



**Administration for Children and Families**

**Office of Community Services**

**Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Regional Performance and Innovation Consortium  
(RPIC) Capacity Building and Quality Improvement (CBQI) - Region VIII**

**HHS-2023-ACF-OCS-ET-1124**

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

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**Funding Opportunity Title:**

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Regional Performance and Innovation Consortium (RPIC) Capacity Building and Quality Improvement (CBQI) - Region VIII

**Announcement Type:**

Initial

**Funding Opportunity Number:**

HHS-2023-ACF-OCS-ET-1124

**Primary CFDA Number:**

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**Due Date for Applications:**

07/31/2023

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

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

The Office of Community Services (OCS) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) issued a NOFO for one 3-year cooperative agreement for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Regional Performance and Innovation Consortium (RPIC) Capacity Building and Quality Improvement (CBQI). This cooperative agreement will support a robust regional Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) strategy for the CSBG Network<sup>[1]</sup> — states, territories<sup>[2]</sup>, directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations, CSBG-eligible entities, and state associations — in one of the ten regions identified by ACF. In order to strengthen service delivery models, build and expand agency capacity, advance equity across programs and services, leverage funds and other resources, enhance relationships across the region, and develop a robust regional T/TA strategy, the RPIC CBQI Lead will develop and execute T/TA that focuses on the following:

- Service Delivery Models, Strategies, and Partnerships;
- Build and Strengthen the Knowledge, Capacity, and Ability of the Region to Implement Effective Programs and Activities;
- Regional Activities Designed to Address the Collaboration, Capacity Building, Quality Improvement, and T/TA Needs of the Region;
- Relationship-building, Collaboration, and Information-Sharing Efforts with CSBG state-lead agencies;
- Regional CSBG Performance Management Framework Efforts; and
- Storytelling and Messaging to Demonstrate the Impact of Collective CSBG Regional Efforts.

Since 2011, OCS has supported awards through cooperative agreements under the RPIC model to serve as geographic leads for the coordination of CSBG T/TA activities. In this role, the RPICs have helped build an integrated system of capacity-building activities by coordinating efforts across the region. Additional information about the establishment of the RRPIC can be found in [CSBG Information Memorandum #123 Reorganization of CSBG Resources](#).

Through separate cooperative agreements, OCS will fund 11 RPIC CBQI award recipients. The award recipient for this cooperative agreement will serve as the lead state association (hereafter referred to as the RPIC lead) within the region and work closely with regional state associations to coordinate T/TA efforts across the region. The RPIC lead will also be responsible for the administrative oversight of the cooperative agreement, including programmatic and financial reporting. In addition, the RPIC lead will identify, promote, and support multiyear T/TA efforts to ensure high-quality programs and services and impactful outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

The cooperative agreement will require OCS to have substantial involvement and a close working partnership with the award recipient to implement T/TA consistent with the purposes of CSBG and the goals and mission of OCS. The award recipient will regularly communicate information about the implementation and progress of the initiatives throughout the duration of the cooperative agreement, including meeting monthly with OCS to discuss the progress of goals and objectives outlined in the project work plan.

[1] OCS and the CSBG national T/TA providers are also included in the CSBG Network; however, for the purposes of this NOFO, they are not included as direct recipients of the T/TA provided.

[2] Per the CSBG Act, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are recognized as territories, while District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are recognized as states.

## **I. Program Description**

### **Statutory Authority**

Sections 674(b)(2)(A) and 678A of the CSBG Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 9903(b)(2)(A) and 9913)

### **Description**

#### **OVERARCHING PRIORITIES FOR OCS**

OCS-funded programs are vital in addressing persistent poverty and pervasive disparities and inequities. To achieve our vision, OCS has established several overarching priorities to ensure that our goals are achieved across the CSBG Network. Award recipients must ensure that the following three goals are considered throughout the planning and execution of the activities outlined within this NOFO.

1. Ensuring the programs OCS administers are of the highest quality possible and reach those most in need.
2. Lifting voices from the field and using lessons learned to be thoughtful, inclusive, and innovative in the approach.

3. Identifying opportunities to break down silos and implement cross-cutting initiatives within OCS and ACF and across the federal government.

## **CSBG BACKGROUND**

CSBG is a federal block grant and one of seven anti-poverty programs administered by OCS. CSBG supports activities to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and empower individuals and families with low-incomes to become self-sufficient. CSBG funds support a wide range of individual-, family-, and community-level services and strategies to support the needs of individuals and families with low-incomes in rural and urban areas. OCS provides CSBG funding to states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. territories, federal and state-recognized tribes and tribal organizations (hereinafter referred to as CSBG award recipients). Tribal award recipients provide services directly to individuals and families. State and territory award recipients work with CSBG-eligible entities to tailor CSBG-funded programs and services to meet the most pressing needs in their communities.

Through discretionary awards, OCS provides funding to support CSBG training, technical assistance, and monitoring efforts. Eligible applicants include statewide or local organizations or associations with demonstrated expertise in providing training to individuals and organizations to help effectively address the needs of families and individuals with low-income and underserved communities. These organizations collaborate with OCS and support CSBG-funded states, territories, and tribes and tribal organizations to increase effectiveness and accountability and to generate robust results for the people and communities served.

With the support of CSBG funding, award recipients and CSBG-eligible entities work together to assist individuals and families with low-income increase self-sufficiency, improve living conditions, strengthen ownership of and pride in communities, and establish strong family and support systems. Common areas where the CSBG Network designates funding include, but are not limited to, collaboration and linkages across anti-poverty programs and organizations; crisis and emergency supports; assistance with housing, nutrition, utility, transportation, employment, and educational needs; income and asset building services; and upstream services aimed at creating pathways out of poverty.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

Capacity building is essential for the implementation of sustainable service delivery models that provide high-quality and cost-effective services. Specifically, capacity building leverages the inherent self-sustaining ability of organizations and systems to recognize, analyze, and improve quality issues by controlling and allocating available resources more effectively<sup>[1]</sup>.

Capacity building can take many forms, such as:

- Professional development for staff and board members,
- Opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, networking, or leadership development,
- Creating or re-examining organizational plans, and
- Initiating collaboration with other non-profits.

Quality improvement efforts include understanding working dynamics within and between organizations; implementing a collaborative and systematic approach to problem solving; and designing, testing, and implementing changes using real-time measurement for improvement. By engaging in capacity building and quality improvement efforts, organizations can deliver on services through the promotion of sound management, strong governance, and a persistent focus on achieving meaningful results.

[1] See Reference List.

## **THE ROLE OF THE RPIC CBQI WITHIN THE REGION**

The RPIC lead institutes collaborative and innovative T/TA efforts across the region; this includes working closely with the state associations within the region to ensure that state-specific T/TA needs are identified and relevant training is coordinated. There is one RPIC lead, within each of ACF's 10 regions. The exception is Region 4; T/TA efforts for Region 4 are provided by two CSBG award recipients due to the size of the region. The RPIC lead will:

- Spearhead the development of a regional T/TA strategy that builds on, and contributes to, the efforts of state associations, states (hereinafter referred to as CSBG state lead agencies), CSBG-eligible entities, and tribes and tribal organizations. This includes implementing and administering a subaward with each state association within the region for the coordination and implementation of identified state-specific T/TA. The award recipient will utilize the [CSBG Needs Assessment Dashboard](#) as a resource for developing the regional T/TA strategy.
- Ensure that T/TA efforts focus on providing and sustaining services to diverse populations and lead to enhanced service delivery across the region.
- Organize and lead regional convenings focused on planning, coordinating, and implementing T/TA activities and sharing resources with CSBG-eligible entity staff across the region.
- Assess the effectiveness of the T/TA provided through this cooperative agreement through ongoing program performance evaluation.

## **OBJECTIVES OF RPIC CBQI**

T/TA provided through this cooperative agreement may include regional convenings; small group learning opportunities; direct, one-on-one T/TA; webinars; training modules; publications; podcasts; e-guides; case studies; training videos; presentations; and other learning and capacity-building activities. The award recipient must work collaboratively with national CSBG T/TA providers under the shared mission of delivering high-quality services that create pathways out of poverty for vulnerable communities.

The award recipient is required to demonstrate an understanding of the interconnected nature of all members of the CSBG Network and demonstrate a commitment to deconstructing silos and other circumstances that adversely impact communication and service delivery across the region. The award recipient must have the capacity, infrastructure, and experience to develop training, resource materials, and other activities that propel the CSBG Network forward. Additionally, the award recipient must engage and integrate territories and directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations into regional efforts and have the ability to identify and document the unique needs of territories, directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations, CSBG-eligible entities, and state

associations within the region. The award recipient will work with OCS; national T/TA providers; and other national, state, and local stakeholders to address unique needs and challenges, when possible.

It is expected that the knowledge, capacity, and ability of the region will be strengthened through the implementation of meaningful, coordinated, and targeted regional and state-specific T/TA activities. The RPIC lead will institute a regional T/TA strategy for promoting relationship-building, capacity building, and quality improvement initiatives; coordinating T/TA resources to support community-level outcomes; and fostering collaborative strategies that promote partnership, innovation, and improved service delivery. The award recipient will be required to coordinate high-quality, tailored T/TA and develop, implement, and disseminate T/TA tools that address the six objectives described below. Each objective will be achieved through strong relationships and collaboration with the state associations within the region. The T/TA tools and resources developed through this cooperative agreement shall be housed in a resource library as specified by OCS.

## **1. Service Delivery Models, Strategies, and Partnerships**

This objective is a direct response to the *Service Models, Strategies, and Partnerships* needs category described in the [CSBG Needs Assessment Dashboard](#), which was one of the highest rated T/TA priorities by the CSBG Network. Service delivery models include identifying the services an individual or family needs to become self-sufficient, guiding an individual or family through a continuum of services, and tracking outcomes. Strategies include protocols for monitoring and managing the quality and effectiveness of services. Partnerships include collective action efforts to leverage and coordinate local, state, and national connections to create change in community conditions that foster the environment needed to cultivate and maintain self-sufficiency and advance equity.

The RPIC CBQI award recipient must focus T/TA efforts on the following:

- A. Identifying services, service delivery models, and case management/tracking tools that effectively assist an individual and family in becoming self-sufficient.
- B. Providing T/TA to CSBG-eligible entities to support the needs of low-income individuals and families through the use of [rapid-cycle learning](#) (RCL) methods to test, adapt, and/or enhance innovative programs and service models to effectively respond to urgent community-based needs. More information on RCL can be found in the [CSBG Dear Colleague Letter \(DCL\)-2023-04 Project Impact: Rapid Cycle Projects Showcase Webinar Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2023](#).
- C. Identifying protocols for monitoring and managing the quality and effectiveness of services and tracking service delivery outcomes.
- D. Establishing, cultivating, and enhancing national, regional, state, and local partnerships that are instrumental to addressing poverty.
- E. Building, maintaining, and enhancing partnerships across the CSBG Network and cultivating unique partnership opportunities that can help advance the CSBG Network's mission.

F. Prioritizing the role of strategic organizing and planning to ensure community collaboratives are in place to efficiently deliver effective services to low-income individuals and communities.

G. Identifying and addressing challenges to advancing equity across programs, services, and processes, with a focus on individuals who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

H. Identifying and sharing promising practices, evidence-based practices, and evidence-informed practices across the region.

I. Identifying and sharing long-term planning approaches for changing community conditions.

Additional T/TA focus areas may include:

J. Determining strategies to empower customers living in low-income communities to respond to the unique problems and needs in their communities through maximum feasible participation with CSBG-eligible entities and state associations.

K. Developing and implementing training activities and curriculums for CSBG-eligible entity staff and board members, including understanding the importance of how their roles and responsibilities impact the services provided to communities.

L. Identifying strategic planning processes to successfully plan, develop, and implement strategic plans; track progress; and evaluate results, including approaches for CSBG-eligible entities to share strategic plans with CSBG-eligible entity staff and community members.

## **2. Build and Strengthen the Knowledge, Capacity, and Ability of the Region to Implement Effective Programs and Activities**

The RPIC CBQI award recipient must focus T/TA efforts on the following:

A. Identifying, enhancing, implementing, and promoting capacity building and quality improvement efforts to meet the T/TA needs of the region.

B. Collaborating with the national CSBG T/TA providers to provide coordinated T/TA to improve knowledge management and promising practices across the region.

C. Strengthening programs and activities by identifying and implementing tools and resources to assist with collecting and analyzing regional CSBG data.

D. Identifying and implementing T/TA for new CSBG-eligible entity staff including Executive Directors, Program Managers, and financial staff, as well as board members to become acclimated to their new roles.

Additional T/TA focus areas to consider may include:

E. Increasing the capacity of CSBG-eligible entities to provide and sustain services that enhance equity amongst low-income families and communities and, in turn,

transform communities and identify improvement areas to enhance services and outcomes.

F. Engaging with CSBG state lead agencies, state associations, and CSBG-eligible entities to implement succession planning efforts for employee retention; identify and fill positions as staff retire or exit key positions; implement staff leadership development programs; and create a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

G. Engaging with directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations and CSBG-eligible entities to develop a Local Theory of Change that can help validate how agencies will affect the movement of people with low-incomes towards stability and economic security and how agencies will affect the well-being of the community. A Local Theory of Change should align with the [CSBG National Community Action Network Theory of Change](#).

### **3. Regional Activities Designed to Address the Collaboration, Capacity Building, Quality Improvement, and T/TA Needs of the Region**

The RPIC CBQI award recipient must focus T/TA efforts on the following:

A. Spearheading the development of a comprehensive and integrated system of regional T/TA activities by coordinating, implementing, and collaborating with CSBG state lead agencies and state associations to develop an annual T/TA Needs Assessment template. The T/TA Needs Assessment template will be used to collect and analyze data to identify high-priority technical assistance needs and establish community-level goals and outcomes. The T/TA Needs Assessment template must be reflective of each state's needs, including those identified through the FY 2022 CSBG T/TA Needs Assessment Survey. OCS published the results of the survey in a publicly accessible dashboard: [CSBG Needs Assessment Dashboard](#). The T/TA Needs Assessment template will be disseminated to the state associations within the region for distribution to CSBG-eligible entities within their respective states.

B. Convening with state associations to analyze data from the completed state-specific T/TA Needs Assessment to determine regional T/TA priorities.

C. Collaborating with state associations to develop and disseminate an annual regional T/TA report, which captures the identified priority T/TA needs across the region and the regional strategy for addressing the needs. The report will be disseminated across the region.

D. Collaborating with state associations, national CSBG T/TA providers, and external training providers to coordinate and implement T/TA.

E. Convening (e.g., monthly or quarterly) the state associations to coordinate and implement regional T/TA and discuss the status and impact of T/TA within the region.

Additional T/TA focus areas to consider may include:

F. Facilitating regional presentations to provide a clear understanding of the role of the RPIC CBQI and the T/TA resources available to CSBG-eligible entity staff within each region.

G. Engaging with CSBG state lead agencies and CSBG-eligible entities to identify and eliminate barriers to growth and opportunities for CSBG-eligible entity staff, allowing staff to deliver innovative, effective, and culturally relevant services.

H. Coordinating with CSBG-eligible entities to provide T/TA to CSBG-eligible entity staff and board members to determine and prioritize areas for capacity building and quality improvement.

#### **4. Relationship-building, Collaboration, and Information-Sharing Efforts with CSBG State Lead Agencies**

The RPIC CBQI award recipient must focus T/TA efforts on the following:

A. Cultivating strong collaboration and recurrent communication with CSBG state lead agencies to build and strengthen relationships across the region and establish a culture that facilitates trust, collaboration, timely sharing of information, and, ultimately, advance the achievement of CSBG outcomes.

B. Providing support for collaboration with CSBG state lead agencies across the region to plan, coordinate, and deliver effective, relevant, and timely T/TA to territories, directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations, CSBG-eligible entities, and state associations.

C. Supporting engagement with CSBG state lead agencies to develop and sustain partnerships to leverage funds and other resources to improve outcomes and drive community-level transformation, including identifying opportunities to braid (coordinate two or more funding streams toward one purpose while separately tracking and reporting on each source of funding) federal, state, local, and private funding streams and implementing strategies to improve the coordination of resources across ACF-administered programs.

D. Encouraging regular convening (e.g., monthly or quarterly) between state associations and CSBG state lead agencies to exchange the sharing of strategic goals, priorities, opportunities, and expectations.

Additional T/TA focus areas to consider may include:

E. Coordinating collaborative workgroups with CSBG state lead agencies and state associations to problem solve around shared issues, including procedural changes with program administration, strategic planning, and content for Community Needs Assessments (CNA) and Community Action Plans (CAP) to maximize the utility of community strategies.

F. Engaging with CSBG state lead agencies to identify and overcome obstacles in distributing CSBG funding in an efficient and timely manner.

G. Working closely with CSBG state lead agencies to determine approaches to improve the timeliness of data sharing to state associations.

The applicant is encouraged to submit a letter of commitment from each CSBG state lead agency committing to working with the RPIC CBQI to complete an annual State T/TA Plan; integrate any CSBG territory and directly-funded Tribes and Tribal Organizations within the state into RPIC CBQI T/TA efforts; and engage in enhanced communication, collaboration, and relationship-building efforts.

## **5. Regional CSBG Performance Management Framework Efforts**

The RPIC CBQI award recipient must focus T/TA efforts on the following:

- A. Engaging with CSBG state lead agencies and CSBG-eligible entities to build capacity to meet the organizational standards to advance CSBG-eligible entities beyond compliance to ensure mission-driven operations.
- B. Utilizing the information learned through the annual regional T/TA report to implement regional performance management T/TA.

Additional T/TA focus areas to consider may include:

- C. Supporting a culture of learning that encourages successful performance management systems to ensure continuous improvement across the region.
- D. Sharing promising practices with CSBG lead agencies and CSBG-eligible entities on developing strategies to improve performance.
- E. Facilitating regional presentations to provide an overview of the CSBG Performance Management Framework to CSBG-eligible entity staff and board members.

## **6. Storytelling and Messaging to Demonstrate the Impact of Collective CSBG Regional Efforts**

The RPIC CBQI award recipient must focus T/TA efforts on the following:

- A. Highlighting CSBG success stories and effectively communicating compelling storytelling with CSBG data.
- B. Sharing achieved impact, outcomes, and success stories with CSBG-eligible entity staff, board members, and internal and external stakeholders.
- C. Leading the collection of data in response to OCS data calls, including collaborating with CSBG lead agencies, state associations, and CSBG-eligible entities within the region, to gather accurate responses in a timely manner. For further information, see *Federal Evaluation* later in this section.

Additional T/TA focus areas to consider may include:

D. Engaging with CSBG lead agencies and CSBG-eligible entities to determine strategies to use data to develop narratives to exhibit the success and impact of programs and services.

E. Utilizing success stories to educate the community about the effectiveness of CSBG community-based anti-poverty organizations.

F. Leveraging storytelling and messaging to showcase the strength of CSBG and Community Action.

## **RPIC GEOGRAPHIC AREAS**

For purposes of this funding opportunity, the RPIC must be physically located in the identified region provided in the NOFO. The geographical area aligns with the established ACF regions (Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Program: RPIC, ACF regions, and the ACF Regional Map at (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro/regional-offices>). This program is not appropriate for projects proposing stand-alone services that target areas outside the aforementioned geographic areas.

## **RECOMMENDED ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR THE RPIC CBQI**

To support a robust regional T/TA strategy, the RPIC will implement and administer subawards to each state association within the region for the coordination and implementation of identified state-specific T/TA. OCS recommends the following distribution to subaward federal funds awarded through this cooperative agreement to the state associations in the award recipient's defined geographic region to support T/TA efforts as outlined in *Section I. Program Description*. Please see [45 CFR §75.352](#) Requirements for pass-through entities. OCS believes the following distribution will result in an equitable distribution of funds across the state associations within the region and ensure that the majority of the funding is utilized for the purposes of the proposed T/TA activities within this NOFO.

- RPIC CBQI Lead – Up to 10 percent to support administrative oversight of cooperative agreement.
- RPIC CBQI Lead – Up to 40 percent dedicated to planning and coordination of regional T/TA activities, including regional convenings and developing training materials.
- Subawards to the state associations within the region for implementation of state-specific T/TA – no less than 50 percent. This includes funding for T/TA within the RPIC CBQI Lead's state.

The budget must clearly present the amount of funding allocated for administrative oversight and planning and coordination of regional activities. The budget must also clearly detail the funding formula used to allocate funding to each state association within the region. Draft subawards are required to be submitted with the application.

## **CSBG RPIC CBQI TIMELINE**

The CSBG RPIC CBQI cooperative agreement has a 36-month project period that will be separated into two distinct phases, which are outlined below. The deliverables for each phase must be aligned closely with and promote promising practices associated with reducing poverty and increasing the self-sufficiency of individuals, families, and communities with low-income. The budget must include itemized expenses for each phase of the project.

- *Phase One (September 30, 2023-January 31, 2024): Planning and Preparation*

During this phase of the cooperative agreement, the award recipient must develop a robust work plan for the implementation of the T/TA outlined in this NOFO as well as an approach for identifying any additional T/TA needs within the region. OCS will provide a template for a work plan that covers the performance period noted in this NOFO. The work plan will document and track the following:

- Identified and detailed project goals, performance measures, and intended outcomes
- Timelines for implementing the proposed project, including major milestones and target dates
- A clear plan for advancing equity through capacity-building, quality improvement, and relationship-building T/TA efforts across the region
- A clear plan for identifying and managing regional T/TA needs
- Specifics on how the work will be completed (i.e., individualized one-on-one virtual or in-person T/TA, mass virtual or in-person training, and training materials)
- Progress on defined deliverables (i.e., training materials, publications, webinars, manuals)

In Phase One, the award recipient must consider how the T/TA tools and resources created can be beneficial to the entire region.

In addition to the work plan, deliverables for Phase One also include:

- A draft outline of the T/TA tools that will be implemented in Phase Two
- An updated logic model, as needed
- An updated Program Performance Evaluation Plan, as needed
- An engagement plan for integrating territories and directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations into regional efforts and documenting the unique needs of territories, directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations, CSBG-eligible entities, and state associations within the region.
- A Dissemination Plan for presenting and socializing the tools with the region, through presentations, conferences, webcasts, outreach campaigns, and small group T/TA sessions

- *Phase Two (February 1, 2024-September 29, 2026): Implementation and Evaluation*

During Phase Two, the award recipient will develop, refine, and disseminate T/TA tools and resources for the entire region that are focused on administering CSBG, including deliverables such as webinars, training modules, publications, podcasts, presentations,

toolkits, and/or other learning activities. T/TA tools and resources must include specific deliverables focused on ensuring equitable services and positive outcomes for underserved individuals, families, and communities with low income. The tools will be distributed among the region using the dissemination plan, and then housed in a resource library as specified by OCS.

Throughout Phase Two, the award recipient must continue to engage in an ongoing program performance evaluation plan to inform semi-annual and final award reports to be delivered to OCS. In the final report, the award recipient will discuss (1) outcomes based on deliverables defined in the work plan, (2) how the effectiveness of the T/TA tools and resources created were measured and evaluated, (3) the development of a body of knowledge, lessons learned, and promising practices that can be replicated for future T/TA deployments, and (4) how the project will promote community-wide, transformative, and sustainable changes in capacity building, quality improvement, relationship-building impacting the region beyond the project period noted in this NOFO.

Additionally, during this phase, the award recipient will work closely with OCS staff to refine the work plan, logic model, proposed Program Performance Evaluation Plan, and Dissemination Plan, as needed.

Deliverables for Phase Two include the following:

- Revised work plan, as needed
- Revised logic model, as needed
- Revised program performance evaluation plan, as needed
- Revised engagement plan, as needed
- Revised dissemination plan, as needed
- Sustainability Plan describing how T/TA resources will outlive the award and can be adapted regionally and for future use by OCS
- Creation of defined T/TA tools
- Assessment on the return of investment
  - Semi-annual report (SF-425)
  - Final report (SF-425) at the end of the last performance period

## **CSBG PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The award recipient must provide T/TA related to the implementation of regional performance management. The Performance Management Framework – as defined in [CSBG-Information Memorandum \(IM\)-152](#) – is in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010. The Performance Management Framework is focused on continuous improvement to strengthen the CSBG Network to meet current challenges, while positioning the CSBG Network for future growth and increased capabilities to achieve family, agency, and community outcomes.

In FY 2023, OCS introduced PEAAK — Performance, Evaluation, Accountability, Accessibility, and Knowledge — to further expand the continuous improvement model of the Performance Management Framework and better describe its components which currently include: performance measurement tools (e.g., the Community Needs Assessment [CNA],

customer satisfaction survey, [organizational standards](#), Results Oriented Management and Accountability [ROMA] Next Generation [NG], and [accountability measures](#)), reporting tools (e.g., the [CSBG State Plan](#), the [CSBG Annual Report](#), the [CSBG Report to Congress](#), and the [OCS Annual Report](#)), monitoring and oversight, and access to the data to better understand and tell the successes of CSBG.

## **CSBG T/TA NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY**

The award recipient will develop an annual T/TA Needs Assessment template which must be reflective of the T/TA needs identified through the FY 2022 CSBG T/TA Needs Assessment Survey. In FY 2022, OCS invited the CSBG Network to complete the online CSBG T/TA Needs Assessment Survey. The survey's goals were to elicit feedback, identify CSBG award recipient's top T/TA priorities, and inform and strengthen OCS-funded T/TA to ensure that OCS is meeting the T/TA needs of the CSBG Network. Over 900 individuals responded to the survey. The survey results helped inform OCS' T/TA Learning Agenda for the FY 2023 CSBG discretionary awards and contracts, including this cooperative agreement. Feedback on the needs of the CSBG Network, allows OCS to ensure that the T/TA we provide is effective, proactive, continuous/ongoing, and innovative. It also helps to ensure we can make a substantial difference in the lives of the individuals, children, families, and communities the CSBG Network serves. OCS published the results of the survey in a publicly accessible dashboard: [CSBG Needs Assessment Dashboard \(FY 22\)](#).

## **ADVANCING EQUITY**

The award recipient must make equity a focal point, addressing the existing inequities created by the continuing and historical marginalization of underserved communities, as defined in the *Definitions* (later in this section), and those disproportionately impacted by persistent poverty. Advancing equity creates opportunities for the improvement of communities that have been historically underserved and supports historically marginalized individuals and communities in reaching their full potential, which benefits all of society. Award recipients must pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, which will require a demonstrated understanding and vision of equity and inclusion, the identification of the root causes of inequity, including the identification of existing activities and policies that perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities, and the development of a method to support CSBG-eligible entities in strategic planning to address practices and policies that exacerbate inequity. To capture opportunities that lead to increased equity and to identify the actual needs of the community, the award recipient must intentionally include and amplify the voice of community members while collecting information and developing and implementing T/TA tools.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

All publications developed or purchased with funds awarded under this notice must be consistent with the requirements of CSBG. Pursuant to [45 CFR § 75.322\(b\)](#), the award recipient owns the copyright for materials that it develops under an award issued pursuant to this notice, and HHS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise

use those materials for federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so. In addition, pursuant to [45 CFR § 75.322\(d\)](#), the federal government has the right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use data produced under this award and has the right to authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for federal purposes, e.g., to make it available in government sponsored databases for use by others. If applicable, the specific scope of ACF rights with respect to a particular award-supported effort will be addressed in the

Notice of Award. The award recipient must ensure data and copyright-protected works developed by a subrecipient or contractor also are subject to the federal government's copyright license and data rights.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF FEDERAL SUPPORT**

Whenever T/TA projects are either entirely or partially supported by CSBG funds, the award recipient must clearly identify the T/TA materials, tools, and resources developed through the cooperative agreement. Furthermore, the award recipient must include the certification statement, as follows:

*"This [project/publication/program/website, etc.] [is/was] supported by the Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United State (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$XX with 100 percent funded by OCS/ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, OCS/ACF/HHS or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#)*

## **SUBAWARDS**

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

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

Please reference the [Award Term and Condition on Subawards](#) on the [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#) website for further requirements involving subawards.

## **Federal Evaluation**

If ACF identifies additional resources to fund a federal study of the funded RPIC-CBQI activities, then the recipient will be required to participate. The study would utilize an outside non-recipient evaluation team and would focus on the processes, implementation, progress indicators, and quality improvement of funded activities.

NOTE: Consistent with the PRA of 1995, (44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521), under this NOFO, OCS will not conduct or sponsor – and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information covered by such Act, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OCS will obtain OMB approval for a federal study of the funded grant activities, as appropriate.

## **OCS Response to Nationally Declared Emergency**

If, during the project period, OCS and/or recipients are required to adjust program and/or cooperative agreement requirements due to a nationally declared emergency, OCS will exercise maximum flexibilities as needed. Requirements may be conducted virtually, or timelines may be modified in consultation with OCS.

## **DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions apply to this funding opportunity and applicants are strongly encouraged to review these carefully prior to applying:

**Capacity Building** – Activities that assist states, state associations, territories, directly-funded tribes and tribal organization, and CSBG-eligible entities to improve or enhance their overall or specific capability to plan, deliver, manage, and evaluate programs efficiently and effectively to produce intended results for low-income individuals. Activities may include, but are not limited to, upgrading internal financial management or computer systems, establishing new external linkages with other organizations, improving board functioning, evaluating program outcomes, implementing leadership development programs, improving knowledge management approaches, adding or refining a program component, replicating techniques or programs piloted in another local community, or making other cost-effective improvements.

**Cooperative Agreement** – An award instrument of financial assistance used when substantial involvement is anticipated between the awarding office (the federal government) and the award recipient during performance of the contemplated project. Substantial involvement will include collaboration or participation by OCS staff in activities specified in the award and oversight of the progress, goals, and objectives outlined in the project work plan.

**CSBG Annual Report** – Section 678E(a)(2) of the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9917(a)(2)) requires each state to prepare and submit to the HHS Secretary an annual report on the measured performance of the state and its CSBG-eligible entities. In accordance with section 678E, the reports must include information that is pertinent and comprehensive, and which describes in detail CSBG activities and services as well as addresses outcomes which measure how CSBG funds were used to promote self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization.

**CSBG-Eligible Entities**– Over 1,000 local agencies that provide anti-poverty services and advocacy in 99 percent of American counties. Community representation and accountability are hallmarks of the CSBG Network, where agencies are governed by a CSBG Tripartite Board. CSBG-eligible entities include community action agencies, limited purpose agencies, migrant or seasonal farmworker organizations, and tribe or tribal organizations. Approximately 80 percent of these agencies are 501(c)3 non-profits, and 20 percent are public entities, part of a city or county government. CSBG-eligible entities typically run multiple programs in their mission to address the causes and the effects of poverty.

**CSBG Lead Agency** – The agency designated by the Governor or Chief Executive Officer of a state or territory to submit the official CSBG plan, CSBG Annual Report, monitor the activities of eligible entities, and assure compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements for CSBG.

**CSBG Network** – The CSBG Network includes OCS, states, territories, directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations, CSBG-eligible entities, state associations, and the CSBG national T/TA providers that plan and implement anti-poverty programs and services on behalf of people with low-income. OCS and the CSBG national T/TA providers are also included in the CSBG Network; however, for the purposes of this NOFO, they are not included as direct recipients of the T/TA provided.

**CSBG Performance Management Framework** – A framework designed to increase accountability across all levels of the CSBG Network (federal, state, and local) and to enable program administrators at all levels to make better data-based decisions. The elements of the framework include 1) organizational standards for CSBG-eligible entities, 2) accountability measures, 3) Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Next Generation (NG), and 4) the CSBG Annual Report which includes an updated and refined set of CSBG outcome measures.

**CSBG State Plan** – The CSBG State Plan is a critical document for both state and federal oversight of CSBG. According to section 676(b) of the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9908(b)), states and territories must prepare and submit a State Plan for CSBG funding. OCS provides funds to CSBG award recipients based on the determination that their State Plan, which also serves as an application, is complete and in accordance with all requirements of the CSBG Act. To qualify for CSBG funding, each CSBG lead agency must prepare and submit a 1- or 2-year state plan application to OCS by September 1 of each year using the OMB-approved form (OMB No. 0970-0492).

**Equity** – The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

**Evidence-based Practice** – Approaches to prevention or treatment that are validated by some form of documented scientific evidence. This could be findings established through scientific research, such as controlled clinical studies, or other comparable and rigorous methods.

**Evidence-informed Practice** – Approaches that use the best available research and practice knowledge to guide program design and implementation within context. This informed practice allows for innovation and incorporates the lessons learned from the existing research literature.

**Knowledge Management** – The process of gathering, classifying, analyzing, and sharing information so that an organization can collectively pursue its objectives efficiently. Components of knowledge management include people, processes, and technology. The process of knowledge management should be supported by an appropriate investment in training and technology.

**Promising Practice** – A practice with at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness in small-scale interventions or for which there is potential for generating data that will be useful for making decisions about taking the intervention to scale and generalizing the results to diverse populations and settings.

**Quality Improvement** – A systematic approach to specifying the processes, services, activities, and outcomes of a program through regular data collection and the application of strategies that lead to performance improvements.

**Regional Performance Innovation Consortia (RPIC)** – The RPICs are state associations that serve as regional focal points and institute regional collaborative and innovative T/TA efforts across the CSBG Network. There is one RPIC within each of the ACF 10 regions, which lead the development of a comprehensive and integrated system of T/TA activities. The exception is Region 4; T/TA efforts for region 4 are provided by two CSBG award recipients due to the size of the region.

**Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) Next Generation (NG)** – A performance-management approach designed for use in assessing the impact of anti-poverty efforts carried out by CSBG-eligible entities receiving CSBG funds. The ROMA cycle of performance management includes high-quality needs assessments; community CSBG plans that use evidence-informed service approaches targeted to the highest priority needs, setting challenging outcome goals; and documentation and analysis of progress and results according to a consistent set of criteria.

**State Associations** – A key part of the training and technical assistance efforts for the CSBG Network, state associations provide member services, coordination, training and often host conferences.

**Technical Assistance (TA)** – An activity, generally using the services of an expert aimed at enhancing capacity, improving programs and systems, or solving specific problems. Such services may be provided proactively to improve systems or as an intervention to solve specific problems.

**Territories** – Per the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9905), Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are territories. American Samoa is the only territory included in this cooperative agreement. Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are part of the Consolidated Block Grant and will not receive T/TA through this cooperative agreement. For the purposes of CSBG, Puerto Rico is treated as a state rather than a territory.

**Training** – An educational activity or event that is designed to impart knowledge and understanding or increase the development of skills. Such training activities may be in the form

of assembled events such as workshops, seminars, conferences, or programs of self-instructional activities.

**Underserved Communities** – Populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civil life.

## II. Federal Award Information

**Funding Instrument Type:**

CA (Cooperative Agreement)

**Estimated Total Funding:**

\$400,000

**Expected Number of Awards:**

1

**Award Ceiling:**

\$400,000

Per Budget Period

**Award Floor:**

\$400,000

Per Budget Period

**Average Projected Award Amount:**

\$400,000

Per Budget Period

**Anticipated Project Start Date:**

09/30/2023

**Length of Project Periods:**

36-month project period with three 12-month budget periods

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

**Additional Information on Awards:**

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

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

**Note:** For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A recipient's failure**

**to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** For more information on these requirements, see *Section III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching*.

Subsequent year funding will be awarded through non-competing continuation applications. In order to receive continuation funding, award recipients must have demonstrated satisfactory progress in the prior budget period. For the purposes of this NOFO, satisfactory progress is defined as ensuring that proposed programmatic activities are consistent with *Section I, Program Description* of this NOFO, submitting all programmatic and financial reports, work plan, and deliverables in a timely manner, attending recurring meetings with OCS, and meeting all terms and conditions of the award.

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

OCS will have substantial involvement directly with the award recipient.

The responsibility for the management, control, direction, or performance of the project will be shared by OCS and the award recipient. OCS will have the right to intervene (including interruption or modification) in the conduct or performance of project activities if the award recipient does not adhere to the goals and objectives as outlined in this NOFO and the signed cooperative agreement. OCS and the award recipient will collaborate on all activities involving the design or direction of T/TA products, training, or any other deliverables.

#### ***OCS program involvement will include:***

- Providing program guidance and input, as appropriate.
- Approving all work plans and schedules.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on the activities, documentation, procedures, measures, and tools established and implemented for accomplishing the goals of the cooperative agreement throughout the duration of the initiative.
- Reviewing, providing feedback, and concurring with activities, procedures, tools, measures, products, and written materials prior to external communication and dissemination on an ongoing basis.
- Participating in the analysis of data.
- Participating in the selection and approval of analysis mechanisms.
- Reviewing and approving each agreement phase before subsequent phases may be started.
- Participating in the presentation of T/TA including webinars and one-on-one trainings.

## **III. Eligibility Information**

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

As prescribed by Section 678A(c)(2) of the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9913(c)(2)), eligible applicants are CSBG-eligible entities, or statewide or local organizations or associations, with demonstrated expertise in providing training to individuals and organizations on methods of effectively addressing the needs of low-income families and communities. Eligible applicants must be physically located in ACF Region VIII (Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, South Dakota, Utah, and Colorado). The geographical area aligns with the established ACF regions and

the ACF Regional Map at (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/oro/regional-offices>). For the purpose of this funding opportunity, eligible applicants within the region or service area may coordinate efforts and apply as a consortium, identifying a single applicant organization to serve as the recipient.

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

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

### III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:

No

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

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

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

### III.3. Other

#### Application Disqualification Factors

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

opportunity.

### **Award Ceiling Disqualification**

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

### **Required Electronic Application Submission**

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

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

### **Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)**

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

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

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

**The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.** Paper applications received after

4:30 pm ET on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.**

#### **Notification of Application Disqualification**

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

### **IV. Application and Submission Information**

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

Charisse  
Johnson  
Administration for Children and Families  
OCS Operations Center  
c/o F2 Solutions  
FON: HHS-2023-ACF-OCS-ET-1124  
1401 Mercantile Lane  
Largo  
MD  
20774  
855-792-6551  
OCSgrants@acf.hhs.gov  
**Application Packages**

#### **Electronic Application Submission:**

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

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

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

#### **Federal Relay Service:**

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

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

##### **FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS**

**Each applicant applying electronically via Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding SFs and Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved**

**forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.**

***FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:***

**Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)**

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

**Point of Contact**

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

**Application Checklist**

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

**Accepted Font Style**

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

**English Language**

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

**Page Limitations**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Copies Required**

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

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

### **Signatures**

Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

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

### **Accepted Application Format**

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

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

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

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

The combined page limitation for the Project Description and the Appendices must not exceed 75 pages.

The Project Description must include the following items. All items must be labeled, numbered, and organized clearly in the Table of Contents.

- Table of Contents
- Project Summary
- Objectives
- Expected Outcomes
- Approach
- Dissemination Plan
- Project Timeline and Milestones
- Logic Model
- Program Performance Evaluation Plan
- Project Budget and Budget Justification
- Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

The Appendices must include the following in the Table of Contents. All items must be labeled, numbered, and organized clearly in the Table of Contents.

- Table of Contents
- Organizational Capacity
- Proof of Legal Status of Entity/Proof of Non-Profit Status
- Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
- Third-party Agreements
- Other Supporting Documentation

### **ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Application Upload Requirements**

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

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Acrobat Reader software will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

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

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

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

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

required assurances and certifications.

### **Naming Application Submission Files**

**Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces).** Please also see

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

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

### Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

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

| Forms/Assurances/Certifications                                                    | Submission Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Notes/Description                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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.<br>Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application and project award period.<br>Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at:<br><a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a> . | See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> 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 application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.                                                                             | Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.                                                     |
| SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs and                      | Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project.                                                                                                                                                                  | Required for all applications when                                                                                  |

| Forms/Assurances/Certifications                    | Submission Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Notes/Description                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs   | SFs must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.<br><br>By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. | applying for a non-construction project.                                                                                               |
| 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. |

#### Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

##### **Mandatory Grant Disclosure**

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

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

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

##### **And to:**

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

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

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

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

Since ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise

required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information. If applications are submitted electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review process.

## **The Project Description**

### **The Project Description Overview**

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

The Project Description provides the information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for financial assistance. It must address all activities for which federal funds are being requested and all application requirements as stated in this section. The Project Description must explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in *Section I. Program Description*. As a reminder, reviewers will be evaluating this section in accordance with *Section V.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 application project description. It must be clear, accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. The summary must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.

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

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

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

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

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

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

#### **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.

**Objectives**

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

**Expected Outcomes**

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

**Approach**

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

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

**Implementation**

The implementation plan (approach) for the RPIC CBQI cooperative agreement must present a well-conceived overall approach to the project, including details demonstrating that the project will be implemented effectively and will achieve the purpose and objectives stated in *Section I. Program Description, Objectives of RPIC CBQI*. The implementation plan must include a description of the anticipated processes and procedures to develop and implement a regional T/TA strategy, including an engagement plan to integrate territories and directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations into regional efforts. The implementation plan must describe how T/TA tools and resources can be replicated across the region. The implementation plan must clearly present equity as a focal point of T/TA efforts by addressing the existing inequities created by the continuing and historical marginalization of underserved communities and those disproportionately impacted by persistent poverty. An approach must focus on assessment, planning, the development and implementation of T/TA strategies, and follow-up. The plan

should describe the factors that could accelerate or hinder project implementation and explain how these factors would be managed.

### **Project Timeline and Milestones**

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

### **Organizational Capacity**

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

- Organizational charts.
- Resumes.
- List of Board of Directors.
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this funding opportunity.
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's personnel policies.
- Information on compliance with federal/state/local government standards.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

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

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

### **Program Performance Evaluation Plan**

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

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

### **Logic Model**

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their projects. A logic model is a diagram that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the links among program elements. Logic models must target the identified objectives and goals of the grant program. While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this funding opportunity, the logic model may include connections between the following items:

- Inputs (e.g., additional resources, organizational profile, collaborative partner(s), key staff, budget);
- Target population (e.g., the individuals to be served, identified needs);
- Activities, Mechanisms, Processes (e.g., evidence-based practices, best practices, approach, key intervention and evaluation components, continuous quality improvement efforts);
- Outputs (i.e., the immediate and direct results of program activities);
- Outcomes (i.e., the expected short and long-term results the project is designed to achieve, typically described as changes in people or systems), and
- Goals of the project (e.g., overarching objectives, reasons for proposing the project).

### **Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information**

Provide a description of how protected personally identifiable information 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.

### **Dissemination Plan**

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

- Dissemination goals and objectives;
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences;
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes;
- A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended, and
- The timeline for dissemination.

### **Third-Party Agreements**

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

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

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

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

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

**Special Note:** *The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2022 and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022,*

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

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

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

The applicant must provide a well-prepared specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based (SMART) budget. The budget must include the itemized expenses for each phase of the project and a narrative justification that clearly explains all the calculations comprising the amount requested. The budget must include the anticipated compensation for each proposed subaward. The budget must clearly support the entire 36-month project period and structured to present the two phases of the project:

- Phase One (September 30, 2023 – January 31, 2024): Planning and Preparation, and
- Phase Two (February 1, 2024 – September 29, 2026): Implementation and Evaluation

The budget must clearly present the amount of funding allocated for administrative oversight and planning and coordination of regional activities. The budget must also clearly detail the funding formula used to allocate funding to each state association within the region.

If the total amount budgeted for subawards exceeds 50 percent of total direct costs for the budget period, the applicant must provide a justification for subawarding the portion of the project and must explain how the prime recipient plans to maintain a substantive role in the project.

## **General**

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

## **Personnel**

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

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

principal investigator, if known at the time of application.

### **Fringe Benefits**

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

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

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

### **Travel**

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

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

### **Equipment**

**Description:** "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in, or excluded from, acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.) See 45 CFR §75.439 for more information.

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

and/or disposition of the equipment after the project ends.

## **Supplies**

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

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

## **Contractual**

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

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

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

## **Other**

**Description:** Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel, insurance, food (when allowable), medical and dental costs (non-personnel), professional service costs (including audit charges), space and equipment rentals, printing and publications, computer use, training costs (such as tuition and stipends), staff development costs, and administrative costs. Please note costs must be allowable per 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

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

## **Indirect Charges**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**For awards that require matching or cost sharing by statute,** recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources (at or above the statutory requirement) in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching or cost sharing amount (and any voluntary committed amount in excess) may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

**For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute,** recipients are not expected to provide cost sharing or matching. However, recipients are allowed to voluntarily propose a commitment of non-federal resources. If an applicant decides to voluntarily contribute

non-federal resources towards project costs and the costs are accepted by ACF, the non-federal resources will be included in the approved project budget. The applicant will be held accountable for all proposed non-federal resources as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to meet the voluntary amount of non-federal resources that was accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that was identified in the approved budget in the NoA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Application Submission Options**

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

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

#### **Electronic Delivery**

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

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

Read the following instructions about registering to apply for ACF funds. Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the

registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

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

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

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Track a Workspace:** After successfully submitting a Workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Issues with Federal Systems**

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

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

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

### **Paper Format Application Submission**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

07/31/2023

#### Due Date for Applications

07/31/2023

#### Explanation of Due Dates

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

### **Electronic Applications**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Mailed Paper Format Applications**

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

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

### **Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Emergency Extensions**

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

## **Acknowledgement of Received Application**

### **Acknowledgement from Grants.gov**

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

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

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

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

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

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

ACF will 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 a grant even if a State, Territory or Commonwealth, etc., does not have a SPOC or has chosen not to participate in the process. Applicants from non-participating jurisdictions need take no action with regard to E.O. 12372. Applications from Federally-recognized Indian Tribal governments are not subject to E.O. 12372.

#### **IV.6. Funding Restrictions**

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

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

Pre-award costs are not allowable.

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

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

Major renovation is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this program.

#### **IV.7. Other Submission Requirements**

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

### **Submission by Mail**

Bridget  
Shea Westfall  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Community Services  
Grant Operations Center  
1401 Mercantile Lane  
FON: HHS-2023-ACF-OCS-ET-1124  
Largo  
MD  
20774

### **Hand Delivery**

Same as Above

### **Electronic Submission**

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

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

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **V.1. Criteria**

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

### **Overall Understanding of Objectives**

**Maximum Points: 10**

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant clearly describes how the goals and objectives of proposed project activities will advance equity across the region. (0 – 5 points)
2. The applicant defines the scope and detail of the planning and preparation phase and the implementation and evaluation phase of this cooperative agreement and commits to planning, implementing, and adapting the proposed project in accordance with OCS oversight. (0 – 5 points)

**Expected Outcomes****Maximum Points: 15**

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant clearly describes how the proposed project will strengthen the knowledge, capacity, and ability of the region through the implementation of meaningful, coordinated, and targeted T/TA activities. (0 – 10 points)
2. The applicant clearly describes how equity will be a focal point of T/TA efforts including how T/TA tools and resources can be replicated across the region. (0 – 5 points)

**Approach****Maximum Points: 30**

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant clearly presents a well-conceived overall approach to the project, including details demonstrating that the project will be implemented effectively and will achieve the purpose and goals stated in *Section I. Program Description, Objectives of RPIC CBQI*. (0 - 5 points)
2. The approach must include a description of the anticipated processes and procedures to implement training and education relevant to the region. (0 - 5 points)
3. The applicant clearly describes how T/TA efforts will address the existing inequities created by the continuing and historical marginalization of underserved communities and those disproportionately impacted by persistent poverty. (0 – 5 points)
4. The applicant describes a plan for developing a regional T/TA strategy that includes leading coordinated, targeted, and relevant T/TA efforts to enhance collaboration, capacity building, quality improvement, relationship-building, and promising practices. (0 – 5 points)
5. The applicant clearly presents an engagement plan to integrate territories and directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations into regional efforts, and identify and document the unique needs of territories, directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations, CSBG-eligible entities, and state associations within the region. (0 – 5 points)
6. The applicant describes a plan for a program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement and will be utilized to monitor ongoing activities and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project. (0 – 3 points)
7. The applicant presents a clear description of how the T/TA under this cooperative agreement will be identified, supported, promoted, and disseminated and how T/TA tools and resources can be replicated across the region. (0 – 2 points)

**Project Phases and Timelines****Maximum Points: 10**

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant clearly describes how the project will adhere to the project phases described in *Section I. Program Description, CSBG RPIC CBQI Timeline* and has developed a strategy to implement the project in the allotted 36-month project period. (0 – 5 points)
2. The applicant clearly describes a plan to develop the deliverables described for the project phases described in *Section I. Program Description, CSBG RPIC CBQI Timeline*. (0 - 5 points)

**Logic Model****Maximum Points: 5**

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant presents a well-defined logic model that guides the proposed project. The logic model demonstrates strong linkages between the applicant's expected achievements and likely short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes. The logic model addresses the goals stated in *Section I. Program Description* (0 – 5 points)

**Organizational Capacity****Maximum Points: 10**

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant clearly documents the roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors, and/or partners. These positions are well-defined and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project with respect to the target population. (0 - 5 points)
2. The applicant provides strong evidence of sufficient experience and expertise in systems integration and partnership development. The evidence for this expertise includes the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities of the proposed project director and primary staff members, and documents how their specific qualifications and level of expertise will support the successful implementation of the proposed project activities. (0 - 5 points)

**Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities****Maximum Points: 5**

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant presents a detailed framework (e.g., governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) that ensures 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). (0 - 5 points)

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

In reviewing this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant presents a SMART budget that consists of a line-item budget that includes detailed calculations for object class categories and a narrative justification that clearly explains all the calculations comprising the amount requested. (0 - 5 points)
2. The budget clearly supports the entire 36-month project and is structured to present the two phases of the project. Proposed costs are fully justified and reasonable to complete the proposed activities. (0 - 5 points)
3. The budget clearly describes the funding formula used to allocate funding to each state association within the region through subawards. (0 - 3 points)
4. The budget clearly presents the amount of funding allocated for administrative oversight and planning and coordination of regional activities. (0 - 2 points)

**V.2. Review and Selection Process**

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

### **Initial ACF Screening**

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

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

### **Objective Review and Results**

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

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

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

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

### **Post-Award Requests Involving Real Property**

All real property costs, including supporting documentation, are subject to ACF administrative review. Recipients, and if applicable, subrecipient(s), will be required to provide detailed listings of all real property addresses and their associated costs (45 C.F.R §75.436, §75.439, §75.462, and §75.465) used and claimed under this federal award. This includes all real property owned or leased by the recipient, and if applicable, subrecipients. Information on facilities, administrative buildings and offices must be provided. **Information for any and all** real property costs claimed under the award must be provided. For more information, see [ACF Property Guidance](#) pages,

including, [Rent/Lease Arrangement Guidance](#), [Real Property Documentation](#), and [Unallowable Property Costs](#).

After the initial award, if there are any modifications, budget revisions, and/or additional requests for funding, and they impact any of the original approved real property or real property-related costs, the real property listing and related costs documentation requested in *Section IV.2 The Project Budget and Budget and Justification* must be included and updated, accordingly.

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

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

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

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

### **Approved but Unfunded Applications**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **HHS Grants Policy Statement**

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

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

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

20, 2019)), or any related or similar federal laws or regulations. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

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

### **VI.3. Reporting**

Performance Progress Reports:

Semi-Annually

#### **Reporting Requirements**

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

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

Financial Reports:

Semi-Annually

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

#### **Program Office Contact**

Charisse

Johnson

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Community Services

Mary E. Switzer Building

330 C Street, SW

Washington

DC

20201

202-401-5802

[charisse.johnson@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:charisse.johnson@acf.hhs.gov)

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

Bridget

Shea Westfall

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Grants Management

Division of Innovation and Improvement Assistance  
Mary E. Switzer Building  
330 C Street, SW  
Washington  
DC  
20201  
855-792-6551  
bridget.sheawestfall@acf.hhs.gov

**Federal Relay Service:**

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

## VIII. Other Information

### Reference Websites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Office of Community Services \(OCS\) | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](http://www.hhs.gov/oc/)

[Community Services Block Grant \(CSBG\) The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](http://www.hhs.gov/oc/)

### Application Checklist

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

| What to Submit                                    | Where Found                                                                       | When to Submit                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SF-424 -<br>Application for<br>Federal Assistance | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i> | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4.</i> |

| <b>What to Submit</b>                                                                                         | <b>Where Found</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>When to Submit</b>                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                               | This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> in the Mandatory section.                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>Submission Dates and Times.</i>                                                                                                                                           |
| Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.                            | Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the funding opportunity.<br><br>To obtain a UEI and SAM registration, go to <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a> .                                                                         | A UEI and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants.<br><br>Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. |
| SF-424 Key Contact Form                                                                                       | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i><br><br>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> .                                                                                                                 | Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i>                      |
| Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)                                                   | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i><br><br>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> .                                                                                                                 | Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.                                                                                             |
| SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i><br><br>These forms are available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> in the Mandatory section.<br>They are required for applications that include only non-construction activities. | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i>                                           |
| SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)                                                            | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i><br><br>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> .                                                                                                                 | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4.</i>                                                                       |

| <b>What to Submit</b>                       | <b>Where Found</b>                                                              | <b>When to Submit</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             |                                                                                 | <i>Submission Dates and Times.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| The Project Budget and Budget Justification | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification.</i> | <p>Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C.</p> <p>Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p> |
| The Project Description                     | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i>                     | <p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>                                                                                                      |