

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Head Start

Early Head Start Expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants - Communities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

HHS-2024-ACF-OHS-HP-R3-0072

Application Due Date: 03/26/2024

Table of Contents

Executive Summary....2
I. Program Description....4
II. Federal Award Information....18
III. Eligibility Information....20
III.1. Eligible Applicants....20
III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching....20
III.3. Other....21
IV. Application and Submission Information....23
IV.1. Address to Request Application Package....23
IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission....23
Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications....28
The Project Description....31
The Project Budget and Budget Justification....39
Application Submission Options....46
IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)....48
IV.4. Submission Dates and Times....48
Explanation of Due Dates....48
Acknowledgement of Received Application....49
IV.5. Intergovernmental Review....49
IV.6. Funding Restrictions....50
IV.7. Other Submission Requirements....50
V. Application Review Information....50
V.1. Criteria....51
V.2. Review and Selection Process....55
V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates....58
VI. Federal Award Administration Information....58
VI.1. Federal Award Notices....58
VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements....59
VI.3. Reporting....60
VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)....61
VIII. Other Information....61
Reference Websites....62
Application Checklist....63

Appendix.....67

Funding Opportunity Title:
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Executive Summary

Notice:

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

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announces the availability of approximately $6,914,508 to be competitively awarded for the purpose of expanding access to high-quality, comprehensive early learning services for low-income infants, toddlers, and their families. This NOFO solicits applications from public or private non-profit organizations, including faith-based organizations or for-profit organizations, that seek to provide a high-quality, comprehensive program, in a manner that ensures continuous services and seamless transitions for children and families residing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Funds in the amount of $6,914,508 annually will be available to provide Early Head Start services to eligible children and their families in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This dollar amount includes base funding of $6,779,508 (for use in program operations, staffing, materials, equipment, facilities, etc.) and training and technical assistance (T/TA) funding of $135,000. The appropriate use of T/TA funds for the purposes of improving program quality and helping prepare children to succeed in school are described in section 648 and section 645A(g) of the Head Start Act.

ACF, within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), will consider applications for Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships, non-partnership Early Head Start (EHS) Expansion, or applications that include a combination of both.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships
New or existing Head Start, EHS, and EHS-CC Partnership recipients can apply to use funding to partner with local child care, including family child care providers, to provide comprehensive,

high-quality services to eligible infants and toddlers through EHS-CC Partnerships. These EHS-CC Partnerships will enhance and support early learning settings to provide full-day, full-year, comprehensive services that meet the needs of low-income working families; enhance access to high-quality, full-time child care; support the development of infants and toddlers through strong relationship-based experiences; and prepare them for the transition into preschool. EHS-CC Partnerships play an important role in the child care system by both expanding high-quality early learning services to infants and toddlers and applying resources and lessons learned from EHS to build the system's capacity.

Through EHS-CC Partnerships, new or existing recipients will partner with local child care centers and/or family child care programs and will leverage current investments through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) or other sources to extend the hours of service and increase comprehensive services available for EHS-eligible children. All infants and toddlers in an EHS-CC Partnership site will benefit from facilities or family child care homes that meet licensing and EHS facility safety requirements. Other children in classrooms with EHS-CC Partnership enrolled children may benefit from lower teacher-child ratios and class sizes, higher qualifications of their teachers, ongoing supervision and coaching, an established curriculum, and parent engagement activities. While only children enrolled in the EHS-CC Partnership program will be eligible for direct family-specific benefits such as home visits, health tracking and promotion, and family partnership agreements through this funding, programs must operationalize services to ensure there is no segregation or stigmatization of EHS-CC Partnership children or families due to the additional requirements or services.

Developing New Family Child Care Providers and Building Networks
Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative approaches that increase the supply of high-quality early care and education in their community. Especially in communities with a shortage of child care providers, such approaches might include training new family child care providers and establishing family child care networks. Family child care networks can increase administrative efficiency and access to resources. They also can decrease isolation and increase professional development opportunities and support among and between family child care providers.

Non-partnership Early Head Start Expansion
New or existing Head Start, EHS, and EHS-CC Partnership recipients can apply to establish or add new traditional EHS slots through non-partnership EHS Expansion. Non-partnership EHS Expansion recipients will also provide early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services that will enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of participating children; support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward self-sufficiency. Given the need for continuity of care for very young age children, the Office of Head Start (OHS) expects that applicants will propose a full-day, full-year model with sufficient hours to meet the child care needs of families and not less than 1,380 hours per year.

Combination Approach
New or existing recipients can apply to both expand the number of EHS slots and implement the EHS-CC Partnership model designed to bring EHS services to infants and toddlers in child care and family child care settings.

General Information for All Applicants
Regardless of the model the applicant selects, only high-quality applications will be funded. All applicants should prioritize providing services to the most vulnerable families with the greatest need due to special challenges, such as extreme poverty, homelessness, involvement with the child welfare system, or substance misuse issues. Grants will be awarded based on how effectively the model design fits the needs of the community to be served and the overall quality of the proposed program, dependent upon available funding. Funds awarded through this NOFO must not supplant existing subsidies or other funding.

Through this NOFO, applicants have the choice of applying in one of the following three ways: 1) EHS-CC Partnerships, 2) non-partnership EHS Expansion, or 3) a mix of both EHS-CC Partnerships and non-partnership EHS Expansion. However, applicant entities may submit only one application per service area, regardless of how they choose to apply. ACF will review only one application for a service area from any applicant. For more information, please see *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission.*

High-quality infant and toddler care is particularly important, and often is lacking, in economically-distressed communities. Therefore, ACF reserves the right to prioritize funding for qualified applicants that propose services in census tracts designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones. For more information about federally designated Qualified Opportunity Zones, please visit: https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-quest ions and https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx. (See Section *V.2. Review and Selection Process* for more details.)

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority
The Head Start program is authorized by the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.

Description
Description, Program Background, and Purpose
The EHS program is administered by ACF, an operating division of HHS. ACF intends to fund applications that demonstrate an organization's commitment and capacity to operate an EHS program that raises the quality of early care and education in the community and helps children start school ready to succeed.

The Head Start and EHS programs provide grants to public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to predominately economically disadvantaged children and families. Head Start's primary purpose is to prepare children to be ready for school and ensure their healthy development. In fiscal year (FY) 1995, the EHS program was established to serve pregnant women and children from birth to 3 years of age in recognition of the mounting evidence that the earliest years matter a great deal to children's growth and development. Since its beginning in 1965, Head Start has served more than 35 million children and their families. In FY 2022 Head Start was funded to serve 833,075 children and families and of these, 197,455 were funded in the EHS program. These programs were operated by 1,560 Head Start recipients, including 1,137 recipients providing EHS program services for infants, toddlers, and pregnant women.

Head Start and EHS programs must provide directly or through referral, early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services that will enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of participating children in the key domains of physical development and health; social and emotional development; approaches to learning, language, and literacy; and cognition and general knowledge. Programs support parent engagement in their roles as their children's teachers and advocates, and help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Head Start and EHS programs emphasize family engagement because of the critical role that parents play in supporting their children's healthy development and school success. Effective programs engage parents in their children's development and learning. Programs also emphasize the significant involvement of parents in the administration of local Head Start and EHS programs. These leadership opportunities are designed to strengthen skills that parents can apply to improve their family's economic well-being and to become more effective advocates for their children.

Overview of the Child Care and Development Fund

CCDF is the primary federal program devoted to providing families with child care subsidies and supporting states, territories, and tribes in improving the quality of child care programs. CCDF is administered by ACF's Office of Child Care (OCC), which provides funding, oversight, and technical assistance to states, territories, and tribes that administer the program. CCDF provides child care assistance to 1.3 million children monthly, approximately 370,000 of whom are infants and toddlers. Annual federal CCDF funding is approximately $8.7 billion. State funding and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) transfers provide additional funding. In 2014, the program was reauthorized on a bipartisan basis, and this reauthorization included a number of important reforms to the program. For example, the reauthorized Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act phases in an increase in the minimum amount of funds that must be used to improve the quality of child care and other additional services to parents, such as resources and referral counseling regarding the selection of child care providers, to 9 percent. In addition, the law requires states to spend a minimum of 3 percent to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers.

CCDF recipients (i.e., states, territories, and tribes) have flexibility in many areas that can help support partnerships. For example, within certain federal parameters, CCDF recipients set income eligibility rules that can be aligned with EHS's income eligibility rules (the CCDF threshold must be below 85 percent of state median income) and set policy on how often to re-determine a family's subsidy eligibility (the frequency can be no less than 12 months). Most families who receive child care assistance through CCDF are required to pay a co-payment, which CCDF recipients can waive for families below poverty, such as families eligible for EHS. CCDF recipients may also waive family co-payments for children who receive or need to receive protective services, or that meet other criteria established by the CCDF recipient. While the majority of CCDF services are funded through certificates/vouchers linked to individual eligible children, CCDF recipients also have the option of awarding grants and contracts to provide a stable source of funding for child care programs. Regardless of the funding mechanism (whether vouchers, grants, or contracts), child care subsidies used in combination with the EHS-CC Partnership funding provided under this NOFO will allow recipients to improve the quality of environments and services for a greater number of low-income children.

Child care is provided through a broad array of public, private, for-profit, and non-profit programs and providers. In the United States, there are approximately 110,000 licensed child care centers and approximately 120,000 licensed family and group child care homes. Family child care is an important part of the child care system, especially for infants and toddlers who are more likely to be cared for in home-based settings compared to older children. In addition, family child care is an important child care option for children whose parents work non-standard work hours or schedules, and it is particularly important in many rural areas where there are few child care centers.

Head Start Program Performance Standards

In addition to the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq., Head Start is governed by the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) that define the scope of services necessary to support children's development and school readiness. These program performance standards are found in 45 CFR Parts 1301-1305 https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii. The HSPPS are the foundation on which programs design and deliver comprehensive, high-quality, individualized services to support the school readiness of children from low-income families. The standards set forth the requirements local recipients must meet to support the cognitive, social, emotional, and healthy development of children from birth to age 5. They encompass requirements to provide education, health, mental health, nutrition, and family and community engagement services as well as rules for local program governance and aspects of federal administration of the program.

Facilities

Funded recipients proposing facility purchase, construction, or renovation will be required to meet the requirements in 45 CFR Part 1303 Subpart E – Facilities. This subpart prescribes what a recipient must establish to show it is eligible to purchase, construct, and renovate facilities as outlined in section 644(c), (f), and (g) of the Act. It explains how a recipient may apply for funds; details what measures a recipient must take to protect federal interest in facilities purchased, constructed, or renovated with grant funds; and concludes with other administrative provisions. This subpart applies to facility purchase, construction, and major renovations. It only applies to minor renovations and repairs when they are included with a purchase application and are part of purchase costs.

As a component of the facilities request, recipients must also submit the relevant SF-429 Real Property Status Report and Request form(s), along with supporting documentation, in GrantSolutions Online Data Collection (GS/OLDC) system. These are standard forms to be used by recipients of federal financial assistance to report real property status (Attachment A) or to request instructions on real property (Attachment B, C) acquired (i.e., purchased or constructed) in whole or in part under a federal award. This includes real property (owned and/ leased) improved using federal funds. These reports are used for awards that establish a federal interest on real property. Federal interest does not expire until disposition has been requested by the recipient using the SF-429 Attachment C in GS/OLDC and approved by ACF. Recipients that incur costs to purchase, construct, or improve real property before receiving official ACF approval, typically via the Notice of Award (NoA), do so at their own risk. Any expenditure claimed or contributed to an award that is later to be found unallowable under the award and/or

was not approved by the authorized official may result in disallowed costs. For more information, see Real Property Guidance.

Mortgages and Long-Term Lease Agreements
If so directed by OHS, the newly funded recipient must accept assignment of any existing mortgages, long-term lease agreements, or security agreements (in the case of a modular unit) on properties subject to a federal interest occupied by the current recipient. By accepting this condition, the recipient must comply with real property and reporting requirements, including submission of the SF-429 Attachment A on an annual basis until disposition is approved by ACF. For more information, see Real Property Guidance.

If a recipient intends to finance, refinance, or amendment a financing arrangement on a real property or real property project, the SF-429 Attachment C must be submitted, along with supporting documentation, in GS/OLDC. This is considered an encumbrance that requires the ACF Chief Grants Management Officer decision. This action may delay recipient real property projects, as such, it is encouraged that financing arrangements be considered as a last resort. Recipients that proceed on these arrangements before receiving official ACF approval do so at their own risk. Any expenditure claimed to an award that is later to be found unallowable under the award and/or was not approved by the authorized official may result in disallowed costs. For more information, see Real Property Guidance.

Program Approach
All recipients funded through this NOFO must provide high-quality, comprehensive services. HHS has a goal of ensuring that funding available under this funding opportunity supports robust competition for both non-partnership EHS Expansion and EHS-CC Partnership models.

Based on the strategic plan and community assessment, applicants will propose an approach that responds to the greatest needs of families in the community, including the need for increased access to full-time, stable, high-quality, comprehensive child development services for working families. Having high-quality infant and toddler care is particularly important, and often is lacking, in areas with high concentrations of poverty.

All applicants should consider the birth-to-5 continuum of care and education in developing their proposals. Recipients are expected to leverage resources from existing community agencies that provide early learning services – including early intervention, home visiting, and preschool programs – that will support children from birth through kindergarten entry.

Applicants must consider how they will ensure smooth and seamless transitions for children and families, particularly as infants transition into center-based or family child care services, and as toddlers transition to preschool services. Recipients are required to plan for transitions for children out of EHS, including assisting families with preschool options for children after their program ends through agreements with publicly funded Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and child care programs.

ACF is responsible for ensuring that all entities, regardless of the model, that are awarded a grant through this NOFO and where relevant, their partner sites or delegate agencies, meet applicable Head Start requirements, local child care licensing and other regulations for all the children or

sites funded by this grant. These include requirements established by the HSPPS; relevant provisions of the Head Start Act; and applicable state, tribal, and/or local child care requirements. ACF acknowledges that meeting applicable requirements will require a commitment by both the recipient and, in the case of EHS-CC Partnership recipients, the partners, to fulfill their agreed-upon roles and responsibilities and adequate funding and support. Recipients that receive funds for EHS Expansion slots will be expected to meet all applicable HSPPS when children are being served in EHS Expansion slots. OHS is responsible for monitoring the quality of EHS program services and the recipients' compliance with federal and other applicable requirements based on the authority in section 641A(c)(1) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9836a(c)(1).

The following list provides a brief summary of the EHS services to be provided to the children and families through this grant:

- **Eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance,** ensuring the most vulnerable children are served.
- **Comprehensive early childhood education and development services** that promote the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development of young children and families during the early years through the following:

  - **EHS group sizes and teacher/caregiver to child ratios;**
  - **Qualified and trained staff** to ensure warm and continuous relationships between caregivers, children, and families that are crucial to learning and development for infants and toddlers;
  - **Parent involvement** in their children's learning and development;
  - **Provision of learning opportunities** for infants and toddlers to grow and develop in warm, nurturing, and inclusive environments;
  - **Culturally and linguistically responsive** services that support continuity of care between the home environment of the child and the program;
  - **Health and safety** of enrolled children;
  - **Health promotion** by providing comprehensive health, mental health, and oral health services for children, and helping families to identify and access a medical home to ensure ongoing care;
  - **Nutrition,** including participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, arrangements for nursing mothers who choose to breastfeed, and provision of formula in center-based programs and family child care homes;
  - **Inclusion of at-risk children with disabilities** by ensuring the following:
    - Services meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families, including the establishment and implementation of procedures to identify such children and plans to coordinate with programs providing services as described in section 645A(b)(11) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9840a(b)(11);
    - Children with documented behavioral problems receive appropriate screening and referral;
    - An inclusive, supportive environment where children with disabilities can be served in the same settings as typically developing children; and

        - That 10 percent of the children enrolled have a disability, unless granted a waiver by OHS.

- **Family partnerships** providing services to parents that engage in the following ways:
    - Support their role as parents;
    - Promote positive parent-child interactions, including the participation of fathers; and
    - Enable families to move toward self-sufficiency.

- **Community partnerships** by ensuring formal linkages and coordination with community agencies located in the area or state that provide services within the birth-to-5 continuum of care and education to ensure that children receive continuous, coordinated services from birth to school entry. Coordination should include such providers as early intervention service providers; other agencies providing services to infants and toddlers, including the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program and other home visiting programs; local Head Start programs; state pre-kindergarten; and other local providers of early childhood education.
- **Administrative and financial management**, including the following:
    - Ensuring a well-functioning governing body to share responsibility for oversight of the delivery of high-quality services;
    - Ensuring financial management systems are in place that meet requirements set forth in 45 CFR § 75.302;
    - Ensuring family involvement in the program through opportunities such as participation in the policy council or committees at the recipient-level;
    - Ensuring that the level of services provided to families responds to their specific needs and circumstances;
    - Recruiting, training, and supervising high-quality staff;
    - Providing professional development plans for each staff member to ensure that each staff person attains and maintains qualifications for his/her position and meets all Head Start requirements for staff working with infants and toddlers (Head Start Act 42 U.S.C. 9840a(h)(2)); and
    - Implementing a systematic procedure for transitioning children, such as the following:

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        - Ensuring continuity of services and smooth transitions when the needs of families change, to ensure that children served through the EHS-CC Partnership receive ongoing services through fluctuations of family status;
        - Supporting transition planning with families to ensure each pregnant woman and child experiences smooth transitions into EHS and child care services, and from EHS and child care services to Head Start or other preschool programs.
        - Implementing appropriate financial management systems so that expenditures are attributable to specific activities under the grant award.

- **Transportation** by working with families to address their transportation needs and providing or helping them find transportation, as needed to participate in the program.
- **Facilities** by ensuring centers and family child care homes meet licensing and all health and safety requirements for infants and toddlers.

Overview of Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Models
EHS enrolls pregnant women and children from birth to age 3. Applicants may request to operate services through the EHS-CC Partnership model for center-based services for infants and toddlers, and family child care services for infants, toddlers, and children up to the age of 3; or through the non-partnership EHS Expansion model for direct or delegated center-based or family child care; home-based or locally designed options with services for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers; or a combination approach of both models. Recipients, regardless of the model(s) or option(s), must serve a sufficient number of pregnant women, infants, and toddlers, and their families so that the funding level is adequate to support the full array of staffing and infrastructure necessary for successful implementation. Although ACF is not setting a minimum number of participant slots for which applicants must apply to serve, ACF recommends applicants not currently operating EHS or EHS-CC Partnerships propose no fewer than 72 slots, which may include multiple child care centers and/or family child care home partner sites. ACF recognizes that organizations with existing EHS infrastructure to support the necessary services may propose fewer than 72 slots.

Applicants should identify the model(s) they plan to implement (in a post-COVID-19 environment without the physical distancing restrictions currently in place due to COVID-19). The non-partnership EHS Expansion model is operated directly by the program and/or its delegates. The EHS-CC Partnership model is operated through child care centers and family child care homes, generally through a contracted partnership. Applicants may also propose to offer both models in a single program.

Regardless of model, all recipients are required to leverage existing local resources and collaborate with community organizations to ensure that a comprehensive array of health, mental health, nutrition, and social services are provided to enrolled pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families.

Program Options
Center-Based Option
Center-based services are delivered in a child care or early education center. Programs select the center-based design that provides sufficient hours to meet the needs of eligible children and families in their communities.

EHS programs must operate a minimum of 1,380 hours per year. While length of day is not prescribed, for most programs, this is a minimum of 6 hours per day, 46 weeks per year. OHS expects EHS-CC Partnership recipients to provide a minimum of 10 hours per day all year to meet the needs of working families. Programs generally use resources in addition to EHS funding to meet the full-day needs of families.

The requirements for the center-based option are listed in HSPPS at 45 CFR § 1302.21.

Home-Based Option
The home-based option delivers the full range of required services through a minimum of 46 weekly visits with a child's parent(s) and at least 22 group socialization experiences over the course of the year. For example, for young infants or medically fragile children in very rural areas and when families prefer not to send their infants and toddlers to center-based care, this option may be implemented when a parent is available at home. The home-based option is not compatible with the EHS-CC Partnership model.

The requirements for this option are fully described in HSPPS at 45 CFR § 1302.22.

Family Child Care Option
The full range of Head Start services are delivered to children enrolled in family child care homes operated directly by the recipients or through a contract with the family child care provider(s). This model must operate sufficient hours to meet the needs of families and not less than 1,380 hours per year. This option may be implemented, for example, when families need flexible hours, prefer a home-like setting, or want siblings to attend together. It may also be the best option when there is no available facility in a community to operate a center-based program.

Developing Family Child Care Providers and Building Networks
In communities with a shortage of child care, innovative approaches can increase the supply of high-quality early care and education in the community. Such approaches might include training new family child care providers and establishing family child care networks. Family child care networks can create increased administrative efficiency and access to resources. They also can decrease isolation and increase professional development opportunities and support among and between family child care providers. The requirements for this option are fully described in HSPPS at 45 CFR § 1302.23.

Locally Designed Program Options
Based on the strategic plan and community assessment, applicants may propose a variation that responds to the needs of families in the community. Some communities or eligible populations may have unique needs for services that do not fall within the standard options or models described earlier. Applicants proposing to provide EHS to such populations or communities are encouraged to propose innovative designs or a combination of existing program options using the waiver process for locally designed options described at 45 CFR § 1302.24 of HSPPS. Selection of this option must be supported by evidence that demonstrates the locally designed variation effectively supports appropriate development and progress in children's early learning outcomes.

EHS-CC Partnerships Model
In this model, eligible infants and toddlers enrolled in center-based and/or family child care receive high-quality, comprehensive services that meet HSPPS, including requirements for teacher qualifications, curriculum, screening, nutrition, and other services. EHS-CC Partnership recipients are required to use a layered funding model that integrates additional funding and resources for a seamless full-day and full-year of comprehensive services.

More than 60 percent of infants and toddlers served through CCDF are in families living below the federal poverty level; therefore, they are also eligible for EHS. Children in poverty who need

full-day child care frequently also need the comprehensive services provided by EHS. Also, because of the relatively underserved proportion of subsidy-eligible children under age 3 in high-quality early learning programs, applicants are strongly encouraged to target areas with high concentrations of subsidy-receiving and subsidy-eligible (e.g., children on subsidy waiting lists) children and their families. For children in poverty already in child care, improving the quality of those programs is a need often identified by communities.

EHS-CC Partnerships have the benefit of "ripple effects" for children who may not be enrolled in an EHS-CC Partnership slot, but who receive services at an EHS-CC Partnership site, increasing the positive reach of the model. For example, all infants and toddlers attending an EHS-CC Partnership site, whether enrolled in EHS or not, may benefit from program-level enhancements such as lower teacher-child ratios, staff training, and facilities and homes that meet licensing and other safety requirements.

EHS-CC Partner Roles and Responsibilities

It is expected that through the EHS-CC Partnership, recipients and their partners will be able to deliver higher quality and comprehensive services to all enrolled children by layering federal funds for the eligible EHS children, child care subsidies, and/or other funds. Funding provided through this grant will support the implementation of these requirements and must be allocated appropriately between the recipient and the partners to do so. The exact role for each partner will vary at the local level, depending on the existing and proposed services through EHS and child care for each partnership. The EHS-CC Partnership recipient and partnering child care provider(s) must establish clearly defined roles and responsibilities articulated through a subrecipient agreement or a contract. Clearly defining joint roles and responsibilities, and those that are separate and distinct for the recipient and for the partners, is vital in ensuring accountability for meeting all requirements of the grant.

All EHS-CC Partnership recipients must ensure that every child receives all of the required services set forth in the HSPPS, whether that is done directly by the recipient or through support or financial assistance to the child care partner. EHS-CC Partner sites are responsible for meeting the HSPPS for the specified services rendered through the agreement with the recipient, such as education, health and safety needs, family partnerships, nutrition, etc. Recipients will ensure that all other comprehensive services will be provided directly by the recipient, partners, or through community referrals. Roles and responsibilities of the EHS-CC Partnership recipient and the child care partners are summarized in, but not limited to, the list below.

Recipient Level Responsibilities

- Engaging partners early and continuously in the planning process;
- Ensuring the provision of all comprehensive services, including health, mental health, oral health, nutrition, education, and parent engagement services for all children enrolled in EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnerships;
- Ensuring that all administrative and financial management requirements are met;
- Ensuring all EHS staff and EHS-CC Partnership teachers meet minimum qualifications for their positions;

- Providing technical assistance and professional development, coaching, and supervision for all staff with an emphasis on continuity of care and relational learning that supports children and their families and fosters school readiness;
- Ensuring family service workers are available in sufficient numbers to support enrolled families;
- Ensuring a minimum of two annual home visits for each enrolled child;
- Supporting the inclusion and delivery of services to children with disabilities (at least 10 percent of funded enrollment);
- Fully assessing and ensuring the physical environment and facilities meet all HSPPS, including requirements for square footage, health and safety, appropriate crib and sleep spacing and arrangements, and facilities;
- Planning for and providing resources to support partner access to safe, developmentally appropriate outdoor environments that allow children to grow and thrive in the natural environment;
- Ensuring compliance with all applicable regulations, including state and/or local child care licensing;
- Ensuring children retain services regardless of their subsidy status; and
- Engaging parents in program decision-making through involvement on the Policy Council.

EHS-CC Partnership recipients are expected to build upon the existing services provided by the partners as well as other available community resources.

EHS-CC Partner Responsibilities

- Ensuring adult-child ratios and group sizes meet EHS standards or state, territory, or tribal requirements – whichever requirements are more stringent – at all times. (This may require additional staffing to ensure appropriate coverage for full-day services while also minimizing the number of staffing transitions and maximizing the consistency and stability of relationships for very young children);
- Implementing an evidence-based curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for infants and toddlers;
- Conducting ongoing assessment of children to individualize the instruction and learning for each child;
- Providing health and nutrition services, including all developmental, sensory, and behavioral screening and assistance with provision of follow-up services; and
- Engaging parents in the full range of child development and family support services.

Start-Up and Implementation Period for All Recipients (regardless of model)

Newly awarded recipients, regardless of model or option(s), should anticipate a reasonable startup period and will be expected to begin providing services as soon as high-quality services can reasonably be provided (i.e., when high-quality facilities are ready and staff have been trained). Recipients are expected to be fully enrolled no later than 12 months after receiving a grant award.

ACF recognizes that the development and implementation of a start-up plan is critical to the

success of new or expanded programs for all recipients, regardless of model. The development of the timeline for pre-operational activities, including orientation, training, and health and safety checks, is also critical to ensure children have the necessary equipment and materials. Planning for the provision of EHS services requires a thoughtful process in both design and implementation, including engagement with community entities. Planning for EHS-CC Partnerships must incorporate the strengths and resources of the child care and family child care partners and the contributions of other community organizations. Planning for program implementation should begin with this application and continue at the time of funding. Start-up planning and implementation will consist of the following:

- Negotiating and implementing contract agreements with a manageable number of partners;
- Creating an organizational structure to support provision of comprehensive services to children and families;
- Developing plans to provide high-quality, comprehensive services (health, mental health, family support, and nutrition);
- Hiring qualified staff, including completing the required background checks, and developing professional development plans for each staff member;
- Providing for training and professional development activities that move staff on a career pathway towards knowledge, skills, and credentials associated with enhanced quality;
- Developing plans to provide both EHS and, if applicable, child care staff, with training as required by HSPPS; state, territory, or tribal and local child care licensing; and other regulations;
- Developing plans to ensure high-quality group care environments, including assessing and improving settings to ensure the safety, well-being, and developmental appropriateness for children, staff, and families;
- Developing plans to lessen barriers such as lack of transportation;
- Developing management, fiscal, and facilities plans;
- Developing service plans that include a schedule for screening and ongoing assessment and the selection and implementation of an evidence-based curriculum;
- Developing plans to implement and facilitate a coordinated system of care that will assist in meeting the needs of the children and families, including partnership with the local Part C (of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) intervention agency that coordinates services for infants and toddlers with disabilities;
- Developing systems of ongoing oversight and monitoring to ensure quality;
- Recruiting and enrolling children; and
- Planning for and providing access to safe, developmentally appropriate, outdoor environments that allow children to grow and thrive in the natural environment.

Activities completed by all applicants during the planning process require a thorough review and understanding of relevant HSPPS and all relevant requirements in the Head Start Act. All newly funded EHS recipients will have a variety of resources available to support their planning and implementation efforts, including the resources listed in *Section VIII. Other Information, Reference Websites* of this NOFO. All EHS Expansion or EHS-CC Partnership recipient applicants are strongly encouraged to use a start-up planner and/or a fiscal consultant to help ensure plans, policies, and procedures are in place to address all regulations.

Applicants are encouraged to request start-up funds; however, the approval of start-up funding as requested is not guaranteed.

Start-Up and Implementation Period for EHS-CC Partnership Recipients

Early implementation of the first round of EHS-CC Partnership grants has contributed to an expanded body of knowledge regarding the keys to success in these programs. In addition to the previously addressed considerations for all applicants, EHS-CC Partnership recipients should focus on the following during the start-up/implementation period:

- *Conducting self-assessment and partner-assessment activities,* including applicants assessing their own capacity to provide technical assistance to partners to meet EHS standards and considering whether they will need to contract with other entities to provide support through the grant. Discussions with partners should include an in-depth assessment of partners' needs related to facilities, referral and enrollment protocols, classroom environment, ratios, group size, professional development, staff qualifications, staffing plans (including substitutes), salary enhancements, curriculum, meals, and other supports.
- *Working with partners to jointly develop partnership contracts and agreements* that include information such as sites of services, specific roles and responsibilities of the recipient and the partners, and selection of partnership child care sites. EHS-CC Partnership contracts and agreements should be individualized to address the unique needs of each partner. Programs are encouraged to work with a manageable number of partners.
- *Establishing payment terms and conditions* that are stated in the contract or agreement and ensure partners have access to sufficient funds to accomplish the goals and objectives. Partners should be paid on an enrollment basis, rather than on an attendance basis. Other costs associated with fully preparing partnership staff and the care environment to meet HSPPS must be calculated into payments made under the agreement. Timing of payments to partners is also crucial; if funds are to be used to support staff qualifications, facilities renovation, and other immediate needs, then those initial costs and methods for providing funds to partners must be covered in the contract. Partner contracts or agreements and the program budgets must anticipate the loss of child care subsidy or other funding and must recognize that the loss of funding is not a basis for dis-enrolling an EHS-CC Partnership child already enrolled in the program.
- *Developing plans for staffing coverage* that allows for primary caregiving relationships and continuity of care for EHS-CC Partnership enrolled children. Because the required EHS staffing ratio is one teacher for every four children and no more than eight children in one group or classroom, additional teachers and staff will be needed to cover full hours of operation and conduct the range of duties (e.g., lesson planning, reflective supervision, etc.) necessary to provide EHS-CC Partnership services.
- *Developing plans to support the professional development of staff over time* and strategies to ensure that wages of EHS-CC Partnership caregivers are on par with similarly qualified EHS teachers.

- *Planning systems of ongoing oversight and support* to ensure high-quality service provision through the life of the grant; contract adjustments may be needed over time with constant assessment to help determine the level of adjustment.

Non-Federal Match
Recipients must, unless a waiver is granted, contribute 20 percent of the total cost of the program from non-federal funds. A waiver may be granted for any of the grounds listed in 42 U.S.C. 9835(b) (45 CFR § 1303.4).

For awards that contain real property projects, any portion of the cost of purchase, construction, or renovation contributed by or for the entity, or a related donor organization, to satisfy a matching requirement, per 45 CFR §1303.44(c) and 1305.2, becomes part of the federal share of the facility. Unless recipient equity contributions (sources) are used and meets the following: 1) are non-Head Start related funds (e.g., unrestricted funds such as income unrelated to Head Start, donations, and contributions), 2) not used as match on the facility or related activities (45 CFR §1303.44(c)), 3) not included in the Head Start grant (45 CFR §1303.4), and 4) not used in other federal funding sources (45 CFR §75.306(b)(5)).

Administrative Cost Waiver
No more than 15 percent of total costs may be used for program administration. An HHS official may grant a waiver of the 15 percent limitation on allowable development and administration costs for a Head Start or EHS program approving a higher percentage for a specific period of time not to exceed 12 months (45 CFR § 1303.5).

Oversight and Monitoring Reviews
OHS is responsible for monitoring the quality of Head Start and/or EHS program services and the recipient's compliance with federal and other applicable requirements, and to provide access to T/TA as needed. The federal government uses several mechanisms to conduct its oversight, including ongoing communication with ACF regional offices and periodic site visits. Federal monitoring reviews are required by the Head Start Act. Over the course of the project period, reviews are conducted to ensure compliance with the HSPPS and other applicable regulations. Monitoring reviews may occur onsite or offsite and include compliance with health and safety requirements, rules related to children's eligibility for the program, and financial management requirements.

Federal Evaluation
As a condition of acceptance of an award under this NOFO, all recipients are required to participate fully in ACF-sponsored evaluations and adhere to all evaluation protocols established by ACF to be carried out by its designee contractors.

ACF-led evaluations are subject to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act. ACF will obtain OMB approval prior to requiring recipients to respond to a collection of information.

Eligible Participants (all recipients)
EHS programs enroll pregnant women and infants and toddlers from birth to age 3. Additionally, EHS-CC Partnership recipients may serve children in family child care settings from birth to 48 months. Families must have incomes below the poverty line, be eligible for public assistance, be

homeless, or be in foster care to be eligible for services (see definitions in 45 CFR § 1305.2). Children are selected for enrollment based on age, income eligibility, and relative level of need with regard to other criteria that are identified within each community (45 CFR § 1302.12(b)(c)).

Head Start regulations permit up to 10 percent of enrolled participants to be from families that do not meet these low-income criteria.

Additionally, programs must ensure that at least 10 percent of the total number of children enrolled by the Head Start or EHS agency and delegates are children with disabilities unless a waiver is granted.

Child care subsidy eligibility requirements under CCDF are established by states, territories, and tribes and vary within a broad set of parameters established by federal rules. Each CCDF lead agency sets income eligibility limits up to 85 percent of state median income. Families must be working or participating in education/training, and children must be under age 13. In CCDF, more than 60 percent of infants and toddlers served are in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold and, therefore, are eligible for EHS also.

Applicants may elect to propose program models that promote socioeconomic diversity within classrooms. Federal Head Start funds must be used to serve eligible children as described in this section. Additional children who are not income-eligible for EHS can be served as long as their participation is supported through other funding sources such as child care subsidies, public school pre-K allocations, parent-paid tuition, or other sources. Such program designs may be beneficial in promoting socioeconomic diversity within classrooms. All costs must be allocated to appropriate funding sources in compliance with federal requirements.

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. An award recipient or any subrecipient may not use grant funds, whether directly or indirectly, to support or oppose union organizing.

Subrecipient(s) must meet the eligibility requirements identified in the NOFO, *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:
G (Grant)

Estimated Total Funding:
$6,914,508

Expected Number of Awards:
2

Award Ceiling:
$6,914,508
Per Budget Period

Award Floor:
$1,000,000
Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:
$0
Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:
07/01/2024

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

Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'

Additional Information on Awards:
Awards made under this funding opportunity are subject to the availability of federal funds.

Applicants must submit an annual (12-month) budget. The funding amount listed on Line 18a (Federal) of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, must reflect a full 12 months of funding. The federal funding amounts reflected on the SF-424 and in the applicant's budget submission must match.

Applications requesting an annual award amount that exceeds the Award Ceiling as listed in this section will be disqualified from the merit review and funding under this funding opportunity. This disqualification applies to the Award Ceiling for a 12-month period, as reflected on the applicant's SF-424. Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

The applicant's 12-month budget request should include both base and training and technical assistance (T/TA) funding. Base funding is for use in program operations, staff, materials, equipment, facilities, etc. In addition to base funding, applicants should request an additional 2.5 percent of the base funding for training and technical assistance (T/TA) funding. T/TA funding is used for the purposes of improving program quality and helping prepare children to succeed in school and is described in Section 648 of the Head Start Act.

Therefore, the total federal funds requested in the applicant's budget and on the applicant's SF-424, Line 18a (Federal) should include the sum of the applicant's proposed base and T/TA funding. Please see *Appendix, Regional Allocations* for more information.

Expected Number of Awards
Please note that the expected number of awards represents a total estimated **range** of awards that OHS might make as the result of this NOFO. If the expected number of awards is 1, applicants are expected to submit proposals for the entire service area. If the expected number of awards is 2 or greater, applicants may submit 1 application to apply to serve either the entire service area, or a portion of the service area.

Start-up/Pre-Award Costs
Pre-award costs, including start-up costs, may be requested by an applicant in addition to the base operating and T/TA grant funds. If requested, applicants must provide a separate budget for start-up/pre-award costs, in addition to a 12-month budget for the base funding awarded, within the page limitations stated for *The Project Budget and Budget Justification* in S*ection IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. If awarded, start-up/pre-award costs would apply to costs incurred up to 90 days prior to the award start date. Examples of start-up activities are facility renovations, purchase of classroom supplies, building purchase, licensing, background checks, etc.

Approval of start-up/pre-award costs is **not** guaranteed; they are negotiated at the time of award and are based on reasonableness, necessity, and the availability of funds. The incurrence of start-up/pre-award costs in anticipation of an award is done at the applicant's own risk and imposes no obligation on ACF either to make an award or to increase the amount of the approved budget if an award is made for less than the amount anticipated and is inadequate to cover the start-up/pre-award costs incurred. It is possible that ACF may honor start-up/pre- award costs by reducing the base amount of the award to include these costs.

Estimates for start-up/pre-award costs must be identified separately on the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, and in the Budget and Budget Justification section of the application. The start-up/pre-award funding amount must **not** be included in the funding amount listed on Line 18a (Federal) of the SF-424. The funding amount listed in Line 18a of the SF-424 must represent only the total annual federal funding the applicant is requesting for base and T/TA funding. Start-up/pre-award costs, if requested, should be included only on the Other Estimated Funding line (Line 18e) and clearly labeled as "Start-up/Pre-Award Costs" in a separate line item on the SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs. Additionally, if applicants are requesting start-up/pre-award costs, these costs must be easily identified as a separate budget in the Budget and Budget Justification section of the application.

Inclusion of start-up/pre-award costs in the application submission is not subject to the "Award Ceiling Disqualification" that is explained in this section of the NOFO and in *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*. However, if an applicant does not segregate start-up/pre-award costs from the base funding award request (SF-424, line 18a, Federal), the "Award Ceiling Disqualification" will apply.
Start-up budgets will be evaluated against the criteria listed in *Section V.1. Criteria*.

Note: Costs incurred for grant application preparation are not considered an approved use of pre-award costs and may not be included in the project budget or budget justification.

Grant Awards
The successful applicant(s) under this NOFO *may* receive grant awards with a project period of up to 5 years (60 months) that may include four to five budget periods. For example, recipients may receive a 54-month project period with an initial 18-month budget period and three subsequent 12-month budget periods.

Please see *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions* for limitations on the use of federal funds awarded under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are any public or private non-profit agencies, including community-based and faith-based organizations, or for-profit agencies pursuant to section 645A(d) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9840a(d).

Eligible entities include the following: (1) entities operating Head Start, (2) entities operating an Indian Head Start or Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program, and (3) other public entities and non-profit or for-profit private entities, including community-based and faith-based organizations, capable of providing child and family services that meet the standard for participation in programs under the Head Start Act.

Please note, “(1) entities operating Head Start" programs includes entities operating Head Start, EHS, and/or EHS-CC Partnership programs.

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

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

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

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:
Yes
Recipients are required to meet a non-federal share of the project cost, in accordance with Section 640(b) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9835 (b).

Recipients must provide at least 20 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF (federal) share and the non-federal share. The non-federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions. For example, if the total approved project cost is $ 8,643,135 , in order to meet the match requirements, a project requesting $6,914,508 in ACF (federal) funds must provide a non-federal share of the approved total project cost of at least $ 1,728,627 , which is 20 percent of total approved project cost.

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

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

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

See *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification, Commitment of Non-Federal Resources* for more information.

Matching Waiver Pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d)
Matching requirements (including in-kind contributions) of less than $200,000 are waived under awards made to the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (other than those consolidated under other provisions of 48 U.S.C. 1469) pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d). This waiver applies whether the matching required under the award equals or exceeds $200,000.

Non-federal resources will be evaluated under criteria found in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity.

III.3. Other

Inclusion of start-up/pre-award costs in the application submission is not subject to the "Award Ceiling Disqualification," as explained in Section II. Federal Award Information. (See directions for listing these costs in Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, Budget and Budget Justification.) However, the "Award Ceiling Disqualification" will apply if an applicant

does not segregate start-up/pre-award costs (SF-424 18e, Other) from the base funding award request (SF-424, line 18a, Federal).

Application Disqualification Factors
Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from the merit review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

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

Required Electronic Application Submission

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

If you do not have an internet connection or sufficient capacity to upload large documents to the internet you may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow you to submit your application in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission."

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

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

Applications submitted to Grants.gov which fail their validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by ACF. If you submit an application for the same NOFO more than once, only the last on-time submission will be acknowledged.

Paper applications with an approved exemption from the electronic submission requirement must be received by 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. Paper applications received after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be disqualified from the merit review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Additional Application Disqualification Factors

- In accordance with 45 CFR § 1304.13, recipients terminated for cause by ACF within 5 years prior to the posting date of this NOFO will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.
- A Head Start or EHS agency that has had a denial of refunding, in the preceding 5 years is also excluded from competing (45 CFR § 1304.13).

Notification of Application Disqualification

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

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

HHS-2024-ACF-OHS-HP-R3-0072
Office of Head Start
OHS Grant Review Team c/o Guardians of Honor
1990 K Street NW
Suite 650
Washington
DC
20006
(888) 242-0684
OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com

Application Packages

Electronic Application Submission:

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

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

Notice of Two-File Requirement

Applicants applying via Grants.gov must upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms (SFs) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved forms. Additional files will be removed prior to the merit review.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Signature of Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)

Each applicant must designate an authorized organization representative (AOR) with authority to act on the organization’s behalf on matters related to the application submission and administration of awards. The AOR signature must appear on all forms in which a signature is required. By signing, the AOR agrees the organization will abide by all applicable Federal statutes, regulations and terms and conditions of the award.

Accepted Font Style and Size
Applications must be in Times New Roman 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be 10-point font. Pages that contain blurred or illegible text will be removed.

If documents must be scanned, the font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. You may not scan more than one page of a documents onto a single page. Pages with blurred text will be removed from the application.

English Language
Applications must be submitted in the English language and must be in the terms of United States (U.S.) dollars. See 45 CFR §75.111 for more information.

Page Limitations
You must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS" later in this section. **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 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:

- Table of Contents
- One-page Project Summary
- Required Assurances and Certifications
- SFs and OMB-approved forms
- Resumes, Logic Models, Proof of Legal Status/Non-Profit Status, Third-Party Agreements, Letters of Support, footnotes and tables
- Line-Item Budget and/or the Budget Justification

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

NOTE: Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended. The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

Corrections/Updates to Submitted Applications
When applicants revise a previously submitted application, ACF will accept only the last on-time

application for pre-review under the Application Disqualification Factors. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors* and *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options.*

Copies Required
Applicants must submit one complete copy of the application package electronically. Applicants must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at Grants.gov.

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

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

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

Page Limitations and File Content
The page limitation is 150 pages for the Project Summary/Abstract, Table of Contents, Project Description (First File), and Appendices. Page limitations are identical for electronic and paper formats application submissions.
First File

- Project Summary/Abstract *(single-spaced) – limited to 1 page*
- Table of Contents *(single-spaced) – suggested 1 page*
- Project Description *(double-spaced) – suggested 75 pages*
    - Community Need and Objective
    - Project Design and Approach
    - Staffing
    - Planning and Implementation
    - Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems
    - Budget and Budget Justification

Second File

- Appendices *(must be readable) – suggested 73 pages*
    - Certificate of Good Standing
    - Board of Directors Attestation
    - Proof of Legal Status of Applicant
    - Proof of Policy Council Approval
    - Organizational Capacity documentation (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
    - Third-party agreements
    - Indirect cost rate agreement (IDR)
    - Letters of support
    - Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities
    - Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

- Other supporting documents

Enforcement of NOFO Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements
In instances where formatting and font requirements are not adhered to, ACF uses a formula to recalculate the number of pages the application would include if it conformed to the formatting and font requirements listed in this section. The formula counts the number of characters an applicant uses when following the instructions and using 12-point TNR and compares the resulting number with that of the submitted application. For example, an applicant using TNR, 11-point font, with 1-inch margins all around, and single-spacing, would have an additional 26 lines, or 1,500 characters, per page which is equal to 4/5 of an additional page. Recalculation of pages using this formula may cause applications to exceed the page limitation, which would cause pages to be removed from the end of the Second File, which includes the Appendices, and excluded from review.

Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues
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 under "How to Apply for a Grant/Submit an Application."

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
You are required to submit applications electronically unless you have received an exemption that will allow submission in paper format. See *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options* for information about requesting an exemption**.**

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

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

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

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

Formatting Submission Files
ACF strongly recommends that File One and File Two be uploaded as Portable Document Files (PDFs).

To adhere to the two-file requirement, you may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Applicants using 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.

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."

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

Use only file formats supported by ACF
While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two files (Project Description and Appendices) are uploaded as PDFs in order to comply with the two-file upload limitation.**

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)

Documents in file formats not listed here will be removed from the application and will not be used in the merit review. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

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 not be reviewed. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:
You must receive an exemption in order for a paper application to be accepted for review. For more information on the exemption, see "ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission."

Applicants with an approved exemption for paper application submission should download the forms package associated with the NOFO's Synopsis on Grants.gov under the Package tab.

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

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

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

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

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
Proof of Policy Council Approval	Submission is required of applicants that are **current Head Start and/or Early Head Start recipients**.	Proof of Policy Council Approval of the application is required of applicants that are current Head Start and/or Early Head Start recipients by 42 U.S.C. § 9837(c)(2)(D)(iii) and 45 CFR § 1301.3.
Certificate of Good Standing	Submission is required for all **for-profit organizations**.	Sole proprietorships are not eligible applicants. The submission of the Certificate of Good Standing, along with the current list of board members, and organizational documents that require the establishment and maintenance of a Board of Directors, provide proof of eligibility for for-profit organizations.
SF-424A Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs / SF-424B Assurances - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424C - Budget Information Construction Programs / SF-424D - Assurances Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for both, non-construction **and** construction activities, under the proposed project. SFs must be used and submitted by the application due date. By signing and submitting the SF-424B and/or SF-	Required for all applications when applying for non-construction and/or construction activities under the proposed project. Please see special instructions in the *Checklist* in *Section VIII. Other Information* in this funding opportunity. Projects that include both, **non-construction and construction** activities must submit the SF-424A, B, C, and D.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	424D, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.	
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Required of all applicants. Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application and project award period. Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at: http://www.sam.gov .	See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)* for more information.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants must cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
Assurance: Board Attestation	Submission is strongly encouraged for any applicants who collaborate with an external grant-writer, consultant and/or contractor for assistance and/or support on their application submission. The assurance may be submitted with the application package.	A template of this assurance is provided in the *Appendix* of this announcement. The assurance must be **signed** by the Board chair, or person who is authorized to sign the application on behalf of the applicant.

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

Mandatory Grant Disclosures

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

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

> The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Grants Management, ATTN: Grants Management Specialist, 330 C Street, SW., Switzer Building, Corridor 3200, Washington, DC 20201
>
> **And to:**
>
> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, ATTN: Mandatory Grant Disclosures, Intake Coordinator, 330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen Building, Room 5527, Washington, DC 20201
>
> **Fax:** (202) 205-0604 (Include "Mandatory Grant Disclosures" in subject line) or
>
> **Email:** grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov

SF-424 Key Contact Form

Applicants must provide contact information on the following in this form:

- Key Management Staff (e.g., Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer);
- Key Program Staff (e.g., Executive Director, Program Director); and
- Board Chairperson

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions

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

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 project description. The summary must include a brief description of the applicant's proposed project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed activities or services, and if applicable, the population group(s) to be served. The summary must be clear, accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. Please place the following at the top of the Project Summary:

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

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

Geographic Location
Describe the precise physical location of the project and boundaries of the area to be served by the proposed project. If the geographic area(s) are served by both the primary recipient and subrecipient organization(s), describe the locations covered by all organizations anticipated to receive funding from the award.

Legal Status of Applicant Entity
Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Non-Profit Organizations

Proof of Non-Profit Status Options:

Option 1: 501(c)(3) and non-501(c)(3) non-profit organizations are eligible
Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

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

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

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).

Legal status means being established as a public agency under state law or a non-profit under state or federal law. ACF will accept proof of status as a for-profit organization under state or federal law.

For-Profit Organizations
For-profit organizations applying for funding must submit the following to provide proof of their eligibility and legal status:

- A Certificate of Good Standing,
- A current list of board members, and
- Organizational documents that require the establishment and maintenance of a Board of Directors.

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 funding opportunity.

Proof of Policy Council Approval
Current Head Start and EHS recipients must submit proof of Policy Council approval of the application as required by section 642(c)(2)(D)(iii) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9837(c)(2)(D)(iii) (45 CFR § 1301.3).

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. Community Need and Objectives
Applicants must provide data about why a geographic area is in high need of early childhood education and family support services. Data must include the number of eligible pregnant women, infants, and toddlers by geographic location; the number of families in extreme poverty; jobless rates; incidence of community health problems; or other similar factors.

Demonstrate how the proposed program would target a geographic area with the greatest need for EHS services, and how children and families most in need will be identified and prioritized.

Provide a description of information regarding the availability and access to early childhood education services for infants and toddlers in low-income families in the proposed geographic area.

Clearly justify how the needs of the community are best served by their proposed approach, including a rationale for which ages of children the applicant proposes to serve in its program. Justify the program option(s) proposed for each age group to be served as the most appropriate to meet the needs of the community, as outlined in 45 CFR § 1302.20, including how many pregnant women, infants, and toddlers will be served; and the number of hours per day, days per week, and weeks per year services will be provided.

- Applicants proposing to serve in multiple communities must specify the number of program participants to be served in each community.
- Applicants proposing the home-based option must include the proposed number of home visits and socializations for each age group to be served.

Applicants must discuss the access to other early childhood education programs and services, including the estimated number of EHS-eligible children who are receiving child care subsidies, in the geographic area. Additionally, applicants must describe their plan to effectively leverage available funding streams including child care subsidies.

Applicants must describe barriers to participation including access to transportation. Applicants should propose EHS transportation services as necessary to ensure that the highest need children can access the program.

Describe how the proposed program will ensure that not less than 10 percent of the total number of children enrolled will be children with disabilities. Describe how the proposed program will partner with other programs or services in the community to best meet the needs of low-income families to be served, with evidence of community engagement and community partnerships in the geographic location(s) to improve service delivery, increase access to services, and prevent duplication.

If proposing EHS-CC Partnership services, discuss if partners have been identified that demonstrate a commitment to the proposed project. Applicants must also demonstrate their knowledge and awareness of its state's subsidy and CCDF policy landscape in its proposed service area.

If proposing delegate agencies, describe how those delegate agencies were chosen. The applicant must describe how the organization's oversight will ensure the delegate agencies implement high-quality programs that adhere to the requirements outlined in 45 CFR 1303 Subpart D. The applicant must also identify the communities in which the delegate agency will operate, and the number of children to be served including the proposed program option(s).

2. Project Design and Approach

Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to implement and sustain the high-quality, comprehensive, individualized educational, health, mental health, nutritional, oral health, and

other social services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families that prepare children to succeed in school. Describe how the program will implement program components and, where applicable, describe separately for infants and toddlers.

Name the curriculum or set of curricula that will be used, describe why it was selected, and present the evidence basis that it effectively promotes progress toward its developmental foundations. Provide evidence supporting how the curriculum is tied to outcomes for children and meets the requirements discussed in 45 CFR § 1302.30.

Applicants must describe a process for establishing and measuring school readiness goals (45 CFR § 1302.102) that reflect the ages of children proposed to be served and demonstrate these goals are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Applicants must also explain the extent goals were or will be established in alignment with state early learning guidelines, as appropriate. Describe how service effectiveness and quality will be measured, monitored, and improved over time. Applicants must specify the name and process for selection of their assessment tool. The assessment must be developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate. Describe the plan to use child assessment data for individualization and referral, and for aggregation and analysis. Describe how that analysis will be used in combination with other program data to determine recipients' progress toward meeting its goals.

Applicants also must include information about how they will meet the health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition needs for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers. This includes a description of the system for health screening and services that will ensure participants are accurately referred for necessary follow-up evaluation and treatment within time frames specified by 45 CFR § 1302.33.

Provide a plan describing how the applicant will integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to promote children's learning and development, as discussed in 45 CFR § 1302.34, 1302.50 and 1302.52.

Describe how the proposed program will meet the unique needs of special populations, including children with disabilities, dual language learners, children and pregnant women experiencing homelessness, working families, and children in foster care. Provide a plan to develop a unified birth-to-school-entry continuum of care and education through linkages with home visiting programs, Head Start, and other preschool programs. Applicants must explain their procedures to identify such participants; plans to provide trained personnel; and plans to provide services to assist children in making meaningful progress in attaining age-appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities, and development. In addition, applicants must propose the coordination of services within a community that supports transitions for children and families.

Applicants must describe how they will deliver services to enrolled women post-pregnancy, and how the newborn infant and family will transition into the appropriate program option. They must also describe how the program will support transitions within the EHS program. Lastly, applicants must describe how they will ensure that infants, toddlers, and their families participating in the program will have the opportunity to receive Head Start or other appropriate preschool services for which they are eligible through the age of mandatory school attendance.

Finally, applicants must describe their plan to coordinate with public and private entities that are willing to commit resources to assist the program in providing high-quality child health and developmental services. Such partnerships must include a plan to coordinate with other child care and preschool programs, state pre-kindergarten programs, programs under Part C and Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and with the educational programs that children will enter upon leaving EHS.

If proposing EHS-CC Partnership, applicants must demonstrate that partner sites have been identified and describe their plan for sustaining these partners, as well as contingency plans for replacing proposed partners if any partnerships do not materialize or prove unsustainable.

3. Staffing

Applicants must describe the qualifications of their proposed staff, including their experience in providing child development services in accordance with 45 CFR § 1302.91. This includes a description of key program staff's major functions and responsibilities. Applicants must also describe the management staff's knowledge of the proposed program and how it will ensure all program staff members understand how those standards are applicable to them. Describe the plan to include staff with infant/toddler expertise in decision-making roles.

Applicants must describe how they will attract and retain qualified staff, including through salary and benefits, with the ability to implement a research-based curriculum; effective instructional strategies; and a high-quality, comprehensive program. Describe the strategies and mechanisms to support staff, and a plan to assess staff performance including under-performing staff. Applicants must also describe how they will provide career development opportunities for professional, paraprofessional, and other staff (45 CFR § 1302.91).

Additionally, applications must describe a plan to evaluate job applicants, including existing recipient staff, to determine which applicants are most capable of implementing a high-quality, comprehensive program.

The narrative must also address the following: (1) how the applicant will facilitate strong staff child relationships that support the development of infants and toddlers; (2) a plan to ensure that staff is prepared for and supported in implementing evidence-based instructional practices that are individualized to support positive child outcomes; and (3) how all staff will successfully partner with families in supporting children's development.

If proposing center-based or family child care services, describe the plan for observing teacher practice, including teacher-child interactions. If proposing home-based services, describe the plan for observing home visitor practice, including interactions with the family and child, and supporting the parents in their role as the child’s primary caregiver/teacher. For all program services, discuss using this information to inform professional development and practice improvements. Include the names of any instruments to be used.

4. Planning and Implementation

An implementation plan and timeline, including transition period planning, must be included that addresses the following, at a minimum:

- State and local licensing requirements for each proposed age group, the length of time required to obtain licensure for early childhood learning environments, and the impact on the proposed implementation plan.
- The availability of appropriate facilities for the proposed program model(s) and the anticipated timelines for: 1) rent/lease arrangements, and/or 2) completing any construction, renovation, or adaptation of space to meet requirements. Plans should include any properties with a federal interest currently occupied by the incumbent recipient, where applicable. For more information, see *Section I. Program Description, Facilities* and *Mortgages and Long-Term Lease Agreements*.
- As applicable, plans for alternative service provision (e.g., temporary home-based services) during start-up, until contracts are in place and facilities are fully operational. Full enrollment is expected no later than 12 months from the date of award.
- Where facilities are not available, a plan to acquire facilities in accordance with 45 CFR § 1303.42.
- The ability to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff to support the proposed start of EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership programming.
- Plan for recruiting eligible children and families, and maintaining enrollment. **If proposing EHS-CC Partnership,** this plan must include how the applicant will identify and enroll families currently receiving CCDF subsidies.

5. Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems

Applicants must demonstrate their ability to oversee operations that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The application must describe the capacity of senior executive managers (for example, Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer) and governing body to manage the following:

- Exercise effective oversight of program operations and accountability for federal funds;
- Set and monitor overall agency priorities and operational systems;
- Develop and implement systems for communication, record-keeping, reporting, and ongoing monitoring, and;
- Conduct community assessments, annual self-assessments, and outcome-based evaluations.

Applicants must document their plan to constitute and train a governing body that will be in compliance with the program governance requirements established in section 642(c) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9837(c). Applicants must also demonstrate their capacity to effectively implement a system of governance that includes the Policy Council and parents in decision making. If applicable, applicants should provide information about how its current governance structure would change (if at all) to meet the HSPPS.

If proposing EHS-CC Partnership, applicants must describe their ability to work with partners and ensure accountability for meeting HSPPS across multiple sites (as appropriate).

Please see *6. Budget and Budget Justification*, under *The Project Budget and Budget*

***Justification*, later in this section for additional program-specific requirements that will be evaluated in the application review process.**

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

- Organizational charts.
- Resumes.
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description).
- List of Board of Directors.
- Audit summary report including auditor's opinion in lieu of the full audit report, if applicable.
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this funding opportunity.
- Child care licenses and other documentation of professional accreditation.
- Information on compliance with federal/state/local government standards.

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

These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

- Financial and Program Management
- Property Management
- Procurement
- Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting
- Subrecipient Monitoring and Management
- Record Retention and Access
- Remedies for Noncompliance
- Prior Written Approval

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).

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
Provide a description of how protected PII and other information that is considered sensitive, consistent with applicable federal, state, local and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, will be collected and safeguarded. The applicant must provide the methods and/or systems that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and if applicable, address the process for subrecipient(s) and/or contractors. Also, provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period. See 45 CFR § 75.303(e) for more information.

Third-Party Agreements

Third-party agreements include Letters of Commitment, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Memoranda of Agreement (MOA). Letters of Commitment, MOUs and MOAs must 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. Letters of Commitment, MOUs, and MOAs 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 third-party agreements.

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment, MOUs, or MOAs between recipients and third-parties (i.e., subrecipients, contractors, or other cooperating entities). In addition to clearly describing the roles and responsibilities for project activities and support and/or resources that the third-party is committing, these agreements must detail work schedules and estimated remuneration with an understanding that a finalized agreement will be negotiated once the aware is made to the successful applicant.

Letters of Support
Provide statements from community, public, and/or commercial leaders that support the project proposed for funding. All submissions must be included in the application package. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the individual writing the letter, the organization they represent, the date, and reason(s) for supporting the project.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

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

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

Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications listing the appropriate budget forms to use in this application.

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

Provide a budget for the initial budget period only (typically the first 12 months of the project) using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable.

Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for only the first budget period 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.

6. Budget and Budget Justification

Applicants must demonstrate that funds are budgeted to provide all required comprehensive EHS services. The applicant must provide evidence of a reasonable per-child cost, based on the proposed program type and program option(s). The application must clearly and accurately distinguish between the base operating funds, T/TA funds, total federal funds, and the applicant's non-federal share. Additionally, applications must provide a cost-effective budget that is aligned with the program services, staffing plan, and other program components proposed in the application narrative. The applicant must describe the plan for the expenditure of T/TA funds. **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership,** applicants must include sufficient T/TA resources to assist the child care and family child care partners with meeting HSPPS.

For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership, applicants must demonstrate that a significant portion of the funding will be directed to its child care partners to ensure high-quality early learning experiences. Applicants must also discuss how funding will be directed to child care partners to support staff professional development, including credentialing and other opportunities designed to support increased competencies, credentials, wages, and compensation. Additionally, applicants must describe specific details about their plan to use a layered funding approach that includes the child care subsidy. Applicants must discuss how they will not supplant existing funding, including subsidies for their proposed project. Finally, applicants must describe the plan to ensure that children whose families lose child care subsidy eligibility will continue to be served.

The application must detail the plan to contribute the required non-federal share/match of the total project cost. Each source of non-federal share match must be clearly identified, including the estimated amount per source and the valuation methodology. Finally, the proposed sources of

non-federal share/match must only be derived from allowable sources. Please see S*ection III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching* for information on the matching requirement.

Start-up/Pre-Award Costs

The application must demonstrate that start-up/pre-award costs if proposed, are justified, reasonable, and applicable based on the applicant's proposed EHS program. Applicants requesting start-up funding must submit a separate budget for start-up/pre-award costs as described in S*ection II. Federal Award Information*. If the applicant is not requesting startup/pre-award costs, this requirement is not applicable.

Start-up/pre-award costs may include the following: 1) ensuring that proposed facilities comply with state and local requirements and are adequately equipped, 2) purchasing classroom equipment and supplies, and/or 3) conducting staff background checks.

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 because those costs should be listed under the "Contractual" category as part of the total value of the contract or agreement.

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

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

Travel

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

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

Equipment

Description: "Equipment" means 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: Tangible personal property other than those included under the Equipment category. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of $5,000, or the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, regardless of the length of its useful life. See 45 CFR § 75.2, 75.321, and 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 those that should be placed under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, procurement contracts, and subawards. 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. Costs related to professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees, must be listed in the Other category. (Typically, these arrangements will take the form of a consultant agreement directly with an individual as opposed to a contract with a company that employs the consultant. The latter case must still be listed under Contractual line item.)

If applicable and charged as a direct cost, include cost of third-party renting or leasing agreements for equipment; and third-party renting or leasing agreements for real property by address for each building, facility, administrative office, space, structure, land, and other real property.

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

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

If applicable and charged as a direct cost, for each real property proposed or claimed for rent or lease include: the rent amount with calculation; terms of lease; maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost; minor A&R with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost; show the computation and provide other information that supports the amount requested. Only when allowable and with prior approval, describe the financing costs (including interest) including terms for the real property address. For applicable ACF programs with real property authority, see ACF Property Guidance. **Do not include** real property owned by the recipient or arrangements considered "less-than-arms-length," "sale and lease back," "finance lease" per Financial Accounting Standards Board, "financed purchase" per Government Accounting Standards Board standards because these costs (e.g., depreciation costs) if charged as 1) a direct cost, should be listed under the "Other" category or 2) an indirect cost as with any indirect costs, as part of their indirect cost pool that is used to calculate an indirect cost rate). These costs must be treated as either direct or indirect costs, not both. For more information, see 45 CFR §75.2, 75.414, 75.430-75.431, 75.434, 75.436, 75.439, and 75.452.

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to: individual consultant costs; local travel; insurance (when not included under the Fringe category); food (when allowable); medical and dental costs (non-personnel); professional service costs (e.g., audit charges); depreciation of real property and

equipment (when not treated as an indirect cost), printing and publications, training costs (such as tuition and stipends), staff development costs, and administrative costs (when not treated as an indirect cost). 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.

If applicable and charged as a direct cost, include depreciation by real property address for each building, facility, administrative office, structure, land, and other real property proposed for use and depreciation of equipment proposed for use. For each real property owned by the recipient or less-than-arms-length lease intended to be proposed or claimed for use provide, if applicable, and in accordance with 45 CFR §§75.436 and 75.465: the allocable percentage and total dollar amount; the depreciation amount with type of method and calculation used; tax amount; insurance amount and what it covers; maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost; minor A&R with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost; the ownership type (e.g., owned, leased, or intent to lease); show the computation and provide other information that supports the amount requested. For more information, please see ACF Property Guidance. **Do not include** costs of third-party renting or leasing real property and equipment because those costs should be under the "Contractual" category.

Indirect Charges

Description: Indirect or Facilities & Administration (F&A) (F&A means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. F&A costs are generally used by institutions of higher education). Typical examples of indirect or F&A costs include but are not limited to depreciation on buildings and equipment, equipment and capital improvements, operation and maintenance expenses, and general administration and expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of personnel administration and accounting. For more information, see 45 CFR §75.2, 75.414, 75.430-75.431, 75.434, 75.436, and 75.439. Enter the total amount of indirect costs. This category has one of two methods that an applicant can select. An applicant may only select one.

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

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

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 by statute, recipients must meet the required level of cost sharing. Recipients that have voluntarily decided to contribute cost sharing when it is not required, or at a higher level than required, will be held accountable for the proposed cost-sharing, if accepted by ACF and included in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to provide cost sharing that has been accepted by ACF may result in the disallowance of federal funds.**

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 the merit review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity.

Construction

Description: Provide a separate detailed budget and narrative in accordance with the instructions outlined on the SF-424C. Identify which construction activities and costs will be contractual and those that the applicant will assume.

Justification: Provide a separate detailed budget and narrative in accordance with the instructions for other object class categories. Identify which construction activities/costs will be contractual and those that the applicant will assume.

Program Income

Description: The estimated amount of gross income, if any, expected to be directly generated by or earned from this project. Program income includes but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed, the use or rental of real or personal property acquired under federally-funded projects, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights, and interest on loans made with award funds. See 45 CFR §75.307 for more information.

Justification: Describe the nature, source and anticipated use of program income in the budget or refer to the pages in the application that contain this information.

Paperwork Reduction Act Disclaimer

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

Application Submission Options

Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic Delivery

ACF applicants are required to submit their applications online through Grants.gov.

How to Register through Grants.gov

Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process.

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

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

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

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

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

***Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account*:** For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html

EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles: After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC is then expected to log into Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.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 this funding opportunity, please contact the number listed in the application package.

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

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

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

When ACF successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submission, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role.

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

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" for complete guidance.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

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

Paper Application Submission

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* of this funding opportunity for address information for paper application submissions.

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

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

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

- Be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information until the process is complete. If you receive an award, your SAM registration must be active throughout the life of the award. It must be renewed every 365 days to keep it active;
- Provide its UEI in each application or plan it submits; and
- Ensure any proposed subrecipient(s) have obtained and provided to the recipient their UEI(s) prior to making any subawards (**Note:** Subrecipients are not required to complete full SAM registration.).

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

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

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

01/24/2024

Due Dates for Applications

Due Date for Applications 03/26/2024

03/26/2024

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* and in this section.

Electronic Applications

The deadline for submission of electronic applications via Grants.gov is 11:59 pm ET on the due date.

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

Mailed Paper Applications

The deadline for receipt of mailed paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the Overview and in this section. Applications should be mailed to the address provided in *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

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

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

Emergency Extensions

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

Acknowledgement of Received Application

Acknowledgement from Grants.gov

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

Applicants will also receive an email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process.**

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:

ACF will 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://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf.

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 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 at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management, 330 C St. SW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20201.

Entities that meet the eligibility requirements of this funding opportunity are still eligible to apply for an award 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)

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to the following address.

Submission by Mail
HHS-2024-ACF-OHS-HP-R3-0072
Office of Head Start
OHS Grant Review Team c/o Guardians of Honor
1990 K Street NW
Suite 650
Washington
DC
20006

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: With the exception of the notice of funding opportunity and relevant statutes and regulations, reviewers must not access, or review, any materials that are not part of the application documents. This includes information accessible on websites via hyperlinks that are referenced, or embedded, in the application. Reviewers must evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and must not refer to, or access, external links during the merit review.

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. 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 merit review. The required elements of the project description and budget justification may be found in *Section IV.2. The Project Description* of this funding opportunity.

In addition to the required elements of the project description found in *Section IV.2.*, the objective review panel will evaluate proposals in accordance with the relevant sections of the HSPPS (45 CFR Parts 1301-1305). The review of applications under this NOFO will result in a numerical score as evaluated by a panel of non-federal reviewers. The review panel will assign numerical scores for each evaluation criterion based on a range of points (0 points - total point value), taking into consideration the extent to which the application narrative includes substantial and compelling evidence.

1. Community Need and Objectives **Maximum Points:** 20

To evaluate the Community Need and Objectives, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant presents evidence of the need for EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership services in the proposed community. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- If the proposed service area and location(s) where services will be delivered is clearly described.
- How EHS resources will be directed to the geographic area(s) of greatest need and children and families most in need of EHS services.
- The rationale for which ages of children are proposed to be served, including the estimated number of eligible pregnant women, infants, and toddlers by program type and geographic location(s).
- If the proposed program option (center-based, home-based, family child care, services to pregnant women, locally designed option, or EHS-CC Partnership) best meets the needs of the local community. Does the justification use information that describes the applicant's process for engaging other entities in the community in making this determination?
- The analysis of access to other early childhood education programs and services, including the estimated number of EHS-eligible children who are receiving child care subsidies in the geographic area.
- The analysis of the quality of other early childhood education programs and services in the geographic area.

- The plan to effectively leverage available funding streams, including child care subsidies.
- The plan to enroll children with disabilities.
- If applicable, how the proposed delegate agency is identified, including the communities in which the applicant will operate, the number of children to be served by age of child and their proposed program option(s).
- Evidence of community engagement in the proposed geographic locations that is designed to improve service delivery, increase access to services, and prevent duplication.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership:**
    - The extent to which the applicant has identified partners that have demonstrated a commitment to the proposed project.
    - Evidence of the applicant's knowledge and awareness of its state's subsidy and CCDF policy landscape in its proposed service area.

2. Program Design and Approach **Maximum Points:** 30

To evaluate Program Design and Approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant presents evidence of its ability to implement a high-quality, comprehensive program for the population the applicant proposes to serve in the *Community Need and Objectives* section. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- The curriculum or set of curricula and teaching practices proposed that promote progress toward school readiness goals.
- The process for establishing and measuring school readiness goals. Do those school readiness goals reflect the ages of children that the applicant proposes to serve in the program, and are they culturally and linguistically appropriate?
- If the school readiness goals were or will be established in consultation with the parents of children who will be participating in the program.
- How the applicant will meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- The plan to meet the needs of the applicant's targeted population in the child welfare system, dual language learners, homeless children, and pregnant women.
- The plan to develop a unified birth-to-school-entry continuum of care and education through linkages with home visiting programs, Head Start, and other preschool programs.
- How the applicant will meet the health, mental health, nutritional, and oral health needs of program participants.
- **For applicants proposing center-based or family child care services:** How the applicant describes a plan for observing teacher practice, including teacher-child interactions.
- **For applicants proposing home-based services:** How the applicant describes a plan for observing home visitor practice. Do all applicants describe, using this information, how to inform professional development and practice improvements?
- The process for obtaining required screenings, including developmental hearing and vision, and referring for further evaluation as necessary.
- The process for selecting the specified assessment tool. The plan to use child assessment data to individualize the instruction and learning for each child and, as necessary, refer

for additional evaluation and intervention; and aggregate and analyze child-level assessment data.

- The plan to coordinate with public and private entities to assist the program in providing child health and developmental services and program management services.
- The system proposed to deliver services to enrolled women post-pregnancy, including how the newborn infant and family will transition into the appropriate program option at the appropriate time.
- How the applicant will ensure that infants, toddlers, and their families participating in the program will have the opportunity to receive Head Start or other appropriate preschool services.
- The plan to facilitate the meaningful engagement of parents in activities designed to help them become full partners in the education of their children. Barriers to parent participation should be discussed.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership:**
    - Evidence that the applicant has identified its partner sites and describes a thorough plan for sustaining its child care partners, as well as contingency plans for replacing proposed partners if any partnerships do not materialize or prove unsustainable.

3. Staffing **Maximum Points:** 15

To evaluate Staffing, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates its ability to recruit, retain, and manage staff with the ability to implement a comprehensive EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership program. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- The plan to ensure all teaching staff will meet the qualification requirements.
- Evidence of the proposed program director and proposed key program staff's ability to meet the required qualifications to administer an EHS program, complex social service program, or early education services.
- The plan to attract, train, and retain qualified staff, including through salaries and benefits, with the ability to implement a high-quality program.
- How the applicant proposes to provide career development opportunities for professional, paraprofessional, and other staff, including family child care providers.
- If the plan to evaluate job applicants, including existing recipient staff, to determine which applicants are most capable of implementing a high-quality, comprehensive program is realistic.

4. Planning and Implementation **Maximum Points:** 10

To evaluate Planning and Implementation, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant details its plan to provide effective and efficient implementation of EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership programming, including start-up period planning. Applicants must include an implementation plan and timeline that addresses, at a minimum, the following:

- State and local licensing requirements, the length of time required to obtain licensure for early childhood learning environments, and the impact on the proposed implementation plan for the timely provision of services.

- The availability of appropriate facilities for proposed program models and the anticipated timelines for completing any construction, renovation, or space adaptation to meet requirements.
- As applicable, plans for alternative service provision (e.g., temporary home-based services) during start-up, until contracts are in place and facilities are fully operational to ensure full enrollment not later than 12 months from the date of award.
- Where facilities are not available, a plan to acquire facilities in accordance with federal Head Start regulations.
- The ability to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff to support the proposed start date of EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership operations.
- The plan for recruiting eligible children and families and maintaining enrollment. **If proposing EHS-CC Partnership,** this plan must include how the applicant will identify and enroll families currently receiving CCDF subsidies.

5. Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems **Maximum Points:** 15

To evaluate Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates its understanding of the crucial role of the Board and Policy Council. Reviewers will also consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates a capacity to provide effective program administration and oversight, including child care partner sites if applicable. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- The capacity of the senior executive managers and governing board to manage the following:
    - exercise effective oversight of program operations and accountability for federal funds;
    - include the Policy Council in the planning and decision-making process;
    - ensure representation of the diverse community served;
    - set and monitor overall agency priorities and operational systems; and
    - conduct community assessments, annual self-assessments, and ongoing monitoring.
- The ability to plan, constitute, and train a governing body in compliance with Head Start regulations. If applicable, the applicant's description of how its current governance structure would change to meet the requirement of the Head Start Act.
- The existence of management systems for program planning, internal and external communication, record keeping, issuance of internal and external reports, and program self-assessment and monitoring.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership:**
    - The applicant’s ability to work with partners and ensure accountability for meeting HSPPS across multiple sites (as appropriate).

6. Budget and Budget Justification **Maximum Points:** 15

To evaluate the Budget and Budget Justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that funds are budgeted to provide all required EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership services, and if the applicant:

- Clearly and accurately distinguishes the proposed base operating funds, T/TA funds, total federal funds, and the applicant's non-federal share, if applicable.
- Provides a cost-effective budget aligned with all components of the application narrative as described in S*ection IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership, the applicant effectively demonstrates the following:**
    - A significant portion of the funding will be directed to its child care partners to ensure high-quality early learning experiences.
    - Funding will be directed to child care partners to support staff professional development, including credentialing and other opportunities designed to support increased competencies, credentials, wages, and compensation.
- Describes its plan for the expenditure of T/TA funds.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership, the applicant includes the following:**
    - Sufficient resources for T/TA to assist the child care and family child care partners with meeting HSPPS.
    - Evidence of a reasonable per-child cost, based on the proposed program type and program option(s).
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership, the applicant includes the following:**
    - Specific details about its plan to use a layered funding approach that includes leveraging child care subsidy for its proposed budget. Does the applicant discuss how it will not supplant existing funding, including subsidies for their proposed project?
    - Plan to ensure that children whose families lose child care subsidy eligibility will continue to be served.
- Demonstrates that start-up/pre-award costs, if proposed, are justified, reasonable, and applicable based on the applicant's proposed EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership program. **NOTE:** If the applicant is not requesting start-up/pre-award costs, this criterion is not applicable.
- Details its plan to contribute the required non-federal share/match of the total project cost.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No award will be made under this funding opportunity on the basis of an incomplete application.

Initial ACF Screening

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

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

Results of the merit review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, merit 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 consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. In addition, ACF reserves the right to evaluate applications in the larger context of the overall portfolio by considering geographic distribution of federal funds (e.g., ensuring coverage of states, counties, or service areas) in its pre-award decisions.

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

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

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

Pre-Award Discussions and Negotiations
ACF may enter into pre-award discussions and/or negotiations with one or more applicants regarding each applicant's proposed project, budget, and other information related to its organizational capacity to provide high-quality, comprehensive early education services before making final award(s). Based on these discussions, ACF may consider the following:

- Whether the proposal meets the stated purpose of the funding opportunity as described in *Section I. Program Description.*
- Whether the proposed program is cost effective based on the application submitted for evaluation in response to *Section IV.2. The Project Description* and *The Project Budget and Budget Justification.*
- Whether the proposal contains contingent activities that may impede, or indefinitely delay, the implementation of the proposed program, such as, but not limited to, the ability to timely renovate and/or secure facilities that are required to deliver EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership services.
- Whether the Head Start and/or EHS programming proposed by an applicant who will be newly operating in the state, can begin quickly after award with a minimal start-up period as described in the *Executive Summary*.
- Any other factors necessary for ACF to determine if the applicant is capable of providing high-quality, comprehensive early education services.

Not all pre-award discussions and/or negotiations will result in grant awards. ACF reserves the right to cease discussions and negotiations with applicants prior to award and may enter into discussions or negotiations with other applicants. A breach of confidentiality by the negotiating applicant during pre-award discussions may jeopardize the final award decision.

Additional Review and Funding Considerations

ACF's priority is expanding access to high-quality programs. Grants will be awarded based on how effectively the model design fits the needs of the community to be served. ACF will prioritize proposals that include a viable plan to reach full enrollment within 12 months of receiving the grant award. Through this NOFO, funds are allocated by each geographical region of the country as defined by ACF based on each region's relative share of young children whose families' incomes are below the poverty line. ACF retains administrative flexibility to reallocate between regions as appropriate when making awards using the regional allocation to ensure each recipient meets a high standard of quality and to align with funding priorities.

The Head Start Act gives priority to organizations based on their ability to serve target populations. In keeping with section 641(d)(3) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9836(d)(3), HHS shall give priority to applicants for Head Start funding that have demonstrated capacity in providing effective, comprehensive, and well-coordinated early childhood education and development services and programs to children and their families. Section 645A(e) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. 9840A(e), gives priority in EHS funding to entities with a record of providing early, continuous, and comprehensive childhood development and family services.

ACF reserves the right to prioritize qualified applicants proposing to serve children in census tracts designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones (see https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx).

Please note that if the applicant is a current or former Head Start or EHS recipient, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider the recipient's last two OHS monitoring reports. In addition, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider any monitoring reports issued in the 5 years preceding the posting of this NOFO. ACF will retrieve, review, and consider any documentation that relates to the fiscal health and financial viability of the applicant. ACF will also retrieve, review, and consider state licensing documentation on the applicant. These reports and documents will be considered in making final funding determinations.

Also, if the applicant is a current Head Start, EHS, or EHS-CC Partnership recipient, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider the recipient's enrollment data for the three years preceding the posting of this NOFO. Ongoing under-enrollment will be considered in making final funding determinations.

ACF reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant that is presently designated as "high-risk," probationary or not in good standing, or has been debarred or defunded by any federal agency. ACF reserves the right not to fund applicants with unacceptably high federal Head Start per-child costs. Additionally, ACF may decide not to fund projects that would require unreasonably high start-up costs for facilities or equipment or that propose such a low number of children that the project may require unreasonably high operating costs relative to the number of children and families proposed to be served.

The ACF Office of Grants Management will also perform an internal review of all property requests and documentation submitted to assess that costs comply with federal regulations and NOFO requirements. ACF reserves the right to request any additional information (e.g., lease agreements, encumbrance documents, etc.) to ascertain allowability and may reduce the budget due to unallowable costs.

Each prime recipient's primary role must be to ensure the delivery of the statutorily authorized services, whether provided directly or through collaborative involvement with their subrecipient(s). Prime recipients of an award under this NOFO will be legally accountable to ACF for the performance of the project or program. Prime recipients will be held solely responsible in the event of non-compliance by a subrecipient.

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), https://sam.gov/reports/ei/static, 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.

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

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

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

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

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

Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other

correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

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

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

An application funded with the release of federal funds through an 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.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

ACF awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS), which covers basic award processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. The HHS GPS is available at https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/grants/grants/policies-regulations/hhsgps107.pdf.

Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations

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

Consistent with 45 CFR § 87.3(b), a faith-based organization that receives direct financial assistance from HHS may not engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the HHS awarding agency. Such an organization, whether faith-based or not, also shall not, in providing services

funded by HHS, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice, as provided in 45 CFR § 87.3(d).

The Head Start specific regulations (known as the Program Performance Standards or HSPPS) are as follows:

- 45 CFR Part 1301, Program Governance
- 45 CFR Part 1302, Program Operations
- 45 CFR Part 1303, Financial and Administrative Requirements
- 45 CFR Part 1304, Federal Administrative Procedures
- 45 CFR Part 1305, Definitions
- And all applicable grant regulations

Copies of the current applicable Head Start regulations are available at the websites identified in S*ection VIII. Other Information, Reference Websites*. Regulations used to determine whether expenditures by Head Start and EHS recipients are allowable can be found at https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy under Fiscal Regulations.

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports:
Annually
Unless otherwise noted in this section, recipients under this NOFO 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 https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/manage-grant/reporting.

Head Start Program Reporting

All Head Start recipients under this NOFO will be required to submit program information periodically, including for example, monthly enrollment reports, an annual Program Information Report (PIR), and service location and staff contact information. Recipients will be notified in advance of required reporting through various means, such as Notice of Award (NoA) documents, email correspondence, and letters. Additional information on Head Start Program Reporting can be found at https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/pir. The PIR serves as the annual performance progress report for the Office of Head Start.

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

Financial Reports:
Semi-Annually
Post-Award Facilities Requirement
It is expected that for all facility related projects the applicable OMB-approved SF-429 forms (e.g., SF-429 Cover Page, SF-429 Attachment A – Annual General Report, SF-429 Attachment B – Acquire or Improve Request, and SF-429 Attachment C – Disposition and Encumbrance Request) be submitted along with supporting documents in the GS/OLDC system. For more information, please see ACF Property Guidance and Real Property Guidance.

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Shawna
Pinckney
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Head Start
330 C Street SW
Street 2:
Washington
DC
20201
(888) 242-0684
OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com

Office of Grants Management Contact

First Name:
Jeff
Last Name:
Newton
Federal Agency:
Administration for Children and Families
Sub OpDiv:
OpDiv:
Street 1:
1961 Stout Street
Street 2:
Office 08-148
City:
Denver
State:
CO
Zip:
80294
Phone:
(888) 242-0684
Phone 2:
Fax:
Email:
OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com
URL:

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 Forecasts and NOFOs www.grants.gov/.

ACF "Applying for an ACF Award" https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant.

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

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

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

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

Qualified Opportunity Zones https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequentlyasked-questions and https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx.
The Head Start Act as amended by The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, (Pub. L. 110-134) http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/law.
Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR Parts 1301-1305) https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/hspps-appendix.pdf.
Early Head Start:
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/ncecdtl.
Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc.
EHS-CC Partnership Implementation Planners and Fiscal Consultants
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/local-early-childhood-partnerships/article/ehs-cc-partnership-implementation-planners-fiscal-consultants Special Quest resources:
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/specialquest-multimedia-training-library/specialquest-multimedia-training-library
Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Information on the Internet

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Resources: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/starting-partnership.

About the Child Care and Development Fund

Office of Child Care:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ.
CCDF Reauthorization: https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/ccdf-reauthorization.
Child Care Technical Assistance Network: https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/.
State CCDF Administrators:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts.

Applicant Support Resources

OHS strongly encourages applicants interested in applying for this funding opportunity to visit

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant. This webpage provides information on applying for grants, registering and applying through www.Grants.gov, submitting an application, and understanding the grant review process. All interested applicants are reminded to frequently refer back to this NOFO when preparing their application.

Lastly, OHS encourages interested applicants to visit https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/grant-application/article/funding-opportunity-announcement-foa-locator-map. This website offers resources, such as a profile of the current recipient services, equipment, and inventory, intended to support organizations in preparing their funding applications. All interested applicants are reminded to frequently refer back to this NOFO when preparing their application.

Prospective applicants will also have the opportunity to send questions to OHS by e-mail at OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com. A summary of the questions and OHS responses will be posted for public view on the applicant support website as soon as they become available.

Interested applicants may also contact the OHS Operations Center at (888) 242-0684 or TTY: 711 if they have additional questions.

Application Checklist

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

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Proof of Policy Council Approval	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications* and *The Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation*.	Submission is due by the application due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Application Due Dates and Times.*
Certificate of Good Standing	See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications* and *The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity*.	Submission is required with the application by the Application Due Date in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
SF-424A Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs / SF-424B Assurances - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424C - Budget Information Construction Programs / SF-424D -	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications*. These forms are available in the NOFO's forms	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Assurances Construction Programs	package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. All forms are ***required*** for applications under this NOFO for projects that include both non-construction **and** construction activities.	
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO'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.*
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)* in the funding opportunity. To obtain a UEI and SAM registration, go to http://www.sam.gov.	A UEI and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms	Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	package at www.Grants.gov.	
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.
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 NOFO'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.*
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
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.*
Project Summary	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.*

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	The Project Summary is limited to one single-spaced page.	
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 NOFO. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
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.
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*.
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDR)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*. The IDR must be	If the IDR is available by the application due date, it must be submitted with the application package. If it is not available by the application due date, listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4.*

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	submitted with the application package.	*Submission Dates and Times*, it may be submitted 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*.
Assurance: Board Attestation	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications and Section V.1. Criteria*, with a template provided in the *Appendix.*	Applicants for whom this applies the assurance must be **signed** by the Board chair, who is authorized to sign the application on behalf of the applicant. Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Assurance: Board Attestation		

Appendix

Assurance Template: Board of Directors Attestation

For applicants to whom this applies, this assurance must be completed, **signed** and dated, and submitted as part of this application in the appendices.

Date
To Whom It May Concern:
I, (name), attest that (Organization) collaborated with an external grant-writer(s), consultant(s), and/or contractor(s) on the development of the application submitted in response to the funding opportunity announcement. Further I, (name), attest that the governing Board of (Organization) actively participated in the content development and commitments included in the applicant's proposal. On behalf of (Organization), I also confirm that its governing Board, and proposed Early Head Start and/or EHS-CC Partnership management staff are fully knowledgeable of the Head Start regulatory requirements.

(Signature)
(First and Last Name)
(Title/Board Chair)

The assurance must be signed by the Board Chair, who is the designated representative of the applicant with the authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the award and administration of grants.