Notice of Funding Opportunity

Application due June 28, 2024

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

Refugee Career Pathways (RCP) Program

Opportunity number: HHS-2024-ACF-ORR-ZM-0020

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 registration is 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 June 28, 2024

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 28, 2024.

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 Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

Helping refugees begin professional, skilled careers in the U.S.

Summary

The Refugee Career Pathways (RCP) Program provides funding to help refugees and other eligible populations gain the knowledge, skills, and experience to enter and advance in professional and skilled career fields. RCP helps refugees learn about career pathways and create personalized career plans. Project activities include career counseling, connection to vocational training, specialized English-language training, and mentorship. Programs can offer financial help for costs related to career development, such as tuition, training, supplies, transportation, and child care.

RCP projects partner with at least one educational institution to expand training opportunities for refugees. RCP projects run by educational institutions partner with a refugee-serving organization, such as a resettlement office.

Please also see the full RCP program guidelines.

Funding details

Type: Grant

Estimated total program funding: $5 million

Total expected awards: 15

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): $250,000

Maximum award amount for the first budget period (award ceiling): $325,000

Funding periods: 36-month period of performance with three 12-month budget periods

ORR will continue to fund projects after the first and second years based upon:

- Satisfactory performance.
- Approval of noncompetitive application for continued funding.
- Determination that continued funding is in the federal government's best interest.

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

Have questions? See Contacts and Support.

Key facts

Opportunity name: Refugee Career Pathways Program

Opportunity number: HHS-2024-ACF-ORR-ZM-0020

Federal assistance listing: 93.576

Statutory authority number: Immigration and Nationality Act § 412(c)(1)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1522(c)(1)(A)

Key dates

Application deadline: June 28, 2024

Expected award date: August 30, 2024

Expected start date: September 30, 2024

See deadlines.

Eligibility

Who can apply

Eligible applicants

These types of organizations may apply:

- Public and private nonprofit organizations.

Individuals, including sole proprietorships, and foreign entities may not apply.

Other eligibility criteria

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

Applicants must include a letter of support from a required partner. For most applicants the required partner is an educational institution such as a university, college, or vocational training center. An institution that focuses on one profession, such as driving or health care, does not meet this requirement.

If you, the applicant, represent an educational institution, you are not required to include a letter of support from another educational institution. Instead, you must include a letter of support from an organization serving refugees.

See initial review for disqualification factors.

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.

Program description

Refugee Career Pathways (RCP) overview

The RCP Program helps refugees begin professional careers in the United States. Many refugees have professional experience but do not have the degrees, certifications, and knowledge needed in the U.S. job environment. Highly skilled refugees often need to take low-skilled jobs to support themselves after arrival, which limits their ability to advance or develop their skills. This makes it more difficult for refugees to become self-sufficient and use their skills to benefit their communities. Existing job training programs for refugees often focus on initial job placement rather than long-term career goals.

The RCP Program will help refugees begin careers that provide greater job security and the possibility of advancement. The program employs the career pathways approach, which has shown promise in enabling immigrants to enter career fields in the United States.

The career pathways approach means working with participants to help them learn about jobs in their field that are in high demand in their region. This approach also includes providing the training and education needed to qualify for these jobs. This helps participants understand how they can enter more highly skilled and highly paid jobs within a professional field.

For more information on the career pathways approach, see the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education resource website and the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services' Joint Letter on Career Pathways.

The career pathways approach requires a strong network of local partners that can address all aspects of career development. Organizations conducting RCP projects work closely with local partners to guide participants through the project and provide ongoing support after the project ends. The RCP project should supplement, rather than replicate or replace, existing local career training opportunities for refugees.

Note: The term "refugee" is used in this document to mean all people eligible for ORR refugee benefits.

Program scope

The RCP Program's objectives are:

- Helping refugees become self-sufficient by gaining professional certifications or skilled employment.
- Increasing refugees' understanding of career pathways and giving them the knowledge and tools to succeed in their career path.

Recipients will work directly with refugees to apply the career pathways approach through training and career coaching. Recipients will help participants identify ways to enter their chosen career field and create a plan to advance within the field. Recipients will identify barriers, such as the refugee's credentials not being recognized or their unfamiliarity with workplace standards, and provide support and resources to overcome them.

Recipients will not provide typical employment-related services funded by ORR or other service providers.

Providing equitable services

Recipients must ensure that their project is fully and equally accessible to all refugees, as detailed within the eligible participants section. Program activities must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and provide flexible scheduling for participants, who may be working full-time or during nontraditional work hours. Recipients will serve refugees with varying levels of education and experience. Recipients will provide direct training and support and/or connect participants with external training and support that fits each participant's background and career goals. Recipients must be able to help refugees overcome potential barriers to participation, such as lack of transportation or child care responsibilities. Program design should include input from individuals with lived experience.

Program activities

Career development plans

Recipients must create a personalized career development plan for each participant, based on their skills, experience, credentials, and desired career path. Plans are not limited to finding a job within a field. The plan must include both immediate steps that the participant can take toward their career goals, as well as steps that contribute to their short-, medium-, and long-term career prospects.

The participant must select a career field that:

- Has entry-level jobs that the participant could get while participating in the RCP project.
- Provides opportunities for professional advancement.
- Has employment opportunities in the local community.

The plan must lay out a clear and realistic path for qualifying for and obtaining employment in the field. The plan must include the following, as applicable:

- Description of the career field the participant wants to enter.
- The participant's current skills and experience.
- Skills, experience, education, and credentials that are needed or useful to start a career in that field.
- Specific job titles the participant may qualify for during the RCP project.
- Barriers to entering the field and strategies to handle these barriers. Barriers could include:
    - Limited English skills.
    - Lack of familiarity with workplace standards.
    - Inexperience with job search strategies.
    - Diplomas or certificates not translated or recognized in the United States.
- Specific educational courses or programs of study that the participant will complete.
- Opportunities to gain additional experience, such as on-the-job training, mid-career internships, or apprenticeships.
- Exams or training programs to acquire a credential that is needed or helpful in getting a job in the field.
- A plan for getting an existing credential to be recognized, if applicable.
- A list of local employers hiring for the targeted positions.
- A list of mentors and other contacts who can provide guidance in finding a job and succeeding in the field.
- Any costs associated with these items.
- Options for further career development after the RCP project.
- A plan for how participants can save and plan for future career development.

The plan is a living document that will be changed and improved throughout the project period. Participants will be able to use the plan as a resource after the end of the project period.

The plan must also include a service agreement that participants will sign. The agreement will describe the role, responsibilities, and expectations for both the participant and the organization. It will also include a policy for addressing participant grievances.

Career coaching and training

Recipients must connect each participant with a career coach or navigator to provide personalized career coaching and help them gain employment in their field. Coaching focuses on developing and improving the participant's career development plan. It also includes guidance on career development activities and completion of the steps in the plan.

The coach must schedule regular discussions with the participant to track progress toward career goals and completion of action steps. The coach must have information on opportunities for vocational training, education, and certification. The coach must ensure that each active participant is making continuous progress in career development to the best of the participant's ability. The coach must not limit their interactions to simply checking that a participant has attended class or has no immediate needs.

Career coaches will do the following:

- Guide participants as they obtain the skills, credentials, or experience to qualify for employment and advance in their field.
- Help participants overcome obstacles to meeting their goals.
- Connect participants with employers, mentors, local employment-based service providers, and resources to help them find employment, obtain desired credentials or certifications, and continue their professional development.

Some resources can be found in the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act.

Recipients must provide or connect each participant with specialized training. Training programs must be based on the needs of the refugee participant and the requirements for employment in the participants' fields. Training areas can include:

- Vocational English skills.
- Familiarization with the U.S. workplace environment.
- Job skills such as resume writing, interviewing, and forming professional networks.
- Identification of opportunities in the community to volunteer to gain further experience or network within the field.
- How to identify and approach a possible mentor.

Resource development

Recipients may help create career pathway resources, such as handbooks, licensing guides, and skills assessment tools. These resources should be designed to help participants begin and develop a career in the United States.

Direct financial assistance

Recipients can offer direct financial assistance to participants for costs associated with career advancement. This assistance must be clearly related to the participant's career development plan. You must have a plan for reviewing and approving requests for assistance. These costs could include:

- Tuition for degree or certification programs.
- Licensing and exam fees.
- Credential evaluation services.
- Textbooks, software, and other supplies for career-related courses and exams.
- Uniforms and safety gear.
- Transportation to and from career development activities.
- Child care while participating in career development activities.

Partnerships

RCP projects must be able to serve refugees in the following areas, either directly or through partnerships:

- Job skills training.
- Vocational English-language training.
- Career mentorship.
- Assisting in career entry, such as through apprenticeships or on-the-job training.

Examples of potential partners include:

- American Job Centers.
- Workforce development boards.
- Professional associations.
- Employers.
- Refugee resettlement and support agencies.
- Adult education providers such as those funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (see WIOA state contacts).
- Nonprofit organizations providing technical assistance in immigrant and refugee professional career development.

- Experts in employment, career pathways, or specific professions.
- Professional mentors, including refugees and immigrants, who have successfully entered a career field.

RCP participants can receive services through other ORR programs, if these services do not duplicate RCP services. Through their targeted career development, RCP services should advance employment-related support funded by ORR and other sources.

Required partnership

Projects must reflect a partnership with at least one educational institution. Educational institutions include universities, colleges, community colleges, or other institutions focused on career and technical education.

Recipients that are themselves educational institutions must instead include a partnership with at least one organization providing services to refugees.

Within 90 days of award, the recipient must sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or memorandum of agreement (MOA) with one of these types of organizations.

Coordination with refugee resettlement community

Coordinating with the local refugee resettlement community is critical to the success of this project. Recipients must coordinate regularly with resettlement agencies, state refugee coordinators or replacement designees, and other community services providers to extend the reach of their efforts. Examples of activities to share resources with partners can include:

- Attending quarterly meetings with resettlement agencies.
- Regularly meeting with state refugee coordinators.
- Participating in other relevant forums.

Services for refugee women

Projects are encouraged to develop a specialized plan to reach out to and provide RCP services to eligible women.

Eligible participants

RCP Program participants must be eligible for ORR Refugee Resettlement Program benefits and services through their immigration status or category as one of the following:

- Refugee
- Asylee
- Cuban or Haitian entrant

- Iraqi or Afghan Special Immigrant
- Amerasian
- Victim of human trafficking
- Another individual made eligible by law, such as a humanitarian parolee from Afghanistan or Ukraine who arrived under specific circumstances during a defined period

Eligible people must also meet these criteria:

- They are not U.S. citizens.
- They have been eligible for ORR services for five years or less when they enroll.
- They are authorized to work in the United States, or they provide evidence that they are eligible and have applied for work authorization.
- They are able and willing to begin or continue employment in a professional or skilled career field during the program period.

More information on eligibility for ORR-funded refugee resettlement program benefits and services can be found at 45 CFR § 400.43, and in ORR Policy Letters 16-01, 22-01, and 22-13.

ORR will issue a policy letter and inform recipients if other populations are made eligible by law and can be enrolled in program services.

It is the recipient's responsibility to verify the eligibility of each participant upon enrollment. If the recipient is unsure whether a candidate is eligible, they can contact refugeeeligibility@acf.hhs.gov. ORR will consider exceptions for otherwise eligible persons who have more than five years of ORR eligibility on a case-by-case basis. To request an exception, recipients must contact their program officer with an explanation of why the individual should be considered a priority for service and why they could not enroll in the RCP Program during the five-year eligibility period. Do not include immigration documents or personal details in the message.

Recipients must comply with applicable civil rights laws to ensure that ORR-eligible populations receive fair treatment, access, and opportunity to participate in ORR-funded programs without discrimination on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, race, color, religion, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or political opinion. ORR notes that in implementing its nondiscrimination provisions for the Refugee Resettlement Program, it operates in compliance with the requirements of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and other applicable federal conscience protections, as well as other applicable federal civil rights laws and applicable HHS regulations. For additional detail, please see 45 CFR § 87.3.

For each participant, you must keep a record of eligibility documentation that ORR staff can review on request. Options for keeping records include:

- Keeping a copy of eligibility documents in the participant's case file.
- Recording the following information:
  - Details of the exact document that the participant presented to confirm eligibility, along with any codes or markings that show eligibility.
  - The participant's date of arrival to the United States or initial date of ORR eligibility.
  - The name of the staff member who reviewed the documents.

Enrolled participants may take part in the program for the full period. The recipient of this funding opportunity does not need to re-enroll a participant each year. The recipient is encouraged not to set time limits for the services they provide. Instead, they should provide services as long as the participant can benefit from them.

The funding recipient can only enroll participants within the service area described in their application. ORR will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis. The recipient may request to expand or change the service area through a change in scope amendment.

Case file requirements

Recipients must make a case file for each participant and keep it updated. These files must include:

- Documentation of their eligibility for the program.
- Career development plan.
- Case notes.
- Documentation of payments made to or on behalf of the participant.
- Invoices and receipts for these payments.

Recipients must allow ORR staff to review case files upon request.

Programs must comply with 45 CFR § 75.303(e) to take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information. When staff are not using the files, they must be secured so that only appropriate staff can access them. If recipients use an electronic system, they must limit access to the data and use encryption to protect participants' information. If recipients use a paper system, they must keep files secure—ideally in a file cabinet that is kept locked and can only be accessed by authorized staff.

Data reporting requirements

Recipients will be required to report on the following data points semiannually:

- Number of participants newly enrolled in the program.
- Number of participants currently enrolled in the program.
- Average income of enrolled participants.
- Number of participants developing personalized career plans.
- Number of participants enrolling in degree or certification programs.
- Number of participants enrolling in apprenticeship or on-the-job training programs.
- Number of participants earning college credits.
- Number of participants who obtained a new credential or recognition of an existing credential.
- Number of participants obtaining employment in a professional or skilled career field.
- Number of training hours the program provided to participants in English-language programs to prepare for a particular vocation or job-related training program.
- Number of training hours the program provided to participants in developing job readiness skills such as resume writing, interviewing, and expectations for the professional workplace.
- Average income of participants who obtained employment.

See Step 6 for further details on reporting requirements.

Funding policies and limitations

We do not allow the following costs under this funding opportunity:

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

Each participant can receive $12,000 in direct financial assistance over the three-year program. To exceed this limit, ORR must provide written approval. Whenever possible, payment should be made directly to the vendor or service provider on behalf of the participant.

See 45 CFR 75.420 to 75.475 for information on costs that are always unallowable or have restrictions.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those for a common or joint purpose across more than one project and that 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 45 CFR 75.414(f), if you have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate. If you are awaiting approval of an indirect cost proposal, you may also use the *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 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See 45 CFR 75.2 for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

Learn more at 45 CFR 75.414, Indirect Costs.

Subawards

The prime recipient 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 subrecipient activities alone is not a substantive role. See 45 CFR 75.352 for information on subrecipient monitoring.

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

Subrecipients must meet the eligibility requirements of this NOFO.

Statutory authority

This program is authorized by the Immigration and Nationality Act § 412(c)(1)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1522(c)(1)(A).

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 click Get Started. From the same page, you can also click on the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register.

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 at Grants.gov and search for opportunity number HHS-2024-ACF-ORR-ZM-0020. Then, click the “Package” tab.

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 information on exemptions for paper submissions.

Learn more

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

Join the webinar

For more information about this opportunity, join the webinar on May 15, 2024, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Eastern Time. You can join at ACF's Zoom link.

If you are not able to join through your computer, you can call in.

Phone number: 646-828-7666
Meeting ID: 160 602 9774

The goal of the webinar is to address common questions regarding the application process and common mistakes made during application submission. Participants may ask questions during the session though please note that we will not be able to provide information not already included in this NOFO. If there is a discrepancy between the NOFO and the presentation and/or presentation materials, the NOFO takes precedence.

This webinar is fully voluntary. Opting to participate or not to participate will not affect eligibility, application scoring, or the awards process. Participants may remain anonymous during the webinar.

We will record the webinar. If you are not able to join live, you can replay it at ORR's Grant Opportunities site.

Step 3:
Prepare Your Application

In this step

Application contents and format

Application components

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

File one: Project Narrative Attachment form

Includes:

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

File two: Other Attachments form

Includes all attachments.

Other required forms

Includes other required forms.

Required format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 80 pages

File format: Portable Document File (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:

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

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.

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

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: As needed

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

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 the 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.

Project narrative

The project narrative is where you address all your proposed activities. It is a critical section of your application, which we evaluate and rank against other applications using the merit review criteria. 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.
- 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 the geographic areas, include their locations as well.

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 letters of support and 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.
- Include any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments. You may refer to them in the endnotes or footnotes.
- Describe the proposed service area.
- Provide refugee arrival data showing that enough refugees live in the proposed service area to support a 36-month project.
- If necessary, use a literature review to address the project objectives.

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.

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. 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.

Career planning, coaching, and training

- Describe how you will create and update career development plans for participants.
  - Explain how you will personalize plans to suit each participant's background, skills, and experience.
  - Include your process for developing short-, medium-, and long-term goals for each participant.
  - Include a sample career plan or a detailed description of what plans will include. Use the career development plans section of the program description as a guide.
- Describe the career coaching and guidance you will provide to participants. Include details on the expected frequency and length of coaching sessions, who will provide coaching, and the format of sessions (in office or virtual).
  - Include expectations for participants at coaching sessions and what you will do if participants are not engaged or miss sessions.
- Describe how you will connect participants to training or education. Include details on both career-specific skills and general skills, such as resume writing, interviewing, and networking.
- Describe how you will make sure participants can access career-related training and education, either through direct financial assistance or other sources of funding. Include information on resources for assisting with career development costs. If you plan to provide direct financial assistance, describe how you will approve assistance requests.
- Describe the role of your proposed partnership with an educational institution in your program. Explain how this partnership will expand and improve refugees' career and technical training opportunities. If you represent an educational institution, describe how your partnership with an organization serving refugees will expand these opportunities.

- Explain how program activities correspond to the career pathways approach. Describe how your program will offer services that are not already available.
- Describe any career-related resources you plan to develop, if applicable.
- If you identify outreach strategies designed to target women, you may receive bonus points. Describe barriers to women's participation in the program and achieving their career goals. Include a detailed plan explaining how your project will help them overcome these obstacles.
- If you describe a partnership with a workforce development center or American Job Center, you may receive bonus points. Explain how the partnership will lead to increased professional development opportunities for participants. You can find information about workforce development centers and American Job Centers in your area at the U.S. Department of Labor's CareerOneStop website.

Outreach and culturally appropriate services

- Describe your strategy for outreach to eligible individuals within the program service area. Explain your plan for identifying and enrolling participants who can best benefit from the program.
- Explain how your program will benefit participants with various levels of education, experience, and career interests.
- Explain how your program will reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of the population you serve. Address how you will include the lived experience of local refugees in program design and activities.

Providing equitable services

- Explain how your program will provide services to participants working full-time or nontraditional hours.
- Explain how your program will provide services to participants with basic or no English-language skills. Describe how you will help them strengthen their English to a level needed for professional employment.
- Explain how you will handle transportation issues. Make sure participants from all parts of your service area—including those who do not own cars—can access program services.
- Explain how you will make sure participants with young children can access program services. Include your plan for overcoming any child care issues.

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:

- Provide evidence that your team has the relevant experience and expertise needed to carry out your project.
- Describe your team's experience with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- Provide evidence that your team has the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions effectively.
- You will provide some supporting information in the attachments section.
- Provide a list of all organizations, consultants, or key people involved and describe their roles in the project.
- Provide evidence of your experience, or that of your project partners, in providing the required training. This should demonstrate your capacity to provide such training.
- Provide evidence that you fully understand the refugee population in the area to be served through the program, including:
    - Nationalities of arrivals.
    - Specific areas where refugee populations live.
    - Local organizations supporting refugees.

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 Subpart D. 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, 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 staff and any partners or subrecipients, including an organizational chart where appropriate.

Project performance evaluation plan

Describe a plan for how you will evaluate your project's performance and how it will contribute to continuous quality improvement. This plan must describe:

- How you will monitor ongoing activities and the progress toward the project's goals and objectives.
- The inputs, key activities, and expected outcomes of the funded activities. Inputs might include your collaborative partners, key staff, budget, service processes, or other resources.
- How you will measure the inputs, activities, and outcomes.
- How you will use the resulting information to inform improvement of funded activities.
- Any processes that support the overall data quality.
- The organizational systems and processes that will track performance outcomes.
- 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.
- Any potential obstacles to implementing the project performance evaluation and how you will address them.
- A timeline for how you will review information from the performance evaluation and apply it to your ongoing project.

- How you will collect the specific metrics discussed in the data reporting requirements section.
- How you will use data to inform and improve project quality.
- How you will evaluate your relationships with any proposed partners.

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, or budget.
- Target population, such as the individuals to be served or identified needs.
- Activities, mechanisms, and processes such as evidence-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 of 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.

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

See 45 CFR 75.303(e) for more information.

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-424-A. See the other required forms.

It justifies the costs you ask for and includes added detail, including detailed calculations for the "object class categories" in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for the initial budget period only. See information on funding periods.

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, including unit costs where appropriate.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See the funding policies and limitations.
- The requirement to include funds for at least one staff member to travel to the annual program meeting in Washington, DC.

We encourage you also to 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 information on indirect costs for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient 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.

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 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 indirect costs 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.

Additional eligibility documentation

You must include a letter of support from a required partner.

For most applicants, the required partner is an educational institution, such as a university, college, or vocational training center. An institution that focuses on one profession, such as driving or health care, does not meet this requirement.

If you, the applicant, represent an educational institution, you are not required to include a letter of support from another educational institution. Instead, you must include a letter of support from an organization serving refugees. More information appears in the partnerships section of the program description.

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 or curricula vitae for all key personnel.
- A job description for each vacant key position.
- College transcripts for graduate student research fellows.
- Audit summary report including auditor's opinion, if applicable.
- Documentation that you are coordinating with the state refugee coordinator of the state where your project will take place. The documentation must show that you have discussed your plan with the coordinator, and that the plan complements existing state or replacement designee services for refugees and other ORR-eligible populations.
    - Please see the ACF's Key State Contacts to find contact information for your state refugee coordinator.

Third-party agreements

You must submit 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.

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.

You may receive bonus points if you include a letter of support from an American Job Center or workforce development board.

Maintenance of effort certification

Not included in the page limit.

You will self-certify your maintenance of effort. Place this certification on your organization's letterhead. See the maintenance of effort wording at ACF's website.

Other required forms

You will need to complete some other required forms. Upload the forms listed here 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.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable, with the application or before award.
Key Contacts	With the application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	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.

Step 4:
Learn About Review and Award

In this step

Application review

Initial review

We review each application to make sure it meets basic 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.
- Doesn't include the required letter of support from a required partner. See the additional eligibility documentation section in Step 3 for more information.

We will let you know if your application is disqualified within 30 days of the application deadline. You won't receive 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 members use the criteria in this section. Applications will be reviewed solely against the requirements noted within this NOFO. Extra points will not be awarded for proposals that address the published RCP program guidelines.

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

Criteria

Criterion	Total number of points = 100 + 6 possible bonus points
Approach: Career planning, coaching, and training	20 points
Approach: Outreach and culturally appropriate services	15 points
Approach: Providing equitable services	20 points
Organizational capacity and partnerships	20 points
Expected outcomes, timeline, and logic model	10 points
Project performance evaluation plan	5 points
Budget and budget justification	10 points
Bonus points	6 points

Approach: Career planning, coaching, and training (Maximum points: 20)

- Your process for creating and updating career development plans is specific and comprehensive and includes all required elements. You include a sample career development plan or a detailed description of what the plan will include. **(0 to 3 points)**
- Your process for creating and updating career development plans is personalized to each participant. The plan includes actions that will contribute to the participant's short-, medium-, and long-term career prospects. **(0 to 3 points)**
- You detail how you will provide career coaching, counseling, and guidance on career pathways. You include expectations for participants at coaching sessions and your process for addressing participant absence. **(0 to 3 points)**
- You explain how you will help participants gain the skills and credentials they will need. The plan includes both career-specific skills and general career skills such as resume writing, interviewing, and networking. **(0 to 3 points)**
- You provide clear details on how you will make sure participants can cover their costs for training and skill development. If you intend to provide direct financial assistance for that purpose, your plan for awarding this assistance meets program requirements. **(0 to 3 points)**
- Your proposed partnership with an educational institution includes a plan to expand refugees' access to career and technical education and training. If you are

an educational institution, you provide a plan for partnering with at least one organization serving refugees. **(0 to 3 points)**

- Your proposed activities correspond to the career pathways approach and the program scope. You explain how the proposed program will add to existing local services. **(0 to 2 points)**

Approach: Providing equitable services (Maximum points: 20)

- You show how your program will provide services to participants working full-time or nontraditional hours, and with basic or no English language skills. **(0 to 10 points)**
- You show how you will overcome transportation and child care barriers. **(0 to 10 points)**

Approach: Outreach and culturally appropriate services (Maximum points: 15)

- You fully describe your strategy for outreach to eligible individuals within the program service area. **(0 to 4 points)**
- You show that your program will help participants with various levels of education, experience, and career interests. **(0 to 4 points)**
- You show how your program will reflect the cultural and linguistic needs of the local refugee population. **(0 to 4 points)**
- You show that your program includes the lived experience of local refugees in program design and activities. **(0 to 3 points)**

Organizational capacity and partnerships (Maximum points: 20)

- You show that you fully understand the refugee population and geographic area to be served through the program. **(0 to 2 points)**
- You present refugee arrival data showing that enough refugees live in the service area to support a 36-month program. **(0 to 2 points)**
- You show that your team has the necessary experience and expertise and can serve refugees, as discussed in the partnerships section of the program description. **(0 to 2 points)**
- You show that your team has experience administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects. **(0 to 2 points)**
- You show that your team has the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions effectively. **(0 to 2 points)**
- You include resumes of key personnel and/or job descriptions that show your team can carry out proposed activities and achieve program goals. **(0 to 2 points)**

- You clearly define your and your partners' roles and responsibilities. Your supporting documents from partners—including third-party agreements for partners with a significant role—show that they are committed to the program and its objectives. **(0 to 2 points)**
- You show a partnership with an educational institution or a refugee-serving organization, as applicable. **(0 to 2 points)**
- You provide documentation of coordination from the state refugee coordinator. You include more information in the organizational capacity supporting information section. **(0 to 2 points)**
- You provide statements from the community that support the proposed project. **(0 to 2 points)**

Expected outcomes, timeline, and logic model (Maximum points: 10)

- You include specific performance outcomes related to those described in the program scope. Your expected outcomes are realistic given local conditions, organizational capacity, and requested funding. **(0 to 4 points)**
- You provide specific monthly or quarterly projections of goals to be achieved in the first program year, target dates for accomplishments that cannot be quantified, and a plan for meeting enrollment projections. **(0 to 3 points)**
- Your logic model presents a realistic and effective conceptual framework for the project and explains the links among program elements. **(0 to 3 points)**

Project performance evaluation plan (Maximum points: 5)

- You describe a realistic and effective plan for project performance evaluation that will help you continuously improve your program. **(0 to 1 point)**
- The evaluation plan details how you will monitor ongoing activities and your progress toward the goals and objectives of the project. **(0 to 1 point)**
- The plan includes descriptions of the inputs, key activities, and expected outcomes of the activities. **(0 to 1 point)**
- The plan explains how inputs, activities, and outcomes will be measured and how the resulting information will be used to improve funded activities. The plan describes any processes that support the overall data quality of the performance outcomes. **(0 to 1 point)**
- The plan includes the data points mentioned in the data reporting requirements section. **(0 to 1 point)**

Budget and budget justification (Maximum points: 10)

- You present a detailed line-item budget for the first budget period. All proposed costs are reasonable and cost effective. Unit costs are provided where appropriate. **(0 to 5 points)**
- Your budget narrative thoroughly justifies all proposed costs. Each budget item is clearly linked to program objectives through your proposed activities. **(0 to 5 points)**

Bonus points (Maximum points: 6)

- You provide a detailed plan to reach out and provide RCP services to eligible refugee women. You describe barriers women may face in participating in the program and achieving their career goals. You describe how the program will help them overcome these obstacles. **(0 to 3 points)**
- You propose a partnership with a workforce development board and/or American Job Center in the program service area. Your application includes a letter of support from the partner confirming their interest. **(0 to 3 points)**

Risk review

Before making an award, we review the risk that you will not prudently manage federal funds. 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.

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review results, which 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 goals, objectives, and priorities of the program.

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 startup 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:

- An incomplete application.
- A disqualified 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.

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 June 28, 2024.

- For electronic submissions, the due time is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).
- If you receive an exemption from electronic submission, the due time is 4:30 p.m. ET. See information 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 that your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.

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.

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

To submit your application, mail it to:

Tim Chappelle
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Grants Management
Community Strengthening Grants
ATTN: HHS-2024-ACF-ORR-ZM-0020
Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20201

The requirements include:

- Print your application and all copies one-sided.
- Applicants must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all standard forms and OMB-approved forms.
- You must submit the original and both 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. One application copy must include an original signature.

Other submissions

Intergovernmental review

You will need to submit application information for intergovernmental review under Executive Order 12372. 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. 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 American Indian and Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations.

Mandatory disclosure

You must submit any information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. See Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR 75.113.

Send written disclosures to ACF at Tim.Chappelle@acf.hhs.gov **and** to the Office of Inspector General at grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov.

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

Component	How to upload	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 a single Other Attachments form.	
☐ Indirect cost agreement		Yes
☐ Legal proof of nonprofit status		Yes
☐ Letter from educational partner (or refugee service organization partner, as appropriate)		Yes
☐ Documentation of consultation with state refugee coordinator		
☐ Organizational capacity supporting information		Yes
☐ Third-party agreements		Yes
☐ Letters of support		Yes
☐ Maintenance of effort certification		No
Other required 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

Component	How to upload	Included in page limit?
☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)		No
☐ Key Contacts		No
☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form		No
☐ 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.
- 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.
- The HHS Grants Policy Statement (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 HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements. See also ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements.
- 45 CFR Part 87 Appendix A, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations.

Reporting

If you are successful, you will have to submit financial and performance reports. To learn more about reporting, see Reporting at the ACF website.

- Performance report forms: ACF-OGM-PPR and data report OMB #0970-0490, Expiration Date 3/31/2026
  - Performance report frequency: Semiannual
- Financial report forms: SF-425
  - Financial report frequency: Semiannual

Refugee Career Pathways Program evaluation

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

Nondiscrimination and assurance

If you receive an award, you must follow all applicable nondiscrimination laws. You agree to this when you register in SAM.gov. You must also submit an Assurance of Compliance (HHS-690). To learn more, see the Laws and Regulations Enforced by the HHS Office for Civil Rights.

Contacts and Support

In this step

Agency contacts

Program

Ryan Foster
Ryan.Foster@acf.hhs.gov
202-260-6949

Marieme Ndiaye
Marieme.Ndiaye@acf.hhs.gov
202-401-5737

Grants management

Tim Chappelle
Tim.Chappelle@acf.hhs.gov
202-401-4855

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 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)
- ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs
- ACF How to Apply for a Grant
- ACF Property Guidance
- Grants.gov Accessibility Information
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- United States Code (U.S.C.)

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.