

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

African American Child and Family Research Center
HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-PH-1916
Application Due Date: 07/12/2021

African American Child and Family Research Center
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Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families

Funding Opportunity Title:	African American Child and Family Research Center
Announcement Type:	Initial
Funding Opportunity Number:	HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-PH-1916
Primary CFDA Number:	93.647
Additional CFDA Number:	93.595 93.575 93.600
Due Date for Letter of Intent:	**06/11/2021**
Due Date for Applications:	**07/12/2021**

Executive Summary

Notice:

- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire funding opportunity announcement (FOA) 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/howto.

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is soliciting applications for an African American Child and Family Research Center (hereafter referred to as "Center") to lead and support research on the needs of African American populations served by ACF and promising approaches to promote social and economic well-being among low-income African American populations. This research Center would ideally bring together a diverse, inclusive, culturally sensitive, and interdisciplinary team of academic and organizational partners to provide leadership on research that is culturally rigorous and informed by structural inequities. The work of the Center should inform policies concerning low-income African American populations and foster significant scholarship regarding the needs and experiences of the diverse African American populations throughout the nation. Through a combination of research, capacity building, and communication activities, this Center will ideally address a range of relevant issues including, but not limited to the following: a) definition and measurement of the experiences of African American individuals, families, and communities; b) identification of barriers and facilitators of human service utilization by African American populations; c) examination of strategies to promote the social and economic well-being of African American children and families; and d) evaluation of promising approaches for serving African American populations. The Center will be expected to develop research products, resources, and a comprehensive communication plan that aims to build research capacity in the field and improve understanding of African American populations in order to inform policy development and programmatic responses. The Center

will focus broadly on child care and early education, employment, economic mobility, wealth, and children's healthy development and learning. Key topics of interest are identified below in the Funding Opportunity Announcement and include, but are not limited to, research and/or program evaluation related to experiences and outcomes regarding: education and employment; human services; discrimination; the criminal justice system involvement; and distinctive experiences in rural, suburban and urban areas.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

- Social Services Research and Demonstration: Title XI, part A, section 1110 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1310);
- Child Care Development Block Grant: section 658O(a)(5) of the Child Care Development Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9858m(a)(5));
- Social Security Act, section 413, as amended by the FY 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31), Title IV-A: Block Grants to States for the Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (42 U.S.C. 613);
- Head Start Act, section 649, as amended by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 9844).

Description

BACKGROUND

Through the provision of federal leadership, partnership, and resources for the compassionate and effective delivery of human services, ACF seeks to ensure that all children, youth, families, individuals, and communities in the United States are resilient, safe, healthy, and economically secure. ACF makes considerable investments for the provision of high-quality services to support children and families, and there is a growing body of research to inform those investments. However, many critical questions remain about how to most effectively and efficiently support the social and economic well-being of the diverse populations ACF serves.

ACF services touch the lives of many children and families from varied racial backgrounds and a sizable portion of those served identify as Black or African American. For example, 29 percent of recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance in 2019 identified as Black or African American (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2020). Furthermore, approximately 30 percent of families enrolled in Head Start and 40 percent of families receiving monthly child care assistance through the Child Care Development Fund are Black or African American (HHS, 2019; HHS,2019).

ACF recognizes the complexities and ongoing discourse across disciplines on the use of the term African American to refer to populations who identify as Black but are not the descendants of enslaved people in the United States. ACF uses the term "African American" throughout this FOA to refer largely to the descendants of enslaved people who were brought from their African homelands by force to work in America as well as other individuals, families, and

communities of the African diaspora who have immigrated to the United States who may identify as Black.

Given the participation of African American families and children in ACF programs, there is a need for community-engaged research and evaluation to understand the varied assets, needs, and experiences of African American families and children; identify promising approaches to address economic and social inequities; and promote their social and economic well-being. Community-engaged approaches to research work in collaboration with the populations being studied, with a goal of building trusting bi-directional relationships, can improve the rigor of the work, as well as the relevance of the work, to all stakeholders.

Research with African American communities must be culturally rigorous and must also be informed by an understanding of both current and historical circumstances. Culturally rigorous research ensures that knowledge is gathered in a way that is inclusive of and responsive to the diverse cultural practices of the populations being studied, ensuring that information is gathered in appropriate and meaningful ways (Tribal Evaluation Workgroup, 2013). Research that is informed by historical and current circumstances is grounded in an understanding of the important role that public policies, institutional practices, and other societal norms play in shaping the needs, strengths, and experiences of the populations being studied. This type of rigorous research and evaluation with African American populations can support the effective and efficient administration of ACF programs and, ultimately, improve the lives of African American children and families.

Traditionally, research that has informed predominate views of underrepresented groups, including African American populations, has not been community engaged, culturally rigorous, or informed by consideration of structural inequities. Moreover, such research has relied heavily on a comparative research framework in which the behaviors, experiences, and outcomes of White Americans are used as the standard or reference point against which the behaviors, experiences, and outcomes of underrepresented populations are assessed. Often this research approach fails to acknowledge how aspects of research design and measurement can bias findings and fails to acknowledge important historical and cultural contexts that differ across groups. This research approach has contributed to the inherent assumption that the behaviors, experiences, and outcomes of underrepresented groups that differ from White Americans represent deficits and must be addressed to promote their economic and social well-being. We aim to support research that is contextualized by a thorough understanding of historical and contemporary inequitable social structures and systems as well as the diverse cultural practices of African American populations.

PURPOSE

ACF is providing the support for the Center to highlight and advance research on African American populations. By focusing on research that is culturally rigorous and informed by current and historical circumstances, the Center provides an opportunity to broaden current conceptualizations about appropriate research methods for studying African American families; ground research in contextual factors that shape their assets, needs, and experiences; and, ultimately, enhance understanding of ACF programs and service delivery.

ACF has previously funded research centers focused on specific populations, including the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center and National Research on Hispanic Children and Families. The work of these Centers has greatly shaped our understanding of the service needs

and experiences of distinct populations.

The following topics reflect ACF programmatic concerns that the Center's research effort should address:

- Varied assets, needs, and experiences of African Americans regarding child care assistance; Head Start and early care and education; TANF; poverty and social services; employment and economic mobility; and healthy relationships, including supportive family relationships;
- Promising approaches to promote the social and economic well-being of African Americans;
- Participation of African Americans in the social services workforce, for example, as providers of child care, Head Start, and early education; and
- Structural barriers, local implementation issues, and community factors that shape the provision of ACF programs to African Americans.

The Center will be a collaborative effort in support of multiple human services programs that interact with African American children and families. Information and knowledge gained from one program may be relevant to other programs. The activities funded by the Center will focus on the programmatic goals of the four focus areas listed above. Please see *Section II. Federal Award Information* for information about how the Center's resources and activities should be proportionately dedicated to reflect the eligible activities under each of the four funding streams supporting the Center.

GOALS

The Center will provide national leadership and excellence by investigating the assets, needs, and experiences of the diverse population of African American families and children served (or potentially served) by ACF programs as well as promising approaches to address economic and social inequities and, ultimately, promote their social and economic well-being. The focus of this Center will be on the child care assistance, TANF, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs and the populations they serve. However, other related ACF programs, such as child welfare and child support, and the populations they serve may be addressed as they relate to those programs of focus. The work of the Center will draw on interdisciplinary approaches to accomplish the three goals listed below.

Each of these goals should be a priority for the Center, and the grantee is expected to develop and realize a program of research that appropriately balances the Center's core infrastructure and administrative responsibilities with each of these three key program goals. It is also expected that the grantee will identify and develop effective strategies to sustain project activities in support of the grant program's goals after the period of federal funding ends. These goals and the related responsibilities of the Center are discussed in more detail below.

1. Advance Research

Approximately 60 percent of the Center's overall effort should be dedicated to the goal of advancing research.

The Center will be expected to plan, initiate, and maintain a community-engaged, focused, and high-caliber research program. This means that the research should be conceived with input

from relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, and reflect partnerships with these stakeholders at multiple phases of the research process. The Center's program of research should build on the existing literature related to African American children and families and should be directly relevant to the needs and interests of ACF areas of programmatic concern, including the following:

- The varied assets, needs, and experiences of African Americans regarding child care assistance; Head Start and early care and education; TANF; poverty and social services; employment and economic mobility; and healthy relationships, including supportive family relationships;
- Promising approaches to promote the social and economic well-being of African Americans;
- Participation of African Americans in the social services workforce, for example as providers of child care, Head Start, and early education; and
- Structural barriers, local implementation issues, and community factors that shape the provision of ACF programs to African Americans.

The program of research may also include topics of more general value to the field of human services.

The research should be culturally rigorous and informed by historical and current circumstances, and attend to issues of intersectionality of other relevant membership categories (e.g., disability, gender identity). The research may include ongoing or new social, behavioral, and economic policy-related research projects, including (but not limited to) secondary analysis of available data sets; research syntheses, pilot and feasibility studies; refining measurement tools or instruments; or similar research projects, as necessary, to address the key research questions of interest.

All research activities supported with ACF funds must adhere to the principles of rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics outlined in ACF’s evaluation policy. Although ACF's policy focuses on evaluation, the principles and many of the specifics apply to other types of research activities as well. The research program should include an agenda of applied research, quantitative and qualitative research methods, primary data collection, and secondary data analyses, as best suited for the research questions and objectives pursued by the Center. The research program should support Center staff and other affiliated researchers in completing research that improves understanding of questions that fall within the four areas of ACF programmatic concern. See *Section I. Program Description, Purpose*, the third paragraph. The Center should provide intellectual leadership in the national research community by establishing links with a broad range of scholars external to the grantee institution through a combination of mechanisms, which may include (but is not limited to) leadership roles, partnerships with other institutions of higher education, visiting and postdoctoral appointments, research assistantships, an extramural program of non-resident grants, etc.

Using multi-disciplinary and multi-method approaches, the research program should advance methodological innovations (e.g., measurement tools, study designs) to obtain reliable and valid information on individual-, community-, program-, and systems-level constructs relevant to African American populations (e.g., current and historical circumstances, parent-child interactions, economic mobility, family relationships, children's optimal development and well-

being, racial trauma). The Center team must possess competency in a range of economic, social, and behavioral disciplines and research methodologies. The team must also have deep knowledge of the role institutional and structural conditions and practices play in shaping the needs, assets, and experiences of African American populations. The planning and execution of the Center's research shall always consider the program and policy implications of research findings in a non-partisan manner. The Center should link research to public and private efforts to improve the lives of African American children and families. A Steering Committee (see *Section I. Program Description, Structure)* made up of both Center and federal staff will meet regularly to review and refine plans for Center activities. A Technical Work Group (see *Section I. Program Description, Structure*) will meet annually to provide input for the Center's Activities.

2. Build Research Capacity

Approximately 20-30 percent of the Center's overall effort should be dedicated to the goal of building research capacity.

The Center is expected to build research capacity and infrastructure to conduct research relevant to ACF program and policy goals that is culturally rigorous and informed by an understanding of current and historical circumstances that shape the experiences of African Americans. The Center is expected to build research capacity through developing tools, resources, and approaches to equip the field to conduct relevant research. In order to promote such research broadly in the field, the Center is expected to provide consultation and professional development to support and encourage the work of researchers within and outside of the federal government investigating relevant questions.

In addition, the Center is expected to contribute to the development and expansion of the pool of researchers reflective of the communities being studied by the Center. The Center should pursue innovative approaches to expose emerging scholars to the work of the Center and OPRE, as well as encourage and directly support emerging scholars to develop careers in policy-relevant research concerning African American children and families.

3. Communicate Research

Approximately 10-20 percent of the Center's overall effort should be dedicated to the goal of communicating research.

Another integral feature of the Center's responsibilities is to make knowledge and information available to ACF's stakeholders. The Center is expected to develop and implement a dissemination strategy that broadly and efficiently communicates findings from research conducted within and outside of the Center and increases the use of research, data, and relevant resources for a wide audience including researchers, federal and state policymakers, ACF grantees, program administrators, and communities participating in the research. The dissemination plan will be comprehensive and utilize diverse media, channels, and strategic partnerships best suited to connect target audiences with the research findings and resources that can inform their work. For example, the plan is expected to include traditional, social, and innovative media, such as developing accessible written, visual, and audio products; holding events, such as webinars, workshops, roundtables, or symposia; and, engaging in outreach activities such as listening sessions and presentations at research and practice-focused gatherings, collaborating with ACF technical assistance providers, and engaging in bidirectional

communication with stakeholders. It is expected that the dissemination plan will demonstrate strong links to the goals and objectives of the Center.

STRUCTURE

The Center's organizational structure will include the following key elements: the Center Director (or co-Directors); Center team and partners; Dissemination Lead; a Steering Committee; and a Technical Workgroup.

Center Director: The Director will be the primary personnel representing the Center across all activities. The Director's expertise, knowledge, and skills will inform all Center's activities and will contribute directly to the collaborative efforts involved. Through the Director's efforts, the Center will advance the state of research concerning African American children and families. The Director will not only be primarily responsible for the successful completion of the Center's research activities, but will also be responsible for establishing and maintaining coherence in goals and objectives across the Center's activities and collaboration across the various structural elements and participants in the Center's activities.

The Director must have a Ph.D. or equivalent for their field and should be an established expert as demonstrated by a substantial body of published work including peer-reviewed articles related to African American children and families. The Director must have expertise in ACF programmatic areas of concerns (see *Section I. Program Description, Purpose*, the third paragraph). Gaps in the Director's skills should be addressed through additional Center leadership and staff, subcontracts with other institutions and organizations, and partnerships with other scholars and professionals (i.e., Co-Directors, consultants, logistic management support, research team members). Changing the Center's Director during the project period would constitute a major revision of the approved project and would require prior approval by ACF.

The Director must commit appropriate time and effort to the Center to ensure ongoing management and oversight and high-quality results and products. The grantee should inform the Federal Project Officer (PO) regarding any significant changes in availability throughout the project period.

Center Team and Partners. The Center's team and partners (i.e., project managers, coordinators, writers, data collectors, subcontracted research and logistics support, research partners) are critical to the success of all of the Center's activities. The Center team must include individuals with experience and skills for conducting research with African American children and families. The Center team must include individuals with expertise in ACF's programmatic areas of concern (see *Section I. Program Description, Purpose*, the third paragraph). Gaps in Director or Co-Director expertise may be addressed by identified strengths in the Center's team and partners. Grantees are encouraged to seek out and partner with other organizations, research institutions, and experts throughout the course of the project, given the depth of expertise that is required by this project. Changes in key center staff and partners (e.g., senior research staff, project manager, or research partners) during the project period would constitute a major revision of the approved project and would require prior approval by ACF.

Dissemination Lead. The dissemination lead is a key member of the Center team. The dissemination lead must have significant experience and competences in high-quality and effective communication of findings from research, data, and relevant resources to a wide range

of audiences, including researchers, federal and state policymakers, ACF grantees, and program administrators. The dissemination lead must be knowledgeable of diverse media, channels, and strategic partnerships.

Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will consist of the Center's Director (or Co-Directors, if applicable), other selected key Center personnel, the FPO from OPRE, and other representatives of ACF (as determined by the FPO). This Steering Committee will meet regularly to discuss the Center's plans, activities, and progress, with a focus on ACF's goals for the Center. The Center Director and team will be responsible for day-to-day operations and decisions. The Steering Committee's responsibilities will include the following:

- Provide input on an agenda for the Center as well as more specific plans and products of the Center with an eye towards the Center's short- and long-term goals;
- Identify supplemental activities to address emerging programmatic concerns;
- Identify and support opportunities for dissemination of the Center's work;
- Identify opportunities for the Center to consult with policymakers and other key stakeholders;
- Facilitate communication and collaboration with other ACF-sponsored projects; and
- Provide problem-solving feedback regarding the Center.

The committee will meet via teleconference or in person as needed to support clarity and consistency in the Center's mission and procedures and a robust on-going research portfolio.

Technical Work Group. The Center will nominate and establish a Technical Work Group made up of experts and stakeholders from outside of the grantee/funded institution(s) with research, programmatic, and lived-experience expertise in ACF's programmatic areas of concern regarding African American children and families (see *Section I. Program Description, Purpose*, the third paragraph). This group of experts and stakeholders will provide input and feedback to inform priorities and refine plans for Center activities. The Technical Work Group will be regarded as a resource for the Center, supporting the Center in defining the state of the field; identifying forward-looking questions, concerns, and major gaps in the knowledge base; ensuring the community-engaged research focus of the Center; and supporting the ability of the Center to build research capacity while addressing issues relevant to policy and program leaders. The Center should convene and engage this group purposefully to help realize ACF's goals for the Center and to expand the reach of the Center's activities.

Efforts will be made in selecting this group to assure representation from a broad range of institutions (such as academic, research, policy, and program organizations) and fields of study. To enable deeper discussions on selected topics and connections among experts and stakeholders, it is expected that the Technical Work Group will meet at least once each year.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In support of the overarching grant program goals (see *Section I. Program Description, Goals* for details), the Center will be responsible for the following additional tasks:

Supplemental Activities. The Center is expected to plan for approximately 10 percent of its effort to support supplemental activities.

During the project period, the Center should have the ability to complete several supplemental

activities, as needed, to respond to pressing research and policy needs that fall within the scope of the Center. For designing, refining, and carrying out these supplemental projects, the Center may work through a consultative process with federal staff, and, as needed and appropriate, with additional consultants and the Technical Work Group. It is expected that these activities may overlap to some extent with projects/efforts developed in pursuit of the Center's primary research, research capacity building, and communication goals.

Specific supplemental activities will be identified by the grantee during the grant. However, a few examples of potential activities include the following:

- Developing research briefs on specific topics of interest to ACF programs;
- Development and pilot testing of research protocols to better engage and reflect the experiences of African American children and families;
- Development and validation of survey instruments for inclusion in federal research examining experiences of African American populations with ACF programs; and
- Analyzing public or administrative data or other materials to address specific questions of interest.

Meetings and Conferences. Regular, in-person or virtual meetings can help deepen understanding, strengthen connections, and promote collaboration among individuals, institutions, and perspectives. In support of the research capacity-building and communication goals of this grant program, the grantee will be expected to attend (and, in some cases, to host) the following required meetings and conferences when they are held during the grant project period. The proposed budget should reflect funds for the Director (or Co-Directors) and at least one key personnel to attend the required meetings either virtually or in person and all costs and logistical support (i.e., hotel, travel, compensation) for any proposed meetings or conference activities.

- *National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC)*. It is expected that key Center personnel will attend the biennial NRCEC, which is held in Washington. The next conference is expected to be held in the summer of 2022. This conference brings together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss the latest research surrounding Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, home visiting, child welfare, special education, pre-kindergarten, early elementary, and other early childhood programs. This provides an excellent opportunity for the Center to build relationships with key stakeholders and present research findings.
- *Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) Annual Meeting.* It is expected that key Center personnel will attend the annual meeting of CCEEPRC, which is typically held in the spring in Washington, DC. The meeting brings together grantees and contracted researchers funded by ACF and federal and state CCDF administrators to discuss child care policy research and is an excellent opportunity for the Center to build relationships with key stakeholders and to discuss implications of research developments and the Center's work. The next CCEEPRC annual meeting is scheduled to take place in Washington, DC, over 2 days in March 2022.
- *Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS).* It is expected that key Center personnel will attend the biennial RECS, which is expected to be held May 2022 in Washington DC. This conference, which brings together researchers and

administrators to discuss cutting-edge research related to a range of anti-poverty programs and policies, is an excellent opportunity for the Center to build relationships with key stakeholders and present research findings.

- *Other opportunities to meet with ACF.* In addition, OPRE will identify and facilitate opportunities to present Center work and engage with federal and state policymakers, program administrators, ACF technical assistance providers, ACF-sponsored research teams, and other stakeholders to maximize timely information sharing and coordination as appropriate.

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 FOA, *Section III.1. Eligible Applicants*. Additionally, all subrecipient(s) must obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, or after government-wide implementation, a Unique Entity Identifier assigned by the System for Award Management (SAM), if they do not already have one. Prime recipients are required to check the SAM to verify that the subrecipient(s) is/are not debarred, suspended, or ineligible. Please reference the Award Term and Condition on Subawards on the ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements website for further requirements involving subawards.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Total Funding:	$1,800,000
Expected Number of Awards:	1
Award Ceiling:	$1,800,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	$1,800,000 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	$1,800,000 Per Budget Period
Anticipated Project Start Date:	09/30/2021

Length of Project Periods:

Length of Project Period:	60-month project period with five 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Awards:
Awards made under this announcement 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 from funding under this announcement. 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.** See *Section III.2.* of this announcement for information on cost-sharing or matching requirements.

Consistent with statutory authority, the Center's resources and activities should be dedicated proportionately to reflect the purposes of the four funding streams supporting the center. They are as follows:

- *TANF*

Funds authorized through the Social Security Act contribute $900,000, or 50 percent, of the Center’s total funds. Section 413 of the Social Security Act 42 USC 613, as amended by the FY 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31) requires HHS to conduct research regarding the effect that grants made under TANF have on factors such as employment, self-sufficiency, child well-being, unmarried births, marriage, poverty, economic mobility, and family stability to help improve those programs and the individuals and families they serve. Funds may also be used for disseminating information on any research, evaluation, or study conducted under this section, including facilitating the sharing of information and best practices among states and localities.

- *Head Start and Early Head Start*

Research funds associated with Head Start and Early Head Start contribute $400,000, or about 22 percent, of the Center’s total funds. Section 649 of the Head Start Act, as amended by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, requires HHS to carry out research, demonstration, and evaluation activities focused on Head Start’s and Early Head Start’s continued quality improvements and effectiveness. Specific objectives highlighted in the statute include contributing to understanding the characteristics and needs of population groups eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start as well as the impact of such services on the individuals served and the communities in which such services are provided.

- *Child Care*

Research funds associated with the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDB) contribute $400,000, or about 22 percent, of the Center's total funds. Section 658O(a)(5) of the CCDB (42 U.S.C. 9858m(a)(5) authorizes HHS to conduct research, demonstrations, and evaluations focused on increasing access to child care services and improving the safety and quality of child care services.

- *Social Services Research and Demonstration (SSRD)*

Funds authorized through the SSRD contribute $100,000, or about 6 percent, of the Center's total funds. Section 1110 of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1310, titled Cooperative Research or Demonstration Projects, authorizes HHS to support research or demonstration projects in an effort to prevent, reduce, and foster self-sufficiency; aid in effecting coordination of planning between private and public welfare agencies; or help improve the administration and effectiveness of programs carried on or assisted under the Social Security Act and related programs. Previous OPRE-funded projects have focused on understanding behavioral interventions for advancing self-sufficiency and racial and ethnic disparities in human services.

The grantee will need to demonstrate that each of the funding streams was used exclusively to meet the distinct purposes of each appropriation. For example, if any Center staff work on cross-cutting issues, their time will need to be tracked to reflect time spent on each particular appropriation.

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

ACF staff will collaboratively negotiate with the recipient of funds regarding the roles and responsibilities outlined in this announcement before finalizing the cooperative agreement. This will include discussions regarding whether there are gaps or weaknesses identified by the review panel that need to be addressed, such as additional areas of expertise or support needed within the Center's organizational structure and working with the grantee to address significant gaps or weaknesses.

ACF will monitor the grantee, providing guidance and technical assistance, when necessary. ACF will work collaboratively with the grantee to facilitate the accomplishment of project goals. ACF will facilitate collaboration and coordination with other ACF-sponsored grantees and projects (e.g., research projects, training and technical assistance providers) and ACF program offices (e.g., Office of Child Care, Office of Head Start, Office of Family Assistance).

ACF will provide funding as specified on the Financial Assistance Award for each budget period of this project activity, subject to the availability of funds. ACF will accept applications from the recipient for continued annual funding under this agreement beyond the 12-month budget period but within the approved project period on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the recipient, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Government. ACF will determine satisfactory progress for continuation of the federal award by assessing the recipient's semi-annual Performance Progress Report.

The FPO and other ACF staff, as needed, will participate in the Steering Committee to provide input, information, assistance, and feedback reflecting ACF's programmatic and research goals and to remain informed about project activities and progress. ACF staff will provide feedback

regarding grantee proposed plans and products to ensure that the activities and the products developed are filling needs and are relevant and translatable to the policy and practice communities. ACF staff will also provide feedback to ensure that the Center's resources and activities are dedicated proportionately to reflect the purposes of the funding streams supporting the Center.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Applicants are required to submit written evidence that research is a primary organizational activity as part of the application submission. The required documentation is described in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation.* Lack of the required documentation will disqualify the application from review and from award. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors.*

Applicants are required to show the entity's proposed Principal Investigator(s) [PI(s), who will serve as Center Director(s)] has the credentials and experience for conducting high-quality research. Applicants who fail to submit the required documentation will be disqualified from review and reward. The required documentation is described in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation*. Lack of the required documentation will disqualify the application from review and from award. *See Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

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 this part and 42 U.S.C. 2000bb et seq., the Department will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate against an organization on the basis of the organization’s religious character, affiliation, or exercise.

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. 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 announcement.
See *Section IV.2. Legal Status of Applicant Entity* for documentation required to support eligibility.
Please see *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions* for any limitations on the use of federal funds that could affect the eligibility of an applicant or project.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: Yes

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 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.**

Cost sharing is required for these projects in accordance with title XI, section 1110 of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 1310. Applicants must provide a cost sharing amount in the application's Budget and Budget Justification. There is no statutorily required minimum amount or percentage for the cost share. Cost sharing may be in cash or in-kind, including the graduate student's time spent on the project, and may include unrecovered indirect costs in accordance with §45 CFR 75.306.

Since the cost sharing amount is not part of the federal share, it does not affect the Award Ceiling amount under the application disqualification factor. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*. Please also see *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification, Commitment of Non-Federal Resources* and *Section V.1. Criteria, Budget and Budget Justification*.

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 from funding under this announcement.

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 from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for 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 www.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 from funding under this announcement.**

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" at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6.

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

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

Each time an application is submitted via www.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 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the *Overview* and *in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. Paper applications received after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Evidence of Research as a Primary Organizational Activity

Applications that do not include written evidence that research is a primary organizational activity will be disqualified from review and from funding under this FOA. See *Section III. I. Eligible Applicants, Additional Information on Eligibility*, and *Section IV.2. Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation* for more information.

Curriculum Vitae or Biographical Sketch for Principal Investigator

Applications that do not include written evidence that the proposed PI(s) [who will serve as Center Director(s)] has earned a doctorate or equivalent in a relevant field; conducts research as a primary professional responsibility; and has articles published in major peer-reviewed journals as a first author, as evidenced in their curriculum vitae and/or biographical sketch, as part of the application submission will be disqualified from the application review.

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 FOA.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

African American Child and Family Research Center
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031
Phone: (877) 350-5913
Email: aacfcenter@icf.com

Electronic Application Submission:
The electronic application submission package is available in the FOA's listing at www.Grants.gov.

Applications in Paper Format:
For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" available in the FOA's Grants.gov Synopsis under the Package tab at www.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 www.Grants.gov.

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

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS
Each applicant applying electronically via www.Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:
Authorized Organizational 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 FOA Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements
Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's FOA 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. The removed page(s) 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 FOA 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. 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 Standard Forms 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 www.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 Standard Forms (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:

Each application may include only one proposed project presented in two files.

Page Limits and Numbering. Applicants must limit their entire application (including both the project narrative file and appendices file) to 100 pages. Pages submitted beyond the first 100 in the application will be removed prior to panel review.

Applicants are advised to include all required forms and materials. Applicants are strongly advised to use headings and subheadings that correspond to the required information, found in *Section IV.2. The Project Description and Budget and Budget Justification;* the evaluation criteria, found in *Section V.1. Criteria;* and required proposal sections.

A. Application File One. Applicants must number the pages of File 1 beginning with the Table of Contents. File 1 must include a project description with the following:

1. Table of Contents
2. Project Summary
3. Approach: Sections must be carefully labeled to ease reviewers' identification of information relevant to the review criteria. It is strongly encouraged that the approach be organized according to the sections presented in the list below. Additional headers and subheaders may also be used to organize the content of each section.

    - Objectives and Proposed Research Priorities
    - Plan to Implement a Community-engaged Research Program
    - Plan to Build Research Capacity
    - Dissemination Plan
    - Plan for Supplemental Activities
    - Staff and Organizational Plan

4. Plan for Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
5. Project Budget and Budget Justification
6. References

B. Application File Two. Applicants may only have one appendix file. Examples of items in the appendix file include, but are not limited to the following:

- Documentation of research as a primary organizational activity
- Resume/Curriculum Vitae (CV) and/or Biographical Sketch for PI(s).
- Legal Status of Applicant Entity: Proof of accreditation if a public, state-controlled, or private institution of higher education
- Proof of Non-Profit Status (if applicable)
- Proof of For-Profit Status (if applicable)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically unless they have requested and 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 www.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 Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms
Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, such as the SF-424 application and budget forms and the SF-P/PSL (Project/Performance Site Location), 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 Standard Forms, OMB-approved forms, and required assurances and certifications.

Naming Application Submission Files
Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov**. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces).** Special characters that are allowed under Grants.gov's naming conventions, and are accommodated by ACF's systems, are listed in the instructions available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" at Grants.gov. Please also see https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html.

Use only file formats supported by ACF
It is critical that applicants 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 PDF documents 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 on Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*'" at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6

Format Requirements for Paper Applications
All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single FOA, or multiple applications under separate FOAs, each application submission must be packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled for the specific FOA it addresses by FOA title and by Funding Opportunity Number (FON).

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

Because each application will be duplicated, do not use or include separate covers, binders, clips, tabs, plastic inserts, maps, brochures, or any other items that cannot be processed easily on a photocopy machine with an automatic feed. Do not bind, clip, staple, or fasten in any way separate sections of the application. 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 grant or cooperative agreement awards under this announcement must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications with the application. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this FOA at www.Grants.gov.

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description

Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.
Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. Active registration at the SAM website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.	See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)* for more information.
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Form is available at http:// www.hhs .gov/ ohrp/ assurances/ forms/index .html. General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at http ://www. hhs.gov/ ohrp/ . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email (ohrp @csophs .dhhs.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900).
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project.

Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.	
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.

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:** MandatoryGranteeDisclosures@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 applicants are

submitting their application electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review and selection process.

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions

The Project Description provides the majority of 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 FOA, as described in *Section I. Program Description*. As a reminder, reviewers will be evaluating this section in accordance with *Section V.1. Criteria*.

The Project Description must be clear, concise, and complete. ACF is particularly interested in Project Descriptions that convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project Descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting documents designated as required must be included in the Appendix of the FOA.

Letter of Intent

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this announcement. 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 announcement; 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.

Applicants are encouraged to submit the letter of intent via email to megan.reid@acf.hhs.gov.

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.

Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

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

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

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

For-Profits and Small Businesses

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

Small Businesses

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

Additional Eligibility Documentation

Applicants must provide the additional, required documentation, or required credentials, to support eligibility for an award, as described in *Section III. Eligibility Information* of this announcement.

Evidence of Research as a Primary Organizational Activity. Written evidence that research is a primary organizational activity is required. This evidence must include a history of the completion of high-quality research and/or evaluation work within the past 2 years. Also, submission of resumes that reflect staff that are experienced, skilled, and knowledgeable in advanced research and evaluation methods is required.

Curriculum Vitae or Biographical Sketch for Principal Investigator. The PI(s) [Center Director(s)] must have a doctorate or equivalent in a relevant field, must conduct research as a primary professional responsibility, and must have articles published in major peer-reviewed journals as a first author, as evidenced in their curriculum vitae and/or biographical sketch.

Evidence of Accreditation. Public, state-controlled, and private institutions of higher education must be accredited by one of the regional accrediting commissions recognized by the Department of Education and the Council of Post-Secondary Accreditation.

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.

1. Objectives and Proposed Research Priorities

    Applicants must propose research priorities related to ACF's programmatic concerns and the grant program purpose and goals discussed in *Section I. Program Description*, which will form the basis of the Center's 5-year agenda. Applicants must present a brief analysis of the state of the field (e.g., key trends, social, demographic, economic) and knowledge base related to the Center's proposed research priorities, justifying the proposed course of the research, capacity-building, and communication activities. The analysis must demonstrate the applicant's grasp of the state of the field and the implications for ACF's programmatic concerns regarding African American populations. The analysis must discuss critical gaps in knowledge and research methodologies that the applicant would prioritize among Center activities.

    The successful applicant will demonstrate the importance of the proposed project's research priorities and objectives to the field, will describe rigorous and appropriate approaches to meet the objectives, and will convincingly demonstrate that the projects and approaches will significantly enhance the knowledge base by filling in critical gaps identified and build on past research. An application that simply contains an ad hoc categorization of an unstructured set of research projects or activities — as opposed to a set

of projects that reflect coherent research priorities — will be judged unfavorably.

2. Plan to Implement a Community-engaged Research Program

Applicants must propose a 2-year research program plan (at a minimum), outlining the major research priorities to be investigated and including specific examples of activities to address these. It also must be specific about short- and long-term research priorities and projects demonstrating the basis for any proposed activities and products. The lines of research described must be concrete enough that project descriptions in subsequent work plans can be viewed as articulating a research plan discussed in the application.

Community-engaged approaches to research work in collaboration with the populations being studied and with a goal of building trusting bi-directional relationships, can improve the rigor and the relevance of the work to all stakeholders. The proposed research activities must be multi-method and multi-disciplinary. Applicants should include detailed and clear descriptions of the specific objectives and methodology, as appropriate, for each proposed activity; the skills, expertise, and knowledge of any personnel involved; and how the research activities will be conceived with input from relevant stakeholders and reflect partnerships with these stakeholders throughout the research process, to reflect the community-engaged focus of the Center. Applicants must discuss the appropriateness of the approaches proposed, including how the approaches are culturally rigorous and informed by historical and current circumstances, as well as methodological considerations.

Applicants must propose a long-term research planning process and quality assurance plan for all Center research activities throughout the full project period (up to 5 years), including involvement of the Steering Committee, Technical Work Group, and any other key stakeholders. The first year of the process may reflect more developmental, but still substantial, activities (i.e., identifying gaps in the field, reviews and secondary analyses, piloting, team development, establishing formal partnerships, refining activities and schedule), while the plan for later years may reflect more substantial research activities such as data collection and data analysis.

3. Plan to Build Research Capacity

Applicants must propose a detailed plan to build capacity in the field to conduct research that is culturally rigorous and informed by current and historical circumstances to address ACF policies/programs related to African American populations. The proposed plan must include two components – developing resources for the field and developing and expanding the pool of researchers from communities studied by the Center.

First, applicants must propose a set of activities to build long-term capacity for research on the social and economic well-being of African American children and families and on programs to effectively serve them. Such activities might include the development of tools, resources, and approaches for the research field at large, including within the federal government. Applicants must propose specific activities following from the research priorities identified.

Second, applicants must propose professional development and mentoring activities for emerging scholars (e.g., undergraduate and graduate students, early career scholars) from the communities being studied by the Center, describing how they will benefit from

exposure to and participation in the ongoing research and other activities of the Center, OPRE, and federal partners. In addition, applicants must describe how scholars will be encouraged to pursue studies in the identified research priorities or focused on related areas concerning African American populations. Applicants must provide details of any program to reach scholars to expand participation in the field and to attract a pool of talented researchers into careers focused on African American children and families.

4. Dissemination Plan

Applicants must clearly describe a robust dissemination strategy that will be employed throughout the 5-year period. The dissemination plan for the first 2 years of funding should be sufficiently detailed and propose specific products or communications (interim, long-term) resulting from all research activities, as well as strategic approaches for identifying and reaching intended audience(s) for each and any specific channels proposed for dissemination, to support the goals of the Center. In addition to identifying potential products, applicants must include a detailed plan that describes a process for identifying and developing products and communications and communicating findings from research conducted outside of the Center on relevant topics to effectively reach and inform key audiences, including the research community, federal and state policymakers, program administrators, and any partners or communities engaged in the course of research. The proposed plan must demonstrate strong links to the goals and objectives of the Center and incorporate innovative mediums that meet the identified audience's need.

The proposal must include details regarding Center resources that will address dissemination (e.g., logistics and technical support, quality control, and management). As appropriate to the planned activities, the proposal will fully describe the expertise, skills, and knowledge of proposed personnel or partners with respect to the completion of high-quality products including presentations, events, or communication through other media. This should include a description of the processes that will be instituted to ensure that all information disseminated is of high-quality and appropriate for the pre-determined audience.

In developing a plan, applicants are encouraged to consult OPRE resources addressing dissemination of human services research, particularly the report titled "The Value-Added Research Dissemination Framework" (available on ACF's website at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/opre-research-dissemination-project-2010-2012). Applicants are also encouraged to include procedures to support compliance with the standards for electronic media (section 508 of the amended Rehabilitation Act ["Section 508"]) to eliminate barriers that might interfere with the ability of individuals with disabilities to fully access web-delivered information and fully utilize web-based tools and services.

5. Plan for Supplemental Activities

Applicants must demonstrate capacity to conduct supplemental policy-relevant projects (e.g., relevant expertise and availability of Center personnel, proposed consultants, subcontracts, or other plans for timely and efficient completion of such activities) as discussed in *Section I. Program Description, Additional Responsibilities*. Applicants must discuss proposed infrastructure and processes to support this function, including the personnel, as well as the effort and funds devoted to completing supplemental activities as

they arise. ACF does not expect applicants to provide highly detailed research plans for supplemental activities in the application; however, proposals must provide evidence of sufficient capacity, planning, and flexibility to support timely and high-quality supplementary activities related to the Center's goals.

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);
- 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 announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.

Staffing Plan. Applicants must propose a staffing plan for the Center, including analysis and description of the skills and background needed among staff members. Applicants must specify how they will ensure a genuinely interdisciplinary approach to achieving the goals of the Center.

Applicants must identify the Center Director(s) (or Principal Investigator(s)) and key Center staff, such as senior research staff, project managers, communications and technical personnel, etc.

The applicant must discuss any arrangements and expectations for students, research assistants, post-doctorates, resident scholars, mentors, other staff, or organizations that will have roles in engaging and developing scholars.

Full resumes or curriculum vitae of proposed staff members that demonstrate their qualifications for their roles shall be included in the Appendix of the application. Applicants must describe the roles and expected contributions of all proposed personnel. The time commitment to the Center and other existing commitments for each proposed Center staff member must be clearly indicated in chart form. In addition, the authors of the application and the roles that each person will play in the proposed Center must be specified.

The proposed PI(s) who will serve as the Center Director(s) must have appropriate qualifications, expertise, and experience, including the following:

- Qualifications
    - Intended time commitment to the Center and other non-Center-related time commitments.
- Expertise
    - Research experience, especially community-engaged research experience, in issues related to African American children and families and also in the specific areas of proposed research.
    - Expertise in conceptualizing and carrying out tasks and activities set forth in this FOA and producing products as required.
- Experience
    - Experience successfully managing projects of this scope and type and ensuring staff successfully complete assignments and work effectively and efficiently together.
    - Experience effectively collaborating with other researchers, scholars, and key stakeholders.

***Organizational Plan*.** Applicants must demonstrate the appropriate organizational capacity and propose an organizational plan for the Center, including the Center's organizational structure and linkages with the host institution and other organizations. Applicants must specify how they will ensure a genuinely interdisciplinary approach to achieving the goals of the Center, and where appropriate, the necessary links to university/college departments or units, other organizations and scholars engaged in research, and public/government and community stakeholders.

The proposal must include details on the proposed organizational plan as proposed for the first 2 years; a description of how necessary partnerships will be established and maintained; and a description of the proposed role(s) and contribution(s) of the Steering Committee, including its proposed configuration and membership, and the Steering Committee members' relevant skills and experience that will contribute to the goals and objective in the manner proposed.

If the applicant envisions an arrangement among two or more institutions, this section will describe the specifics about the relationships, including leadership, management, and administration. Applicants must describe what steps will be taken to develop the Center’s presence in the broader research and policy communities.

Applicants must also discuss the proposed role, procedures, and expected contributions of the Technical Work Group and any key stakeholders not proposed as members of the work group. The proposal must include a list of proposed members of the technical work group, including sufficient details to assess their appropriate expertise. Clear and practical plans for communication and utilization of the Technical Work Group (in informing and refining Center activities) will strengthen the application.

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

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

Grantees 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).

Third-Party Agreements

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

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment or MOUs between recipients and third-parties (i.e., subrecipients, contractors, or other cooperating entities).

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 Standard Form, 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 matching cost sharing 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, 2021 and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, (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 announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is $199,300. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits 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.

The proposed budget and budget justification (i.e., narrative) for the Center should reflect the full project period that is proposed by the applicant (i.e., up to a maximum of 5 years). This section should discuss how the budget for the full project period supports proposed research, capacity building, and dissemination activities, as well as supplemental activities.

The budget for the first 2 years of funding should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate support for the specific activities proposed, while linking to the overall plan and budget for the full project period.

Budget Development by Funding Source: The grant awarded under this FOA is made up of multiple funding sources; therefore, applicants must provide additional detail in their budget and budget justifications that proportionately reflects the percentages and types of costs and activities by funding source. A description of the multiple funding sources is shown in Section II. Federal Award Information, Additional Information on Awards, and is repeated here. In the SF-424A, applicants must show the amounts estimated under each Object Class Category, by funding source, under each of the columns.

Section A – Budget Summary:

Column (a) Grant Program, Function, or Activity: List the program associated with the funding source, e.g.,

1. SSRD,
2. Head Start and Early Head Start,
3. TANF, and
4. CCDB.

Column (b) Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: List the CFDA Numbers that appear in the Overview section of this FOA.

Section B – Budget Categories Object Class Categories: Use multiple columns to provide

cost detail for each Object Class Category by funding source. The following are the funding amounts by funding source and the percentages of budget they represent under the grant award: SSRD = about 6 percent, Head Start and Early Head Start = about 22 percent, TANF = 50%, CCDB = about 22 percent.

Applicants must provide a narrative of how they will track and maintain internal controls for the four funding streams in the budget justification. The budget justification should also include the appropriateness of the level and distribution of funds to the successful completion of ACF's research, capacity building, and dissemination goals and additional responsibilities over the full project period.

The availability, potential availability or prospects for other funds (from the host university, other universities, foundations, states, other federal agencies, etc.) and the uses to which they would be put, should be documented in this section. Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project should be identified in Block 18 of the SF-424. Inclusion of non-federal funding is required for the funds authorized under SSRD, title XI, part A, section 1110 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1310). There is no minimum amount nor percentage that is statutorily required. The inclusion of non-federal funding is voluntary under funds authorized under the Head Start Act, the CCDB, and the TANF block grant. The value of non-federal funds will not be evaluated under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria.* Grantees will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal funds in their application budgets and budget justifications, by budget period, or risk disallowances.

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

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

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

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

Fringe Benefits
Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees in addition to regular salaries and wages. For more information on

Fringe Benefits please refer to 45 CFR § 75.431. Do not include the fringe benefits of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients.

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

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) 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/grantee 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 Subpart 2.1. 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 qualified 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 the Department of Health and Human Services (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 announcement.

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 02/28/2022. 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 www.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 grant 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.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

***Obtain a DUNS Number*:** All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizations DUNS" on the SF-424 form.

For more detailed instructions for obtaining a DUNS number, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html

***Register with SAM*:** In addition to having a DUNS number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the System for Award Management (SAM). All organizations must register with SAM in order to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html

***Create a Grants.gov Account*:** The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the AOR role.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html

***Authorize Grants.gov Roles*:** After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying them of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then 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 your organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.

For more 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 commitment on behalf of the organization as an AOR; this step is often missed and it 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 FOA, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

The following is an overview of applying via Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.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, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.

***Adobe Reader*:** If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or ACF forms. 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*:** The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. 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 package, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the package. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission.

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

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant 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 your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission
All applications must be received by 11:59 p.m., 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 acknowledgement 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, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

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 at www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/systems_issue_policy_final_0.pdff.

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 at:
www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/acf_policy_for_requesting_an_exemption_from_required_electronic_0.pdf

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.* of this announcement for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 p.m., 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 announcement.

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

All applicants must have a DUNS Number (http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform) and an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov/SAM, https://www.sam.gov).

Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, registration at SAM must be active throughout the life of the award.

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 register for, or renew a registration, at SAM. User Guides are available under the "Help" tab at https://www.sam.gov.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal grant funds from any HHS Agency, or receive subawards directly from recipients of those grant funds to:

- Be registered in the 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; and
- Provide its active DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV.

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

Due Date for Letter of Intent: **06/11/2021**

Due Date for Applications: **07/12/2021**

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 www.Grants.gov is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically via www.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 www.Grants.gov are available at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

Applications submitted to www.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 p.m., 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 from funding under this announcement.

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
Applications that are hand-delivered by applicants, applicant couriers, by overnight/express mail couriers, or other representatives of the applicant 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 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., 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 from funding under this announcement.

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 www.Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date.
- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 p.m., 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 from www.Grants.gov
Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to www.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 application's submission**.** Receipt of this email does not indicate that the application is accepted or that is 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 www.Grants.gov by ACF. Receipt of these emails is not an indication that the application is accepted for competition.

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:
ACF will not provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

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

Applicants should go to the following URL for the official list of the jurisdictions that have elected to participate in E.O. 12372 https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/grants_spoc. Applicants from participating jurisdictions should contact their SPOC, as soon as possible, to alert them of their prospective applications and to receive instructions on their jurisdiction's procedures. Applicants must submit all required application materials to the SPOC and indicate the date of submission on the Standard Form (SF) 424 at item 19.

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

SPOC comments may be submitted directly to ACF to: U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management, Division of Discretionary Grants, 330 C St. SW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20201.

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

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

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

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

Grant awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

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

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

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

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

Submission By Mail

African American Child and Family Research Center
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031

Hand Delivery

African American Child and Family Research Center
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway

Fairfax, VA 22031

Electronic Submission
See *Section IV.2.* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via www.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 funding opportunity announcement and relevant statutes and regulations, reviewers will 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 will 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 will evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and **will 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* of this announcement.

Objectives and Proposed Research Priorities Maximum Points:15

1. The extent to which the proposal is clearly written, concise, organized, and provides appropriate details. Sections are clearly labeled to make it easier for reviewers to identify information relevant to the evaluation criteria.

2. The extent to which the brief analysis of the state of the field:

A. Conveys a strong understanding of past research, key trends, and the current state of research related to ACF's programmatic concerns regarding African American children and families;
B. Demonstrates the applicant's firm grasp of the significance of past research, key trends, and current state of research for ACF's program and policy priorities; and
C. Identifies critical gaps in the knowledge base, especially in light of ACF's program and policy priorities.

3. The extent to which the Center's proposed priorities:

A. Build on the analysis of past research, key trends, and the current state of the research, particularly any critical gaps identified in the knowledge base, with a coherent program of research;
B. Address the topics that reflect ACF programmatic concerns discussed in *Section I. Program Description* of this announcement, with clear relevance to the needs and interests of programmatic concerns regarding African American children and families; and
C. Add general value to the field.

Plan to Implement a Community-engaged Research Program Maximum Points:20

1. The extent to which the applicant proposes a coherent and feasible 2-year research plan that outlines the major research themes to be investigated using a community-engaged approach and includes the following:

A. An approach to research which plans to work in collaboration with the populations being studied, with a goal of building trusting bi-directional relationships.
B. Short- and long-term research priorities and projects that reflect ACF's programmatic areas of concern and advances the human services field;
C. Specific activities planned to address each of the research priorities
D. Discussion of the extent to which the approaches are multi-disciplinary and multi-method and advance methodological innovations related to research on African American populations; and
E. Description of the how the activities will be culturally rigorous and informed by the historical and contemporary circumstances of African Americans (i.e, grounded in an understanding of the important role that public policies, institutional practices, and other societal norms play in shaping the needs, strengths, and experiences of the populations being studied).

2. The extent to which the proposed activities are detailed, clear, and specific, and include the following:

A. Description of how the proposed specific methodologies will be used;
B. Description of how the research activities be conceived with input from relevant stakeholders and reflect partnerships with these stakeholders throughout the research process;
C. Proposed roles of key persons and/or partners that will complete the activities; and
D. Skills, expertise, and knowledge of any personnel involved.

3. The extent to which the application proposes a long-term research/evaluation planning process and quality assurance plan for all Center-related activities, including involvement of the Steering Committee and the Technical Work Group.

Plan to Build Research Capacity Maximum Points:20

1. The extent to which applicants propose a detailed feasible plan to build capacity in the field to conduct research that is valid, culturally rigorous, community-engaged, and informed by historical and current circumstances relevant to African Americans that addresses ACF

policies/programs related to African American populations, within the following two components:

A. Developing research resources for the field.

- A set of activities to build long-term capacity for research on the social and economic well-being of African American individuals, children, and families and on programs to serve them effectively. Such activities might include the development of tools, resources, and approaches for the research field at large, including within the federal government.
- Specific activities following from the research priorities identified.

B. Developing and expanding the pool of researchers from the communities being studied by the Center.

- Professional development and mentoring activities for scholars, describing how they will benefit from exposure to and participation in activities carried out by the Center, OPRE, and other federal partners. ACF encourages mentoring opportunities made available for scholars to engage with research proprieties and focus areas related to African American populations.
- Details of any programs to reach scholars to expand participation in the field and to attract a pool of talented researchers into careers focused on African American children and families.

2. The extent to which the proposal discusses any arrangements and expectations for students, research assistants, post-doctorates, resident scholars, mentors, other staff, or organizations that will have roles in engaging and developing scholars.

Dissemination Plan Maximum Points:15

The extent to which applicants clearly describe a robust dissemination strategy that will be employed throughout the 5-year period, and includes the following:

1. Detailed information about the plans for the first 2 years;
2. Description of how the applicant will effectively communicate research findings and other information to key audiences;
3. Strong links to the goals and objectives of the Center;
4. Strategic approaches that will be used to effectively reach and inform specific, targeted audiences with information they can use, using innovative mediums that meet their needs;
5. Description of potential partners the applicant will work with that can expand the reach of dissemination efforts and enhance evaluation-to-practice translation, including intermediary stakeholders who engage with practitioners and the audiences regularly;
6. Available resources and expertise of staff that will be involved in carrying out the dissemination strategy and quality assurance processes; and
7. Description of the processes that will be instituted to ensure that all information disseminated (written products, oral presentations, etc.) is of high quality and appropriate for the pre-determined audience.

Plan for Supplemental Activities Maximum Points:5

The extent to which the proposal provides evidence of sufficient capacity and flexibility to conduct timely and high-quality research related to the Center's goals.

Staffing and Organizational Plan Maximum Points:15

1. Staff Plan. The extent to which the proposed Center staffing plan describes the roles and expected contributions of all proposed personnel; identifies the Center Director(s) (who will serve as the project's Principal Investigator(s)) and key Center staff such as senior research staff, project managers, communications and technical personnel; and includes full resumes or curriculum vitae of proposed staff members that demonstrate their qualifications for their roles. This includes documentation that the Center Director(s) has the following necessary qualifications, expertise, and experience to be the primary leads for this Center:

A. Qualifications**:**
    - The extent to which the application describes the PI?s intended time commitment to the Center and other non-Center-related time commitments and the time devoted to the Center seems reasonable.

B. Expertise:
    - The extent to which the PI has research expertise, especially community-engaged research experience, in issues related to African American children and families and also in the specific areas of proposed research.
    - The extent to which the PI demonstrates expertise in conceptualizing and carrying out tasks and activities set forth in this FOA and producing products as required.

C. Experience:
    - The extent to which the PI demonstrates prior experience in successfully managing projects of this scope and type and ensuring staff successfully complete assignments and work effectively and efficiently together.
    - The extent to which the PI demonstrates prior experience effectively collaborating with other researchers, scholars, and key stakeholders.

2. Organizational Plan. The extent to which the application presents a proposed organizational framework that supports the multiple dimensions of work of the Center over the 5-year period and includes the following:

A. Details on the proposed organizational plan as proposed for the first 2 years;
B. Description of the rationale for the organizational plan and how it will support the successful attainment of the goals and objectives specified for The Center in this FOA;
C. Description of the management roles and responsibilities that will be handled by the applicant entity and those that will be assigned to other individuals/entities proposed to be involved and funded through the cooperative agreement, including the expertise of individuals assigned to various roles;
D. Description of how necessary partnerships will be established and maintained;
E. Description of any arrangements proposed between the applicant institution and other entities or among other institutions, including roles and responsibilities and the process(es) for the arrangements to formalized or finalized;
F. Description of the proposed role(s) and contribution(s) of the Steering Committee, its

proposed configuration and membership, and the Steering Committee members' relevant skills and experience that will contribute to the goals and objective in the manner proposed;

G. Strong 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 announcement through inclusion of documentation of research as a primary organizational activity; and
H. Sufficient evidence that each participating organization, including partners and/or subcontractors, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.

Budget and Budget Justification — Maximum Points:10

The extent to which the budget and budget justification demonstrate the following:

1. How the 5-year project period supports the proposed research, capacity-building, dissemination, and supplemental activities of the Center.
2. Adequate support for the specific activities proposed in the budget for the first 2 years of funding, while linking to the overall plan and budget to the total 5-year project period.
3. Appropriateness of the level and distribution of funds to meet ACF's expected balance in research, capacity building, and dissemination goals over the full project period.
4. The availability, potential availability or prospects for other funds (from the host university, other universities, foundations, states, other federal agencies, etc.) and how those funds would be used.
5. The applicant's SF-424A shows the amounts estimated under each Object Class Category, by funding source, under each of the columns.
6. An explanation of which column of the SF-424A corresponds to each funding stream, and an explanation of which activities are funded by each funding stream(s).
7. How the applicant will track and maintain internal controls for the four funding streams.
8. Proposed project costs meet the following:
    A. Are reasonable, sufficient, and appropriately allocated to successfully complete the research, evaluations, capacity building, and dissemination plan;
    B. Include adequate funds for participation and/or support of the required meetings; and
    C. Are justified according to the needs and timeframe for carrying out the proposed activities.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this announcement on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant or subrecipient that does not have a DUNS number (http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform) and an active registration at SAM (www.sam.gov). See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier 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 FOA.

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 announcement. 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. 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.

The competitive review will be conducted by a panel of federal and non-federal expert reviewers knowledgeable in the areas of human services research and African American child and family research. Any federal reviewers on the panel will be chosen for their technical expertise in the area of African American children and families and will be from outside of OPRE. Application review panels will assign a score to each application and identify its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the evaluation criteria.

OPRE will conduct an administrative review of the applications and results of the competitive review panels and will make recommendations for funding to the Director of OPRE, taking into account the goals of the Center, as listed in *Section I. Program Description*. The Assistant Secretary for ACF is responsible for the final selection.

Applications may be funded in whole or in part depending on the following: (1) the ranked order of applicants resulting from the competitive review; (2) staff review and consultations; (3)

the availability of funding; and (4) the best interests of the federal government.

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

Please refer to *Section IV.2.* of this announcement 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 Notice of Award (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 postal mail, email, or by GrantSolutions.gov 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.

Grantees 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 grantee's employees who are working on the Federal award are not fluent in English, the grantee 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 announcement are subject to 45 CFR Part 75 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards currently in effect or implemented during the period of award, other Department regulations and policies in effect at the time of award, and applicable statutory provisions. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is available at www.ecfr.gov. Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are available at: www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements.

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

Please review all HHS regulatory provisions for Termination at 45 CFR § 75.372.

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 Notice of Award (NOA). The HHS GPS is available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-1.

Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations

The grantee must comply with 45 CFR Part 87 "Equal Treatment For Faith-Based Organizations," including the requirement that all faith-based or religious organizations are eligible, on the same basis as any other organization, to participate in this and any program for which they are otherwise eligible. Thus, when selecting service providers or subrecipients, it may not discriminate for or against any organization on the basis of the organization's religious character or affiliation as indicated in 45 CFR § 87.3(a).

A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the 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)), the 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 may not use direct financial assistance from the Department to engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization). Consistent with 45 CFR §87.3(d), Such an organization also may not, in providing services funded by the Department, 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.

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports: Semi-Annually

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

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

Financial Reports: Semi-Annually

Recipients will be required to track and report grant funds by each of the multiple funding sources on their SF-425 and Performance Progress Reports. Recipients must assign costs only to those activities allowable under each of the funding sources authorization or appropriation.

VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Megan Reid
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street SW.
Washington, DC 20201
Phone: (202) 401-4619
Email: megan.reid@acf.hhs.gov

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget Shea Westfall
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Grants Management
330 C Street SW.
Washington, DC 20201
Phone: (202) 401-5542
Email: bridget.sheawestfall@acf.hhs.gov

Federal Relay Service:

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

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

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

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

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecast www.grants.gov/.

ACF Funding Opportunity Announcements ami.grantsolutions.gov/.

ACF "How To Apply For A Grant" https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto.

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

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

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

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

Application Checklist

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

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Project Summary	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.* The Project Summary is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity*.	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the application due date and time listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4.* of the FOA. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Unique	Referenced in *Section*	A DUNS number (Unique

Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	*IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)* in the announcement. To obtain a DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier), go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform . To register at SAM, go to http://www.sam.gov.	Entity Identifier) and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* These forms are available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. They are required for applications that include only non-construction activities.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Letter of Intent	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Project Description*.	Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4.*
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.	Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C. Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications*.	If applicable, concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.

Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications*. See http://www.hhs.gov/ ohrp/ assurances/ forms/ index.html for additional information. This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.
The Project Description	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Table of Contents	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submit with the application by the due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.