

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Head Start

Head Start Expansion, Early Head Start Expansion, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants

HHS-2024-ACF-OHS-HP-0157

Application Due Date: 05/14/2024

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Funding Opportunity Title:
Head Start Expansion, Early Head Start Expansion, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants

Announcement Type:
Initial

Funding Opportunity Number:
HHS-2024-ACF-OHS-HP-0157

Assistant Listing Number:
93.600

Due Date for Applications:
05/14/2024

Executive Summary

Notice:

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

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announces the availability of approximately $102 million to be competitively awarded for the purpose of expanding access to high-quality, comprehensive early learning services for low-income infants, toddlers, preschool-age children, and their families. Through this NOFO, ACF is interested in targeting this competition to reach areas of greatest need to facilitate the enrollment of families who would most benefit from services. ACF, within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), will consider applications for Head Start Expansion, Early Head Start (EHS) Expansion, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) Expansion, or applications that include some combination of these options.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) is offering applicants the opportunity to apply for funding to serve pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and children from birth to compulsory school age in one application. The goal of this NOFO is to ensure distribution of resources to meet the demonstrated community needs of children from birth to compulsory school age and the needs of families pursuing employment, training, education, and other opportunities to support their well-being. Given the need for continuity of care for young children, the OHS expects that applicants will propose a full-day, full-year model with sufficient hours to meet the child care needs of families and not less than 1,020 hours per year for Head Start.

This NOFO solicits applications from public or private non-profit organizations, including faith-based organizations or for-profit organizations, that seek to provide a high-quality, comprehensive program incorporating a combination of Head Start, EHS, EHS-CCP funding, or

to provide services for Head Start only, EHS only, or EHS-CCP only in a manner that ensures continuous services and seamless transitions for children and families.

Defining what we mean by *Expansion*:

In this NOFO, ACF defines expansion as the addition of new services in a community or the expansion of existing services. For Head Start, EHS, or EHS-CCP programs, a program can include any of the following: adding slots within a new or existing center-based classrooms or family child care programs; adding new classrooms to a new or existing center; adding or establishing new centers or family child care providers; adding new slots to a new or existing home-based program option; new or existing recipients who are seeking expanded services to meet the needs of families pursuing employment, training, education, and other opportunities to support their well-being; and/or existing recipients who reduced enrollment to increase staff compensation and are now applying to expand their enrollment to regain the slots they reduced.

Head Start Expansion

Current Head Start recipients, as well as organizations that are not current recipients, are both eligible to apply to establish or add new traditional Head Start slots through Head Start Expansion. For any new Head Start center-based slots, the OHS expects that applicants will propose a service duration that meets the identified needs of the community and is not less than the requirements described in 1302.21(c)(2) of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). Again, applicants are reminded that a Head Start program must provide at least 1,020 annual hours of service for at least 45 percent of its Head Start center-based funded enrollment. Applicants should plan carefully to ensure the service duration for newly proposed Head Start slots still meets this percentage threshold and consider the child care needs of low-income working families in the community.

Early Head Start Expansion

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

EHS-CCP

New or existing Head Start, EHS, and EHS-CCP recipients can apply to use funding to partner with local child care, including family child care providers, to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to eligible infants and toddlers through EHS-CCP. These EHS-CCP will enhance and support early learning settings to provide full-day, full-year, comprehensive services that meet the needs of low-income working families; enhance access to high-quality, full-time child care; support the development of infants and toddlers through strong relationship-based experiences; and prepare them for the transition into preschool. EHS-CCP play an important role in the child care system by both expanding high-quality early learning services to infants and toddlers and applying resources and lessons learned to build the system's capacity.

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

For more information on the EHS-CCP model, please visit: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/early-head-start-child-care-partnerships-programs.

Combination Approach

New or existing recipients can apply to expand a combination of Head Start, EHS, and EHS-CCP model slots to bring services to children and families.

General Information for All Applicants

Regardless of the model the applicant selects, only high-quality applications will be funded. All applicants should prioritize providing services to the most vulnerable families with the greatest need. ACF recognizes that in order to reach families most in need of services, funding should be prioritized to facilitate the enrollment of families living in poverty, while also considering measures of need, which may include other community or family circumstances and adversities (e.g., those experiencing extreme poverty or homelessness, community health problems, rates of joblessness, teen parents, incarcerated parents, and/or substance misuse). Funds will be awarded based on how effectively the model design fits the needs of the community to be served and the overall quality of the proposed program, dependent upon available funding. Additionally, funds will be awarded based on the applicant's ability to provide sustainable approaches toward staffing, which includes providing staff with competitive wages that are comparable to similar roles in local public schools and provide a minimum wage that covers basic necessities, comprehensive benefits, and wellness supports. A well-compensated and supported workforce is essential to providing high-quality services to promote children's optimal development and family well-being. Funds awarded through this NOFO must not supplant existing subsidies or other funding.

Through this NOFO, applicants have the choice of applying to use the funds in one of four ways: 1) Head Start expansion 2) EHS Expansion 3) EHS-CCP, or 4) a mix of Head Start expansion, EHS Expansion, and EHS-CCP. However, applicant entities may submit only one application per service area regardless of how they choose to apply. ACF will review only one application for a service area from any applicant. For more information, please see *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

This funding is authorized by division H, title II of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328). The Head Start program is authorized by the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9840(a)(5)(A) and 42 U.S.C. 9840A(a)).

Description

Program Background and Purpose

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

The OHS provides grants to public, private non-profit, and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to predominately economically disadvantaged children and families. Head Start's primary purpose is to prepare children to be ready for school and ensure their healthy development. Since its beginning in 1965, Head Start has served more than 36 million children and their families. In fiscal year (FY) 2022, Head Start was funded to serve 801,000 children and families. Currently there are approximately 1,600 Head Start recipients.

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

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

Reaching Areas of Greatest Need

Having high-quality early care and education opportunities is particularly important and is often lacking in economically distressed communities. Through this NOFO, ACF is interested in targeting this competition to reach areas of greatest need to facilitate the enrollment of families who would most benefit from services. Children living in high-poverty neighborhoods (defined for this NOFO as neighborhoods where 30 percent or more of the population is living in poverty) are more likely to be exposed to adverse childhood experiences, such as witnessing violence, death of a parent, or having a parent incarcerated, which are linked with poor adult outcomes.[1] Research indicates that young children in low-income households that live in or move to a less poor neighborhood experience better adult outcomes including higher future income and better college attendance.[2] Research has also found that the negative effects of concentrated poverty—like its influence on crime, school dropout rates, and the duration of poverty—begin to emerge once a neighborhood’s poverty rate exceeds 20 percent and grow rapidly before leveling off around the 40 percent threshold.[3] Additionally, high-poverty neighborhoods are likely to

remain high-poverty over time. Over the span of nearly four decades following the 1980s, just 14 percent of neighborhoods that were high poverty had turned around (flipped to low poverty).[4] Research also finds that non-poor children living in high-poverty areas have worse outcomes than poor children living in lower poverty areas. ACF seeks to facilitate the enrollment of eligible families that live in these neighborhoods.

[1] See https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/summer16/highlight2.html and https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4169988/.

[2] See https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1448013/ and http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/mto_paper.pdf.

[3]See https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228614768_The_Mechanism_s_of_Neighborhood_Effects_Theory_Evidence_and_Policy_Implications.

[4] See https://eig.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Persistence-of-Neighborhood-Poverty.pdf.

High Poverty Census Tracts

To operationalize this priority, ACF will grant priority points to applicants that propose services located within high-poverty census tracts. Census tracts generally have a population size between 1,200 and 8,000 people, and usually cover a contiguous area.[5]

For the purposes of this NOFO, high poverty census tracts are defined as those where at least 30 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level. In order for applicants to determine whether or not they will qualify for these priority points, ACF is providing a mapping tool Priority Points Mapping Tool (arcgis.com) that allows an applicant to enter their service location address(es) to determine if any proposed locations fall within a high-poverty census tract. While applicants are encouraged to utilize this tool, it is not required. Applicants could use the same data parameters as spelled out in *Section V.1.7 PRIORITY POINTS – Serving High Poverty Neighborhoods* to deduce whether or not they qualify for these priority points. Additional details on the priority points for high-poverty census tracts, including examples, are provided in *Section V.1.7 PRIORITY POINTS – Serving High Poverty Neighborhoods*.

Applicants that propose services in areas of high poverty as identified by the census tracts identified in this mapping tool, will receive priority points under the Criteria listed in *Section V.1.7 PRIORITY POINTS – Serving High Poverty Neighborhoods* of this NOFO. These census tracts are also shown on a map at: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/cc40971a0d8a45ecb3fae566cd6df0f5

The data used to make this determination are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017-2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. For more information about the ACS, please visit: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/

The ACS data used to calculate the poverty rates is reported at the Census Tract level. Census Tracts are generalized representations of U.S. neighborhoods. The Census Tract is the closest and most reliable approximation available for poverty estimates at the neighborhood-level. For more information about Census Tracts, please visit: https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/education/CensusTracts.pdf

[5] See https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/about/glossary.html#par_textimage_13

Head Start Program Performance Standards

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

Facilities

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

Program Approach

Head Start and EHS are designed to increase the number of low-income children receiving high-quality, comprehensive early education services that help facilitate healthy development, including physical and social/emotional development, and prepare them for school success. To meet this goal, it is critical that funds awarded through this NOFO do not supplant existing services. Given the need for continuity of care to support the rapid development in the earliest years, OHS expects that recipients proposing EHS or EHS-CCP Expansion will serve pregnant women, infants, and toddlers for at least 1,380 annual hours, as required in 45 CFR § 1302.21(c)(1), unless approved for a locally designed option. OHS expects that recipients will implement a full-year model, as described in 45 CFR Part 1302 Subpart B, that will require per-child costs that, in most circumstances, will be higher than the costs needed to provide part-year services. For applicants proposing Head Start expansion, OHS expects that recipients will serve at least 45 percent of preschool slots for 1,020 annual hours, as required in 45 CFR § 1302.21(c)(2). All remaining slots must meet or exceed the minimum hours, as described in 45 CFR § 1302.21(c)(2). Applicants are encouraged to use this opportunity to design a model of services and program options that best meet the needs of children and families over time. Applicants must serve a sufficient number of infants, toddlers and/or preschool aged children and their families, so that the funding level is adequate to support the full array of staffing and infrastructure for successful implementation.

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

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

Applicants are encouraged to bring new and innovative ideas that are evidence-based or evidence-informed to maximize the extent to which EHS and Head Start, in collaboration with other partners and early childhood education providers, can prepare children and their families for school.

Program Options

Center-Based Option

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

Head Start programs must provide at least 1,020 annual hours of service over at least 8 months per year for at least 45 percent of their preschool center-based funded enrollment. The remainder of a program's preschool enrollment must meet or exceed the minimum service duration requirements specified in the HSPPS. EHS center-based programs must provide a minimum of 1,380 hours of service per year. While length of day is not prescribed, for most EHS programs, this is a minimum of 6 hours per day, 46 weeks per year. OHS expects EHS-CCP recipients to provide a minimum of 10 hours per day all year to meet the needs of working families. Programs generally use resources in addition to Head Start and EHS funding to meet the full-day needs of families.

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

Home-Based Option

The home-based option delivers the full range of required services to enrolled children and their families. EHS home-based programs must provide a minimum of 46 weekly visits with a child's parent(s) and at least 22 group socialization experiences over the course of the year. Head Start home-based programs must provide a minimum of 32 visits and at least 16 group socialization activities over the course of the year. For example, for young infants or medically fragile children in very rural areas, and when families prefer not to send their children to center-based care, this option may be implemented when a parent is available at home. The home-based option is not compatible with the EHS-CCP model.

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

Family Child Care Option

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

The requirements for this option are fully described in the HSPPS section 45 CFR § 1302.23.

Locally Designed Program Options

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

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

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

ACF recognizes that the development and implementation of a start-up plan is critical to the success of new or expanded programs for all recipients, regardless of model. The development of the timeline for pre-operational activities, including orientation, training, and health and safety checks is also critical to ensure children have the necessary equipment and materials. Planning for program implementation should begin with this application and continue at the time of funding. Start-up planning and implementation will consist of:

- Negotiating and implementing contract agreements with a manageable number of partners;
- Creating an organizational structure to support provision of comprehensive services to children and families;
- Developing plans to provide high-quality, comprehensive services (health, mental health, family support services, and nutrition);
- Hiring qualified staff, including required background checks, and developing professional development plans for each staff member;
- Providing training and professional development activities, which move staff on a career pathway towards knowledge, skills, and credentials associated with enhanced quality;

- Developing plans to provide both EHS and Head Start, if applicable, child care staff with training as required by HSPPS; state, territory, or tribal and local child care licensing; and other regulations;
- Developing plans to ensure high-quality group care environments, including assessing and improving settings to ensure the safety, well-being, and developmental appropriateness for children, staff, and families;
- Developing plans to lessen barriers such as lack of transportation;
- Developing management, fiscal, and facilities plans;
- Developing service plans that include a schedule for screening and ongoing assessment and the selection and implementation of an evidence-based curriculum;
- Developing plans to implement and facilitate a coordinated system of care that will assist in meeting the needs of the children and families, including partnership with the local Part C (of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) intervention agency that coordinates services for infants and toddlers with disabilities;
- Developing systems of ongoing oversight and monitoring to ensure quality;
- Recruiting and enrolling children; and
- Planning for and providing access to safe, developmentally appropriate outdoor environments that allow children to grow and thrive in the natural environment.

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

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

Administrative Costs

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

Oversight and Monitoring Reviews

OHS is responsible for monitoring the quality of Head Start and/or EHS program services and the recipient's compliance with federal and other applicable requirements and to provide access to training and technical assistance, as needed. The federal government uses several mechanisms to conduct its oversight, including ongoing communication with ACF regional offices and periodic site visits. Federal monitoring reviews are required by the Head Start Act. Over the course of the project period, reviews are conducted to ensure compliance with the HSPPS and other applicable regulations. Monitoring reviews may occur onsite or offsite, and include compliance with health and safety requirements, rules related to children's eligibility for the program, and financial management requirements.

Federal Evaluation

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

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

Eligible Participants (all recipients)

Head Start serves children when they are at least 3 years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the community where the Head Start program is located. EHS programs enroll pregnant women and infants and toddlers from birth to age 3. Families must either have incomes below the poverty line or be eligible for public assistance to be income-eligible for Head Start or EHS programs. In addition, homeless children and children in foster care are categorically eligible for services. Children are selected for enrollment based on age, income eligibility, and relative level of need regarding other criteria that are identified within each community (45 CFR § 1302.12(b) and (c)).

Head Start regulations permit up to 10 percent of enrolled participants to be from families that do not meet these low-income criteria. A provision in the Head Start Act, as discussed in 42 U.S.C. 9840(a)(1)(B), which is applicable to both Head Start and EHS, allows recipients that can ensure that all eligible children, including homeless children, are served, to enroll up to an additional 35 percent of its participants from families with incomes greater than or equal to 100 percent, but less than 130 percent, of the poverty line. In most cases, given the relatively low EHS participation rates, that the provisions of 42 U.S.C. 9840(a)(1)(B) regarding serving up to 35 percent of a program's enrollment from families with incomes up to 130 percent of the poverty line would apply for this announcement.

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

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

Mortgages and Long-Term Lease Agreements

If so directed by OHS, the newly funded recipient must accept assignment of any existing mortgages, long-term lease agreements, or security agreements (in the case of a modular unit) on properties subject to a federal interest occupied by the current recipient. By accepting this condition, the recipient must comply with real property and reporting requirements, including

submission of the SF-429 Attachment A on an annual basis until disposition is approved by ACF. For more information, see Real Property Guidance.

If a recipient intends to finance, refinance, or amendment a financing arrangement on a real property or real property project, the SF-429 Attachment C must be submitted, along with supporting documentation, in Grant Solutions/Online Data Collection (GS/OLDC). This is considered an encumbrance that requires Chief Grants Management Officer decision, which may delay recipients. Recipients that proceed on these arrangements before receiving official ACF approval do so at their own risk. For more information, see Real Property Guidance.

Subawards

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

Subrecipient(s) must meet the eligibility requirements identified in the NOFO, *Section III.1. Eligible Applicants*. Additionally, all subrecipient(s) must obtain Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) 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.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:
G (Grant)

Estimated Total Funding:
$102,127,361

Expected Number of Awards:
60

Award Ceiling:
$20,509,347
Per Budget Period

Award Floor:
$750,000
Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:

$1,500,000
Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:
09/30/2024

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

Other

Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'
The successful applicant(s) under this NOFO *may* receive awards with a project period of up to 5 years (60 months) that may include 4-6 budget periods. For example, recipients may receive a 54-month project period with an initial 18-month budget period and three subsequent 12-month budget periods.

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

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

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

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

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

Expected Number of Awards

Please note that the expected number of awards represents a total estimated **range** of awards that OHS might make as the result of this NOFO.

Start-up/Pre-Award Costs

Pre-award costs, including start-up costs, may be requested by an applicant in addition to the Head Start and EHS base operating and Head Start and EHS T/TA grant funds. If requested,

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

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

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

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

Start-up budgets will be evaluated against the criteria listed in *Section V.1. Criteria*.

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

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

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

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

Please note, “(1) entities operating Head Start programs” includes entities operating Head Start, EHS, and/or EHS-CCP programs.

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

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

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

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

Recipients must provide at least 20 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF (federal) share and the non-federal share. The non-federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions. For example, if the total approved project cost is $ 25,636,684 , in order to meet the match requirements, a project requesting $20,509,347 in ACF (federal) funds must provide a non-federal share of the approved total project cost of at least $ 5,127,337 , which is 20 percent of total approved project cost.

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

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

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where “cost sharing” refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by a recipient or subrecipient and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the recipient will be held

accountable for proposed non-federal cost sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NoA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

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

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

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

III.3. Other

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

Award Ceiling Disqualification

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

Required Electronic Application Submission

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

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

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

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

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

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

Additional Application Disqualification Factors

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

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

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

HHS-2024-ACF-OHS-HP-0157
Office of Head Start
OHS Grant Review Team c/o Guardians of Honor
1990 K Street, NW
Suite 650
Washington
DC
20006
(888) 242-0684
OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com

Application Packages

Electronic Application Submission:

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

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

Notice of Two-File Requirement

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

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Signature of Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)

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

Accepted Font Style and Size

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

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

English Language

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

Page Limitations

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

All applications must be double-spaced. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages will have extra pages removed, and those pages will not be reviewed.

Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced:

- Table of Contents
- One-page Project Summary

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

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

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

Corrections/Updates to Submitted Applications
When applicants revise a previously submitted application, ACF will accept only the last on-time application for pre-review under the Application Disqualification Factors. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors* and *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options.*

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

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

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

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

Page Limitations and File Content

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

First File

- Project Summary/Abstract *(single-spaced) – limited to 1 page*
- Table of Contents *(single-spaced) – suggested 1 page*
- Project Description *(double-spaced) – suggested 75 pages*
    - Substantiation of Need

- Community Need and Objectives
- Project Design and Approach
- Staffing and Compensation
- Planning and Implementation
- Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems
- PRIORITY POINTS - Serving High Poverty Neighborhoods
- Budget and Budget Justification

Second File

- Appendices *(must be readable) – suggested 73 pages*
  - Certificate of Good Standing
  - Board of Directors Attestation
  - Proof of Legal Status of Applicant
  - Proof of Policy Council Approval
  - Organizational Capacity documentation (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
  - Third-party agreements
  - Indirect cost rate agreement (IDR)
  - Letters of support
  - Plan for Oversight of Federal Award and Funds Activities
  - Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
  - Executed Leases, draft leases, unsigned leases, or a letter of intent for each proposed property(ies). **Note:** The lease documentation will not count towards the page limitation.
  - Other supporting documents

Enforcement of NOFO Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements

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

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

To adhere to the two-file requirement, you may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Applicants using Adobe Acrobat Reader software will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually.

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Acrobat Reader they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" at the top bar menu and select "Adobe Software Compatibility."

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

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

ACF supports the following file formats:

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

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

make awards based on an incomplete application.

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files
If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the affected file will not be reviewed. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

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

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

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

Applicants must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all SFs and OMB-approved forms. The original copy must have original signatures. Copies of the application, not the original, will be reproduced by the federal government for review. **All application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes. All pages in the application submission must be sequentially numbered.**

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

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

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Required of all applicants. Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration	See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)* for more information.

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

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
Proof of Policy Council Approval	Submission is required of applicants that are **current Head Start and/or Early Head Start grantees**.	Proof of Policy Council Approval of the application is required of applicants that are current Head Start and/or Early Head Start grantees by 42 U.S.C. § 9837(c)(2)(D)(iii) of the Head Start Act and 45 CFR § 1301.3.
SF-424A Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs / SF-424B Assurances - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424C - Budget Information Construction Programs / SF-424D - Assurances Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for both, non-construction **and** construction activities, under the proposed project. Standard Forms must be used. Standard Forms must be submitted by the application due date. By signing and submitting the SF-424B and/or SF-424D, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.	Required for all applications when applying for non-construction and/or construction activities under the proposed project. Please see special instructions in the *Checklist* in *Section VIII. Other Information* in this announcement. Projects that include both, **non-construction and construction** activities must submit the SF-424A, B, C, and D.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
Assurance: Board Attestation	Submission is strongly encouraged for any applicants who collaborate with an external grant-writer, consultant and/or contractor for assistance and/or support on their application submission. The assurance may be submitted with the application package.	A template of this assurance is provided in the *Appendix* of this announcement. The assurance must be **signed** by the Board chair, or person who is authorized to sign the application on behalf of the applicant.
Certificate of Good Standing	Submission is required for all **for-profit organizations**.	Sole proprietorships are not eligible applicants. The submission of the Certificate of Good Standing, along with the current list of board members, and organizational documents that require the establishment and maintenance of a Board of Directors, provide proof of eligibility for for-profit organizations.

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

Mandatory Grant Disclosures

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

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

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

And to:

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

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

Email: grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov

Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project (SF-424)

Applicants **MUST** clearly state the intent of the proposal in Line 15 of the SF-424, Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project, as one of the following:

- Head Start Expansion,
- EHS Expansion,
- EHS-CCP, or
- Combined Application for Head Start Expansion, EHS Expansion, and/or EHS-CCP

The Descriptive Title **must include the state(s)** in which proposed service will be provided, for example, "EHS-CCP – North Carolina" or "Non-Partnership EHS Expansion – Illinois."

Additional SF-424 Instructions

Line 18a – Federal: Include the combined base and T/TA funding requested by the applicant

Line 18e – Other: Includes start-up funding amount, if requested.

SF-424 Key Contact Form

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

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

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions

The Project Description requests the information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for financial assistance. It must address all activities for which federal funds are being requested and all application requirements as stated in this section. The Project Description must explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in *Section I. Program Description*. As a reminder, reviewers will be evaluating this section in accordance with *Section V.1. Criteria*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Non-Profit Organizations

Proof of Non-Profit Status Options:

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

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proof of Policy Council Approval

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

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

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

1. Substantiation of Need

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

In demonstrating this, applicants must provide data about why the proposed geographic area is in high need of Head Start, EHS or EHS-CPP and family support services. Data should include information that may include the number of eligible pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers by geographic location; the number of families in extreme poverty; jobless rates; incidence of community health problems; access to other early childhood education programs and services, including the estimated number of eligible children who are receiving child care subsidy, in the geographic area; or other similar factors. This data should also include information regarding the availability and access to early childhood education services for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in low-income families in the proposed geographic area.

2. Community Need and Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

Provide a description of the plan to assess and meet the needs of families pursuing employment, training, education, and other opportunities to support their well-being. Demonstrate how the proposed expanded services, and associated family engagement efforts, have convenient schedules and carefully planned hours designed for families that reflect the schedules and working conditions among low-income parents.

3. Project Design and Approach

Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to implement and sustain the high-quality, comprehensive, individualized educational, health, mental health, nutritional, oral health, and other social services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families that prepare children to succeed in school. Describe how the program will implement program components and, where applicable, describe separately for infants and toddlers.

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

Applicants must describe a process for establishing and measuring school readiness goals (45 CFR § 1302.102) that reflect the ages of children proposed to be served and demonstrate these goals are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Applicants must also explain the extent to which goals were or will be established in alignment with state early learning guidelines, as appropriate. Applicants must describe how the school readiness goals will be established in consultation with the parents of children who will be participating in the program.

Describe how service effectiveness and quality will be measured, monitored, and improved upon over time. Applicants must specify the name and process for selection of their assessment tool. The assessment must be developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate. Describe the plan to use child assessment data for individualization, referral, and for aggregation and analysis. Describe how that analysis will be used in combination with other program data to determine recipients' progress toward meeting its goals.

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

Provide a plan describing how the applicant will integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to promote children’s learning and development, as discussed in 45 CFR § 1302.34 and 1302.50-52. Applicants should describe how they will ensure that parent participation is open to all families.

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

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

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

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

4. Staffing and Compensation

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

Applicants must describe how they will attract and retain qualified staff with the necessary competencies to implement a high-quality, comprehensive program, including competitive wages and benefits and supports for a positive work climate. Describe the strategies to understand wages for similar positions in high-quality early care and education and elementary school programs and how the program will use this information and account for experience, job responsibilities, and credentials to provide competitive wages. Applicants should include information on benefits that will be provided to staff.

Describe the strategies and mechanisms in place to support staff, and a plan to assess staff performance, including identification of possible barriers to high-quality job performance and solutions to support under-performing staff. Applicants must also describe how they will provide career development opportunities for professional, paraprofessional, and other staff (45 CFR § 1302.91).

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

The narrative must also address the following: (1) how the applicant will facilitate strong staff-child relationships that support the development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; (2) a plan to ensure that staff are prepared for and supported in implementing evidence-based instructional

practices that are individualized to support positive child outcomes; and (3) how all staff will successfully partner with families in supporting children's development.

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

5. Planning and Implementation

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

- State and local licensing requirements for each proposed age group, the length of time required to obtain licensure for early childhood learning environments, and the impact on the proposed implementation plan.
- The availability of appropriate facilities for the proposed program model(s) and the anticipated timelines for completing any construction, renovation, or adaptation of space to meet requirements.
- As applicable, plans for alternative service provision (e.g., temporary home-based services) during start-up, until contracts are in place and facilities are fully operational. Full enrollment is expected as soon as reasonably possible, and no later than 12 months from the date of award.
- Where facilities are not available, a plan to acquire facilities in accordance with 45 CFR § 1303.42.
- The ability to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff to support the proposed start of Head Start, EHS, and/or EHS-CCP programming.
- Plan for recruiting eligible children and families, and maintaining enrollment. **If proposing EHS-CCP,** this plan must include how the applicant will identify and enroll families currently receiving CCDF subsidies.

6. Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems

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

- exercise effective oversight of program operations and accountability for federal funds;
- ensure representation of the diverse community served;
- set and monitor overall agency priorities and operational systems;
- develop and implement systems for communication, record-keeping, reporting, and ongoing monitoring, and;
- conduct community assessment, annual self-assessments, and outcome-based evaluations.

Applicants must document their plan to constitute and train a governing body that will be in compliance with the program governance requirements established in 42 U.S.C. 9837(c) of the

Head Start Act. Applicants must also demonstrate their capacity to effectively implement a system of governance that includes the Policy Council and parents in decision making. Applicants must demonstrate the existence of management systems for the purposes of program planning, internal and external communication, record keeping, issuance of internal and external reports, and program self-assessment and monitoring. If applicable, applicants should provide information about how its current governance structure would change (if at all) to meet the HSPPS.

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

7. PRIORITY POINTS – Serving High Poverty Neighborhoods

Applicants interested in receiving priority points must present evidence of providing services in a community where there is a high need for Head Start, EHS and/or EHS-CCP services in the proposed geographic location. Applicants must identify the census tract(s) and the level of poverty associated within the community or communities they are proposing expanded services**.** Applicants must clearly indicate where their proposed services are located and if the location(s) are within a high poverty census tract (30 percent poverty or greater).

Applicants are encouraged to utilize this [mapping tool] to identify their census tract and clearly indicate where their proposed services are located and if the location(s) are within a high poverty census tract. Applicants are not required to use this tool and may choose to use the data parameters to determine whether or not their proposal qualifies for priority points.

The supporting methodology behind the mapping tool is as follows:

- Data Source: The American Community Survey (ACS) provides detailed socioeconomic data at various geographic levels, including census tracts. The 2017-2021 5-Year ACS Subject table that was used is S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months and can be found here: https://data.census.gov/table?q=poverty&g=010XX00US$1400000&tid=ACSST5Y2021.S1701
- Filtering: The census tracts were filtered by poverty rate using column S107_C03_001E: Estimate Percent Below Poverty Level Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined and the census tracts with 30 percent or more poverty (rounded to the nearest percentage point) were selected (8,619 census tracts)
- Categorizing: The census tracts with 30 percent or more poverty were split into two groups by severity. Those census tracts with 30-40 percent poverty were assigned 3 priority points (5,028 census tracts) and those census tracts with 40 percent or more poverty were assigned five priority points (3,591 census tracts)

Please see *8. Budget and Budget Justification*, under *The Project Budget and Budget Justification* later in this section for additional program-specific requirements that will be evaluated in the application review process.

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

If applicable, for each property rented and proposed for use during the project period for which funds will be charged as a direct or indirect cost to the award made under this NOFO, the applicant must provide an executed lease. If a lease has not been executed prior to submission of an application, the applicant must submit an actual draft of the unsigned lease or a letter of intent describing the potential arrangement including address, terms, length, and proposed expenses.

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

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities
Recipients are required to ensure proper oversight in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D.

These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

- Financial and Program Management
- Property Management
- Procurement

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

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

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

Third-Party Agreements

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

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

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

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

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

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

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

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

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

8. Budget and Budget Justification

Applicants must demonstrate that funds are budgeted to provide all required comprehensive Head Start and EHS services. Evidence of a per-child cost, based on the proposed program type and program option(s) must be included to ensure a high quality of services. The application must include costs that provide evidence of a sustainable mechanism for providing competitive compensation and other necessary supports to staff, including a clear description of how compensation offered is competitive with other jobs in the community providing similar services including local school districts. Applicants should propose wages for educational staff that are sufficient to recruit and retain individuals with the experience, training, and credentials to support children’s development and early learning in high-need communities. Wages must be sufficient to avoid high turnover rates among staff, which undermines quality and does not support continuity that is important to children and families. If the application proposes

expanded services to meet the needs of families pursuing employment, training, education, and other opportunities to support their well-being, the application must clearly indicate the associated costs. The application must clearly and accurately distinguish between the Head Start and EHS base operating funds, the Head Start and EHS T/TA funds, total federal funds, and the applicant's non-federal share. Additionally, applications should provide a cost-effective budget that is aligned with the program services, staffing plan, and other program components proposed in the application narrative. The applicant must describe the plan for the expenditure of T/TA funds.

For applicants proposing EHS-CCP, applicant must include sufficient T/TA resources to assist the child care and family child care partners with meeting HSPPS. Applicants must demonstrate that a significant portion of funding will be directed to its child care partners to ensure high-quality early learning experiences. Applicants must also discuss how funding will be directed to child care partners to support staff professional development, including credentialing and other opportunities designed to support increased competencies, credentials, wages, and compensation. Additionally, specific details about the applicant's plan to use a layered funding approach that includes the child care subsidy must be described. Applicant must discuss how it will not supplant existing funding including subsidies for their proposed project. Finally, applicants must describe the plan to ensure that children whose families lose child care subsidy eligibility will continue to be served.

The application must detail the plan to contribute the required non-federal share/match of the total project cost. Each source of non-federal share match must be clearly identified, including the estimated amount per source and the valuation methodology. Finally, the proposed sources of non-federal share/match must only be derived from allowable sources. Please see S*ection III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching* for information on the matching requirement.

Start-up/Pre-Award Costs

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

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

Facilities

Applicants must delineate any properties that will be used or proposed for use during the project period and for which funds will be charged to the award made under this NOFO as a direct or indirect cost. Properties must be organized into the following three categories: owned, leased (current lease already in place), or intent to lease (through either a letter of intent or an actual draft/unsigned lease). If a lease(s) has not been executed prior to submission of an application, the applicant must submit an actual draft of the unsigned lease or a letter of intent describing the potential arrangement including address, terms, length, and proposed expenses.

The applicant must identify if the arrangement is an “arm’s-length” or “less-than-arms-length” lease and provide how costs are calculated in accordance with 45 CFR § 75.465 (Rental costs of real property and equipment) and 45 CFR § 75.436 (Depreciation).

In the list of properties, include a detailed breakdown of **all proposed costs**. It must be clear which costs are related to which property. In the budget justification, include a corresponding detailed narrative explanation of the purpose and need for each proposed cost under this grant award to determine reasonableness, allocability, and allowability of costs. Each property must include a breakdown of proposed costs and narrative, including all of the following, if applicable: the allocable percentage and total dollar amount; the depreciation amount with type of method and calculation used; rent amount with calculation; terms of lease; tax amount; insurance amount and what it covers; maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost; minor alterations and renovations with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost.

For ACF property related policy and guidance, please refer to the ACF website at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/manage-grant/property

General

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

Personnel

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

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

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees in addition to regular salaries and wages. For more information on Fringe Benefits please refer to 45 CFR § 75.431. **Do not include** the fringe benefits of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients because those costs should be listed under the "Contractual" category as part of the total value of the contract or agreement.

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

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

Travel

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

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

Equipment

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

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

Supplies

Description: Tangible personal property other than those included under the Equipment category. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of $5,000, or the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, regardless of the length of its useful life. See 45 CFR § 75.2, 75.321, and 75.453 for more information.

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

Contractual

Description: Cost of all contracts and subawards except those that should be placed under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, procurement contracts, and subawards. Recipients are required to use 45 CFR §§ 75.326-.340 procurement procedures, and subawards are subject to the requirements at 45 CFR §§ 75.351-.353. Costs related to professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees, must be listed in the Other category. (Typically, these arrangements will take the form of a consultant agreement directly with an individual as opposed to a contract with a company that employs the consultant. The latter case must still be listed under Contractual line item.)

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

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

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

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

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to: individual consultant costs; local travel; insurance (when not included under the Fringe category); food (when allowable); medical and dental costs (non-personnel); professional service costs (e.g., audit charges); depreciation of real property and equipment (when not treated as an indirect cost), printing and publications, training costs (such as tuition and stipends), staff development costs, and administrative costs (when not treated as an indirect cost). Please note costs must be allowable per 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

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

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

Indirect Charges

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

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

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

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

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

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

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

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306. For awards that require matching by statute, recipients must meet the required level of cost sharing. Recipients that have voluntarily decided to contribute cost sharing when it is not required, or at a higher level than required, will be held accountable for the proposed cost-sharing, if accepted by ACF and included in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to provide cost sharing that has been accepted by ACF may result in the disallowance of federal funds.**

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

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

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

Construction
Description: Provide a separate detailed budget and narrative in accordance with the instructions

outlined on the SF-424C. Identify which construction activities and costs will be contractual and those that the applicant will assume.

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

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

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

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

Application Submission Options

Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic Delivery

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

How to Register through Grants.gov

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov.

For questions related to this funding opportunity, please contact the number listed in the application package.

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

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

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

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

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

Issues with Federal Systems

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

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

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

Paper Application Submission

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

05/14/2024

Explanation of Due Dates

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Acknowledgement of Received Application

Acknowledgement from Grants.gov

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

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:
ACF will provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

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

Applicants should go to the following URL for the official list of the jurisdictions that have elected to participate in E.O. 12372 https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf.

Applicants from participating jurisdictions should contact their SPOC, as soon as possible, to alert them of their prospective applications and to receive instructions on their jurisdiction's procedures. Applicants must submit all required application materials to the SPOC and indicate the date of submission on the SF-424 at item 19.

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

SPOC comments may be submitted directly to ACF at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management, 330 C St. SW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20201.

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

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

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

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

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to the following address.

Submission by Mail
HHS-2024-ACF-OHS-HP-0157
Office of Head Start

OHS Grant Review Team c/o Guardians of Honor
1990 K Street, NW
Suite 650
Washington
DC
20006

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

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

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

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

1. Substantiation of Need **Maximum Points:** 10

To evaluate the Substantiation of Need, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant presents evidence how the proposed program would target a geographic area with the greatest need for Head Start or EHS services, and how children and families most in need will be identified and prioritized. Reviewers will score based on the following narrative elements:

- The description of how resources will be directed to the geographic area(s) of greatest need and children and families most in need of services.
- The extent to which data is included to demonstrate why the proposed geographic area is in high need of early childhood education and family support services. This includes the degree to which data is presented on the number of eligible pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers by geographic location; the number of families in extreme poverty; jobless rates; incidence of community health problems access to other early childhood education programs and services, including the estimated number of Head

Start and EHS eligible children who are receiving child care subsidy, in the geographic area; or other similar factors.

- The analysis of data regarding the availability and access to early childhood education services for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in low-income families in the proposed geographic area.

2. Community Need and Objectives **Maximum Points:** 10

To evaluate the Community Need and Objectives, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant presents evidence of the need for Head Start, EHS, and/or EHS-CCP services in the proposed community. Reviewers will score based on the following narrative elements:

- If the proposed service area and location(s) where services will be delivered is clearly described.
- The plan to assess and meet the needs of families pursuing employment, training, education, and other opportunities to support their well-being.
- The rationale for which ages of children are proposed to be served, including the estimated number of eligible pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, by program type and geographic location(s).
- If the proposed program option (center-based, home-based, family child care, services to pregnant women, locally designed option, or EHS-CCP) best meets the needs of the local community. Does the justification use information that describes the applicant's process for engaging other entities in the community in making this determination?
- The plan to effectively leverage available funding streams, including child care subsidies.
- The plan to enroll children with disabilities.
- If applicable, how the proposed delegate agency is identified, including the communities in which the applicant will operate, the number of children to be served by age of child, and their proposed program option(s).
- Evidence of community engagement in the proposed geographic locations that is designed to improve service delivery, increase access to services, and prevent duplication.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CCP:**
    - The extent to which the applicant has identified partners that have demonstrated a commitment to the proposed project.
    - The evidence of the applicant’s knowledge and awareness of its state's subsidy and CCDF policy landscape in its proposed service area.

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

To evaluate Projects Design and Approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant presents evidence of its ability to implement a high-quality, comprehensive program for the population the applicant proposes to serve in the *Community Need and Objectives* section. Reviewers will score based on the following narrative elements:

- The curriculum or set of curricula and teaching practices proposed that promote progress toward school readiness goals.

- The process for establishing and measuring school readiness goals and whether goals reflect the ages of children that the applicant proposes to serve and are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- If the school readiness goals were or will be established in consultation with the parents of children who will be participating in the program.
- How the applicant will meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- The plan to meet the needs of the applicant's targeted population in the child welfare system, dual language learners, homeless children, and pregnant women.
- The plan to develop a unified birth-to-school-entry continuum of care and education through linkages with home visiting programs, Head Start, and other preschool and kindergarten programs, as applicable.
- How the applicant will meet the health, mental health, nutritional, and oral health needs of program participants.
- **For applicants proposing center-based or family child care services:** How the applicant describes a plan for observing teacher practice, including teacher-child interactions.
- **For applicants proposing home-based services:** How the applicant describes a plan for observing home visitor practice. Do all applicants describe, using this information, how to inform professional development and practice improvements?
- The process for obtaining required screenings, including developmental hearing and vision, and referring for further evaluation as necessary.
- The process for selecting the specified assessment tool. The plan to use child assessment data to individualize the instruction and learning for each child and, as necessary, refer for additional evaluation and intervention; and to aggregate and analyze child-level assessment data.
- The plan to coordinate with public and private entities to assist the program in providing child health and developmental services and program management services.
- The system proposed to deliver services to enrolled women post-pregnancy, including how the newborn infant and family will transition into the appropriate program option at the appropriate time.
- How the applicant will ensure that infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families participating in the program will have the opportunity to receive Head Start or other appropriate preschool or kindergarten services, as applicable.
- The plan to facilitate the meaningful engagement of parents in activities designed to help them become full partners in the education of their children. Barriers to parent participation, such as work schedules, should be discussed.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CCP:**
    - Evidence that the applicant has identified its partner sites and describes a thorough plan for sustaining its child care partners, as well as contingency plans for replacing proposed partners if any partnerships do not materialize or prove unsustainable.

4. Staffing and Compensation **Maximum Points:** 15

To evaluate Staffing, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates its ability to recruit, retain, and manage staff with the ability to implement a

comprehensive Head Start, EHS, and/or EHS-CCP program. Reviewers will score based on the following narrative elements:

- The plan to ensure all teaching staff will meet the qualification requirements.
- Evidence of a sustainable mechanism for providing competitive compensation to staff, including a clear description of how proposed salary or wage targets are competitive with other employers providing high-quality early care and education and elementary school education in the community.
- Evidence of the proposed program director and proposed key program staff's ability to meet the required qualifications to administer a Head Start or EHS program, complex social service program, or early education services.
- The plan to attract, train, and retain qualified staff with the ability to implement a high-quality program.
- How the applicant proposes to provide career development opportunities for professional, paraprofessional, family child care providers, and other staff, including supports for professional development.
- Evidence of how the applicant will ensure a positive, supportive workplace for staff, including strategies to promote the mental health and well-being of their staff.
- If the plan to evaluate job applicants, including existing recipient staff, to determine which applicants are most capable of implementing a high-quality, comprehensive program is realistic.

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

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

- State and local licensing requirements for each proposed age group, the length of time required to obtain licensure for early childhood learning environments, and the impact on the proposed implementation plan for the timely provision of services.
- The availability of appropriate facilities for proposed program models, and the anticipated timelines for completing any construction, renovation, or adaptation of space to meet requirements.
- As applicable, plans for alternative service provision (e.g., temporary home-based services) during start-up, until facilities are fully operational.
- Where facilities are not available, a plan to acquire facilities in accordance with federal Head Start regulations.
- The ability to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff to support the proposed start of Head Start and/or EHS programming.

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

To evaluate Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates its understanding of the crucial role of the Board and Policy Council. Reviewers will also consider the extent to which the

applicant demonstrates a capacity to provide effective program administration and oversight, including child care partner sites if applicable. Reviewers will score based on the following narrative elements:

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

7. PRIORITY POINTS – Serving High Poverty Neighborhoods **Maximum Points:** 5

To evaluate this section, reviewers will consider if the applicant presents evidence of their plan to provide services in a High Poverty Neighborhood where there is a high need for Head Start, EHS and/or EHS-CCP services in their geographic location. Applicants that are unable to provide a concrete address where services will be provided will not be able to obtain priority points in this category.

- Applicants are encouraged to utilize this mapping tool to identify their census tract and demonstrate the level of poverty within the community or communities they are proposing expanded services. Applicants are not required to use this tool and may choose to use the data parameters to determine whether their proposal qualifies for priority points. Applicants will clearly indicate where their proposed services are located and if the location(s) are within a high poverty census tract. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following elements:
    - Applicants will receive 3 priority points if one of their service locations is within a high-poverty census tract with a poverty rate of 30 percent - <40 percent for the population.
    - Applicants will receive 5 priority points if one of their service locations is within a high-poverty census tract with a poverty rate of 40 percent or higher for the population.
    - If applicants have service locations in both types of high-poverty census tracts, they will receive the maximum of 5 points.

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

To evaluate this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant's budget and budget narrative demonstrates that funds are budgeted to provide all required Head Start, EHS, and/or EHS-CCP services, and if the applicant:

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

V.2. Review and Selection Process

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

Initial ACF Screening

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

Merit Review and Results

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

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

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

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

Pre-Award Discussions and Negotiations

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

- Whether the proposal meets the stated purpose of the funding opportunity, as described in *Section I. Program Description.*
- Whether the proposal targets a geographic area with the greatest need for Head Start, EHS and/or EHS-CCP services, and how children and families most in need will be identified and prioritized, as described in *Section IV. The Project Description.*
- Whether the proposed program is cost effective based on the application submitted for evaluation in response to *Section IV.2. The Project Description* and *The Project Budget and Budget Justification.*
- Whether the proposal contains contingent activities that may impede, or indefinitely delay, the implementation of the proposed program such as, but not limited to, the ability to timely renovate and/or secure facilities that are required to deliver Head Start, EHS, and/or EHS-CCP services.
- Any other factors necessary for ACF to determine if the applicant can provide high-quality, comprehensive early education services.

Not all pre-award discussions and/or negotiations will result in awards. ACF reserves the right to cease discussions and negotiations with applicants prior to award and may enter discussions or negotiations with other applicants.

Additional Review and Funding Considerations

ACF's priority is expanding access to high-quality Head Start, EHS and EHS-CCP programs. Awards will be based on how effectively the model design fits the needs of the community to be served. ACF will prioritize proposals that include a viable plan to reach full enrollment as soon as possible and no later than 12 months of receiving the award.

Through this NOFO, funds are allocated by each geographical region of the country as defined by ACF based on each region's relative share of young children whose families' incomes are below the poverty line. ACF retains administrative flexibility to reallocate between regions as appropriate when making awards using the regional allocation to ensure each recipient meets a high standard of quality and to align with funding priorities.

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

Having high-quality early care and education opportunities is particularly important and is often lacking in economically distressed communities. Through this NOFO, ACF is interested in targeting this competition to reach areas of greatest need to facilitate the enrollment of families who would most benefit from services. ACF reserves the right to confirm that applicants have correctly designated a high poverty census tract, if applicable. ACF reserves the right to deny funding to an applicant that inaccurately indicates their proposed service locations are in census tracts designated as high poverty or the program proposes services in an area where there are insufficient children under 5.

A well-compensated and supported workforce is essential to providing high-quality services to promote children's optimal development and family well-being. ACF reserves the right to prioritize organizations based on their ability to provide sustainable approaches toward staffing, which includes providing staff with competitive wages, comprehensive benefits and wellness supports.

Please note that if the applicant is a current or former Head Start or EHS recipient, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider the recipient's last two OHS monitoring reports. In addition, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider any monitoring reports issued in the 5 years preceding the posting of this NOFO. A former Head Start or EHS recipient's history of voluntary relinquishment, if applicable, may be considered in making final funding determinations. ACF will also consider if a Head Start or EHS agency has received a Suspension with Notice (45 CFR § 1304.3) or an Emergency Suspension without Advance Notice within 5 years prior to the posting date of this NOFO. Additionally, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider any documentation that relates to the fiscal health and financial viability of the applicant. ACF will

also retrieve, review, and consider state licensing documentation on the applicant. These reports and documents will be considered in making final funding determinations.

Also, if the applicant is a current Head Start, EHS, or EHS-CCP recipient, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider the recipient's enrollment data for the 12 months preceding the posting of this NOFO. Ongoing under-enrollment, and reductions approved in the 6 – 12 months preceding the posting of this NOFO, will be considered in making final funding determinations.

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

ACF reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant that is not "in the community" to be served, in accordance with the requirements for designation as a Head Start agency at 42 U.S.C. 9836. ACF will consider all "qualified applicants in such community" as required by 42 U.S.C. 9836(d) where the application demonstrates that they have an organizational base within the community to be served. This could be established by virtue of the applicant being a provider of services in the community or having a clear relationship to the community as evidenced, for example, by board representation from the community or by evidence of the support of community leaders, including elected or appointed city/county officials, school principals, county government officials, social service provider organizations, community organizations representing minority and other relevant sectors of the community to include low-income populations, and community-based child care providers.

Applicant entities may submit only one application per service area. In such cases where two or more applications are submitted by the same organization, and those applications are deemed to be identical in content except minor differences in proposed enrollment and budget, ACF may consider those submissions non-responsive to the requirements of the funding opportunity. Applications that are derived from a template are over-generalized and may not meet the needs of the individual service area.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

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

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval in the merit review process, but not selected for award may receive funding if additional funds become available in the current Fiscal Year. For those

applications determined as “approved but unfunded,” notice will be given of the determination by email.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

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

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

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

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

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

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

HHS Grants Policy Statement

ACF awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS), which covers basic award processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as

well as important agency-specific requirements. The HHS GPS is available at https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/grants/grants/policies-regulations/hhsgps107.pdf.

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

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

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

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports:
Annually
Unless otherwise noted in this section, recipients under this NOFO will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting requirements is available on the ACF website at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/manage-grant/reporting.

Head Start Program Reporting

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

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

Financial Reports:
Semi-Annually

Post- Award Facilities Requirement

It is expected that for all facility related projects the applicable OMB-approved SF-429 forms (e.g., SF-429 Cover Page, SF-429 Attachment A – Annual General Report, SF-429 Attachment B – Acquire or Improve Request, and SF-429 Attachment C – Disposition and Encumbrance Request) be submitted along with supporting documents **in the GrantSolutions On-Line Data Collection system**. For more information, please see ACF Property Guidance, and ACF Real Property Guidance, including the Real Property Prior Approvals.

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

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

Office of Grants Management Contact

First Name:
Jennifer
Last Name:
Curtiss
Federal Agency:
Sub OpDiv:
Administration for Children and Families
OpDiv:
Street 1:
601 E. 12th St.
Street 2:
Room 349
City:
Kansas City
State:
MO
Zip:
64106
Phone:
(888) 242-0684
Phone 2:
Fax:
Email:
OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com
URL:

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

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

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

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs www.grants.gov/.

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

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

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

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

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

Qualified Opportunity Zones https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions and https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx.

The Head Start Act as amended by The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, (Pub. L. 110-134) http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/law.

Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR Parts 1301-1305) https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/hspps-appendix.pdf.

Early Head Start:

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/ncecdtl.

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc.

EHS-CCP Implementation Planners and Fiscal Consultants

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/local-early-childhood-partnerships/article/ehs-cc-partnership-implementation-planners-fiscal-consultants

Special Quest resources:

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/specialquest-multimedia-training-library/specialquest-multimedia-training-library

Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel.

Please note that providing a link to a non-federal source, website or curriculum in this NOFO does not constitute an endorsement by ACF or any of its employees of the sponsors of the source, website or curriculum or the information or products presented on the site. ACF cannot attest to the accuracy of information provided by this link or any other linked sites on the website.

EHS-CCP Information on the Internet

EHS-CCP Resources:
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/local-early-childhood-partnerships/article/starting-early-head-start-child-care-partnership

About the Child Care and Development Fund

Office of Child Care:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ.

CCDF Reauthorization:
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/form/approved-ccdf-plans-fy-2022-2024

Child Care Technical Assistance Network:
https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/.

State CCDF Administrators:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts.

Applicant Support Resources

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

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

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

Application Checklist

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

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*

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

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
		in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
The Project Description	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications*.	If applicable, concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.
SF-424A Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs / SF-424B Assurances - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424C - Budget Information Construction Programs / SF-424D - Assurances Construction Programs	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications*. These forms are available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. All forms are ***required*** for applications under this FOA for projects that include both non-construction **and** construction activities.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms	Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	package at www.Grants.gov.	
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Project Summary/Abstract	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.* The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Table of Contents	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.*	Submit with the application by the due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Assurance: Board Attestation	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications and Section V.1. Criteria,* with a template provided in the *Appendix.*	Applicants for whom this applies the assurance must be **signed** by the Board chair, who is authorized to sign the application on behalf of the applicant. Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Certificate of Good Standing	See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications* and *The Project Description,*	Submission is required with the application by the Application Due Date in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	Legal Status of Applicant Entity.	
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity*.	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the application due date and time listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4.* of the FOA. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Proof of Policy Council Approval	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications* and *The Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation*.	Submission is due by the application due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Application Due Dates and Times.*
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDR)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*. The IDR must be submitted with the application package.	If the IDR is available by the application due date, it must be submitted with the application package. If it is not available by the application due date, listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*, it may be submitted prior to the award of a grant.

Appendix

1. REGIONAL ALLOCATIONS

Funding is available within each of the 10 ACF regions based on the proportion of young children in poverty in that region. Applicants are encouraged to use the regional allocation funding levels as a guide in determining their proposed funding. Applications that exceed the Award Ceiling listed in S*ection II. Federal Award Information* will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested.

The funding amounts listed for each ACF region in this section represent base funding. Base funding is for use in program operations, staff, materials, equipment, facilities, etc. In addition to base funding, applicants should request an additional 2.5 percent of the base funding for T/TA funding. T/TA funding is used for the purposes of improving program quality and helping prepare children to succeed in school and is described in section 648 of the Head Start Act.

For example, an applicant from Region I might request $2,226,318 in base funding and $55,658 in T/TA funding (which is 2.5 percent of $2,226,318) for a combined total of $2,281,976 in federal funds requested. The applicant would list $2,281,976 on Line 18a of its SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, and break out its requested base and T/TA funding on the SF-424A and in the budget and budget justification.

Please see *Section II. Federal Award Information and Section V.2. Review and Selection Process* for more information about the state allocations.

Region I (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)

$2,226,318

Region II (New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands)

$8,790,402

Region III (Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, District of Columbia)

$6,922,114

Region IV (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)

$20,509,347

Region V (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin)

$15,764,117

Region VI (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)

$17,668,021

Region VII (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)

$3,645,401

Region VIII (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming)

$2,610,987

Region IX (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam, Republic of Palau, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands)

$11,696,020

Region X (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington)

$2,706,160

2. Assurance Template: Board of Directors Attestation

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

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

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

(Signature)

(First and Last Name)

(Title/Board Chair)

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