



Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Tribal Early Childhood and Family Economic Well- Being Research Center (TRC)

Opportunity number: HHS-2025-ACF-OPRE-PH-0017



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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 December 1, 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

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Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

A research center that serves Native American communities by focusing on relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement for child care, Head Start/Early Head Start center and home-based programs, and family economic well-being programs.

Summary

OPRE is seeking applications for the Tribal Early Childhood and Family Economic Well-Being Research Center (TRC).

The TRC will conduct relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement of ACF-funded programs for Native American communities.

The program focuses on child care, Head Start/Early Head Start center and home-based programs and family economic well-being programs. The TRC will bring together a team of experts in each of these areas. It will also engage tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff.

Funding details

Type: Cooperative agreement

Expected total program funding: \$1,000,000

Total expected awards: One

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): \$750,000

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

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

You'll be required to submit semi-annual progress reports. Progress reports help us understand how the project is progressing toward the proposed goals, objectives, and activities, within the stated timeline.



Have questions?
See [Contacts and Support](#).

Key facts

Opportunity name:

Tribal Early Childhood and Family Economic Well-Being Research Center (TRC)

Opportunity number:

HHS-2025-ACF-OPRE-PH-0017

Announcement type:

Initial

Federal assistance listing:

93.600, 93.575, 93.647

Statutory authority number:

[42 U.S.C. 9858m\(a\)\(5\)](#),
[42 U.S.C. 9843](#), [42 U.S.C. 9844](#), and [42 U.S.C. 1310](#)

Key dates

Application submission deadline:

December 1, 2025

[Optional notice of intent](#) deadline:

October 23, 2025

Expected project start date:

January 26, 2026

See [other submissions](#) for other time frames that may apply to this NOFO.

Projects will be eligible for non-competing continuation awards if projects are likely to meet the proposed project goals, objectives, and activities within the stated timeline.

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

Eligibility

Eligibility is unrestricted.

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

Other eligibility criteria

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements may apply for 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.

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

The legislative authorities for this program are the following: (1) Section 658O(a)(5) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act, codified at [42 U.S.C. 9858m\(a\)\(5\)](#); (2) Section 648 of the Head Start Act, as amended by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, codified at [42 U.S.C. 9843](#) and sections 649, [42 U.S.C. 9844](#); and (3) Social Security Act, section 1110, codified at [42 U.S.C. 1310](#).

Background

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) works with tribal governments and Native American communities in the United States to support the well-being of children and families.

By Native American communities, we refer to individuals and groups with ancestral ties to the lands within the United States, including members of federally recognized tribes and others who maintain cultural or community connections. [ACF](#) is committed to respecting sovereignty, upholding the government-to-government relationship with federally recognized tribes, and supporting programs that reflect the unique traditions, languages, and cultural heritage of Native American communities.

Relevant research, evaluation, and measurement benefits the communities implementing these programs, other Indigenous communities, and the federal government.

The Tribal Early Childhood and Family Economic Well-Being Research Center (TRC) is a collaborative effort that supports the following three service programs:

- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
- Head Start
- Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Despite their separate origins, these programs all serve similar populations, and many tribal communities operate two or more of these programs.

Both tribal leaders and the federal government are working on better collaboration across [Tribal early childhood and family economic well-being programs](#).

Recently, ACF has engaged in cross-cutting early childhood policy work such as:

- Providing funding for tribal early childhood systems development
- Engaging in joint consultation
- Offering joint policy guidance from ACF's Office of Child Care (OCC), Office of Head Start (OHS), and Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Similarly, research in one program area often helps others, and many early childhood and family economic topics may be cross-cutting.

The [Tribal Early Childhood Research Center](#) was first funded in 2011 to provide leadership and support excellence in community-based participatory research and evaluations of Tribal Home Visiting, Head Start, and Early Head Start programs that serve American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children and families.

In 2016, the [TRC 2](#) was funded following the model of the TRC, adding funding for child care. Then, in 2020, [TRC 3](#) began, with a focus on family economic well-being added in 2021. This award (the TRC 4) builds on past efforts to support relevant and actionable research evaluation, and measurement. It also continues the focus on ACF early childhood and family economic well-being programs.

Programs

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

CCDF is a federal block grant program administered by OCC that funds states, territories, and tribes for child care services for families with low incomes with children under the age of 13.

Each CCDF Lead Agency must follow the CCDBG Act and ACF-issued rules and regulations found at 45 CFR [Parts 98](#) and [Parts 99](#). States, territories, and tribal governments can set their own CCDF policies, as long as they meet federal requirements.

Tribal Lead Agencies, however, have different rules based on their annual funding. They can tailor their programs to meet child care needs in their communities, focusing on language and culture, and can set aside funds for construction and major renovation.

To learn more about the goals and initiatives of the CCDF program and OCC, you can visit the [OCC website](#).

Every year, part of the CCDF budget goes to research and evaluation projects on Child Care and Early Education policy aimed at improving the CCDF program. To learn more about projects funded with CCDF research set-aside funds, you can visit the [OPRE website](#). CCDF research funds amount to \$250,000, or about 33.33% of the Center's total budget.

Head Start

Head Start programs support children from birth to age five and pregnant women through center and home-based services centered around early learning and development, health, and family well-being. Early Head Start serves children from birth to younger than three years old and pregnant women. Head Start Preschool serves children aged three to no older than the age required to attend school.

Head Start staff actively engage parents, recognizing family participation throughout the program as key to strong child outcomes. Head Start provides awards to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies across 12 regions, five of which are geographically based.

Region XI serves children and families in programs operated by federally recognized AIAN tribes or tribal associations. It includes both AIAN and non-AIAN children and families. Region XII serves migrant and seasonal workers and their families.

OHS honors the rich cultural heritage of AIAN communities. Consistent with the Head Start Act, programs strive to offer high quality services that are linguistically and culturally appropriate and tailored to local needs. For more information on AIAN Head Start, see [American Indian and Alaska Native Programs | ECLKC](#).

Research funds for Head Start total \$250,000, or about 33.33% of the Center's budget.

Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

ACF's Office of Family Assistance (OFA) administers federal programs that foster family economic security and stability. This includes the TANF and Tribal TANF programs. Tribal TANF gives federally recognized tribes and tribal consortia flexibility in the design of welfare programs that promote work and responsibility and strengthen families. Tribes receive block grants to design and run TANF programs that are focused on achieving the four statutory purposes of TANF.

You can read more about the statutory purposes of TANF here at the following link: [TANF's four goals](#).

The Social Services Research and Demonstration (SSRD) funds research and demonstration projects such as those which will help improve the administration and effectiveness of programs carried on or assisted under the Social Security Act and related programs.

SSRD research funds contribute \$250,000, or about 33.33% of the Center's budget.

Goals and activities

The TRC will support relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement of ACF-funded early childhood and family economic well-being programs that serve Native American communities.

By “relevant” and “actionable,” we mean they align with community practices, honor tribal data sovereignty, and are useful for decision-making and improvement.

For examples of this kind of research, see [OPRE Research and Evaluation with Tribal Communities](#).

The primary goals of the TRC are to:

- Conduct relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement of relevance across ACF-funded early childhood and family economic well-being programs.
- Serve as a hub for information and peer exchange, to promote this research, evaluation, and measurement.

To achieve this, the TRC will:

- Further explore and increase the usefulness of community grounded or adapted measures relevant to TRC program areas.
- Engage in and facilitate secondary analyses of data from across TRC program areas (e.g., administrative data, accessible national datasets) to better understand community characteristics, program design, implementation processes, and outcomes.
- Conduct other research responsive to the needs of tribal program administrators, policy makers and providers, tribal leaders, and researchers from the three TRC program areas.
- Summarize information on existing measures of meaningful inputs, processes, and outcomes across TRC program areas.
- Summarize promising practices and provide research-backed frameworks for programs wishing to adapt, enhance, or develop:
 - Curricula
 - Child assessments
 - Staffing qualifications/credentialing that align with the needs of their communities
- Organize forums (e.g., trainings) to share Native American research methodologies, research planning tools (e.g., logic models), and approaches to honoring tribal data sovereignty.

- Honor tribal data sovereignty and ethically disseminate findings to practitioners, policymakers, and the public.

The TRC's information sharing and research activities will be constructed with input from tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from OPRE, OCC, OHS, ECD, and OFA.

Project requirements

Projects funded through these awards are required to meet the following criteria:

Principal investigator

The Center must have one Project Director. The Project Director must:

- Have research expertise and a doctorate or equivalent.
- Represent the TRC and ensure its activities are aligned.
- Commit enough time and effort, so the project is managed well.
- Be supported by a Project Manager or Project Coordinator to ensure efficiency, timely implementation, and coordination.

If the Project Director changes during the project period, it counts as a major project revision and would require ACF approval.

Research team

The Center's research team must consist of:

- Research leads skilled in the three TRC program areas. The leads must:
 - be experts in relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement.
 - commit enough time and effort to manage individual activities, and cross-cutting projects.
- A Dissemination Lead. This person must:
 - Ensure timely, targeted information and peer exchange across TRC program areas.
 - Develop and maintain an accessible website.
 - Develop resources for relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement of relevance across program areas.

Meetings

The Project Director or a Research Team member will be required to attend and present at the following meetings:

- Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (in Washington DC, biennially)
- Annual OCC–sponsored Tribal Child Care Conference (in Washington DC)
- OHS Region XI Grantee Meeting (various locations, annually)
- Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (in Washington DC, biennially)
- National Research Conference on Early Childhood (in Washington DC, biennially)
- National Tribal TANF and Native Employment Works Meeting (various locations, annually)

Collaboration with federal staff

TRC representatives, including Project Directors, Co-Directors, and other selected TRC research leads, will meet biweekly online with the Federal Project Officer (FPO) (from OPRE), and with other representatives from OPRE, OCC, ECD, OHS, and OFA. These meetings will help OPRE stay informed about and provide input on project activities.

During these meetings, the TRC team and OPRE staff will:

- Review research plans, progress, and products.
- Assess efforts to become a hub of information and peer exchange.
- Identify and prioritize dissemination opportunities.
- Discuss challenges and find solutions.

The TRC will also share products or presentations with the FPO for feedback.

Active engagement

The TRC's plans should be formed after engaging with groups, including tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from the three TRC program areas.

The TRC will bring together a Steering Committee that reflects a wide range of Native American communities, perspectives, research disciplines, and a balance across the three TRC program areas. This committee will rotate members to allow for new voices. They will help identify key research and practice questions. The TRC will also consult with federal staff, either through this committee or another, to understand emerging questions related to its programs, and broader federal efforts with Native American communities.

Cooperative agreement—Description of ACF's involvement

When funding is awarded in a cooperative agreement, you can expect substantial involvement of federal staff in the performance of the funded activities. In this cooperative agreement, OPRE will:

- Negotiate roles and responsibilities with the recipient before finalizing the cooperative agreement.
- Address review panel concerns, such as areas in which additional expertise or support might be needed and will work with the grant recipient to address significant gaps or weaknesses.
- Facilitate collaboration among other ACF-sponsored recipients and projects, such as with:
 - Research projects.
 - Training and technical assistance providers.
 - Federal staff representing OCC, ECD, OHS, and OFA.
- Join biweekly calls with the recipient to provide support and remain informed about the project.

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

We do not allow the following costs under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO):

- Construction.
- Purchase of real property.
- Major renovation.
- Pre-award

According to statutory authority, the Center can only use funds for specific ACF programs. Award recipients must ensure each program’s funds only cover its costs. This can be done in two ways:

- Keep funds for each program in separate accounts and use each account only for that program’s costs.
- Combine all award funds in one account and allocate funds to each program, while ensuring no program’s costs exceed its funding. The cost cap/percentage on money being used from each funding source is 33.33%.

Most of the Center’s costs will likely be cross-cutting (i.e., fall within the scope of multiple program areas). In these instances, the recipient generally can choose which program to charge. For questions about this, contact the grants management specialist.

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

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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 [Search Grants | Grants.gov](#) and search for opportunity number HHS-2025-ACF-OPRE-PH-0017. 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.



Step 3:

Prepare Your Application

In this step

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Application contents and format

Application components

You will submit two files plus the [standard forms](#) in the application package.

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 them 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 population you will address, and your proposed services or research questions.

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 [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.

Approach

Outline your action plan. Describe the scope of your proposed project and describe in detail how you will accomplish it. 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.

Applications must contain the following sections:

Background and significance

Include a brief literature review on your most recent and relevant research priorities. Your literature review should do the following:

- Discuss past and ongoing studies on early childhood or family economic well-being programs implemented within Native American communities, as well as identifying gaps in the knowledge base.
- Discuss cross-cutting programmatic and policy issues relevant to Tribal Child Care, Head Start/ Early Head Start, Tribal TANF and related family economic programs.

- Identify the gaps or needs that motivate your proposed research and information sharing activities.

The background and significance section should also describe the proposal's significance. It must explain how it will advance relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement of interest to tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from the three TRC program areas.

Research Plan

A plan to conduct relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement of relevance across ACF-funded early childhood and family economic well-being programs.

You must propose a five-year research plan outlining themes you will investigate, as well as specific activities you will address related to those themes, and your approaches to honoring tribal data sovereignty

Your action plan should do the following:

- Outline research themes and activities to:
 - Further explore and increase the usefulness of community grounded or adapted measures.
 - Engage in and facilitate secondary analyses of data across TRC program areas.
 - Conduct other research relevant to emerging needs.
- Describe how you will seek and integrate input from tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from the three TRC program areas into the research plan.
- Develop a plan for quality assurance for all Center research activities.

Information Sharing Plan

You must propose a five-year plan to share information and provide forums that support relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement in the TRC program areas.

Your plan should:

- Discuss how you will be a hub for information and peer exchange, fostering relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement in the TRC program areas.
- Provide detailed plans to:
 - Summarize information on existing meaningful measures across TRC program areas.
 - Summarize promising practices and provide research-backed frameworks for programs wishing to adapt, enhance, or develop:
 - Curricula
 - Child assessments
 - Staffing qualifications/credentialing tailored to their communities
 - Provide forums (e.g., trainings) for sharing about Native American research methodologies, research planning tools (e.g., logic models), and approaches to honoring tribal data sovereignty.
 - Honor tribal data sovereignty and ethically disseminate TRC findings to practitioners, policymakers, and the public
- Describe how you will seek and integrate input from tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from the three TRC program areas, and any other groups identified as important to engage.
- Discuss potential challenges to carrying out the work as designed, and your solutions.
- Provide a project timeline with specific milestones showing how you will meet the goals.

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 tasks you plan to complete 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 by a specific date.
- Provide target dates for activities you can't quantify.
- 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:

- 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.
- Provide evidence that key team members have the available time to fulfill the associated project duties.
- Provide an appropriate management plan for achieving project objectives on time and on budget.
- Provide an appropriate plan for developing and engaging a Steering Committee, which includes, but is not limited to, tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from the three TRC program areas.
- Provide supporting information in the organizational capacity supporting information section of your [attachments](#).

Current and pending funding support

Provide a list of your current and pending funding for ongoing projects and proposals. Include all sources, such as federal, state, and local governments, public or private foundations, and for-profit organizations.

Indicate which projects and proposals require committed time from the project director, principal investigator, or other key personnel of the project you are proposing in this application.

Show the total award amount, awarding entity, and the amount of time each key staff member will devote to each project.

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 make sure that your federal funds and activities have proper oversight. Include:

- A description of the governance, policies and procedures, and systems you use for record keeping and financial management.
- A description of the procedures you use 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 staff and any partners or subrecipients.

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, and honors tribal data sovereignty. Provide:

- The methods and systems you will use to ensure that you properly handle confidential and sensitive information, including any subrecipients 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\(e\)](#)).

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.

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.

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 the full period of performance. See information on [funding periods](#).

Awards under this NOFO come from multiple funding sources. Applicants must provide additional details in their budget and budget justifications. This detail should reflect the percentages and types of costs and activities by funding source proportionately. In the SF-424A, show the amounts estimated under each Object Class Category, by funding source, under each of the columns. You can find a description of the funding sources in [funding details](#).

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](#).
- How you will track the funding by program to ensure each program received its share of the benefit from the work

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.
- Account for the cost of required meetings.
- Account for staff time and other costs associated with active engagement throughout the project.

- 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.

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 documents 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 your organization's power 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 required in the previous section, 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 charts, including all partners.
- Resumes, biographical sketches, or curricula vitae for all key personnel.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- College transcripts for graduate student research fellows.
- Information on compliance with federal, state, and local government standards.

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.
- Organization they represent.
- Date.
- Reasons for supporting the project.

Protection of human subjects' certification

Not included in the page limit.

You must attach a Protection of Human Subjects: Assurance Identification / Certification / Declaration of Exemption form. You can find this form at the [Office of Human Research Protections Forms](#) website.

For more on this topic see [the Office of Human Research Protections](#) website. If you have questions, you can email them at OHRP@HHS.gov or call them at 240-453-6900.

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 their money.

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

[See instructions and examples.](#)



Step 4:

Learn About Review and Award

In this step

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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 fails 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
Background and significance	20 points
Research plan	25 points
Information sharing plan	25 points
Organizational capacity	20 points
Budget	10 points

Background and significance

Maximum points: 20

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Demonstrate an understanding of previous and ongoing research and gaps in the knowledge base related to early childhood and family economic well-being programs implemented within Native American communities.
- Discuss cross-cutting programmatic and policy issues relevant to the three TRC program areas.
- Provide a rationale for proposed research and information sharing activities.
- Describe the overall significance of the proposal and how it will advance the goals set forth in the Program Description section.

Research plan

Maximum points: 25

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Describe potential research themes and activities to:
 - Further explore and increase the usefulness of community grounded or adapted measures relevant to the TRC program areas
 - Engage in and facilitate secondary analyses of data across TRC program areas

- Conduct other primary research responsive to emerging needs from the Steering Committee or federal staff from the TRC program areas
- Provide a clear and feasible plan to seek and integrate input from tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from the four TRC program areas, and any other groups identified as important to engage into the research plan.
- Identify challenges to carrying out the proposed activities and your solutions.
- Outline a project timeline with specific milestones that is clear, feasible, and appropriate to address the project goals.
- Describe a clear and detailed research planning and quality assurance plan for all Center research activities over the course of the 5-year project period.
- Demonstrate how you will ensure all research activities are completed and findings are shared within the project period.

Information sharing plan

Maximum points: 25

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Detail how you will serve as a hub for information and peer exchange.
- Clearly identify how proposed activities for the hub will support relevant and actionable research, evaluation, and measurement in the TRC program areas.
- Describe clear and feasible approaches to:
 - Summarizing information on existing meaningful measures across TRC program areas.
 - Summarizing promising practices and providing research-backed frameworks for programs that want to adapt, enhance, or develop:
 - Curricula
 - Child assessments
 - Staffing qualifications/credentialing aligned with the needs of their communities
 - Creating forums to share about Native American research methodologies, research planning tools (e.g., logic models), and approaches to honoring tribal data sovereignty.
 - Honoring tribal data sovereignty and ethically disseminating TRC findings to practitioners, policymakers, and the public.
- Detail a clear and feasible plan to seek and integrate input from tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from the three TRC program areas, and any other groups identified as important to engage.

- Discuss potential challenges to carrying out the proposed information sharing activities and your solutions.
- Outline a project timeline with specific milestones that is clear, feasible, and appropriate to address the project goals.

Organizational capacity

Maximum points: 20

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Demonstrate that your proposed Project Director possesses the necessary qualifications, experience, and available time to lead the project.
- Demonstrate that a Project Manager or Project Coordinator with necessary qualifications, experience, and available time will support the Project Director with efficient project management, timely implementation, and coordination.
- Demonstrate that your Dissemination Lead has necessary qualifications, experience, and available time to support the information sharing plan.
- Demonstrate that your proposed research team and partners possess the necessary qualifications and experience in all three TRC program areas, and available time to accomplish project objectives.
- Propose an appropriate management plan for achieving project objectives on time and on budget.
- Propose an appropriate plan for developing and engaging a Steering Committee, which includes, but is not limited to, tribal program administrators and providers, tribal leaders, researchers, and federal staff from the three TRC program areas, and any other groups identified as important to engage.

Budget

Maximum points: 10

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Propose project costs that are reasonable, appropriately allocated, and sufficient to successfully carry out the proposed research and information sharing activities.
- Include travel budget for required meetings
- Address tracking and reporting of award funds by each of the multiple funding sources

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 factors.
- 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](#).
- We will also consider projects that best meet the needs of the program goals (as described in the [program description](#) section) and the needs of ACF. This may mean prioritizing applications that complement or fill gaps in ACF's current research portfolio.

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

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Application checklist	<u>43</u>

Application submission and deadlines

Deadlines

Optional notice of intent

Due on October 23, 2025, by 11:59 p.m. E.T.

See information on [notices of intent](#).

Application

Due on December 1, 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:

David Lee

Office of Grants Management
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Administration for Children and Families
330 C St SW
Washington, DC 20201

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.

Intergovernmental review

You will need to submit application information for intergovernmental review under [Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#). Under this order, states may design their own processes for obtaining, reviewing, and commenting on some applications. Some states have this process and others don't.

To find out your state's approach, see the [list of state single points of contact \[PDF\]](#). If you find a contact on the list for your state, contact them as soon as you can to learn their process. If you do not find a contact for your state, you don't need to do anything further.

This requirement never applies to AIAN tribes or tribal organizations.

Optional notice of intent

We ask that you let us know if you plan to apply for this opportunity. We do this to plan for the number of expert reviewers we will need to evaluate applications. You do not have to submit a notice of intent to apply.

Please email your notice to nicole.denmark@acf.hhs.gov. In your email, include:

- The funding opportunity number and title.
- Your organization's name and address.
- A contact name, phone number, and email address.

See the [deadline for notices of intent](#).

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply.

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



Step 6:

Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration 45

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 \[PDF\]](#) (GPS). 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](#).

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



Contacts and Support

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Agency contacts

Program

Nicole Denmark

202-205-4653

TRC@icf.com

Grants management

David Lee

202-401-5461

David.Lee@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](#)

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