RFA CE-25-025 Questions and Answers

1. How can I obtain a copy of the full announcement? Where can I receive more information on how to apply?
   - More information about the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) can be found here on grants.gov under the opportunity number RFA-CE-25-025. The full announcement can be found under section "Related Documents" which provides additional guidance for applying and navigating the application process. Application submissions can be accessed by pressing the red buttons to apply and/or subscribe for updates and research application portal.

2. We were wondering if you might be open to speaking with our team about this opportunity so we may better understand the nature of the work.
   - We unfortunately are unable to meet with potential applicants but will happily assist you with any questions you would like to send via email to NCIPC_ERPO@cdc.gov.

3. I was curious if you had a list of previously funded/currently funded grantees? My team and I would like to review what has been previously funded to help us generate ideas and determine whether this is funding we would like to pursue.
   - If you would like to know more about current or previously funded NCIPC research, we encourage you to check out our NCIPC website and the NIH RePorter site.

4. May applicants submit their application via ASSIST instead of Grants.gov?
   - Yes, according to **Section IV: Application and Submission Information > 1. Address to Request Application Package** on page 34 of the NOFO, eRA ASSIST or Grants.gov Workspace are options for applicants to submit their applications.

5. I am currently having issues when applying as it leads to a page of Bad Request. Any assistance you can provide to rectifying this issue would be greatly appreciated.
   - We are sorry to hear that you are encountering technical issues when applying! We do not manage the application submission platforms, and thus if the issue has occurred on eRA Commons ASSIST or grants.gov we encourage you to reach out to the following contacts:
     - NIH eRA Service desk at: Toll-free: 1-866-504-9552; Phone: 301-402-7469 | http://grants.nih.gov/support/index.html | Hours: Mon-Fri, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time.
     - Grants.gov Contact Center at: Toll-free: 1-800-518-4726 | Support | Grants.gov | Email: support@grants.gov
6. Should the Research Objective be included in the Specific Aims and/or the Abstract sections?
   - To ensure that your application meets all responsiveness criteria and is forwarded along to peer review, please indicate in **both** the Abstract and the Specific Aims sections the relevant Research Objective that aligns with the proposed research.

7. Please let me know if you think my research proposal would qualify for this NOFO and what the next best steps are.
    - While we are not able to provide guidance or information on the appropriateness of your aims to the NOFO, we can point you to sections of the NOFO that may address your inquiries and that can assist in developing your application:
        - **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 2. Approach** on page 19 to understand the objectives and intent of the NOFO
        - **Section III: Eligibility Information > 5. Responsiveness** on page 31 to review aspects of an application that would be considered responsive and unresponsive
        - **Section V: Application Review Information** on page 42 to understand the scientific review criteria
    - Ultimately, research proposals must be a primary prevention approach that falls under at least one of the following research objectives:
        - **Research Objective 1**: Effectiveness research to evaluate existing primary prevention approaches that address societal- or community-level conditions by **ensuring a strong start for children.**
        - **Research Objective 2**: Effectiveness research to evaluate existing primary prevention approaches that address societal- or community-level conditions by **promoting social norms and narratives that protect against violence and adversity.**
        - **Research Objective 3**: Effectiveness research to evaluate existing primary prevention approaches that address societal- or community-level conditions by **strengthening economic supports to families.**

8. Does a pilot of a program/initiative count as an existing approach?
    - We recommend applicants closely review **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 2. Approach**. As discussed on page 20, "Applications are expected to propose evaluations of existing approaches (i.e., policies or programs that are **already developed and implemented or ready for implementation** in the community or population of interest) with promising or undetermined evidence of impact on ACEs." It is incumbent on the applicant to justify that the proposed program or initiative is at a point where it can be rigorously evaluated and would fit the scientific intent of the NOFO.
9. Does the funder believe we will be able to measure a reduction in at least one Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) outcome and one additional Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) outcome within the 3-year funding period?
    - We understand the difficulties in assessing the true impact of projects in reducing CAN and ACEs within a 3-year funding period – however, as with the intent/objectives of the NOFO, the proposed research must add to the evidence base for the prevention of CAN and ACEs and thus would require a demonstrated effectiveness of the proposed policy or program within your application. Ultimately, it is up to the applicant to provide justification and demonstrate how their proposed research would aim to achieve the outcomes written in the

NOFO. Please see **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 1. Background and Purpose** and **2. Approach** starting on page 7 for more information.

10. Is it sufficient to measure BOTH CAN and ACE outcomes and also measure proximal prevention factors (e.g., decreases in risk factors) and expect to reduce those proximal prevention factors within the study period but not necessarily CAN and ACE outcomes?
    - As seen in **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 2. Approach** on page 22 of the NOFO, measures that indirectly capture ACEs (e.g., measuring overall intimate partner violence in the population as a proxy for capturing childhood exposure to intimate partner violence in the home) may meet the intent of this NOFO, but require further justification. Applicants must describe the strengths and limitations of the selected measure, summarize alternative measures that were considered, provide strong justification for why the selected measure is an appropriate indirect assessment of the corresponding ACE, and describe how the proposed research with the selected outcome measure will advance the evidence base for prevention of ACEs.
    - We also encourage you to review **Section III: Eligibility Information > 5. Responsiveness** on page 31 to review aspects of an application that would be considered responsive and unresponsive and **Section V: Application Review Information** on page 42 to understand the scientific review criteria that your application will be scored against. Ultimately it is incumbent upon the applicant to assess whether the proposal would be deemed responsive to the intent/purpose of the NOFO.

11. Are proposals that evaluate the impact of programs that seek to mitigate the impact of ACEs on communities considered, or solely those that focus on prevention of ACEs?
    - The intent of this NOFO is to strengthen the evidence base for the *primary prevention* of ACEs, which focuses on preventing violence before it occurs. As a result, proposals that seek to focus on reducing the impact of ACEs after they have occurred in communities (i.e., tertiary prevention approaches) will not be considered responsive for this opportunity. Please see **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 1. Background and Purpose > Considerations Regarding NOFO Scope** on page 11 for more information. We also recommended looking at **Section III: Eligibility Information > 5. Responsiveness** on page 31 to review aspects of an application that would be considered responsive and unresponsive and **Section V: Application Review Information** on page 42 to understand the scientific review criteria to assist in the preparation of your application.

12. Is it expected that applicants implement the evidence-based programs or approaches listed in CDC's ACE resource document?
    - The requirement of this NOFO is that proposals must evaluate an existing policy or program that has **not yet been rigorously evaluated** and is not currently undergoing a rigorous outcome evaluation for its impact on ACEs at this time. As a result, applicants are not expected to implement/assess previously-evaluated evidence-based programs listed as examples within CDC's ACEs Prevention Resources for Action. However, research funded

under this announcement must intend to **expand the evidence base** for community- or societal-level ACEs prevention in one or more of the following **strategy/approach areas** identified in CDC's ACEs Prevention Resources for Action. Please see **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 1. Background and Purpose** and **2. Approach** starting on pages 7 and 19 respectively, for more information regarding the intent and objectives of this opportunity. It is up to the applicant to justify the specific program or policy that will be evaluated as it relates to the CAN and ACEs outcomes.

13. I know CANs and ACEs are the main outcomes but are you open to an applicant proposing a more strengths-based outcome such as parent- infant bonding or PCEs instead?
    - Applicants must propose studies focused on preventing at least one form of child abuse and neglect (CAN; e.g., physical abuse, emotional neglect) and at least one additional ACE outside of CAN. Applicants are strongly encouraged to evaluate impacts of the selected approach on multiple ACEs., however the NOFO does not preclude the examination of other outcomes such as PCEs or parent-infant bonding. Please see **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 2. Approach > Objectives/Outcomes** starting on page 21 of the NOFO to determine if your proposed outcomes meet the intended requirements for this opportunity. Additionally, we recommend reviewing **Section III: Eligibility Information > 5. Responsiveness** to determine whether your application will be responsive to this NOFO and the main outcomes as provided.

14. Applicants are discouraged from proposing only formative research (e.g., feasibility, fidelity, satisfaction, etc.). Can you offer an example of what the agency defines as formative research?
    - For this NOFO, applicants are expected to propose rigorous quantitative evaluation designs. Please see **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 2. Approach > Rigorous evaluation designs** starting on page 24 of the NOFO. Formative research involves the use of qualitative and quantitative methods to strengthen the components of the prevention approach, such as the design and implementation, appropriateness, and acceptability, and components of the evaluation activities, such as instrument development, implementation evaluation, recruitment and retention, and pilot studies. Some examples include cognitive testing, pilot data, program testing on a group to measure satisfaction of program or receive feedback on program, etc.

15. Is CDC interested in emerging quantitative methods that may be newer to violence prevention?
    - This may be acceptable as long as the proposed research design is an appropriate and rigorous evaluation strategy. Please see **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 2. Approach > Data collection, acquisition, and analysis** starting on page 25 of the NOFO. CDC does not dictate what methods you include in your proposal in regard to design and data analysis – applicants are expected to provide a justification that their proposed methods are appropriate for evaluating impacts of strategy of your choice. Additionally, applications

should demonstrate that the research staff have necessary skills and experience to ensure quality and timeliness of proposed activities.

16. Does the PI have to be an employee, or can they be a contractor of the organization they are working with?
    - Please see **Executive Summary > Eligible Project Directors/Principal Investigators (PDs/PIs)** on page 5 of the NOFO for more information. As a note, individuals possessing the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to conduct proposed research should collaborate with their institutions to submit a support application. CDC does not award individuals directly. Additionally, as found in **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 2. Approach > Collaboration/Partnerships**, it is expected that for all applications the majority (60% or greater) of the proposed research work plan, as evidenced by the proposed budget, will be directly carried out by the applicant organization throughout the entirety of the period of performance. The applicant organization cannot serve as a "pass through" to fund another entity to conduct the majority of the research.
    - We also encourage you to review **Section III: Eligibility Information** starting on page 29 to understand the eligibility requirements for this NOFO and to ensure you can acquire the appropriate registrations under **6. Required Registrations** with the organization.

17. Is a letter of intent required or highly recommended?
    - A letter of intent (LOI) is not mandatory, nor is it binding or a factor in the review of an application. We encourage applicants to submit a letter of intent because the details it provides help CDC Injury Center staff to plan for the scientific and technical merit peer review process. Please see **Section IV: Application and Submission Information > 3. Letter of Intent** on page 35 for more information should you be interested in submitting a LOI.

18. If we will be evaluating federal policies, do we need a Letter of Support (LOS) from the agency that oversees the implementation of those policies?
    - Yes - a LOS is needed from the organization(s) responsible for implementing the policy or program to be evaluated is required. Please see **Section I: Funding Opportunity Description > 2. Approach > Letters of Support** on page 26 and **Section III: Eligibility Information > 5.** Responsiveness on page 31 of the NOFO for more information. Without the LOS, you might not be able to demonstrate that the partnership would be able to meet the intended goals of the NOFO.

19. Where can we find the peer review scoring criteria?
    - You can find the peer review scoring criteria in **Section V: Application Review Information** starting on page 42 of the NOFO.