities.
- Describe how you will share best practices on addressing ECE workforce challenges across the mixed delivery system.
- Describe how you will measure the processes and results of this activity.

Activity 5: Support program quality improvements

- Describe how you will improve the quality of ECE programs and respond to the requirements outlined in [activity 5 of the program description](#).
- Describe how your improvements to these programs will be equitable, support high-quality inclusion, and include programs that serve traditionally marginalized and underserved children and programs located in rural communities.
- Describe how you will add to other state efforts to improve programs, such as efforts funded by the Child Care and Development Block Grant or outlined in the CCDF State Plan.
- Describe how you will measure the processes and results of this activity.

Activity 6 (optional): Subaward (subgrant) to enhance quality and expand access to programs and services

If you plan to award subgrants, as described in [activity 6 of the program description](#), confirm which of the three options—A, B, or C—you plan to pursue. You may select any or all.

- Summarize how you will conduct these subgrants.
- State the total amount and percentage of the federal award that you will subgrant for each year, with up to 60% of funds in the first year and up to 75% in each of the second and third years.
- If you plan to use more than one subgrant option, describe how much funding you will provide for each option.
- Describe any potential obstacles or anticipated barriers to completing the subgranting activities within the three-year project period.
- Describe how you will continue the activities funded through these subgrants after the project ends.
- If you choose options A or B—to [test strategies to increase access to current programs](#) or to [pilot new programs](#)—describe:
 - How many new slots or services you will make available.
 - For which communities you will make these slots or services available.
 - How you will ensure that these slots or services are provided in high-quality programs.
- If you choose option C—to [improve the quality of existing programs](#)—describe the scope of this work, including which communities you will focus on.

If you do not plan to make subgrants, clearly state that. Describe how you will expand access to high-quality programs without subgrants.

General activity: Strengthen ECE systems

- Strengthening ECE systems is an overarching goal of this program, across all program activities. Describe how your approach addresses the requirements at the [beginning of the program activities section](#).
- Describe how the PDG B-5 grant will contribute to the theory of change and system design for your state's mixed delivery system.
- Provide an assurance that you have worked closely with your state's CCDF lead agency in the development of this funding application. Confirm that if you are selected for funding, you will collaborate with that entity when implementing this award to:
 - Maximize collaboration and data sharing across programs.
 - Ensure that PDG funding is used to inform CCDF planning over the long-term.

Bonus options

- Summarize your plans, considering the requirements in the [bonus options section of the program description](#). Choose one or both options:

- For [option 1, to increase workforce pay and benefits](#): Include how many providers will get pay raises or more benefits through this plan, either directly through PDG and other braided funding sources, or through anticipated systems changes.
- For [option 2, to support social-emotional development and mental health](#): Include how many children you expect to reach with this effort.
- Note what other funding sources, if any, you will use.
- Describe how you will evaluate whether this activity has succeeded, including the type of data you will use in your evaluation.
- Describe how you will expand this program or communicate the results if the program is successful.

Project timeline and milestones

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

- Organize the information by task and subtask, showing related milestones.
- Provide monthly or quarterly quantitative projections for what you plan to do and when. For example, provide the number of people you plan to serve or the number of a certain activity you plan to complete.
- If you can't quantify some of your accomplishments, provide their target dates.
- Cover the full period of performance in your timeline.

Organizational capacity

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

- Provide evidence that your team has the relevant experience and expertise needed to carry out your project.
- Describe your team's experience with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- Describe how decisions are made in the state and by whom, and who will advise the project.
- State your balance of unobligated PDG B-5 funding for your current award as of the time you apply.
 - If your current unobligated balance is greater than 25% of your total award, explain why you have this unobligated balance and how you will spend the funds on time.

You will provide some supporting information in the [organizational capacity supporting information](#) section of the [attachments](#).

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

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

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

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

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

Program performance evaluation plan

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

- How you will monitor ongoing activities and the progress toward the project's goals and objectives, as outlined in your [updated comprehensive statewide B-5 strategic plan](#).
- The inputs, key activities, and expected outcomes of the funded activities, in alignment with proposed strategic plan activities. Inputs might include your collaborative partners, key staff, budget, service processes, or other resources.
- How you will measure the inputs, activities, and outcomes.
- How you will use the resulting information to inform improvement of funded activities.
- Any processes that support the overall data quality.
- The organizational systems and processes that will track performance outcomes.

- How your organization will collect and manage data in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. This might include assigned skilled staff, data management software, and data integrity.
- Any potential obstacles to implementing the project performance evaluation and how you will address them.
- A timeline for how you will review information from the performance evaluation and apply it to your ongoing project, including how you will work with technical assistance providers to support this effort.

Project sustainability plan

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

Provide an approach to project sustainability that is effective and feasible. Describe:

- The key people and organizations whose support you will require.
- The types of alternative support you will require to maintain the project.
- If the proposed project involves key project partners, how you will maintain their cooperation or collaboration after the federal funding ends.

Line-item budget and budget narrative

The line-item budget and budget justification support the information you provide in the Budget Information Standard Form SF-424-A. See [other required forms](#).

It justifies the costs you ask for and includes added detail, including detailed calculations for the “object class categories” in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for the initial budget period only (the first 12 months of the project). See information on [funding periods](#).

As you develop your budget, consider:

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

We encourage you also to review the Standard Form instructions.

To create your line-item budget and justification, see [detailed budget instructions on our website](#).

In general, you must:

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

Specific to this award, you must:

- Include travel costs for at least four individuals to attend a three-day meeting in Washington, DC.
- Specify the amount you plan to spend on activities 1 through 6 and any bonus activities.
- Specify the amount you plan to spend to support any [technical assistance](#) activities in your state, if any.
- Describe how your state will address the [30% cost-sharing requirement](#) and commit to meeting the match by the end of each of the three years.

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

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

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

Attachments

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

Indirect cost agreement

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

See [indirect costs](#) for more information.

Additional eligibility documentation

The application must include a letter on the governor's letterhead, signed by the governor or an authorized representative, designating the state entity that will be responsible for executing and administering this award. The letter must include a description of why the chosen state entity is best suited to oversee and manage the award.

Organizational capacity supporting information

You must attach the following information to support the information in your [organizational capacity](#) section:

- Organizational charts, including all partners.
- Copy or description of your organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.

Other required forms

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

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



Step 4:

Learn About Review and Award

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Application review

Initial review

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

- Requests funding above the [award ceiling](#).
- Is submitted after the [deadline](#).
- Is received in paper format that didn't have a previously approved exemption from ACF.
- Is from an individual, including a sole proprietorship, or a foreign entity.
- Is not designated by the governor as the state agency responsible for executing and administering this award.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Merit review

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

Additionally, our reviewers typically are not federal employees. See information on [proprietary and personally identifiable information](#).

Criteria

Criterion	Total number of points = 100 + 6 possible bonus points
1. Activity 1: Update statewide B-5 needs assessment	5 points
2. Activity 2: Update comprehensive statewide B-5 strategic plan	5 points
3. Activity 3: Maximize family participation and engagement in the B-5 system	15 points
4. Activity 4: Support the B-5 workforce	15 points
5. Activity 5: Support program quality improvements	15 points
6. Activity 6: Subgrant to enhance quality and expand access to programs and services	15 points
7. Strengthen ECE systems	5 points
8. Project timeline and milestones	4 points
9. Organizational capacity	3 points
10. Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities	3 points
11. Program performance evaluation plan	3 points
12. Project sustainability plan	2 points
13. Line-item budget and budget narrative	10 points
14. Bonus options	6 points

Activity 1: Update statewide B-5 needs assessment (Maximum points: 5)

The reviewer will assess the clarity, completeness, and quality of your responses to the [requirements in activity 1](#) and the [approach to activity 1](#).

- Reviewers will confirm that you have reviewed your state's comprehensive B-5 needs assessment and determined that it reflects current state needs. If you have recently conducted a statewide needs assessment, the reviewers will assess your assurance that you conducted or updated a statewide B-5 needs assessment within the past five years, and that the findings will guide your proposed program approach. **(0 to 5 points)**

OR:

- If you are planning to conduct or update the statewide needs assessment, the reviewers will assess how well you:
 - Describe your plan to conduct or update your needs assessment, and how it will build on earlier work or other needs assessments. **(0 to 3 points)**
 - Describe how you will involve key partners in the update. **(0 to 2 points)**

Activity 2: Update comprehensive statewide B-5 strategic plan (Maximum points: 5)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, and quality of your responses to the [requirements in activity 2](#) and the [approach to activity 2](#).

- If you have recently updated the statewide strategic plan, the reviewers will assess your assurance that within the past five years you developed or updated a statewide B-5 strategic plan, and that this strategic plan guides your proposed program approach. **(0 to 5 points)**

OR:

- If you are proposing to conduct or update the statewide strategic plan, the reviewers will assess how well you:
 - Describe your approach to updating the plan. **(0 to 1 point)**
 - Describe how your plan builds on previous work and addresses new and ongoing issues you identified in the needs assessment. **(0 to 2 points)**
 - Meaningfully involve key partners. **(0 to 1 point)**
 - Describe how you will measure your progress in carrying out the plan. **(0 to 1 point)**

Activity 3: Maximize family participation and engagement in the B-5 system (Maximum points: 15)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your responses to the [requirements in activity 3](#) and the [approach to activity 3](#).

The reviewers will assess how well you:

- Provide a plan to maximize parent and family enrollment and engagement in the B-5 system. **(0 to 5 points)**
- Provide an approach to ensuring families and caregivers are involved in ways that are accessible to them. **(0 to 5 points)**
- Provide an approach to measuring your results. **(0 to 5 points)**

Activity 4: Support the B-5 workforce (Maximum points: 15)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your responses to the [requirements in activity 4](#) and the [approach to activity 4](#).

The reviewers will assess how well you:

- Provide a plan to support the B-5 workforce, including **(0 to 10 points)**:
 - An approach to recruiting and retaining new providers.
 - An approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of the ECE workforce.
 - An approach to strengthen career pathways and professional development opportunities.
- Describe your approach to sharing best practices with ECE providers.
(0 to 3 points)
- Describe your approach to measuring the results of this activity.
(0 to 2 points)

Activity 5: Support program quality improvements (Maximum points: 15)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your responses to the [requirements in activity 5](#) and the [approach to activity 5](#).

The reviewers will assess how well you:

- Provide a plan to improve ECE programs. **(0 to 7 points)**
- Provide an approach to include programs that serve traditionally marginalized communities. **(0 to 4 points)**
- Provide an approach to add to and align with other state efforts to improve programs, such as those funded by the Child Care and Development Block Grant.
(0 to 4 points)

Activity 6: Subgrant to enhance quality and expand access to programs and services (Maximum points: 15)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your responses to the [requirements in activity 6](#) and the [approach to activity 6](#).

If you are proposing subgranting activities, the reviewers will assess how well you:

- Describe your approach to making subgrants, including **(0 to 10 points)**:
 - A strong rationale for your plan.
 - How the plan will help low-income and disadvantaged children.
 - How you will ensure that programs are high quality.

- The scope of the activities, such as number of new slots and number of communities served.
- Provide a timeline for conducting subgranting activities. **(0 to 5 points)**

OR:

If you are not proposing subgranting activities, the reviewers will assess your rationale for how you will expand access to high-quality ECE programs without subgrants.

(0 to 15 points)

Strengthen ECE systems (Maximum points: 5)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your responses to the overarching [program activities concerning strengthening ECE systems](#) and the [project narrative requirements about strengthening ECE systems](#).

The reviewer will determine how well you:

- Provide an approach that builds on previous PDG B-5 award activities.
(0 to 1 point)
- Describe how your approach uses or leverages other funding sources.
(0 to 2 points)
- Describe how your approach supports families' access to public programs.
(0 to 2 points)

Project timeline and milestones (Maximum points: 4)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your [project timeline and milestones](#).

The reviewer will determine how well you:

- Organize and present key information and milestones by task and subtask.
(0 to 2 points)
- Provide monthly or quarterly quantitative projections for what you plan to do and when, across the full period of performance in your timeline. **(0 to 2 points)**

Organizational capacity (Maximum points: 3)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your response to the [requirements in the organizational capacity](#) section. The reviewers will determine how well you:

- Demonstrate that your team has the relevant experience and expertise needed to carry out the project, and that your team has administered, developed, implemented, managed, and evaluated similar projects. **(0 to 1 point)**
- Describe how decisions are made in the state and by whom, and who will advise the project. **(0 to 1 point)**

- Provide the state's current unobligated balance of any PDG B-5 award, thoroughly explain any balance greater than 25% of the total award, and describe a plan to spend the funds on time. **(0 to 1 point)**

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

(Maximum points: 3)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your [plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities](#).

The reviewers will determine how well you describe:

- Governance, policies and procedures, procedures to identify and mitigate risks, and systems you use for record keeping and financial management. **(0 to 2 points)**
- Roles and responsibilities of key staff who will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities, staff, partners, and subrecipients. **(0 to 1 point)**

Program performance evaluation plan (Maximum points: 3)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your plan to evaluate the project's performance and meet the [requirements in the program performance evaluation plan](#) section.

Project sustainability plan (Maximum points: 2)

The reviewers will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your [project sustainability plan](#).

The reviewers will determine how well you describe:

- Your approach to sustaining key elements of the project—such as effective strategies, services, and interventions—after the period of funding ends. **(0 to 1 point)**
- How you will maintain collaboration and cooperation with key project partners after the federal funding ends. **(0 to 1 point)**

Line-item budget and budget narrative (Maximum points: 10)

The reviewer will assess how well you provide a high-quality, detailed [budget and budget justification](#), including a narrative and line-item budget details, that includes **(0 to 10 points):**

- Appropriate amounts projected to be spent for:
 - Activities 1-6 and other required activities, including:
 - Support for any technical assistance activities in your state.

- Travel costs for at least four individuals to attend a three-day meeting in Washington, DC.
- Program performance evaluation plan.
- A high-quality, feasible description of how your state will address the [30% cost-sharing requirement](#) and commit to meeting the match by the end of each of the three years.
- A way to charge indirect costs, if applicable.

Bonus options: Improve workforce pay and benefits or support social-emotional development and mental health (Maximum points: 6)

Applicants must reach a core score of 70 points before bonus points are considered.

The reviewer will assess the clarity, completeness, feasibility, and quality of your responses to the [requirements in bonus options 1 and/or 2](#) and the [approach to bonus options 1 and/or 2](#).

For bonus option 1, the reviewer will determine how well you:

- Provide an approach to improving workforce pay and benefits. **(0 to 1 point)**
- Describe how you will determine whether the activity has succeeded. **(0 to 2 points)**

For bonus option 2, the reviewer will determine how well you:

- Provide an approach to supporting the social-emotional development and mental health of children. **(0 to 1 point)**
- Describe how you will determine whether the activity has succeeded. **(0 to 2 points)**

Risk review

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

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

For more details, see [45 CFR 75.205](#).

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

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

We may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems.
- Designate your application as “approved but unfunded” if it was successful but there was not sufficient funding to make an award. You may receive funding if additional funds become available within the fiscal year.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.

We will not fund:

- An incomplete application.
- A disqualified application.

Award notices

How we make awards

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

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

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



Step 5:

Submit Your Application

In this step

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Application submission and deadlines

Deadlines

Application

Due on July 31, 2024.

- For electronic submissions, the due time is 11:59 p.m. ET.
- If you receive an exemption from electronic submission, the due time is 4:30 p.m. ET. See [exemptions for paper submissions](#).

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

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

Submission methods

Grants.gov

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

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

See [Contacts and Support](#) if you need help.

Issues with federal systems

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

Exemptions for paper submissions

We need to give you an exemption before you can apply on paper. See the [ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission \[PDF\]](#).

Once we have approved your exemption, download your forms package under the Package tab in Grants.gov.

To submit your application, mail it to:

Stefanie Gordon

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Administration

Office of Grants Management

26 Federal Plaza, Room 4114

New York, NY 10278

The requirements include:

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

Other submissions

Intergovernmental review

You will need to submit application information for intergovernmental review under [Executive Order 12372](#), Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. Under this order, states may design their own processes for obtaining, reviewing, and commenting on some applications. Some states have this process and others don't.

To find out your state's approach, see the [list of state single points of contact](#). If you find a contact on the list for your state, contact them as soon as you can to learn their process. If you do not find a contact for your state, you don't need to do anything further.

This requirement never applies to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations.

Mandatory disclosure

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

Send written disclosures to us at trisha.smith@acf.hhs.gov **and** to the Office of Inspector General at grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov.

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

Component	How to upload	Included in page limit?
File one: Narratives ☐ Table of contents ☐ Project summary ☐ Project narrative ☐ Line-item budget and budget narrative	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.	Yes Yes Yes Yes
File two: Attachments ☐ Indirect cost agreement ☐ Additional eligibility documentation ☐ Organizational capacity supporting information	Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.	Yes Yes Yes
Other required forms ☐ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) ☐ Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) ☐ Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) ☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) ☐ Key Contacts ☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form ☐ Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Upload using each required form.	No No No No No No No



Step 6:

Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration [52](#)

Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

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

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award.
- The rules listed in [45 CFR part 75](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS awards in effect at the time of award and any updates.
- The HHS [Grants Policy Statement \[PDF\]](#) (GPS). This document has terms and conditions tied to your award. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your Notice of Award.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in the [HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements \[PDF\]](#). See also ACF [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).
- Applicable program statutes and regulations found at section 9212 of ESSA, Public Law 114-95 (December 10, 2015), [42 U.S.C. 9831 note](#).

Reporting

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

Performance report forms:

- Annual Performance Progress Report, OMB Control Number: 0970-0490
 - Expiration date: 03/31/2026
- ACF Performance Progress Report, OMB Control Number: 0970-0406
 - Expiration date: 1/31/2026
- Performance report frequency: Quarterly, annual

Financial report forms:

- SF-425
- Financial report frequency: Quarterly, annual

Nondiscrimination and assurance

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



Contacts and Support

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Agency contacts

Program

Richard Gonzales

Richard.Gonzales@acf.hhs.gov

202-401-5138

Grants management

Trisha Smith

Trisha.Smith@acf.hhs.gov

215-861-4742

Grants.gov

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

SAM.gov

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

Reference websites

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#)
- [Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\)](#)
- [Office of Early Childhood Development](#)
- [ACF Funding Opportunities: Forecasts and NOFOs](#)
- [ACF How to Apply for a Grant](#)
- [ACF Property Guidance](#)
- [Grants.gov Accessibility Information](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#)
- [United States Code \(U.S.C.\)](#)

Paperwork Reduction Act disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the project description (project narrative, line-item budget, and justification) is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The project description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 03/31/2026. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Endnotes

Select the endnote number to jump to the related section in the document.

[1] The term “early care and education (ECE) program,” as used in this notice of funding opportunity, has the same meaning as “early childhood education program,” defined at section 9212(b)(3) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)(42 U.S.C. 9831 note) and in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)(20 U.S.C. 7801).

[2] A mixed delivery system, as defined by section 9212(b)(5) of ESSA (42 U.S.C. 9831 note), is a system of ECE services that are delivered through a combination of programs, providers, and settings. These include Head Start, licensed family- and center-based child care programs, public schools, and other community-based organizations. These are supported with a combination of public and private funds.

[3] See also “[PDG B-5-ACF-IM-2022-01: Instructions for Requesting Changes in the Existing Scopes of Work to Increase Support for the Early Childhood Workforce](#)” for example strategies to consider.