ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

ACF Children's Bureau

Trauma Interventions for Children and Youth in Foster Care with Complex Mental, Behavioral, and Physical Health Needs

Funding Opportunity Number
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0078

Application Due Date **July 31, 2023**

This may look different than you're used to...

We're testing a new design for this funding opportunity and we'd love your feedback!

Email us at: CB@grantreview.org

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Step 1: Review the Opportunity

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Opportunity Overview

Trauma Interventions for Children and Youth in Foster Care with Complex Mental, Behavioral, and Physical Health Needs

Help children and youth who have experienced trauma build resilience and improve their well-being.

Key Program Services

- Evidence-based clinical services
- Foster parent training and curricula
- Volunteer support services for foster parents
- Positive biological and birth family engagement
- Enrichment activities for children and youth
- Trauma-informed systems work

Program Summary

The Children's Bureau seeks trauma-informed interventions to address trauma in children and youth with complex mental, behavioral, and health conditions.

Funding supports projects to implement interventions that are culturally and developmentally responsive, achieve demonstrable improvements in well-being for children and youth, and share lessons learned.

Core NOFO Details

Eligible applicants:
Non-profit organizations with demonstrated experience working with youth in foster care who have experienced severe trauma

Type:
Grant

Expected funding:
$2M

Expected awards:
2

Funding range:
$750K to $1M per budget period

Average award:
$1M per budget period

Match or cost share:
None

Period of performance:
36 months

Budget period:
36 months

Estimated project start: 9/30/2023

Deadline for optional letter of intent:
6/30/2023

Deadline for applications:
7/31/2023

Opportunity #:
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0078

CFDA: 93.670

Have questions? 888-203-6161 or CB@grantreview.org

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Program Description

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children's Bureau (CB) will make up to two awards for up to 36 months each.

These demonstration projects (from this point on referred to as "a project") will implement and evaluate innovative trauma-informed programming. The focus is services for children and youth with complex needs who are in foster care.

Program Focus

Goals

The program's goals are to find new or improved solutions to help children and youth (from this point on referred to as children) in the foster care system with complex needs in culturally and developmentally responsive ways. These services or interventions may help to:

- **Treat the effects trauma has on the developing brain. This includes:**
  - helping children to learn self-regulation skills;
  - increasing their tolerance for stress and triggers; and
  - improving their decision-making skills.
- **Provide clinical support to children that help them to:**
  - improve their mental health outcomes;
  - process traumatic memories;
  - work through and understand their own specific effects to their trauma;
  - manage any sensory issues; and
  - begin to heal.
- **Build their ability to trust safe adults through:**
  - relationship building with their foster parents, kinship caregivers, prospective adoptive parents, and biological families, where appropriate; and
  - learning how to set safe boundaries.
- **Provide a trauma-informed, safe environment by:**
  - teaching caregivers how to understand the effects of trauma;
  - providing methods to care for children through trusting relationships and culturally and developmentally appropriate behavioral interventions; and
  - providing support for foster parents through respite care and enrichment activities for children.

- **Improve the capacity of child welfare and related systems that come into contact with children to:**
  - understand, identify, and respond to trauma;
  - build systems and networks that provide sensitive and informed ways to work with children with complex needs who have experienced trauma; and
  - increase services.

Objectives

The program's objectives are to develop projects that use and build upon the evidence of effectiveness in existing trauma-informed interventions. Projects should:

- Deeply understand the developmental, mental, and behavioral health needs of children who have experienced trauma and use this knowledge and experience to build innovative, responsive methods for helping children to meet these challenges.
- Lead to improved outcomes for children in foster care, which may include:
  - Improvements in children's assessments.
  - Decreases in mental health crises needing to involve emergency care.
  - Decreases in behavioral issues associated with an increase in self-regulation skills or better management of sensory or other issues.
  - An increase in trauma-informed services available in the community.
- Carry out continuous quality improvement activities and outcomes or impact evaluations to build knowledge and evidence about ways to help children in foster care with complex needs who have experienced trauma.
- Provide others who want to help children with replicable models that show positive results.

Focus Areas

Chronic exposure to trauma from Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can interfere with early development. It can cause short- and long-term harm to physical, social, and emotional well-being (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020).[i]

Research shows that more ACEs increase a child's risk of negative outcomes. These outcomes include poor physical and mental health, substance use, and risky behaviors. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children may face further exposure to stress from systemic racism or the impacts of poverty resulting from limited educational and economic opportunities.

All children in foster care can benefit from trauma-informed interventions. But many children with complex mental, behavioral, and physical issues have unique, profound, and compounding needs. These needs are often greater than those the available expertise and resources can meet.

Because exposure to trauma can have lifelong effects, early screening and intervention is essential.[ii] While the evidence of effectiveness is still emerging, implementing trauma-informed interventions may help to prevent, identify, and address trauma (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020).

Projects will focus on:

- Providing targeted, innovative, trauma-informed interventions that benefit children in foster care with complex mental, behavioral, and physical health needs.
- Conducting continuous quality improvement and evaluation of trauma-informed interventions.
- Regular reporting to ACF on findings, outcomes, and recommendations about sustainable funding and replicable program models.

Program Services

See Approach and Merit Review: Approach.

Recipients must provide trauma-informed services for children in the foster care system. Services must focus on children with complex needs who have experienced trauma.

Projects may include any or all of the six eligible services described below. Within each, CB encourages innovation. The examples below show types of services that recipients could provide. You may propose other services within these categories.

Evidence-Based Clinical Services[iii]

These services help to meet children's mental, behavioral, and physical health needs. Examples include:

- Assessment and diagnosis of mental health conditions.
- Individual, group, and family therapy, including cognitive behavior therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, and play therapy.
- Occupational therapy to help children with sensory issues.
- Emergency mental health services for children in crisis.

Foster Parent Training and Curricula

These services help foster and potential adoptive families to understand the needs of children who have experienced trauma. Examples include:

- The changes in children's bodies, brains, behaviors, and belief systems that come with experiencing trauma.
- The need to build nurturing, trusting relationships with safe boundaries with trusted adults.
- The need to address the whole child and their unique needs.
- The need to correct behavior by focusing on the behavior, not the child.

Volunteer Support Services for Foster Parents

These services provide direct support for foster parents and caregivers. Examples include:

- Respite care to give foster parents time to meet their own needs and engage in self-care.
- Matching foster parents with mentors or support groups with experience caring for children with complex needs.
- Organizing volunteers to help with transportation for children to appointments, meals for the family, or collecting donations of clothing, toys, and other supplies.
- Resilience-building programs that help foster parents manage the challenges they face.

Positive Biological and Birth Family Engagement

These services help support biological family reunification, where possible. Examples include:

- Building supportive relationships between the child, foster family, and biological family.
- Connecting biological families to concrete, economic, and other available supports within the community.
- Managing regular communication. These might include phone calls, emails, and visits. These can also include coordinating family therapy or other supports, case planning and decision making, and co-parenting.

Enrichment Activities for Children

These services provide opportunities for creative expression and building social skills. Examples include:

- Art or music therapy to allow children to express themselves. This can help them to reduce stress and process their emotions and experiences in a safe, supportive environment.
- Outdoor activities like hiking, gardening, and nature walks. These help children connect with nature and find a sense of peace and calm.
- Sports and exercise to help children release energy, relieve stress, and build self-confidence.
- Mindfulness practices like meditation, breathing exercises, and yoga to develop self-awareness and self-regulation skills.

Trauma-informed Systems Work

This work coordinates community services to prevent, identify, and address trauma. Examples include:

- Building networks of local child-serving systems. These include healthcare, education, social services, juvenile justice, and community organizations. Collaborations develop systems that are more responsive, compassionate, and effective.
  - Specific focus areas might include standardized screening and assessments, measurement-driven case planning, treatment referral processes, changes to data systems, and more.
- Training to better understand, recognize, and intervene with the impacts of trauma.

Evaluation



See Application Components and Merit Review: Evaluation.

All funded projects must include an evaluation. You must spend at least 15 percent of the total project award on evaluating your project.

As a result, you must:

- Build on the existing base of knowledge about trauma-informed interventions.
- Conduct an outcome or impact evaluation of your project.
- Continuously improve quality using informative assessments, metrics, and other useful data arising from the project's everyday operations.
- Disseminate learnings from the project so others in the field benefit from your experience.

Projects should use Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved research supported by experts.

Subawards

See 45 CFR 75.2 for "subaward" and "subrecipient" definitions.

Recipients may transfer part of the work to other organizations through subawards. The prime recipient must:

- Keep a substantive role in the project. A substantive role means conducting activities or providing services integral to the project. Conducting subrecipient monitoring activities alone is not a substantive role.
- Make sure that all subrecipients:
  - are non-profits;
  - not individuals, including sole proprietorships, or foreign entities; and
  - have demonstrated experience working with children in foster care who have experienced trauma.
- Make sure that subrecipients have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active System for Award Management (SAM.gov) registration.

Statutory Authority

Title I, Section 105(b)(5) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106(b)(5)).

About the Children's Bureau

The Children's Bureau (CB) partners with federal, state, Tribal, and local agencies to improve the overall health and well-being of children and families.

CB provides support and guidance to programs that focus on:

- Strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect.
- Protecting children when abuse or neglect has occurred.
- Ensuring that every child and youth has a permanent family or family connection.

See CB's Fact Sheet to learn more about CB's history, mission, and program areas.

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Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

Applying for an award takes time.

Start as early as possible both to meet the pre-application requirements and to make sure that you can complete the application before the deadline.

There are a few things you need to do before you can apply:

- ☐ Make sure your organization is eligible.
  - Only non-profits may apply. (See more information on faith-based organizations.)
  - Only those with demonstrated experience working with children in foster care who have experienced severe trauma can apply.
  - Individuals, including sole proprietorship, or foreign entities are not eligible.
  - ACF will determine your eligibility by reviewing your proof of non-profit status, the project narrative's Experience section, and the letter of support from your child welfare agency.
- ☐ Register in SAM.gov or make sure your registration is up to date. Begin as soon as possible. It can take 2 weeks or more to complete this step.
- ☐ Get a UEI. You get your UEI when you register in SAM.gov. (This is different from a DUNs number. See DUNS to UEI transition information.)
- ☐ Register in Grants.gov. See how to register in Grants.gov.
- ☐ Begin working on gaining the required letter of support from the relevant child welfare agency in your jurisdiction. See attachments.
- ☐ Read over this NOFO before beginning.
- ☐ Make sure that you understand the disqualifying factors.
- ☐ Submit an optional letter of intent. You do not need to do this to apply but it helps us. Send an email with the NOFO number, title, and your organization name to CB@grantreview.org.
- ☐ Review the post-award requirements to make sure you can meet them.
- ☐ Find the application package. Go to Grants.gov FIND, search opportunity number HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0078, and click the Package tab.
- ☐ Consider how you will collaborate with your team. You can use your own software and systems to prepare your application, or you can use Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where your team can access and edit at the same time. For instructions, go to Get Started on Your Workspace Application.

For more information on applying for grants, see How to Apply for a Grant on the ACF Grants & Funding Page.

Need Help?

You can contact ACF if you have questions.

CB@grantreview.org

CB Operations Center, c/o LCG, Inc.
ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0078
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410
Rockville, MD 20852

888-203-6161

We will post the applicant questions and their answers on an FAQ page until June 30, 2023. We encourage you to check it periodically for updates. If there is a discrepancy between the NOFO and FAQ, the NOFO takes precedence.

Can't Access Grants.gov?

If you cannot use Grants.gov to get the application package or to apply, see Paper Requests and Submissions.

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Step 3: Prepare Your Application

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Format

Files and Forms

File One

Includes:

- table of contents
- project summary
- project narrative
- budget narrative

See Application Components

File Two

Includes all attachments:

- letters of support
- proof of non-profit status
- staff and position information
- licenses and accreditations
- third-party agreements
- indirect cost letter

Forms

Includes:

- standard forms
- certifications
- assurances

Submit forms at Grants.gov in the application package.

Formatting

Page Limits: Files One and Two can be no longer than 75 pages combined. Each file must be in a PDF format and should be searchable. Do not encrypt or password protect the files.

Creating Files: If you do not have software needed to combine files, you can combine PDFs into a single file using Adobe's online merge tool.

Naming Files: When naming files, use fewer than 50 characters. See "Are there restrictions on file names for any attachment I include with my application?" in Grants.gov FAQs.

Writing Tips

- Provide examples, as needed, to support your statements.
- Be clear and concise. We evaluate your response based on substance and clarity, not length.
- Include potential obstacles and challenges and how you will address them.
- Where relevant, provide information for partners and subawards.
- Write in the order, and using the headings, as outlined below.

REQUIRED FORMAT

File One

Font:
Time New Roman

Size:
12-point font

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

Single-Spaced:
Project summary, table of contents, tables or charts, line-item budget, budget justification, footnotes

Double-Spaced:
All other text

Page Size: 8.5x11

Language:
English

Page Numbers:
Must be included

Application Components

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 website URL.
- A brief description of the project, including the needs and population you will address and your proposed services.
- The physical locations of your project. Include boundaries of the area served.

Project Narrative

The project narrative describes your approach, experience, staffing plans, and evaluation plans.

Use the following headings in your narrative. Include information for any expected subrecipients.

1. Approach
2. Experience
3. Staffing and Management
4. Evaluation

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Approach

Describe your approach to the program's focus areas and services. It must reflect up-to-date knowledge from research on evidence-based or evidence-informed practices on trauma-informed intervention programs. **Include each of the topics below.**

See Program Services and Merit Review Criteria.

Goals

Describe the specific issues your application proposes to address.

- ☐ Show a clear understanding of the focus areas of this NOFO.

Outcomes

Describe the expected outcomes your project plans to achieve.

- ☐ Outcomes should be tied to the program goals.

Services

Describe the services you plan to provide.

Cultural responsiveness requires individuals and organizations to understand cultural differences, recognize potential biases, and look beyond those differences to effectively work with children, families, and communities whose cultural contexts are different from their own.

Developmentally appropriate services are ones that are suitable for a child's cognitive, emotional, and developmental level and capacity.

Include:

- ☐ Your detailed approach to each service area you're proposing to provide and how they work together to meet the project's goals.
- ☐ How your project is trauma informed. Describe the evidence base relevant to the programs or methods you will use.
- ☐ How your project is **culturally responsive** and **developmentally appropriate**.
- ☐ How your project will ensure equitable access to services. Include underserved communities[iv] as defined by Executive Order 13985.
- ☐ List potential obstacles and challenges. Explain strategies you will use to address them.

PROJECT NARRATIVE – APPROACH (CONTINUED)

Logic Model

Include a logic model for the design and management of your project. You will be evaluated based on how clear, meaningful, reasonable, and realistic your outputs and outcomes are.

A logic model is a diagram that presents the conceptual framework and explains the links among project elements.

For more information on logic models, see:

- Change and Implementation in Practice: Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings Brief
- Logic Model Builder

While there are many versions of logic models, for this purpose, it may include connections between the following items:

- ☐ Inputs such as resources, organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, and budget.
- ☐ Target population such as the people you will serve and their needs.
- ☐ Activities, mechanisms, processes. These could include evidence-based practices, approach, key intervention and evaluation components, and continuous quality improvement efforts.
- ☐ Outputs such as the immediate and direct results of program activities.
- ☐ Outcomes such as the expected short- and long-term results including changes in people or systems.
- ☐ Goals of the project including overarching objectives and reasons for proposing the project.

Timeline and Milestones

Provide monthly or quarterly projections for the period of performance. Show the milestones in chronological order along with quantitative targets.

Include:

- ☐ Planned accomplishments for each function or activity.
- ☐ The number of people you will serve.
- ☐ The number of activities you will accomplish.

Dissemination Plan

Describe your plan to disseminate reports, products, outputs, and outcomes to key target audiences.

Plans must include:

- ☐ Dissemination goals and objectives.
- ☐ Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences.
- ☐ How you will provide enough staff time and budget for dissemination purposes.
- ☐ A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received and used project information.
- ☐ The dissemination timeline.

PROJECT NARRATIVE – APPROACH (CONTINUED)

Project Sustainability Plan

You must propose a plan for project sustainability after federal funding ends. ACF expects recipients to sustain key elements of their funded projects. These include strategies, services, and interventions effective in improving practices and outcomes.

Include:

- ☐ The approach to project sustainability that will be most effective and workable.
- ☐ The key people or organizations who will need to support the continued project.
- ☐ The types of alternative support needed to continue the project.
- ☐ If the project involves key project partners, describe how you will continue their collaboration.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Experience

ACF will use the contents of this section as part of the eligibility review. Merit reviewers will then score this section based on the depth of your experience.

Describe your organization's experience in providing similar services to children in foster care who have experienced severe trauma.

See Eligibility and Merit Review Criteria.

Experience

Cite specific projects and their outcomes.

Include evidence that:

- ☐ Your organization and any partners have relevant experience and expertise with developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- ☐ Each partner and subrecipient have the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Staffing and Management

Describe the staffing and management plans to support the project. You will be evaluated based on how realistic and reasonable your proposed methods are for meeting the expected levels of service, that the job descriptions match the skills needed, and that the plan to protect personally identifiable and sensitive information is realistic.

See Merit Review Criteria.

Staffing

Describe your approach to staffing, including for any partners or subrecipients.

Provide:

- ☐ A full picture of how staff will work together to meet project goals and deliver services.
- ☐ For key personnel, short biographical sketches for filled positions or brief descriptions of duties and qualifications for unfilled positions. Include resumes and position descriptions in the Attachments in File Two.
- ☐ An organization chart with narrative descriptions. Include any partners or subrecipients.
- ☐ A brief description of the role of your oversight body. Attach a list of the members.

Management

Provide the following information about the applicant organization and any partners or subrecipients.

Provide:

- ☐ A sound management plan to achieve the proposed objectives on time and ensuring quality.
- ☐ If known, disclose your intent to enter into subaward arrangements. For each proposed subaward, include a description of the work they will perform.

PROJECT NARRATIVE – STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT (CONTINUED)

Oversight Plan

Describe how you will ensure proper financial oversight under 45 CFR part 75, subpart D.

Describe governance, policies and procedures, risk management, and systems that ensure this oversight.

The description must include:

- ☐ A plan for monitoring the project.
- ☐ Systems for record-keeping and financial management.
- ☐ Procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues. This includes information from audits, continuous program performance assessments, and program monitoring.
- ☐ Key staff responsible for oversight of program activities, staff, partners, and subrecipients.

Funding Source

Provide a list or chart that shows all current and pending funding support requiring a time commitment from this application's key personnel.

Include:

- ☐ All sources including federal, state, and local governments; public or private foundations; for-profit organizations; and others.
- ☐ The total award amount, awarding entity, and amount of time staff will devote to each project.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Evaluation

Describe your evaluation approach.



See Program Description: Evaluation and Merit Review Criteria.

Evaluation Plan

Your evaluation plan will describe how you plan to use and develop evidence over the life of your project. It needs to align with the logic model and connect research issues, questions, variables, data sources, and analyses.

Your evaluation plan should state clearly:

- ☐ How you plan to build on existing knowledge. You should review the research, identify gaps, and explain how your project would help fill those gaps. Include your evaluation priorities and research questions.
- ☐ Evidence of your evaluation readiness.

Evaluation Plan (cont)

This could include describing formative evaluations that have already been completed or a literature review of trauma-informed interventions.

- ☐ How you will use evidence and evaluation to support continuous quality improvement while your project is operating. You should include the use of metrics, formative assessments, or other data aligned with your logic model and describe how you will use the results to adjust your program's operations.
- ☐ Your design for an outcome or impact evaluation that will generate valid evidence about your program. You should describe the outcome measures, the methodology, the data sources (which may include administrative data), and the researchers or research partners needed to conduct the analysis effectively.
- ☐ How you plan to disseminate learnings from your project to benefit the field of trauma-informed interventions.
- ☐ Potential obstacles to carrying out the program performance evaluation and how you will address them.

Data Collection

Describe your systems and processes to track project input, activities, and outcomes to allow for accurate and timely reporting.

Include:

- ☐ How the organization will collect and manage data. Projects can use primary or existing data, including administrative data.
- ☐ The planned staff skills, data management software, and data integrity methods.
- ☐ A timeline showing when and how often the applicant plans to review and use the evaluation data.
- ☐ Ability to produce statistical reports to track demographics and performance.
- ☐ Your plan to safeguard data and protect participants. It includes:
  - The process for getting IRB approval and tribal review, if they apply.
  - How you will protect personally identifiable and sensitive information that you or your partners and subrecipients collect.
  - What will happen to the data and information when funding ends.

Budget Narrative

NOTE: Applicants submit the budget form SF-424A separately. See Forms.

See Merit Review Criteria.

General Instructions

Within File One, applicants must include a budget narrative. Provide:

- For each budget section, a line-item budget with detailed calculations for budget categories. See SF-424A: budget categories and object class categories are the same.
- Budget calculations that include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other detail needed to duplicate the calculation.
- Below each budget section, a narrative justification that explains:
  - **Necessity:** Explain why you need these expenses.
  - **Reasonableness:** Explain how you decided that the costs are reasonable.
  - **Allocability:** Explain if these costs are 100 percent allocable for this project or shared with other activities. Answer any expected questions about whether the costs may be allowable.

Treatment of Certain Costs

Proposal Costs

The costs of preparing proposals may be allowable. These costs include developing bids, proposals, applications, and needed data.

Proposal costs are normally treated as indirect costs and allocated across all recipient activities. Such proposal costs are only allocable to the current accounting period. See 45 CFR 75.460.

Fundraising

Most fundraising costs are unallowable. These costs include financial campaigns, endowment drives, requesting gifts and bequests, and similar efforts.

Fundraising costs to meet the federal program objectives are allowed with prior written approval from ACF. See 45 CFR 75.442.

Evaluation

At least 15 percent of the total project award must be for the evaluation component. Clearly identify these costs in your budget narrative.

Pre-Award Costs

Expenses before the award start date are unallowable.

Construction or Major Renovation

These are not allowable under this program.

Purchase of Real Property

You may not buy real property under this program.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Budget Categories

Provide the line-item budget and budget justification for each of the following categories. In addition to the guidance on allowable costs in this NOFO, check the cost principles in 45 CFR part 75, subpart E.

Personnel

Costs of employee salaries and wages. See 45 CFR 75.430.

Do not include the personnel costs of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients here.

Justification

For each position, provide name (if known), title, time commitment to the project in months and as a percentage of full time, and both annual and award salary or wage. The name of the project director, if known.

Fringe Benefits

Allowances and services provided by employers to their employees beyond salaries and wages. See 45 CFR 75.431.

Do not include the fringe benefits of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients here.

Applicants may treat fringe benefits as direct or indirect using the applicant's accounting practices. Only include fringe benefits treated as direct costs here.

The calculation for fringe benefits is typically a rate applied to salary and wages.

Justification

Provide a breakdown of fringe benefit cost calculation.

Travel

Transportation, lodging, and subsistence by the applicant organization's employees traveling on business. List local travel for employees in non-travel status in the Other category. See 45 CFR 75.474. Use your normal travel policies to estimate costs.

Justification

For each trip show, the number traveling, destination, duration, per diem, mileage allowances for privately owned vehicles, and any other costs.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Equipment

Nonexpendable, tangible personal property, including information technology systems, that: have a useful life of more than one year and either costs at least $5,000 per unit or that you would normally capitalize. See 45 CFR 75.439.

Justification

For each type of equipment provide, a description, cost per unit, number of units, the total cost, a plan for use, and use or disposition of the equipment after the project ends.

Supplies

Tangible personal property, other than equipment. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than $5,000. See 45 CFR 75.453.

Justification

Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show calculations. Provide other information that supports the requested amount.

Contractual

Contracts and subawards except for those that belong under other budget categories. Include any third-party evaluation contracts and contract or subawards.

Recipients must use 45 CFR 75.326-.340 procurement procedures and the requirements for subrecipient monitoring at 45 CFR 75.351-.353

List costs related to individual consultants on the Other line.

Justification

- Demonstrate that you will conduct all procurement transactions in ways that provide as much open and free competition as possible.
- Justify any anticipated procurement action you expect to award without competition that will exceed the simplified acquisition threshold defined in 48 CFR 2.101(b).
- Indicate whether the proposed agreement qualifies as a subaward or a contract under 45 CFR 75.351.
  - Provide the name of the contractor or subrecipient (if known) along with a description of expected services, why they are necessary, a breakdown of estimated costs, and an explanation of the selection process.
- Provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each subaward, by entity name, along with the same justifications referred to in these budget and budget justification instructions.
- Provide any pre-award review and procurement documents, such as proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., requested by ACF.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Other

All other costs. These may include:

- consultant costs;
- local travel;
- insurance;
- allowable food;
- medical and dental costs (non-personnel);
- professional service costs, including audit charges;
- space and equipment rentals;
- printing and publications;
- computer use;
- training costs, such as tuition and stipends;
- staff development costs; and
- administrative costs.

See 45 CFR part 75, subpart E to make sure the costs are allowable.

Justification

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

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

This program does not require match.

If you wish to add voluntary match, you may. ACF will not consider voluntary match during review or selection.

If you decide to do so and ACF accepts the costs, ACF will hold you accountable for them and you must report on them in your Federal Financial Reports. If you don't meet your commitment, ACF could disallow funds.

Justification

Document the sources of funding or contributions. If you include in-kind contributions, explain how you will decide what the in-kind contributions are worth.

Provide detailed budget information for every funding source identified in Item 18. "Estimated Funding ($)" on the SF-424.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Indirect Costs

Total amount of indirect costs.
You can select one of two methods.

Method 1 – Approved rate

The applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by their cognizant federal agency.

Justification (Method 1)

Provide a summary of the rate. Enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement in the attachments.

Say whether you are requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed. If so, the applicant authorized representative must include a signed statement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed. You may include the statement in the appendices. ACF will not consider this lower rate during review and selection.

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. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposal may also use the *de minimis* rate. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs.

This rate is 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See 45 CFR 75.2 for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

As described in 45 CFR 75.403(d) you must consistently charge items as either indirect or direct costs and may not double charge.

Justification (Method 2)

State that you will be opting for the *de minimis* rate. Provide any information about a pending request for an approved rate.

REQUIRED FORMAT

File Two

Font and Size:
Must be legible

Page Size:
8.5x11

Language:
English

Page Numbers:
Must be included

Attachments

The letter of support from your child welfare agency and proof of non-profit status are screening requirements. If you don't submit these, your application will not move forward.

See Disqualifying Factors.

Letters of Support

Attach letters of support from community, public, and commercial leaders that support the proposed project. Each letter must identify the person writing, the organization they represent, the date, and reasons for supporting the project.

IMPORTANT! You must include a letter of support from the cognizant child welfare agency in your jurisdiction. It must document your experience working with children in foster care who have experienced severe trauma.

Proof of Non-Profit Status

For non-profit applicants, attach proof of status. Use one of the following:

- A link to the organization's listing in the IRS tax-exempt organizations database.
- A copy of the valid IRS tax exemption certificate.
- A certified certificate of incorporation or similar document establishing nonprofit status.
- A statement from a state tax authority, state attorney general, or other appropriate state official that the organization has a nonprofit status and that none of the net earnings go to private shareholders or individuals.
- If the applicant is a local affiliate of a parent organization, provide any of the above for the parent organization and a statement from them stating that the applicant is an affiliate.

Key Personnel

Attach the resumes for filled positions and job descriptions for vacant positions.

Licenses and Professional Accreditations

If any staff need a license or accreditation, attach of copy of licenses or accreditation certificates.

Third-Party Agreements

Attach third-party agreements for each partner or subaward. These are memoranda of understanding (MOU) or letters of commitment. They must include:

- the roles and responsibilities for project activities;
- the support and resources committed by the third-party;
- work schedules or levels of support;
- estimated funding, if any, provided to the third-party;
- an understanding that a final agreement will be executed if ACF makes an award; and
- the signature of the person with authority to enter into agreements for the third party.

Indirect Cost Letter

Attach a copy of the letter from your cognizant agency approving your indirect cost rate, if you have an approved rate.

Other

Any other information you deem relevant and necessary.

Forms, Certifications, and Assurances

You must upload the following forms at Grants.gov. Review the form instructions in addition to any guidance in this NOFO.

You can find all the following forms in the NOFO Package in Grants.gov or you can review them at Grants.gov Forms.

FORMS/ASSURANCES	SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With application.
Grants.gov Key Contact Form	With application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	With application or before award.
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With application.
Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	With application.
Grants.gov Project/Performance Site Location(s)	With application.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable, with application or before award.
HHS Protection of Human Subjects	With application or before award. For more information see Office of Human Research Protections.

Mandatory Disclosure

You will need to disclose any information about certain violations of federal criminal law. See Mandatory Disclosures.

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Step 4: Understand Review, Selection, and Award

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Award Process pg. 34

IN THIS SECTION

Initial Screening

Merit Review

Merit Review Criteria

Risk Review

Reviews

Before you submit your application, make sure you understand how ACF will review it and what that means for potential funding. Before selection, ACF conducts an initial screening, a merit review, and a risk review.

Initial Screening

ACF will screen each application to see if it meets any of the Disqualifying Factors and therefore will not move forward. If you don't qualify, ACF notify you within 30 business days from the NOFO close date.

Merit Review

An expert review panel will evaluate all applications that pass the initial review using the criteria below and can only review information within the application. Reviewers may not access outside information linked from the application.

ACF will omit salary rates from copies used during the review process.

Merit Review Criteria

See Application Components: Approach

1. Approach — Max. Points: 45

1.1	The goals of the proposed project fit well into the objectives, purpose, and focus areas of the program.
1.2	The proposed services show a sound approach that is right for children with complex needs who have experienced trauma and is likely to be effective.
1.3	The methods proposed have a clear evidence base.
1.4	The methods used are trauma informed and represent safe and accepted practice. Trauma-informed practices go beyond staff training. They are infused into all approaches and methods.
1.5	The proposed services are culturally responsive and age appropriate, including developmental age.
1.6	The plan to provide equitable access to services, including underserved communities, is sound and realistic.

1.7	The logic model contains details on inputs, activities or services, outputs, and outcomes that are clear, meaningful, reasonable, and realistic.
1.8	The timeline and milestones are reasonable and realistic. They show an understanding of the activities needed to stand up and manage the project.
1.9	The plan to disseminate key information to target audiences is sound and meaningful in increasing the knowledge base of trauma-informed interventions for children.
1.10	The plan to sustain the project after federal funding ends is realistic and likely to be successful.

See Application Components: Experience

2. Experience — Max. Points: 10

2.1	The applicant organization and all proposed subrecipients have experience needed to deliver high-quality services under this program. This experience points to positive results from former or current work. Score is based on the depth of the background and results achieved.

See Application Components: Staffing and Management

3. Staffing and Management — Max. Points: 15

3.1	The proposed staffing methods are realistic and reasonable. They are adequate to meet the expected levels of service. The job descriptions match the skills needed to deliver the services.
3.2	The organization and all proposed partners or subrecipients have the processes and methods needed to oversee and manage this project well.

See Application Components: Evaluation

4. Evaluation — Max Points: 25

4.1	The evaluation plan clearly describes how it will contribute to continuous quality improvement. The evaluation plan includes performance feedback and assesses progress to improve the program, move towards sustainable funding, and create a replicable program model.
4.2	The applicant provides evidence of evaluation readiness. This could include describing formative evaluations that have already been completed or a literature review of trauma-informed interventions.

4.3	The expected outcomes, outputs, activity, and services measures are clear, meaningful, reasonable, and realistic.
4.4	The applicant shows an understanding of how to use measurement tools for tracking inputs, outputs, and outcomes. They have valid, reliable, and culturally appropriate key measures and variables. They include a feasible timeline to collect data.
4.5	The evaluation plan's research design and data analysis plans align with the logic model. It connects to research issues, questions, variables, data sources, and analyses. It includes how the applicant will use evaluation findings to document project activities and results.
4.6	The plan to protect personally identifiable and sensitive information is sound and realistic. The evaluation plan is sound and reasonable to safeguard data and protect participants. It includes the process for getting IRB approval and tribal review, if they apply.
4.7	The organization has an appropriate plan to mitigate and address potential obstacles to the evaluation.

5. Budget Narrative — Max Points: 5

See Application Components: Budget Narrative

5.1	The budget justifies the proposed costs. The costs are reasonable and seem right for the proposed goals and services.
5.2	A minimum of 15 percent of the total project award are for the evaluation component.
5.3	Fiscal controls and accountability procedures show responsible use of federal funds.

Risk Review

ACF must consider applicant information in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) in SAM.gov for any award over $250,000 for the period of performance.

An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself in FAPIIS.

ACF will consider applicant comments before making a decision about the applicant's risk.

For more on risk review, see 45 CFR 75.205.

Selection Process

When making funding decisions, ACF considers:

- Merit review results. These scores are key in decision making, but not the only factor.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects, including diversity of project types and geographic distribution.
- The past performance of the applicant. ACF may choose to not fund applicants with management or financial problems.

ACF may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide to not allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO where applicants are considered unsuccessful applicants or approved but unfunded applicants in which an application is recommended in the merit review process but not selected for award.

Award Process

Questions on Award Date

⚠ ACF staff **cannot** respond to requests about funding decisions before official notification.

Notifications

ACF will notify successful applicants by issuing a Notice of Award (NoA). Only the Grants Management Officer can sign the NoA and send it via email or by GrantSolutions. No other communication is permission to move forward.

ACF will notify unsuccessful applicants and approved but unfunded applicants by email or letter.

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Step 5: Review Post-Award Requirements

Before applying for an award, take time to consider the requirements you must meet if you are successful.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards

You can review all requirements at: 45 CFR part 75.

These rules include the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements.

See also requirements related to Termination at 2 CFR 200.340.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

These policies are required by HHS and represent many of the terms and conditions of award. You can review the full policy at HHS Grants Policy Statement (GPS).

All HHS awards must follow the policies in the GPS. These policies are terms and conditions of the award. The awarding agency lists any exceptions to the GPS in the Notice of Award.

ACF Post-Award Requirements

For all other post-award requirements see ACF Discretionary Post-Award Requirements.

Reporting

Reporting for this program is semi-annual. To see post-award reporting requirements, see Reporting on the ACF website.

Step 6: Submit the Application

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Submitting the Application pg. 38

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Application Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you have everything you need to submit a compliant application.

File One

Formatting Instructions

- ☐ Table of Contents
- ☐ Project Summary
- ☐ Project Narrative
- ☐ Budget Narrative

File Two

- ☐ Attachments

Forms (follow form and Grants.gov instructions)

- ☐ Submit all required forms through the Grants.gov application package. If you have an electronic exemption, see Paper Submissions.

Before you Submit ⚠

- ☐ Make sure that File One and File Two are no more than **75 pages combined.**
- ☐ Make sure you do not meet any of the Disqualifying Factors.

Signatures

For electronic applications, follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at Grants.gov to authorize the application.

If you have an electronic exemption, see Paper Submissions.

Disqualifying Factors

ACF will **not** consider an application that:

- Is from an organization that does not meet the eligibility criteria, including:
  - Being a non-profit organization and not an individual, sole proprietorship, or foreign entity. This includes submitting proof of nonprofit status.
  - Having experience working with children in foster care who have experienced complex trauma. This includes having a letter of support from the child welfare agency.
- Is from an organization that does not have a UEI and an active SAM registration. See UEI and SAM.gov requirements
- Requests funding above the award ceiling shown in the funding range.
- Is not submitted through Grants.gov without an approved exemption. See Exemptions for Paper Submissions.
- Is submitted after the deadline. Each time an application is submitted via Grants.gov, the submission will generate a new date and time-stamp email notification.

If either of the last two factors are true, ACF will not consider an appeal.

Factors that May Limit Competitiveness

ACF will remove pages from your application if it goes over the page limit or if the formatting does not meet application requirements in a way that affects fairness. Also, if you submit too many files, ACF will remove the additional files.

Submitting the Application

Deadlines

Optional Letter of Intent

Due on June 30, 2023.

Application

Due on July 31, 2023. For electronic submissions, the due time is 11:59PM ET. If you receive an exemption from electronic submission, the due time for paper applications is 4:30 PM. See Exemptions for Paper Submissions.

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application.

Corrected or updated applications

If you correct or update your already submitted application, ACF will only accept the last on-time application.

Emergency Extensions

ACF may extend an application due date. This happens only when circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit their applications on time.

ACF will only consider events like documented natural disasters or a verifiable widespread disruption of electric or mail service.

The decision to extend the due date or time rests with the Grants Management Officer.

Submitting Your Application

Electronic Submission

You must submit your application through Grants.gov unless ACF has given you an exemption for a paper submission. See Exemptions for Paper Submissions.

Submission Instructions

- Grants.gov has information about the online application process.
- See how to register and apply through Grants.gov for critical information you need to submit your application.
- See How to Apply for Grants at Grants.gov for electronic submission instructions.
- For more help go to How to Apply for Grants and Training Resources and Videos for Grants.gov.

Compatibility

Make sure that your version of Adobe will work with Grants.gov. See Adobe Software Compatibility.

Give Yourself Time

If you have a slow internet connection, transmission can take time before Grants.gov receives your application. Allow enough time before the closing date and time.

Grants.gov will send an error or success email to the AOR.

Issues with Federal Systems

If you have systems issues using Grants.gov or SAM.gov, refer to ACF's Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues.

Need help?

Grants.gov provides applicants with 24/7 support. You can call 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov.

If you have problems, call the Grants.gov Support Center. They will give you a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will help ACF to understand the issue.

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgment from Grants.gov

You will receive emails when:

1. **You submit your application.** Keep the included tracking number.
2. Your application has **entered the validation process**.
3. Your application has **passed or failed the checks and validations.**

⚠ Grants.gov does not send ACF applications that fail the validation check.

Acknowledgments from ACF

ACF will send an email when we receive the application from Grants.gov. ACF does not acknowledge receipt of paper applications submitted under Exemptions for Paper Submissions.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is not subject to intergovernmental review rules.

You do not need to take any action.

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Faith-Based Organizations pg. 42

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How to Register in Grants.gov

Grants.gov has helpful pages to assist with this process:

- How to register in Grants.gov, see Organization Registration.
- How to add a profile for your organization in your Grants.gov account, see Add Profile.
- How to request role creation for the people who need to access Grants.gov, see How to Authorize Grants.gov Roles.
  - This function also assigns your authorized organization representative and point of contact. See Applicant Contacts.
- How to track your role creation request see Track Profile Role Status.

Completing this process is critical. If you do not, you will be unable to apply.

Applicant Contacts

NOTE: The AOR and POC cannot be the same person.

Grants.gov needs you to assign at least two roles. They are:

1. **Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)**, the AOR is the applicant's designated representative, who can make legally binding commitments for your organization. When the AOR authorizes an application, they agree that the organization will assume all award obligations.
2. **Point of Contact (POC),** You must also assign a POC for ACF to contact on issues related to the application. This person is typically the project director.

Faith-Based Organizations

Faith-based organizations that meet the other eligibility requirements can apply. See 45 CFR part 87 and 42 U.S.C. 2000bb et seq. for protections and rules. ACF will not discriminate based on religious character, affiliation, or exercise.

Federal Relay Service

Hearing-or speech-impaired callers can get assistance from the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

Paper Requests and Submissions

Request an Application Package

If you are unable to use Grants.gov to download application materials, you may request it from:

CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc., ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0078
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410, Rockville, MD 20852

888-203-6161
cb@grantreview.org

Exemptions for Paper Submissions

ACF requires applicants to submit applications online through Grants.gov unless it grants an exemption to the applicant.

To request an exemption see ACF's policy and instructions at: Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submissions.

If you receive an exemption, the following submission requirements apply:

Due date and time

ACF must receive paper applications no later than 4:30 ET on July 31, 2023.

You can mail or hand deliver applications on weekdays between 8:00 am ET and 4:30 pm ET, excluding federal holidays.

Copies

Applicants must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all SFs and OMB-approved forms.

Submission format

You must submit the original and both copies in a single package. If you are submitting more than one application under this NOFO or others, you must submit them separately. Label each package with the NOFO title and opportunity number.

Submission

ACF will only accept mail or hand delivered applications. ACF does not accept email or fax submissions.

Send paper applications to:
CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.,
ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0078
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410
Rockville, MD 20852

Signatures

The AOR must sign the application. The original paper application must include an original signature.

Page limits

Limits are the same as for electronic submissions. Print one-sided.

Managing salary rates

Because non-federal reviewers will review this application, you may choose to keep the salary or wage rates listed in the original application but delete or redact them from the copies. The copies may include summary salary information.

Endnotes

i Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., ... & Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 14(4), 245-258.

Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study - ScienceDirect

Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Siegel, B. S., Dobbins, M. I., Earls, M. F., McGuinn, L., ... & Wood, D. L. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. Pediatrics, 129(1), e232-e246.

The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics (aap.org)

Anda, R. F., Felitti, V. J., Bremner, J. D., Walker, J. D., Whitfield, C., Perry, B. D., ... & Giles, W. H. (2006). The enduring effects of abuse and related adverse experiences in childhood: A convergence of evidence from neurobiology and epidemiology. European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience, 256(3), 174-186.

The enduring effects of abuse and related adverse experiences in childhood | SpringerLink

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020). Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html

ii Cohen, J. A., Mannarino, A. P., & Deblinger, E. (2012). Trauma-focused CBT for children and adolescents: An empirical update. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27(8), 1516-1532. doi:10.1177/0886260512436401

Trauma-focused CBT for youth with complex trauma - ScienceDirect

Weiner, Alison Schneider, John S. Lyons, Evidence-based treatments for trauma among culturally diverse foster care youth: Treatment retention and outcomes, Children and Youth Services Review, Volume 31, Issue 11, 2009, Pages 1199-1205, ISSN 0190-7409, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2009.08.013.

Evidence-based treatments for trauma among culturally diverse foster care youth: Treatment retention and outcomes - ScienceDirect

Dorsey, S., McLaughlin, K. A., Kerns, S. E. U., Harrison, J. P., Lambert, H. K., Briggs, E. C., & Amaya-Jackson, L. (2017). Evidence base update for psychosocial treatments for children and adolescents exposed to traumatic events. Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 46(3), 303-330. doi:10.1080/15374416.2016.1220309

Evidence Base Update for Psychosocial Treatments for Children and Adolescents Exposed to Traumatic Events: Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology: Vol 46, No 3 (tandfonline.com)

iii The term “evidence-based” is defined differently across disciplines. For the purposes of this funding opportunity, evidence-based refers to the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of child and family characteristics, culture, and preferences. These are well-defined practices, programs, services, or policies that have been shown, through rigorous evaluation, to improve outcomes for children and families in comparison to one or more alternatives.

iv The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.