ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Family Assistance

Notice of Funding Opportunity
Application due July 29, 2025

HEART—Helping Every Area of Relationships Thrive

Opportunity number: HHS-2025-ACF-OFA-ZB-0109

Contents

Before you begin

If you believe you are a good candidate for this funding opportunity, secure your SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations now. If you are already registered, make sure your registrations are active and up-to-date.

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

You must have an active Grants.gov registration. Doing so requires a Login.gov registration as well.

See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

Apply by the application due date

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on July 29, 2025.

> To help you find what you need, this NOFO uses internal links. In Adobe Reader, you can go back to where you were by pressing Alt + Left Arrow (Windows) or Command + Left Arrow (Mac) on your keyboard.

Step 1:
Review the Opportunity

In this step

Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Office of Family Assistance

Funding projects that support activities to promote healthy marriages, including marriage and relationship education skills and marriage mentoring.

Summary

The Helping Every Area of Relationships Thrive (HEART) program will provide funding for projects that support activities to promote healthy marriages and/or relationships to ultimately strengthen families. This funding will be designed for adult individuals or couples (age 18 and older). Projects will provide a broad array of healthy marriage and relationship promotion activities and services designed to integrate skills-based healthy marriage education, along with additional services to address relationship skills and job and career advancement opportunities. Projects will provide curriculum-based skills development and services designed to support seven family-strengthening activities:

- Marriage and relationship education/skills (MRES).
- Premarital education.
- Marriage enhancement.
- Divorce reduction activities.
- Marriage mentoring.
- Public advertising campaigns.
- Activities to reduce disincentives to marriage.

Additionally, projects are expected to include at least 12 hours of curriculum-based workshops and meet program participation targets. We are also interested in projects that implement one specific program model designed for a service population, such as adult individuals or adult couples.

This is one of three Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) funding opportunities. The others are:

- Relationship, Education, Advancement, and Development for Youth for Life (READY4Life) (HHS-2025-ACF-ZD-0013)

Have questions?
See Contacts and Support.

Key facts

Opportunity name:
HEART—Helping Every Area of Relationships Thrive

Opportunity number:
HHS-2025-ACF-OFA-ZB-0109

Announcement type:
Initial

Federal assistance listing:
93.086

Statutory authority number:
42 U.S.C 603(a)(2)

Key dates

Application submission deadline:
July 29, 2025

Expected project start date:
September 30, 2025

- Family, Opportunity, Resilience, Grit, Engagement—Fatherhood (FORGE Fatherhood) (HHS-2025-ACF-OFA-ZJ-0014)

Funding details

Type: Cooperative agreement

Expected total program funding: $33,000,000

Total expected awards: 40

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): $400,000

Maximum award amount for the first budget period (award ceiling): $1,250,000

We plan to fund a five-year project period. The project period has five one-year budget periods.

Projects will be funded within three scopes of service, each with specific funding levels.

Non-competitive continuation grants will be offered for years 2 through 5 of the project period, subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress towards performance benchmarks, and a determination that continued funding is in the best interest of the federal government. For years 2 through 5, your funding level request for each year must be the same as (or lower than) the amount in year 1.

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

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

These types of organizations are eligible for an award:

- State, county, city, or township governments.
- Special district governments.
- Independent school districts.
- Public- and state-controlled institutions of higher education.
- Native American tribal governments (federally recognized) and tribal organizations (other than federally recognized tribal governments).
- Public housing authorities and Indian housing authorities.
- Nonprofits with or without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS.
- For-profit organizations, including small businesses.
- Private institutions of higher education.

Individuals, including sole proprietorships, and foreign entities are not eligible.

Other eligibility criteria

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity.

Disqualification factors

We will review your application to make sure it meets these responsiveness requirements.

We won’t consider an application that:

- Requests funding above the award ceiling.
- Is submitted after the deadline.
- Is from an individual, including a sole proprietorship, or a foreign entity.
- Is received in paper format that didn’t have a previously approved exemption from ACF.

Application limits

If you submit the same application more than once under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), we will only acknowledge the last on-time submission.

An applicant organization may submit only one application in response to this announcement.

Cost sharing

This program has no cost-sharing requirement. If you choose to include cost-sharing funds, we won't consider it during review. However, we will hold you accountable for any funds you add, including through reporting. If you don't provide your promised amount, we may have to decrease your award amount or use other enforcement actions.

Program description

Statutory authority

42 U.S.C. 603(a)(2)(A)

Background

Programs for adults to promote healthy marriages and relationships

ACF's investment in healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood (HMRF) projects aims to create and sustain stronger families. In recent years, ACF-funded healthy marriage and relationship education recipients have supported family strengthening through providing marriage and relationship education, parenting skills, and job and career advancement activities. ACF's Helping Every Area of Relationships Thrive (HEART) grants will continue to support family-strengthening activities through one or more of a specific set of activities.

Assuring continued commitment to promoting this program

Leadership in your organization, all community partners, and contributors supported through this grant are expected to be made aware of the importance of being equally invested in and committed to achieving all programmatic goals and objectives. Strategic and structured collaboration among these groups is critical for the collective support of this program.

Program purpose and scope

This grant is intended to help families and individuals improve their relationship skills and paths toward economic stability and mobility. Recent research, such as the ACF-funded Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation, has shown that healthy marriage and relationship education (HMRE) programs can improve relationship quality, co-parenting, and some aspects of economic stability, and decrease divorce (Moore, Avellar, Patnaik, Covington, & Wu, 2018 [PDF]).

Scope of services

This program has three possible scopes of service. You must choose a scope based on your organizational capacity, and must apply for a funding level that aligns with that capacity. You must design a project that aligns your scope with a clear, documented need for that specific level of intensity.

- Large scope: $750,000 to $1,250,000.
- Small scope: $400,000 to $749,999.
- Emerging scope: $400,000 to $749,999. This category is for organizations that are not prior HMRF award recipients and express a need for and willingness to participate in capacity-building technical assistance from ACF. This may include assistance with the following project aspects:
    - Marketing and outreach of programming.
    - Fostering partnerships.
    - Delivering HMRF services—for example, curriculum-driven workshops.
    - Recruiting and retaining program participants.
    - Staffing, including hiring and management structure.
    - Managing data.

Programmatic objectives and outcomes

This project will help ACF to continuously improve programming and increase positive outcomes for individuals, couples, families, and children.

The objectives of this program include:

- Adults, including those who are married or interested in marriage, gain skills and tools that allow them to strengthen their relationships, especially with a romantic partner.
- Parents learn how to work together with their co-parent(s), in support of their children.
- Family structure is strengthened, including an increase in healthy marriages.

The short-term outcomes of this program include:

- Improved skills that lead to healthier relationships and marriages.
- Improved skills that lead to better parenting and co-parenting.
- Improved knowledge of and access to factors impacting economic well-being.

The long-term outcomes of this program include:

- Improved individual well-being.
- Improved family functioning.
- Improved family stability, including an increase in number of marriages.
- Improved parenting and co-parenting skills.

- Improved child well-being.
- Improved economic well-being.

Program activities

Program model

Your project is expected to implement a specific program model(s), meaning an intervention that serves and is designed to meet the needs of its specific adult service population(s). Your model could serve one or more populations, such as married couples, noncustodial and custodial single parents, or formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Based on past performance data, we find that implementing one program model will help you achieve your enrollment targets, whether that model serves one or more populations. You may propose more than one model, but we strongly encourage just one.

We seek clear, well-designed projects that can thoroughly articulate their approach and implementation. Important factors include:

- A structure for the activities and services you will offer, aligned with the project's logic model, objectives, and outcomes.
- Staffing plans.
- Training plans for staff, including refresher training.
- Partnerships with other organizations, as appropriate, for recruitment of participants, delivering services paid through this grant, and referrals.
- Well-developed oversight and monitoring plans for paid partners providing service delivery that include clear, detailed line-item budgets and budget narratives.
- A plan for participants that aligns with the target number of participants and accounts for attrition, and includes:
    - Recruitment, with reasonable plans for project marketing and outreach.
    - Enrollment, with intake and assessment process, as applicable.
    - Retention, with strategies to retain the largest number of participants through the program to completion.
- Curricula that meet standards for hours and delivery format, and a monitoring plan that ensures the fidelity of curricula—that is, whether the curriculum is delivered as intended.
- Whenever practicable, a cohort-based design where a group of participants receives the programming together, over time, from start to finish that aligns with participant needs or goals, including online cohorts when appropriate.

- Additional services (such as case management, as needed) to address individual participant needs, support participation, and make links to services that are not fundable under this NOFO.
- A broad array of community-centered strategies to promote healthy marriage. If applicable, consider promising or innovative approaches to achieve job and career advancement.
- Systematic data collection and protection of personally identifiable information.
- Continuous quality improvement.

Your project should include strategies to ensure that participants complete the program model, meaning they participate in at least 90% of primary workshops. Additionally, you should ensure that participants are tracked through enrollment, attendance, and completion, as well as other services you provide to address their needs.

Healthy marriage promotion activities

You may select one or more of **seven specified activities** listed in the legislation, or combine them or their elements, to achieve targeted program outcomes:

- **Public advertising campaigns** on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health. This activity cannot be a general campaign; it must support outreach for programming under other activities.
- **Marriage and relationship education/skills (MRES)**, which refers to marriage education, marriage skills, and relationships skills programs that may also include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and job and career advancement.
- **Premarital education** and marriage skills training for couples and/or individuals interested in marriage.
- **Marriage enhancement** and marriage skills training programs for couples.
- **Divorce reduction** programs that teach healthy relationship skills and identify unhealthy relationship characteristics.
- **Marriage mentoring** programs that use healthily married couples as role models and mentors in at-risk communities.
- Programs to **reduce the disincentives to marriage** for people in income-based aid programs. This activity must be combined with one of five described directly before this bullet.

For example, your project could focus on marriage or relationship enhancement serving couples, and you could choose to incorporate:

- Job and career advancement services and financial management, which fall under the category of marriage education and relationship skills.
- Mentoring services, which fall under marriage mentoring.

Essential areas of focus for healthy marriage and relationship education

Whatever your healthy marriage promotion activities (see previous section), you will need to provide programming that addresses these four essential areas of focus for healthy marriage and relationship education and skills-building:

- Communication skills, including expression, discussion, and negotiation skills.
- Conflict resolution, anger management, and problem-solving skills.
- Emotional intimacy skills, including emotional connectedness.
- Knowledge of the benefits of marriage.

Job and career advancement (optional)

Stronger economic well-being can support healthier relationships and improve relationship satisfaction. As a result, ACF's HMRE programs also include activities related to job and career advancement. We encourage you to incorporate activities that will help participants with lower incomes gain skills and secure employment, as well as financial literacy activities to strengthen budgeting skills, financial planning and management, and asset development. If you offer job and career advancement, you must implement at least three activities, which may include:

- Goal-setting.
- Budget planning.
- Financial sustainability.
- Asset building.

Employment development activities

If your job and career advancement activities include employment, you will need to ensure that while the participant is enrolled in the employment program, they are also engaged in:

- Classes or workshops.
- Coaching.
- Follow-up activities.
- Needs assessment.

If you choose to provide job and career advancement services, they cannot be provided alone. They must be combined with any of the seven healthy marriage promotion activities. We encourage you to provide these services collaboratively, through community partnerships.

Public advertising campaigns

You may implement public advertising campaigns to support program outreach (recruitment, retention) and provide direct services. The public advertising campaign cannot be general: You cannot conduct a public advertising campaign without a connection to a program that provides direct services.

Curriculum-based workshops

It is expected that your project will deliver at least 12 hours of education based on your curricula over time, through one or multiple primary workshops. A workshop is a set of structured classes that take place in group settings. Participants in primary workshops are expected to attend and complete the classes. Additionally, OFA expects primary workshops to be:

- Delivered in more than two sessions.
- Delivered over two weeks or more (and not over a single weekend).

You must deliver workshops that use curricula that are:

- Evidence-informed: Evidence-informed or promising practices bring together the best available research, professional expertise, and/or input from individuals, families, and communities to identify and deliver services that have promise to achieve positive outcomes for families and communities.
- Skills-based: The curriculum should teach concrete skills and engage participants in trying out the skills.
- Relevant to the community context and the populations being served, including being age appropriate, particularly for adults ages 18 to 24 years old.
- Clearly and directly aligned with all NOFO programmatic objectives and outcomes as well as any project-specific goals and objectives.

Some adult relationships/marriage programs use a curriculum that has already been prepared and tested (sometimes called “off the shelf”), and other programs adapt or develop their own evidence-informed curriculum designed to meet the unique needs of their participants. If you adapt an “off-the-shelf” curriculum to make it more relevant, you will need to obtain written approval from the curriculum developer, and potentially OFA. Adaptations may include:

- Adjusting curricula to better meet the needs of participants served.
- Stitching together curriculum modules.
- Integrating additional modules into an existing curriculum.
- Implementing your own evidence-informed curriculum.

All curricula materials, including trainer guides, participant workbooks and other tools must be maintained in both digital and hard-copy options by the program. Curricula is expected to be delivered with fidelity and consistency across program cohorts.

HMRE curricula may address the following topics. The first four are mandatory:

- Communication skills, including expression, discussion, and negotiation skills.
- Conflict resolution, anger management, and problem-solving skills.
- Knowledge of the benefits of marriage.
- Stress and Anger Management.
- Intimacy and emotional connectedness.
- Economic well-being, including budgeting, financial planning, and asset building.
- Community considerations for intimate relationships.
- The effect of past experiences on forming and maintaining relationships.
- Self-regulation and co-regulation to support healthy relationships and attainment of shared and personal goals.
- Parenting skills (if applicable).

Your curricula must also:

- Focus on the benefits of marriage.
- Include a staff development and training component.
- Include technical support provided by the curriculum developer to support implementation fidelity.

To ensure curriculum integrity, curricula designed for group-based settings must be delivered in groups, and you cannot use them in a one-on-one setting (except for make-up sessions).

You may also offer supplementary workshops, that is, workshops to supplement the primary workshops you provide, such as workshops to address specific topics that would benefit some but not all participants like understanding credit scores or thriving in step-families.

Domestic violence

Given high rates of domestic violence (also called intimate partner violence), it is likely that you will serve people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence, or who have engaged in abusive or aggressive behaviors that meet the criteria for domestic violence or intimate partner violence.

You must commit to consulting with experts in domestic or teen dating violence, or relevant community or state domestic violence coalitions, when developing your program model and activities. You must work collaboratively with these experts to ensure that:

- All participants are provided access to accurate information about domestic violence and dating violence, including where to go for support or services.
- All participants are provided safe opportunities to disclose if they are or have been victims of domestic violence or dating violence.
- Project staff and volunteers receive training to respond to disclosures of domestic violence or dating violence by offering confidential referrals to domestic violence services.

You might consider some of these strategies as part of a comprehensive approach to addressing domestic violence in your project:

- Comprehensive training for staff on how domestic violence or dating violence affects program participants and what to do if the victim or perpetrator discloses abuse after initial screening or later in the program.
- Comprehensive domestic and dating violence screening and assessment as a first step in providing services and interventions.
- Universal education on domestic violence and/or dating violence to program participants, as an addition to or alternative for screening and assessment.
- Partnerships with community-based domestic violence agencies.
- Safety planning to prepare for and respond to disclosed incidents of domestic or dating violence, intervene in crises, and make referrals to other community-based domestic violence services.

Child maltreatment

You must ensure that your employees are aware of and trained on your state's reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect. OFA expects that projects will consult with expert organizations on preventing, detecting, and responding to child maltreatment. Your project must include teaching participants about preventing child maltreatment throughout childhood.

Participant eligibility and service populations

Adults ages 18 and older are eligible to participate in this program.

Voluntary participation

You must ensure that participation in programming is voluntary and inform potential participants that their involvement is voluntary.

Program participation targets

This program counts an individual as “served” when he or she has received at least 90% of primary workshops. A couple is “served” when both participants have received at least 90% of primary workshops. You should serve as many participants as reasonable, given the amount of funding requested and your program design. We have established minimum numbers of participants you can serve **per year**, based on your funding level request.

- If you are requesting $750,000 to $1,250,000 in funding, your project is considered **large scope**. You must serve at least 200 individuals, or 100 couples, per year, who will complete at least 90% of primary workshops.
- If you are requesting $400,000 to $749,000 in funding and have prior experience conducting activities under this funding, your project is considered **small scope**. You must serve at least 120 individuals, or 60 couples, per year, who will complete at least 90% of primary workshops.
- If you are requesting $400,000 to $749,999 in funding, are not a prior HMRF award recipient, and are willing to participate in capacity-building technical assistance, your project is considered **emerging scope**.
    - In year 1, you must serve at least 30 individuals, or 15 couples, who will complete at least 90% of primary workshops.
    - In year 2, you must serve at least 60 individuals, or 30 couples.
    - In year 3, you must serve at least 90 individuals, or 45 couples.
    - In years 4 and 5, you must serve at least 120 individuals, or 60 couples.

To account for the project planning period, in year 1 large- and small-scope projects must serve, at a minimum, half of the number of individuals/couples listed here.

You will be held accountable to meeting the targets you propose in your application.

Addressing client needs

Intake, enrollment, and assessment of needs

Your project should incorporate rigorous intake and enrollment processes and strategies to assess participants’ needs, skills, and interests. You should use assessment processes or tools to help project staff make decisions about:

- The match between the program and the needs of the participant.
- Ways to increase participation in the program.
- Any additional strategies for each individual based on their abilities and needs.
- The individual’s placement in training, education, or employment programs, if applicable.

Your strategies for intake, enrollment, and assessment should include the following, as appropriate:

- Comprehensive intake tools that provide information about participants to help staff determine their needs, skills, and interests.
- Training to help the intake staff and potential participants determine whether the program will meet their needs or whether they should be referred to a different program.
- Initial goal-setting by gathering information to determine how best to serve the participant. This information may be used to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) when appropriate.
- Assessments, such as domestic violence screenings, intake surveys, increase in participation, or family supports.
- Discussion about next steps after enrollment, such as assigning a case manager, reviewing the class or activity schedule, or increasing attendance.

Addressing individual participant needs

Your project should include strategies to address individuals' identified needs by providing direct services or links to community-centered support services. These services may include:

- Regular participant contact to help them meet their goals and to facilitate program retention, completion, and access to support services.
- More intensive services related to job and career advancement.

If you are providing employment and/or job and career advancement services, your assessment strategy must address both pre-employment needs and after hiring.

Your project must include:

- Regular contact with participants to help them complete the program and access support services.
- An orientation process that includes a risk and needs assessment and intake and enrollment procedures that will help structure the needs and goals of the participant.
- Development of IDPs, if appropriate, that chart participants' short- and long-term goals, progress, and milestones. These might include education, job readiness, and employment plans.

Grant-funded participation supports

If needed, your project can include participation support costs that will cover services to increase participation and improve program recruitment, retention, and outcomes. Some past grant projects provided transportation assistance, childcare, or meals during in-person workshops. We will discuss these services with you after award, during the planning period.

Partnerships

We encourage you to use partnerships when designing and implementing your project. Strong partnerships are critical to maximizing the effects of your project by leveraging resources, building community support, and increasing access to eligible community populations. Partnerships should be formalized through performance-based memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or third-party agreements.

Partners may serve as:

- Sources for recruiting program participants. However, you should not rely solely on partners for recruitment and outreach.
- Sources for developing, refining, and shaping program materials and plans.
- Implementors of programming.
- Referral agencies for services that are needed but not available through your project. That is, your staff might refer participants to these agencies for additional services.

If you partner with other organizations by issuing subawards, please see the limitations in the subawards section.

Housing

We encourage partnerships with organizations providing housing assistance because you may not use grant funds to subsidize housing or provide housing vouchers or rental assistance. Consider working with community partners to connect participants to transitional, temporary, or permanent housing. Stable housing is a key factor associated with increased parent-child contact, family stability, and reentry.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Some parents and/or their children may receive cash assistance or other supports from the local TANF agency. You may want to establish collaborative relationships with the state or local TANF agency. The TANF agency can provide you with potential participants, and your project can provide activities that can help young parents meet their TANF work requirements.

Child support

We encourage partnerships with local child support agencies because you may not use grant funds for child support payments or assistance. You might consider establishing strong, positive referrals to or in-kind collaborations with local child support agencies.

These collaborations can help fathers understand their child support rights and responsibilities.

Other possible partners

Your assessment of the community needs and community population should align with those of partnering organizations. We encourage you to consider partnerships with federal initiatives, local agencies, or other community programs. Such partners could include:

- American Job Centers, Workforce Investment Boards, and other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-funded employment training programs.
- Employers who offer apprenticeship programs.
- State, local, and tribal TANF agencies.
- Child welfare agencies and organizations.
- Legal aid and community action agencies.
- Criminal justice agencies including prisons, jails, prerelease centers, courts, probation, and parole organizations.
- Head Start programs.
- Healthy Start programs.
- Local substance and mental health agencies.
- Public health services, including health insurance navigators and enrollment specialists.

As a reminder, grant funds must be spent on activities that are reasonable and necessary for the goals of the program, which means that grant funds may not directly fund:

- Health services, including health care, mental health treatment, or substance abuse treatment; nor
- Legal support, in child support or in other areas such as criminal record expungement.

However, you may partner with organizations that provide these kinds of support.

Organizational requirements

Project management and staffing

Your organization and staff must demonstrate the capacity and experience to carry out the project activities. You must include the following key project positions:

- Project director.
- Project manager.

- Data manager.
- Financial officer.

The project director should not be the authorized organizational representative. You must plan to hire one full-time project director or a combination of a project director and a project manager where the two positions equal at least one full-time position and where the project director holds at least a 0.5 full-time equivalence (FTE). We strongly recommend hiring at least one full-time lead responsible for the day-to-day operation and implementation of the program.

Geographic location

You must have a physical presence in the community, city, or county where you provide services, even if some of your services are virtual. A physical presence means a demonstrated ability to directly monitor and oversee:

- Service provision.
- Staff and facilitator training.
- Programmatic, legal, and regulatory compliance in the service area.
- Agreements with partner organizations.

This physical presence is critical to ensure an understanding of the needs and resources of each community in which your program participants live, work, and strive to strengthen their families. In addition, having a physical presence enables participants to connect in real life with other caring adults.

Entrance conference and annual OFA-led HMRF recipient meetings

You must attend the entrance conference, which will be during the first year of the grant. You must also attend annual OFA-led HMRF recipient meetings throughout the project period. The project director and up to three additional key staff must attend the entrance conference and annual meetings.

Planning period

Large- and small-scope recipient organizations will be given up to six months for intensive and comprehensive implementation planning. Planning activities include:

- Updating and refining the need for assistance.
- Finalizing MOUs, interagency agreements, or other third-party agreements.
- Obtaining curriculum deviation approvals from curriculum developers, if needed.
- Finalizing domestic violence protocols.

- Undertaking procurement activities, such as identifying needed goods or services, selecting vendors, and establishing purchase and delivery schedules.
- Hiring and training staff.
- Obtaining security clearances for project staff to work with correctional facilities, if applicable.
- Training staff and setting up operations to collect performance measurement data in the Information, Family Outcomes, Reporting, and Management (nFORM) system.
- Developing a continuous quality improvement plan and program flow diagram—that is, a pictorial representation of the sequence of the program from start to finish.

Emerging-scope recipient organizations will be given up to twelve months for intensive and comprehensive planning, capacity-building, and initial implementation, based on an individualized assessment of capacity strengths and needs.

Large- and small-scope recipient organizations may pilot their program models, or portions of their program models, during the planning period, as early as January 2, 2026, if they meet specific readiness criteria.

Emerging-scope recipient organizations may pilot their program models, or portions of their program models, during their planning period, as early as April 1, 2026. They must also meet specific readiness criteria before piloting their programs.

Program performance measurement, continuous quality improvement, and research requirements

Performance measurement data

You must collect, store, and report data on standardized performance measures in the nFORM system. These measures fall into three areas to provide information on what you are doing and who you are serving:

- Services provided through the grant.
- Client characteristics and outcomes.
- Program operations.

Among other activities, you will need to ask all participants to fill out two online surveys: one at the beginning of programming and one at the end of the last workshop session. You will also need to record information on participants, such as when each one attends a workshop session. The HMRF Grant Resources nFORM page links to the surveys, the user manual, and other related documentation. You may use grant funds to purchase computers or tablets so participants can take the online surveys, headphones for those who wish to hear the computer read the surveys, and maintenance plans.

Continuous quality improvement

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is the process of identifying, describing, and analyzing program strengths and problems, followed by testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. Collecting data through nFORM will give you valuable data that can facilitate CQI activities. We have also created templates that you may use to develop a plan for and carry out CQI activities. The HMRF Grant Resources CQI pages links to CQI resources.

You must develop, implement, and regularly update a CQI plan that uses data and resources to improve program performance and identify areas for further analysis and improvement. You must develop your initial plan within three months of award. You will be expected to show evidence that you are carrying out, updating, and refining the plan. Your CQI activities should be linked to the project's objectives.

Federal research activities

The federal government sponsors federally led evaluations and other research activities. The federal evaluations will be conducted by independent contractors with experience mounting small- and large-scale demonstrations, descriptive and impact evaluations, engaging communities meaningfully at each stage of the research process, and a range of other research activities.

If you are asked to participate in federally led research activities, whenever feasible and where there is interest, you are asked to engage fully and adhere to all research and evaluation protocols established by ACF to be carried out by its designee contractors.

Local evaluations

Post award, you will have the opportunity to submit a proposal to implement a grantee-led evaluation, often called a "local evaluation." You are not required to propose local evaluation activities in your application for this grant or after award. If you wish to propose a local evaluation post award, you should include funds in your first-year budget to partner with an evaluator to develop the evaluation plan proposal. If your local evaluation plan proposal is approved, you will receive supplemental funds for the evaluation. See local evaluation reports from the 2015-2020 cohort of grants.

Cooperative agreement—Description of ACF's involvement

OFA will work in close partnership with you and be substantially involved in various aspects of projects funded under this NOFO. Projects will be funded in the form of cooperative agreements that outline the roles of both ACF and the recipient. ACF's involvement includes:

- Assigning a Family Assistance Program Specialist to monitor and collaborate with you to help you achieve project objectives and ensure proper management of federal funds.
- Providing significant guidance, consultation, and timely review on all project-related materials and deliverables.
- Reviewing, providing feedback on, and approving the project scope, activities, and work plan, including any changes to key personnel.
- Keeping you informed about expectations for successful performance. This includes discussing noncompliance as soon as possible and providing clear feedback on the conditions necessary for compliance.
- Organizing frequent consultations, meetings, briefings, teleconferences, and webinars to review current and planned activities, share information, and promote national coordination.
- Keeping you informed about OFA, ACF, and HHS priorities.

We do not expect that the cooperative agreement will change the project requirements for the recipients under this NOFO.

NOTE: Consistent with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521), OFA will not conduct or sponsor—and a person is not required to respond to—a collection of information covered by such Act, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. If activities under this cooperative agreement are subject to PRA, OFA will work with the funding recipient to obtain OMB approval.

Funding policies and limitations

General policies

- We will only make awards if this program receives funding. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
- Support beyond the first budget period will depend on:
  - Appropriation of funds.
  - Satisfactory progress in meeting your project's objectives.
  - A decision that continued funding is in the government's best interest.
- If we receive more funding for this program, we will consider:
  - Funding more applicants.
  - Extending the period of performance.
  - Awarding supplemental funding.

ACF does not allow funds awarded under this NOFO to support any costs related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities, including research in support of such initiatives, and any other initiatives that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or another protected characteristic. This also includes any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, and any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. The definition of "discriminatory equity ideology" is in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190 of January 29, 2025, which can be found here: 2025-02232.pdf.

For guidance on additional types of costs that we restrict or do not allow, see General Provisions for Selected Items of Costs of the Uniform Guidance, 45 CFR part 75 (or, starting October 1, 2025, 2 CFR part 200).

Program-specific limitations and policies

Use of funds

If funded, your project may be used only for costs associated with the seven authorized healthy marriage promotion activities and their administrative costs. Projects may not implement a fee-for-service model, which means that program participants must not pay for services received under this NOFO.

We do not allow the following costs under this NOFO:

- Construction.
- Purchase of real property.

- Major renovation.
- Supplanting your other funding.
- Pre-award costs.
- Programming or activities that are not necessary and reasonable for the performance of the award, or not allocable to the project, such as services and activities that inculcate or promote gender ideology.

*The criteria used to determine whether other kinds of programming or activities are reasonable and allocable to a grant can be found at 45 CFR 75.403(a) ("Factors affecting allowability of costs"), 45 CFR 75.404 ("Reasonable costs"), and 45 CFR 75.405 ("Allocable costs").

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are costs you charge across more than one project and cannot be easily separated by project.

To charge indirect costs you can select one of two methods:

Method 1—Approved rate. You currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency.

Method 2—*De minimis* rate. Per 2 CFR 200.414(f), if you **do not** have a current federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including a provisional rate), you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate. If you choose this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs. This rate is 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See 2 CFR 200.1 for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

Subawards

As the prime recipient, you must maintain a substantive role in the project. We define a substantive role as conducting funded activities and providing services that are necessary and integral to completing the project. Monitoring your subrecipient's activities alone as described in 45 CFR 75.352 (or, starting October 1, 2025, 2 CFR 200.332) is not a substantive role.

We do not fund awards where your role primarily serves as a conduit for passing funds to other organizations unless that arrangement is authorized by statute.

If they do not have one, all subrecipients must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

Subrecipients must meet the eligibility requirements of this NOFO.

Salary rate limitation

The salary rate limitation in the current appropriations act applies to this program. You may not use awarded funds to pay a salary at a higher rate than the rate for Executive Level II. For the Executive Level II salary, please see guidance from the Office of Personnel Management on executive and senior level employee pay.

The salary limitation reflects a person's base salary (including any portion of the salary that is paid for with indirect costs). It does not include fringe benefits or any income the person is allowed to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards, contracts, and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

Step 2:
Get Ready to Apply

In this step

Get registered

SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier. SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. Begin that process today.

To register, go to SAM.gov Entity Registration and select Get Started. From the same page, you can also select the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register.

When you register or update your SAM.gov registration, you must agree to the financial assistance general certifications and representations. You must agree to those for financial assistance specifically, as opposed to contracts, because the two sets of agreements are different. You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with Grants.gov. You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov Quick Start Guide for Applicants.

Need help? See Contacts and Support.

Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to Grants Search at Grants.gov and search for opportunity number HHS-2025-ACF-OFA-ZB-0109. Then select the Package tab.

After you select the opportunity, we recommend that you select the Subscribe button to get updates.

If you can't use Grants.gov to download application materials, you may request them from the grants management contact.

If you are also unable to apply through Grants.gov, see the section on exemptions for paper submissions.

Learn more

Visit Applying for an ACF Grant Award on the ACF Grants page.

View the webinar

For more information about this opportunity, a prerecorded webinar will be posted on ACF's Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood site.

The goals of this session are to review the NOFO and how to apply. Viewing is voluntary and does not affect eligibility, application scoring, or award selection.

If there is a discrepancy between the NOFO and the presentation and/or presentation materials, the NOFO takes precedence.

Step 3:
Prepare Your Application

In this step

Application contents and format

Application components

You will submit two files plus the standard forms in the application package.

See requirements for other submissions.

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application.

File one

To submit file one, you will use the Project Narrative Attachment form found in the Grants.gov application package for this NOFO.

This file includes:

- Table of contents.
- Project summary, one page.
- Project narrative.
- Line-item budget and budget narrative.

File two

To submit file two, you will use the Other Attachments form found in the Grants.gov application package for this NOFO.

This file includes all attachments.

Standard forms

The Grants.gov application package for this NOFO includes forms beyond those required for file one and file two. Complete all of these forms and submit through Grants.gov.

See the list of standard forms.

Required format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 100 pages.

File format: Portable Document Format (PDF) is recommended, but not required. ACF supports the following file formats when you attach files to the Project Narrative Attachment form and the Other Attachments form:

Accepted file formats

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

Document formats

Paper size: 8 ½ inches x 11 inches
Margins: 1 inch all around
Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

Do not include external links to information you want reviewers to assess because reviewers will score the application solely on information provided in the application.

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman
Color: Black
Size: 12-point font

Footnotes and text in tables and graphics may be 10-point.

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced
Project summary: Must be single-spaced
Project narrative: Must be double-spaced
Line-item budget and budget narrative: Can be single-spaced
Attachments: Can be single-spaced
Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

See disqualification factors to understand what may disqualify your application from consideration.

Table of contents

At the beginning of file one, insert a table of contents that guides a reader through the contents of both files in your application. If possible, include links to the relevant content in file one.

Project summary

Provide a one-page summary of the project description. Do not cross-reference to other parts of your application. The summary must include:

- At the top, the project title, applicant name, address, phone numbers, email addresses, and any website URL.
- A brief description of the project, including the needs and service population you will address, and your proposed services.

Project narrative

The project narrative is where you address all your proposed activities. It is a critical section of your application, which we evaluate using the merit review criteria and rank based on application scores. Remember that substance and measurable outcomes are more important than length. We are particularly interested in project narratives that convey strategies for achieving intended performance.

In it, you must:

- Explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in the program description section.
- Make sure your narrative is clear, concise, and complete.
- Use cross-referencing rather than repetition.
- Be sure to include any required supporting documents noted. You generally provide these in your attachments.
- Use the headings and order of the sections that follow.

Geographic location

Provide the precise physical location of your project and boundaries of the area you will serve. If you will include any subrecipients in your project that will serve in the geographic areas, include their locations as well.

Describe the geographically distinct communities you are serving. If you propose to have program locations in multiple locations or states, you must confirm that you have physical presence in all service areas as provided in the geographic location section of the program description.

Describe whether you will provide virtual services. If so, confirm which services will be virtual and confirm that these services will serve your grant's specific communities. You may not implement a statewide or multistate virtual program unless you provide convincing evidence of physical presence in communities served. You may not implement a national program.

Need for assistance

Identify the problems you plan to solve. These problems could be physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, etc. To do so:

- Demonstrate the need, including the nature and scope of the problem.
- You may provide supporting documentation, such as testimonials, in an application appendix.
- Include any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments. You may refer to them in the endnotes or footnotes.
- Use demographic data and participant or beneficiary information where you can.

Objectives

State your main objectives and any sub-objectives. Address how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of this program and describe how you will achieve the objectives.

Ensure your objectives relate to the programmatic objectives and outcomes section of the program description.

Expected outcomes

Identify the outcomes you plan to achieve from the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall program as described in the program description section. If research is part of the proposed work, outcomes must include hypothesized results and implications of the proposed research.

Approach

Outline your action plan. Describe the scope and detail of how you will accomplish your proposed project. Account for all functions or activities you identify in your application.

Explain potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing your project goals. Explain the strategies you will use to address them.

- You must provide an approach and implementation strategy **for each year of the five-year project period**.
- You may use quantitative and qualitative data to support your proposed approach and strategies, including performance or evaluation data.
- Describe any design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or community involvement in the project.

Assuring continued commitment to promoting this program

Provide a succinct, explicit affirmation that your organization, including your leadership and your partners, are committed to achieving the programmatic objectives and outcomes, and that you will not use these funds as add-on or gap funding to support other non-grant-related organizational priorities, goals, or objectives. Then, briefly describe how you will engage in activities that demonstrate a commitment to achieving the programmatic objectives and outcomes.

Program model

Propose a program model, meaning an intervention that is designed to serve one specific population such as individuals or couples. You may propose more than one model, but we encourage just one. Show how your model addresses the important factors provided in the program model section of the program description. The model must include one or more curriculum-based workshops that address all requirements described in the curriculum-based workshops section of the program description and the target outcomes in the programmatic objectives and outcomes section.

Additionally, include in your model:

- Description of which of the healthy marriage promotion activities you will implement, and how you will address the essential areas of focus for healthy marriage and relationship education.
- An overarching structure for the activities and services, aligned with the project's logic model, objectives, and outcomes.
- Marketing, recruitment, and retention plans that align with the target number of participants and that accounts for attrition:
    - Reasonable, concrete strategies for project marketing and outreach.
    - Reasonable, concrete strategies for participant recruitment.
    - The program's intake, enrollment, and assessment of needs approach and processes.
    - Reasonable, concrete strategies to ensure that participants complete the program model, meaning they participate in at least 90% of primary workshops.
- Robust program-related grant-funded participation supports that support and help retain participants through all aspects of your programming.
- A broad array of community-centered strategies. If applicable, consider promising or innovative approaches to achieve job and career advancement. Describe any design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or community involvement in the project.

- Additional services, such as services to identify and address individual participant needs, financial wellness development, job and career advancement services, and additional program-related activities. (See program description)
- Plan to ensure that participants are tracked, including their enrollment, attendance, and completion, as well as other services you provide to address their needs.

Healthy marriage promotion activities

Describe how you will address the four specified essential areas of focus of healthy marriage and relationship education and skills-building:

- Communication skills, including expression, discussion, and negotiation skills.
- Conflict resolution, anger management, and problem-solving skills.
- Emotional intimacy skills, including emotional connectedness.
- Knowledge of the benefits of marriage.

Describe the activities your project will offer. You must select one or more of the seven specified healthy marriage promotion activities (you may combine them or their elements). Describe how your selected activities align with your overall program design and programmatic objectives and outcomes. Here are specific application instructions for each of the seven activities.

- If you are proposing a **public advertising campaign**, you must demonstrate that the advertising has a clear connection to recruiting and retaining program participants. Attest that the public advertising is not general.
- If you are proposing a **marriage and relationship education/skills (MRES)** project, you may include activities such as parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and job and career advancement. Ensure that these are not standalone services but will be provided along with marriage and relationship skills, or any of the other authorized activities.
- If you are proposing a **premarital education and marriage skills** project, demonstrate how you will ensure that your training is provided to engaged couples and/or couples or individuals interested in marriage.
- If you are proposing a **marriage enhancement and marriage skills for couples** project, describe your service populations (which must be couples) and how your recruitment and retention strategies will engage both partners in a relationship.
- If you are proposing a **divorce reduction and relationship skills** project, describe how you will ensure that services are targeted to married couples who are separated or contemplating divorce, or in an unhealthy relationship (also known as distressed couples). Also describe any specific types of distress your project will serve. Describe specific curricula and program support's design for community population.

- If you are proposing a **marriage mentoring** project, describe how you will recruit and train mentors, and ensure that mentoring services are conducted by healthily married couples who can serve as positive role models in at-risk communities. Describe how you will ensure oversight of program mentors.
- If you are proposing a project to **reduce disincentives to marriage**, describe your approach to doing so. Identify which other activities you will offer along with this one.

Job and career advancement (optional)

If you plan to provide job and career advancement services, describe your experience or partnerships that will enhance participants' financial wellness capacities, including goal setting, budget planning, financial sustainability, asset building, and employment development. Explain how you will assess and address participants' financial wellness needs. Explain which three job and career advancement activities you will include.

Curriculum-based workshops

Propose and describe a workshop series design that aligns with all of the specifications described in the curriculum-based workshops section of the program description. Explain how the curriculum you are using aligns with your project model and is evidence-informed, skills-based, relevant to the community context and the populations being served, and aligned with all NOFO programmatic objectives and outcomes. Clearly summarize, and sum, the primary workshop participation hours. You must also identify other skills-based curricula you will use, such as for job and career advancement.

Include a reasonable rationale or research base for the program model and curriculum, including how the implementation of the program model and curriculum will create positive change.

Include a detailed description of any supplementary workshops, and show how they support the program goals and objectives. Identify other skills-based curricula you will use, such as for job and career advancement.

If you propose adaptations to curricula, you must:

- Describe any proposed adaptations from the original, such as added content on complex family relationships or modifications to increase relevance for specific populations.
- Justify the adaptations.
- Explicitly state that you will seek written approval of adaptations from the curriculum developer and OFA within 30 days post-award.

Domestic violence requirement

Describe how your project will address domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and dating violence. Refer to the examples of strategies in the domestic violence section of the program description.

Include evidence of consultation, or a commitment to consult, with experts in domestic violence or relevant community domestic violence coalitions to develop your programs and activities and show that these services will support you throughout the project. You can include evidence of consultation through MOUs or other third-party agreements. These would need to include information on benchmarks, timelines, and oversight and monitoring. You will provide this evidence in your third-party agreement attachment.

Child maltreatment

Describe how you will help prevent, detect, and respond to child maltreatment among program participants, per the program description section on child maltreatment. Describe how you will ensure staff are familiar with your state's reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect, and how you will provide training on child abuse and neglect. Describe how your project will include education for participants on preventing child maltreatment.

Program performance targets

Describe the scope of your project according to the specifications outlined in the scope of services section. If applying for emerging scope, you must clearly state that you have not previously been directly funded by federal Healthy Marriage or Responsible Fatherhood program funds.

Clearly identify your proposed performance targets:

- Identify your program performance targets for each project year, in a table. Please see Appendix A for a sample table shell. Indicate if the targets are for individuals or couples.
- Propose to serve as many participants as reasonable, given the amount of funding requested and your program design.
- Ensure you submit the number of participants **per year** who:
  - Enroll.
  - Attend at least one primary workshop.
  - Attend at least 50% of primary workshops.
  - Attend at least 90% of primary workshops.
  - Attend 100% of primary workshops each year.

- Make sure the number of individuals in each cell in the column "Number of clients who attend at least **90% of primary workshop sessions**" is at least the minimum number of clients based on the scope of your project, as outlined in the program participation targets section in the program description. For example, if your project is large scope, you must list at least 200 individuals in each cell of this column for years 2 through 5. If you list 300 (or another number of) individuals in any cell of this column, then you are expected to ensure that that number of individuals attend at least 90% of primary workshop sessions in that year.

Describe how you will recruit, enroll, and retain all participants in primary workshops. Describe how you will ensure that participants complete the program, meaning they **participate in at least 90% of primary workshops** or attend make-up sessions.

If you are proposing more than one program model, you must show sufficient capacity to adequately implement each model, meet program performance targets, and achieve outcomes. You must submit a separate table for each program model. In the title, specify the name of the program model and the population to be served.

Participant eligibility and service populations

Describe your service population, including geographic information, per the participant eligibility and service populations section of the program description. **Confirm you are serving adults ages 18 and older**. For example, you might propose to serve adult unmarried couples age 18 and older in specific zip codes, married couples interested in marriage enhancement and divorce reduction in neighborhoods that have been challenged by poverty, or individual adults interested in premarital education. Clearly explain how your project is comprehensively designed to address the needs of the service population.

Voluntary participation

Clearly describe how you will ensure that participation in programs is voluntary and how you will inform potential participants that their involvement is voluntary.

Addressing client needs

Intake, enrollment, and assessment of needs

Describe a thorough intake and enrollment process that includes assessments to capture participants' needs, skills, and interests. Make sure your description directly aligns with the requirements in the intake, enrollment, and assessment section of the program description. Describe how you will incorporate the listed requirements into your intake and enrollment process.

Addressing individual participant needs

Provide a comprehensive plan that includes strategies to address individual participants' needs that align with the provisions in the program description under addressing individual participant needs.

Grant-funded participation supports

Describe your plan for increasing participation and improving program recruitment, retention, and outcomes through the strategic use of participant supports, as per the grant-funded participation supports section of the program description. This plan must consider participation through in-person and/or virtual workshops.

Partnerships

Describe any partnerships with federal, state, local, tribal, and/or community-based entities as outlined in the partnerships section of the program description. Identify whether these partners will help with recruitment, implementation, or referrals. Include well-developed oversight and monitoring plans for paid partners who will deliver services, including clear, detailed line-item budgets and budget narratives.

Include a signed, performance-based MOU between your organization and each partner agency. You can submit a statement regarding your intent to enter into an agreement instead of an MOU or other third-party agreement, if you have not finalized them by the time you submit the application. If you submit a statement of intent, it must include the responsibilities of each party and a timeline for completing an MOU or other third-party agreement.

Project performance plan

Describe a plan for how you will monitor and analyze your project's performance and how it will contribute to continuous quality improvement. Specifically, you must describe expected program performance activities in these key areas.

Performance measurement data

- Describe your data collection plan and how it aligns with the program performance measurement, continuous quality improvement, and research section of the program description.
- Write an explicit affirmation of your agreement use the nFORM Management Information System (MIS) to collect, store, monitor, and report performance measures.
- Explain how you are preparing to collect performance measurement data, such as through:
  - Purchasing computers or tablets, headphones, and maintenance plans.
  - Assigning or hiring qualified staff and providing training.

    - Identifying specific staff positions that will be responsible for performance measurement data collection.
    - Identifying or hiring a designated data manager.
- If you do not have access to the internet because of systemic lack of connectivity, clearly describe potential other avenues for collecting performance measurement data. Indicate your willingness to work with ACF to find ways to collect internet data through other avenues.
- Explain how your organization will collect and manage data in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. This might include assigned skilled staff, data management software, and data integrity.
- Describe processes that support overall data quality as well as protecting personally identifiable information (PII) and data privacy.
- Describe how you will use performance measures, monitor program services, and submit reports using this data. Show your readiness and capacity to regularly review performance data and to aggregate, generate, and submit semiannual performance progress reports. Provide a timeline for how you will review information from performance measures and apply it to your ongoing project.

Continuous quality improvement (CQI)

- Describe how you will develop and carry out a continuous quality improvement plan.
- Describe how your organization is committed to data-driven approaches to identifying areas for program performance, testing potential improvements, and cultivating an environment of learning and improvement.
- Describe how you will use the resulting information to improve funded activities.

No need to discuss local evaluation development in Year 1

If you will reserve funds in your first-year budget to partner with an evaluator to develop a local evaluation plan proposal, you **do not** need to discuss this in your narrative.

Project timeline and milestones

Provide a timeline for your project that includes milestones. To do so:

- Organize the information by task and subtask, showing related milestones.
- Provide monthly or quarterly quantitative projections for what you plan to accomplish and by when. For example, provide the number of people you plan to serve or the number of a certain activity you plan to complete.
- If you can’t quantify some of your accomplishments, provide their target dates.
- Cover the full period of performance in your timeline.

Organizational capacity

Provide the following information for your full project team, including the applicant organization and any cooperating partners, contractors, and subrecipients.

Capacity to deliver services at selected scope

- Provide evidence that your team has the relevant experience and expertise needed to carry out your project.
- Describe your team's experience (including any partnering organizations) with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- Provide evidence that your team, including partnering organizations, has the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions effectively.
- You must disclose your plan to enter into subaward agreements. If planning subawards, describe the work each subrecipient will complete.
- Describe your extensive knowledge and broad experience working in the community that will be served by the program, including how long you have worked in this community.
- Provide documentation of your capacity for large-scope, small-scope, or emerging-scope services.
    - Large scope:
        - Show that the financial statements, audit reports, or statements submitted in your attachments clearly reflect an operational budget of at least $700,000 per year for the two most recent years.
        - Describe how you have provided healthy marriage services similar to the eight healthy marriage promotion activities, or have provided fatherhood services similar to at least two of the three broad activities promoting fatherhood, within the authorizing legislation, and how you will transfer this knowledge and experience to working directly with families through this project.
        - Show that in each of the two most recent years, you have had at least 100 individuals or 50 couples complete at least 50% of primary HM or RF workshops.
        - Describe your capacity to provide high-quality services to as many individuals as you propose in your program participation targets table.
    - Small scope:
        - Show that the financial statements, audit reports, or statements submitted in your attachments clearly reflect an operational budget of at least $300,000 per year for the two most recent years.

    - Describe your past service provision in family-focused services, marriage and relationship education, father engagement, or youth development services. Describe how it is similar to one or more of the eight healthy marriage promotion activities or one or more of the three broad activities promoting fatherhood within the authorizing legislation, and how you will transfer this knowledge and experience to working directly with families through this project.
    - Describe your capacity to provide high-quality services to as many individuals as you propose in your program participation targets table.
  - Emerging scope:
    - Show that the financial statements, audit reports, or statements submitted in your attachments clearly reflect an operational budget of at least $100,000 per year for the two most recent years.
    - Describe your past service provision in human services and how you will transfer this knowledge and experience to working directly with families through HMRF programs.
    - Describe your capacity to provide high-quality services to as many individuals as you propose in your program participation targets table.
    - Confirm that you have never received federal grant funding to implement HMRF services.

Project management and staffing

- Refer to the project management and staffing section of the program description and explain how you will meet those requirements.
- Provide evidence that your team has the relevant capacity, experience, and expertise to adequately develop, oversee, manage, and staff this project.
- Describe the leadership structure, including identifying the project director, and the experience and qualifications of leadership.
- As outlined in the line-item budget and budget narrative, describe FTE allocations for each staff assigned to the project, including key project positions.
- Describe your approach to providing staff support, including any training plans and krefresher training.
- Provide job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- Describe how you will manage the project and how you will make decisions.
- Justify how the staffing approach will enable you to achieve your project's objectives and outcomes.

For both **Capacity to deliver services at selected scope** and **Project management and staffing**, you will provide some supporting information in the Attachments section.

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

You must ensure proper award oversight. The regulation that governs this oversight is 45 CFR part 75 (or, starting October 1, 2025, 2 CFR part 200). It includes standards for:

- 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 your framework to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities. Include:

- A description of the governance structure, fiscal controls, and accountability policies and procedures, and systems you use for record keeping and financial management.
- A description of the procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues. These might include audit findings, continuous performance assessment findings, and monitoring.
- The key staff who will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities.

Logic model

You must submit a logic model for designing, managing, and evaluating the project. A logic model is a diagram that:

- Presents how inputs drive activities to produce outputs, outcomes, and the ultimate goals of the proposed project.
- Explains the links among project elements.
- Targets the identified objectives and goals of the project.

While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this funding opportunity, the logic model may include the connections between:

- Inputs such as additional resources, organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, and budget.
- Target population, such as the individuals to be served or identified needs.

- Activities, mechanisms, and processes such as evidenced-based practices, best practices, approach, key intervention and evaluation components, and continuous quality improvement efforts.
- Outputs, which include the immediate and direct results of program activities.
- Outcomes, which include the expected short- and long-term results the project you expect to achieve. These are typically described as changes in people or systems.
- Project goals such as overarching objectives and reasons for proposing the project.

Ensure your logic model clearly links your project's goals and objectives to the program's programmatic objectives and outcomes.

Demonstrate how you will use the logic model to monitor your project's implementation.

Project sustainability plan

You must propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. We expect you to sustain key elements of your project. These elements can include strategies or services and interventions that have been effective in improving practices and outcomes.

- Provide an approach to project sustainability that is effective and feasible. Describe:
  - The key people and organizations whose support you will require.
  - The types of alternative support you will require to maintain the project.
- If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how you will maintain their cooperation or collaboration after the federal funding ends.

Protection of sensitive or confidential information

Describe how you will collect and safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive. Make sure your approach is consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality. Provide:

- The methods and systems you will use to ensure that you properly handle confidential and sensitive information including any subrecipients and/or contractors.
- A plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the period of performance.

For more information, see 45 CFR 75.303(e) (or, starting October 1, 2025, 2 CFR 200.303(e)).

Dissemination plan

Propose a plan to disseminate reports, products, and project outputs to key target audiences. Include:

- Dissemination goals and objectives.
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences.
- How you will allocate sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination.
- A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences receive project information and use it as intended.
- The dissemination timeline.

Line-item budget and budget narrative

The line-item budget and budget justification support the information you provide in the Budget Information Standard Form SF-424A.

Justify the costs you ask for and provide detail, including calculations for the "object class categories" in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for each year of the period of performance. See information on funding periods.

HHS now uses the definitions for equipment and supplies in 2 CFR 200.1. The new definitions change the threshold for equipment to the lesser of the recipient's capitalization level or $10,000 and the threshold for supplies to below that amount.

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See the funding policies and limitations.
- Well-developed oversight and monitoring plans for partners providing services that include a clear detailed line-item budget and budget narrative.

Please also review the Standard Form instructions.

To create your line-item budget and justification, see detailed budget instructions on our website.

In general, you must:

- Indicate the method you will use for your indirect cost rate. See the indirect costs section for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail necessary for the calculation to be duplicated.
- For any cost sharing, include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance.
- For applicants planning to use subawards, if your subaward budget is more than 50% of total direct costs, justify why you are subawarding that portion of the project. Explain:
  - How you plan to maintain a substantive role in the project.
  - Why you cannot achieve your goals without the subrecipients' participation.

Your budget must include **all program-related costs**, including:

- Travel for all staff required to attend the entrance conference in Washington, DC, and annual OFA-led HMRF recipient meetings.
- Grant-funded participation supports and services in alignment with the funding level requested.
- Other itemized expenses for the project that are aligned with the proposal.

Include a clear, detailed line-item budget and narrative for your oversight and monitoring plans for partners providing services.

Budgeting for performance data operations

Include costs for collecting, storing, monitoring, and reporting performance measure data, including performance measurement tasks during the planning period. Your budget should include (but not be limited to):

- Costs of staff training and time to collect data.
- Purchase of computers or tablets, headphones, and maintenance for online surveys.
- Costs for staff to conduct data entry, quality checks, and reliability training for coding.
- Costs of monitoring and reporting performance data, including costs for staff to analyze data, create and review reports, and plan and monitor adjustments.

Budgeting for local evaluation development in Year 1

If you wish to propose a local evaluation post award, include funds in your first-year budget to partner with an evaluator to develop the evaluation plan proposal. OFA suggests that these funds not total more than 5% of your Year 1 budget or $50,000, whichever is lower.

Staffing levels for key project positions

Your budget narrative and line-item detail must specify allocations for one full-time project director, or a combination of a project director and a project manager where the two positions equal at least one full-time position and where the project director holds at least a 0.5 FTE, to ensure project oversight, monitoring, and day-to-day management.

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

In your application, you may identify salary or other proprietary information or personally identifiable information. We will remove this information from applications before they go to reviewers.

If you have an exemption for a paper submission, you can protect salary information and any proprietary information by placing that information only in the original application. You can remove the information from the copies, keeping summary information.

Attachments

You will upload attachments in Grants.gov using the Other Attachments form. These attachments are included in the overall application page limit, unless it says otherwise in this section.

Indirect cost agreement

If you include indirect costs in your budget using an approved rate, include a copy of your current agreement approved by your cognizant agency for indirect costs. If you use the *de minimis* rate, you do not need to submit this attachment.

See the indirect costs section for more information.

Legal proof of nonprofit status

If your organization is a nonprofit, you need to attach proof. We will accept any of the following:

- A reference to your listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations.
- A copy of a current tax exemption certificate from the IRS.
- A letter from your state's tax department, attorney general, or another appropriate state official saying that your group is a nonprofit and that none of your net earnings go to private shareholders or others.
- A certified copy of your certificate of incorporation or similar document. This document must show that your group is a nonprofit.

- Any of these for a parent organization. Also include a statement signed by an official of the parent group that your organization is a nonprofit affiliate.

Legal proof of for-profit status

If your organization is a for-profit, including a small business, you need to attach proof.

Include documentation establishing the power granted to the entity to enter into contractual relationships or accept awards. This might include your articles of incorporation or bylaws.

Legal proof of small businesses

In addition to the proof that your organization is for-profit, small businesses must submit a certification signed by the chief executive officer or designee that states that the entity qualifies as a small business under 13 CFR 121.101-121.201.

Organizational capacity supporting information

You must attach the following information to support the information in your organizational capacity section:

Organizational requirements

- Clear, comprehensive organizational charts, including how partners and personnel from partners are related and responsible.
- Resumes, biographical sketches, or curricula vitae for all key personnel that clearly show necessary experience and qualifications.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Project management and staffing

- Financial statements adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), if available, for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years. This requirement does not apply to emerging-scope applicants.
- Audit reports or statements from certified public accountants or licensed public accountants, if available, for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years. This requirement does not apply to emerging-scope applicants.
- Copy or description of your organization’s governance structure, fiscal controls, and accountability policies and procedures.
- Information on compliance with federal, state, and local government standards.
- Evidence that your organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar programs.

Third-party agreements

You must submit signed agreements with all third parties involved in the project. Third parties include subrecipients, contractors, and other cooperating entities. Third-party agreements include letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, and memoranda of agreement. **We do not consider general letters of support to be third-party agreements.**

Any such agreement must:

- Describe the roles and responsibilities for project activities.
- Describe the support and resources that the third-party is committing to the proposed project.
- Be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments.
- Detail work schedules and estimated compensation with an understanding that the parties will negotiate a final agreement after award.
- Identify the primary applicant and all collaborators responsible for project activities if for a collaboration or consortia application.

Letters of support

Attach statements from community, public, or commercial leaders that support your project. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the person writing the letter, the organization they represent, the date, and their reasons for supporting the project.

Standard forms

You will need to complete some other required standard forms. Upload the following forms at Grants.gov. You can find them in the NOFO application package or review them and their instructions at Grants.gov Forms.

Forms	Submission requirement
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With the application.
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With the application.
Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	With the application.
Key Contacts	With the application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	With the application or before award.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable based on instructions, with the application or before award.
Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	With the application. Cite your primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.

Important: Public information

When filling out your SF-424 form, pay attention to Box 15: Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project.

We share what you put there with USAspending. This is where the public goes to learn how the federal government spends its money.

Instead of just a title, insert a short description of your project and what it will do.

See instructions and examples [PDF].

Step 4: Learn About Review and Award

In this step

Application review

Initial review

We will review your application to make sure that it meets the responsiveness requirements listed in the disqualification factors section. If your application does not meet these criteria, we will disqualify it and we will not move it to the merit review phase.

We will let you know if your application is disqualified within 30 days of the application deadline. You won't receive any notice from ACF if your application failed Grants.gov validation checks.

If you submit more than two files in addition to your forms, we will remove the extra files. We will let you know if this happens.

We will also remove blurred or illegible pages and any file formats that are not supported.

We will not review any pages that exceed the page limit.

If your application fails to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements, we will adjust your application by removing page(s) from the application. We will remove the pages before the merit review and will not send them to reviewers.

If we do so, we will send you a letter after we make awards to notify you that we amended your application.

Merit review

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The panel members use the criteria in this section.

Our reviewers typically are not federal employees. See the section on proprietary and personally identifiable information.

Criteria

Criterion	Total number of points = 100
1. Approach	45 points
2. Organizational capacity: Capacity to deliver services at selected scope	30 points
3. Organizational capacity: Project management and staffing	15 points
4. Performance measurement, CQI, and logic model	3 points
5. Budget and budget justification	7 points

Approach

Maximum points: 45

The reviewer will assess how well you address the following.

Need for assistance

- Clearly identify the need for assistance and explain how your project will satisfactorily address the need.

Objectives and expected outcomes

- Provide a clear and concise statement of the project's objectives and outcomes, and explain how they are aligned with the objectives and outcomes described in the program description.

Assuring continued commitment to promoting this program

- Provide a written explicit affirmation of commitment to achieving the programmatic objectives and outcomes, and to use funds for grant-related purposes.

Program model

- Provide a clear, detailed description and justification of the proposed project, including the program model, curricula, and activities as outlined under the program model.
- Include a reasonable rationale or research base for the program model and curricula proposed, including a clearly articulated, justified, and well-documented rationale for why they would create positive change.

- Describe a comprehensive approach and concrete processes to recruit and engage participants, and justify why this approach will enable you to meet proposed performance targets.

Healthy marriage program activities

- Clearly demonstrate how the proposed project aligns with the purpose of promoting healthy marriage and relationship education, including the four specified essential areas of focus for healthy marriage and relationship education, the seven specified activities targeting adults (one or more of them; you may combine them or their elements), and any optional activities such as job and career advancement.

Curriculum-based workshops

- Clearly describe the design of your workshops.
- Clearly summarize, and sum, the primary workshop participation hours.
- Identify the curriculum, and clearly explain how it is:
  - Evidence-informed.
  - Skills-based.
  - Relevant to the community context and the populations being served.
  - Clearly and directly aligned with all the provisions listed under curricula.

Domestic violence and child maltreatment

- Describe how your project will address domestic violence, including intimate partner violence and dating violence.
- Describe how you have or will consult with experts in domestic violence.
- Describe how your project will help detect and respond to child maltreatment.

Program performance targets

- State the scope level you are applying for. If applying for emerging-scope funding, confirm that you do not have prior experience conducting activities directly funded by federal Healthy Marriage or Responsible Fatherhood program funds.
- Provide a table that shows your proposed performance targets, making sure they correspond with your proposed scope, for each year of the project as outlined in the program performance targets section.

Participant eligibility and service populations

- Outline the proposed service area, including its geographic location and the need for services.
- Identify the service population(s).

- Confirm you are serving adults ages 18 and older.
- Clearly explain how your project is comprehensively designed to address their needs.

Voluntary participation

- Clearly describe how you will ensure that participation in programs is voluntary and how you will inform potential participants that their involvement is voluntary.

Addressing client needs: Intake, enrollment, and assessment, addressing individual needs, and grant-funded participation supports

- Describe a comprehensive, appropriate, and logical approach to intake, enrollment, and assessment of participant needs, including specifying screening and assessment tools. The approach should include:
    - A well-articulated discussion of how you will link participants to other services.
    - A clear understanding of how to increase participation and a clear, community appropriate plan for how you will address them.

Partnerships

- Describe partnerships as outlined in the partnerships sections. Specify their roles in recruitment, implementation, or referrals. Include oversight and monitoring plans for any paid partners.
- Identify the organizations and contributors that will be responsible for parts of the project through MOUs or third-party agreements. Attach signed performance-based MOUs with responsible partners, or a statement of intent if the MOU is not finalized. Include a timeline for completion in the third-party agreements attachment. The third-party agreements or MOUs must be clear and define specific roles and responsibilities of all parties, including performance benchmarks.

Organizational capacity: Capacity to deliver services at selected scope

Maximum points: 30

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Describe your current operational budget and clearly show how it aligns with the project scope and funding level you requested, as shown in your financial statements, audit reports, or other statements.
- Clearly describe the services your organization has provided and link this to current capacity.

- Demonstrate your extensive knowledge and broad experience working in the community that will be served by the program, including how long you have worked in this community.
- Explicitly state how many individuals you have served, and clearly show how this level of past service aligns with the requirements of the project scope and funding level you requested.
- Describe how you will transfer knowledge from past human service provision to this project.
- Describe current capacity to provide high-quality programming and achieve the program's short- and long-term outcomes.
- Demonstrate that you have the organizational capacity necessary to oversee federal grants by clearly describing your organization's governance structure, fiscal controls, and accountability policies and procedures, including an organizational chart that shows the relationship between all positions, including consultants and subcontractors.
- Clearly describe a project sustainability plan that demonstrates how you will sustain key elements of your project as described in the project sustainability plan section.

Organizational capacity: Project management and staffing

Maximum points: 15

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Comprehensively describe your capacity, experience, and expertise to adequately develop, oversee, manage, and staff this project.
- Include a clear, comprehensive organizational chart.
- Clearly describe the leadership structure.
  - Identify the roles, responsibilities, and time commitment of key staff.
  - Identify a dedicated project director with the appropriate FTE allocation as outlined in the program management and staffing section of the program description.
  - Show that proposed key staff has documented experience and qualifications with project management and decision-making, to successfully carry out their roles.
- Clearly describe the roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of other staff—those at your organization and at any subcontractors or subrecipients. Identify the data manager and financial officer.
  - Describe how these staff members have sufficient experience and qualifications to successfully carry out their roles.

- Include resumes for, at a minimum, key staff. Clearly show that resumes document the necessary qualifications.
- Describe how you will manage the project and how you will make decisions.
- Justify how the staffing approach will enable you to achieve your project's objectives and outcomes.

Performance measurement, CQI, and logic model

Maximum points: 3

The reviewer will assess how well you do the following.

Performance measurement

- Describe a comprehensive data collection plan, including a written explicit affirmation of agreement to use the nFORM MIS to collect, store, monitor, and report performance measures.

Continuous quality improvement

- Describe a comprehensive CQI plan and clearly describe the organizational commitment to data-driven approaches to identify areas for program performance, test potential improvements, and cultivate a community considerations and environment of learning and improvement.

Logic model

- Provide a logic model that clearly links proposed activities to clear, measurable short- and long-term outcomes, and explain how the logic model aligns with the program's programmatic objectives and outcomes.

Budget and budget justification

Maximum points: 7

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Include a line-item budget and clear and comprehensive budget narrative that:
  - Details the FTE allocations for staff positions.
  - Clearly shows how each line item will be used and/or explains how the funds will be allocated among the program activities.
  - Includes all required items, including:
    - Travel to attend the entrance conference and other annual OFA-led HMRF recipient meetings.
    - Costs associated with performance data operations.
  - Clearly explains and details how the project costs are allowable, reasonable, allocable, and necessary.

    - Aligns with the proposed project activities and services, the number of participants, and proposed project objectives.
- Show that the proposed project activities, services, and client participation levels clearly align with the funding level requested.
- Describe a plan for fiscal management that demonstrates structure and accountability of your organization and any subcontractors.

We do not consider voluntary cost sharing during merit review.

Risk review

Before making an award, we review the risk that you will mismanage federal funds or fail to complete the project objectives. We need to make sure you've handled any past federal awards well and demonstrated sound business practices. We use SAM.gov Responsibility/Qualification to check this history for all awards likely to be over $250,000.

If we find a significant risk, we may choose not to fund your application or to place specific conditions on the award.

For more details, see 45 CFR 75.205 (or, starting October 1, 2025, 2 CFR 200.206).

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review results. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- Organizations serving emerging, unserved, or underserved populations.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution.
- The past performance of the applicant.
- The application's compliance with this NOFO's prohibition on using funds awarded under this NOFO to support any costs related to:
    - Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities, including research in support of such initiatives,
    - Any other initiatives that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or another protected characteristic, and
    - Any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, and any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. The definition of "discriminatory equity ideology" is in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190 of January 29, 2025, which can be found here: 2025-02232.pdf.

- Applications that propose to only serve adults (ages 18 and older).
- Applications that request funding at or above the funding floor.
- Scope. For emerging scope applicants, we will aim to fund the 14 applications with the highest scores.
- Current HMRF grant recipients with very high merit review scores for their applications and with current strong performance and compliance. We may choose to fund the applications of organizations that are implementing Healthy Marriage or Responsible Fatherhood grants under the 2020 – 2025 project period when:
    - The application has very high merit review results; and
    - The applicant organization has:
        - Met at least 50% of their Year 3 and Year 4 enrollment target.
        - Met at least 50% of their Year 3 and Year 4 completion target (i.e. clients who attend at least 90% of primary workshop sessions).
        - No alerts, compliance, or corrective action concerns issued by the Office of Grants Management (OGM) or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). (For organizations serving more than one population, the 50% threshold for enrollment and completion will be determined using the combined target numbers and enrollment/completion results for all target populations being served.)

We may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Decide not to fund a project with high start-up costs or unreasonably high operating costs.
- Choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems.
- Designate your application as “approved but unfunded” if it was successful but there was not sufficient funding to make an award. You may receive funding if additional funds become available within the fiscal year.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.

We will not fund:

- A disqualified application.
- An incomplete application.

Award notices

How we make awards

If you are successful, we will email or transmit through our grant systems a Notice of Award (NoA) to your authorized official. We will email you if your application is disqualified or unsuccessful.

The NoA is the only official award document. The NoA tells you about the amount of the award, important dates, and the terms and conditions you need to follow. Until you receive the NoA, you have not received an award. Project costs that you incur before you receive a NoA are at your risk.

By drawing down funds, you accept the terms and conditions of the award. The award incorporates the requirements of the program and funding authorities, the grant regulations, the GPS, and the NOFO.

If you want to know more about NoA contents, go to Notice of Award at ACF's website.

Step 5:
Submit Your Application

In this step

Application submission and deadlines

Deadlines

Application

Due on July 29, 2025.

- For electronic submissions, the due time is 11:59 p.m. ET.
- If you receive an exemption from electronic submission, the due time is 4:30 p.m. ET. See the section on exemptions for paper submissions.

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application. If you submit the same application more than once, we will accept only the last on-time submission.

The grants management officer may extend an application due date based on emergency situations such as documented natural disasters or a verifiable widespread disruption of electric or mail service.

Submission methods

Grants.gov

You must submit your application through Grants.gov unless we give you an exemption for a paper submission. See information on getting registered.

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the Quick Start Guide for Applicants. Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files. We encourage you to leave yourself plenty of time to upload documents.

See Contacts and Support if you need help.

Issues with federal systems

If you experience a systems issue with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues [PDF].

Exemptions for paper submissions

We need to give you an exemption before you can apply on paper. See the ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission [PDF].

Once we have approved your exemption, download your forms package under the Package tab in Grants.gov.

To submit your application, mail it to:

OFA Operations Center C/O LCG, Inc.
ATTN: HHS-2025-ACF-OFA-ZB-0109
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410
Rockville, MD 20852

Follow these requirements when you submit your paper application:

- Print your application and all copies one-sided.
- Submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all required forms.
- Submit both the original and additional copies in a single package. If you plan to submit more than one application under this NOFO or others, you must submit them separately. Clearly label each package with the NOFO title and funding opportunity number. Your authorized organization official must sign the application. The original application must include an original signature.

Other submissions

Intergovernmental review

This NOFO is not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. No action is needed.

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply.

Component	Grants.gov form	Included in page limit?
File one: Narratives	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.	
☐ Table of contents		Yes
☐ Project summary		Yes
☐ Project narrative		Yes
☐ Line-item budget and budget narrative		Yes
File two: Attachments	Insert each in the Other Attachments form.	
☐ Indirect cost agreement		Yes
☐ Legal proof of nonprofit status		Yes
☐ Legal proof of for-profit status		Yes
☐ Legal proof of small businesses		Yes
☐ Organizational capacity supporting information		Yes
☐ Third-party agreements		Yes
☐ Letters of support		Yes
Standard forms	Upload using each required form.	
☐ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)		No
☐ Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)		No
☐ Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)		No
☐ Key Contacts		No
☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form		No
☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)		
☐ Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)		No

Step 6:
Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

There are important rules you'll need to follow if you get an award. You must follow:

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award, including the ACF Standard Terms and Conditions and, if applicable, any program-specific terms and conditions. We incorporate this NOFO by reference.
- The rules listed in 45 CFR part 75, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards in effect at the time of award and any updates, or any superseding regulations.
    - Effective October 1, 2024, HHS adopted the following superseding provisions:
        - 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Modified Total Direct Cost.
        - 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Equipment.
        - 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Supplies.
        - 2 CFR 200.313(e), Equipment, Disposition.
        - 2 CFR 200.314(a), Supplies.
        - 2 CFR 200.320, Methods of procurement to be followed.
        - 2 CFR 200.333, Fixed amount subawards.
        - 2 CFR 200.344, Closeout.
        - 2 CFR 200.414(f), Indirect (F&A) costs.
        - 2 CFR 200.501, Audit requirements.
    - Effective October 1, 2025, HHS will adopt the remaining 2 CFR part 200 provisions and the HHS-specific modifications located in 2 CFR part 300.
- The HHS Grants Policy Statement (GPS) [PDF]. This document has terms and conditions tied to your award. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your Notice of Award.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in the HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements [PDF] and the ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements.
- 45 CFR Part 87 Appendix B, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations.
- Applicable program statute and regulations in the Social Security Act §403(a)(2).

Reporting

As a recipient, you will have to submit performance and financial reports. To learn more about reporting, see Reporting at the ACF website.

- Performance report form: ACF-OGM-PPR
  - Performance report frequency: Semiannually
- Financial report form: SF-425 FFR
  - Financial report frequency: Semiannually
- Information, Family Outcomes, Reporting, and Management (nFORM) System
  - The management information system that grantees use to routinely collect, store, and analyze performance measure data that will be reported to the Office of Family Assistance (OMB Control No.: 0970-0566; Expiration Date: March 31, 2027).

Contacts and Support

In this step

Agency contacts

Program

Taffy Compain
OFA@grantreview.org

Grants management

Telina Bennett-Reed
202-401-4609
telina.bennett@acf.hhs.gov

Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. You can call 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. Hold on to your ticket number.

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can call 1-866-606-8220 or live chat with the Federal Service Desk.

Reference websites

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
- Grants.gov
- Applying for an ACF Grant Award
- Grants.gov Accessibility Information
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- United States Code (U.S.C.)
- Award Terms and Conditions (see also the ACF Standard Terms and Conditions [PDF])
- ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements
- ACF Property Guidance

Appendices

Appendix A: Table Shell

In this appendix, we provide a sample table shell, which you may use to address the requirements found in the program performance targets section.

Target population description: [FILL IN]

	Number of clients enrolled	Number of clients who attend at least one primary workshop session	Number of clients who attend at least 50% of primary workshop sessions	Number of clients who attend at least 90% of primary workshop sessions	Number of clients who attend 100% of primary workshop sessions
Year 1[1]					
Year 2 (Sept. 30, 2026 to Sept. 29, 2027)					
Year 3 (Sept. 30, 2027 to Sept. 29, 2028)					
Year 4 (Sept. 30, 2028 to Sept. 29, 2029)					
Year 5 (Sept. 30, 2029 to Sept. 29, 2030)					
Total					

Appendix B: Glossary

capacity-building technical assistance: This comprises:

- Marketing and outreach.
- Partnerships.
- Delivery of HMRF services (such as curriculum-driven workshops).
- Program flow (recruitment and retention).
- Staffing (for example, hiring and management structure.
- Data management.

case management: A procedure to plan, seek, and monitor services from different social agencies and staff on behalf of a participant. This may involve monitoring the progress of a participant whose needs require the services of several professionals, agencies, health care facilities, and human service programs. Case management typically involves case finding, comprehensive multidimensional assessment, and frequent reassessment.

Client: Refers to all program enrollees and program participants. Used in the context of measuring program inputs and outputs in measuring program participation, for example.

continuous quality improvement (CQI): The process of identifying, describing, and analyzing program strengths and problems, followed by testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions.

domestic violence: For the purposes of these NOFOs, this may also be called “intimate partner violence.”

evidence-informed practices: Brings together the best available research, professional expertise, and input from fathers and families to identify and deliver services that have promise to achieve positive outcomes for fathers, families, and communities.

recipient organization: An applicant organization whose project is awarded funds under this NOFO.

Project: The recipient’s funded program in its entirety, including the program model and the mechanisms to implement it, such as staffing, oversight, and data collection.

Program: The authorized federal funding under this NOFO.

served/serving participants: “Serving” a participant means that the participant has attended at least 90% of primary workshops.

workshop: A set of structured classes that take place in group settings and are focused on a topic or topics related to this program.

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 (project narrative, line-item budget, and justification) is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The project description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires March 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.

Modifications

Modification Description	Updated Date

Endnotes

1. For large- and small-scope grant recipients, this should include any clients served between January 2, 2026, and September 29, 2026. (These grant recipients may pilot as early as January 2, 2026. These grant recipients' planning period ends March 31, 2026, and full implementation starts April 1, 2026. Any clients served during a pilot and during full implementation should be included.)

   For emerging-scope grant recipients, this should include any clients served between April 1, 2026, and September 29, 2026. (These grant recipients may pilot as early as April 1, 2026. All clients served during year 1 will be served during this pilot period, that is, between April 1, 2026, and September 29, 2026.) ↑