



Administration for Children and Families

Office of Head Start

Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start Partnership Program Grants

HHS-2025-ACF-OHS-YT-R11-0156

Application Due Date: 01/21/2025

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
I. Program Description.....	2
II. Federal Award Information.....	7
III. Eligibility Information.....	8
III.1. Eligible Applicants.....	8
III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching.....	8
III.3. Other.....	9
IV. Application and Submission Information.....	10
IV.1. Address to Request Application Package.....	10
IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	10
Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.....	12
The Project Description.....	15
The Project Budget and Budget Justification.....	21
Application Submission Options.....	22
IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM).....	24
IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.....	24
Explanation of Due Dates.....	24
Acknowledgement of Received Application.....	25
IV.5. Intergovernmental Review.....	25
IV.6. Funding Restrictions.....	25
IV.7. Other Submission Requirements.....	25
V. Application Review Information.....	26
V.1. Criteria.....	26
V.2. Review and Selection Process.....	29
V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates.....	30
VI. Federal Award Administration Information.....	30
VI.1. Federal Award Notices.....	30
VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	31
VI.3. Reporting.....	31
VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s).....	32
VIII. Other Information.....	32
Reference Websites.....	32
Application Checklist.....	33

Funding Opportunity Title:

Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start Partnership Program Grants

Announcement Type:

Initial

Funding Opportunity Number:

HHS-2025-ACF-OHS-YT-R11-0156

Assistance Listing Number:

93.600

Due Date for Applications:

01/21/2025

Executive Summary

Notice:

- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) carefully and observe the application formatting requirements listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. For more information on applying for an award, please visit "Applying for an ACF Award" at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant>.**

This NOFO has been modified. *Section V.1 Criteria* has been updated.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the Office of Head Start (OHS), announces the availability of \$6 million to be competitively awarded to tribal colleges and universities. The goal of the Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start (TCU-HS) Partnership Program award is to establish or enhance partnerships with, and increase the number of qualified education staff working in, American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The aim of the TCU-HS Partnership Program is for the entity that receives the award (TCU recipient) to partner with one or more AIAN Head Start recipients. Together, the partners will identify the number of current or potential AIAN Head Start staff to be enrolled, design a program that is responsive and provides effective support to retain students, and identify the number of expected conferred credentials or degrees. The TCU-HS Partnership Program design will include all the support necessary for current or potential AIAN Head Start staff to successfully participate in the program and acquire degrees or credentials.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

Section 648 of the Head Start Act, as amended by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, 2007, codified at (42 U.S.C. 9843(g)).

Description

Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start Partnership Program

Program Goal and Activities

The goal of the TCU-HS Partnership Program is to offer carefully designed, high-quality, accessible, and flexible programs that increase the number of qualified staff eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start education positions. TCU-HS articulate a successful history of administering an early childhood education degree program and commits to specific targets for the number of degrees or credentials to be awarded and the methods for recruiting and retaining students. TCU-HS recipients also demonstrate strong partnerships with one or more AIAN Head Start recipients.

Importantly, the TCU-HS recipient offers a degree program that fully reflects current early childhood education best practice. Degrees obtained through the TCU-HS Partnership Program should confer confidence that the holder has the knowledge and competencies needed to support children's progress and development in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner. The TCU-HS recipient should be familiar with the research-based Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>.

These partnerships will explicitly identify the obligations and benefits to each partner, including identifying specific goals for enrollee numbers and timelines for degree or credential attainment; describing methods of oversight and measurement, including financial management; and outlining the capacity for course correction and ongoing improvement.

OHS expects innovative and convincing proposals to meet the unique needs of individual AIAN communities. Earlier iterations of OHS awards to TCUs demonstrated that the following factors, among others, resulted in higher success:

- Strong, personal support for enrollees,
- Flexibility in course delivery and design (e.g., on-site, distance learning, innovative approach),
- Ability to provide preliminary or remedial instruction,
- Assistance with tuition, books, and other costs,
- Matriculation agreements that permit transfer of credit to and from multiple colleges or universities, and
- Credit for professional experience.

OHS anticipates partnerships will propose these and other specifically responsive strategies.

Management Accountability

TCU-HS Partnership Program implementation is expected to be complex with the strong financial management required to ensure efficient and allowable use of federal funds. TCU-HS recipients will need to develop effective ongoing communication and partnership with one or more AIAN Head Start recipients. Each partner is expected to provide meaningful initial and ongoing input in the design and oversight of the partnership. The partners should be mutually aware of goals and timelines to ensure expectations are being met. The successful TCU-HS recipient will provide an organized and transparent management structure to ensure adequate communication and support between partners and OHS to assure all stakeholders that the project will meet its specific goals to recruit, retain, and award credentials or degrees to the identified number of current or potential AIAN Head Start staff. A signed partnership agreement will define the responsibilities of the TCU-HS recipient and AIAN Head Start recipient(s).

TCU-HS Recipient Staff Accountability

It is expected that the TCU-HS recipient will employ at least one full-time (and more if needed based on design and enrollment) staff person who is dedicated to the project.

- The TCU-HS recipient staff will have responsibility for meeting all related coordination, communication, and reporting requirements.
- The TCU-HS recipient staff is expected to be familiar with the HSPPS and the partner program operations.
- The TCU-HS recipient's staff must have knowledge of the potential strengths and challenges of adult learners who may be far removed from formal education.
- The TCU-HS recipient should have expertise in varying delivery methods needed to reach diverse adult students who may be spread across a wide geographic area with extremely varied experience and knowledge upon program entry.
- The TCU-HS recipient's staff will be responsible for in-person attendance in Washington, DC, or other venue, up to two times per year.
- The TCU-HS recipient's staff may be asked to identify professors or other TCU-HS recipients and Head Start staff to attend or present during AIAN Head Start recipient partners' meetings.

Coursework and Delivery

The TCU-HS recipient must offer coursework that leads to degrees and credentials that meet the needs of their AIAN Head Start recipient partners. This may include associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees and/or an entry-level credential for infant and toddler teachers or preschool teacher assistants that has a pathway for matriculation to a degree.

TCU-HS recipients are expected to provide degree and credential options based on the needs of their AIAN HS recipient partners and may find a combination of credential and degree programs offers the best career pathway for their partner's staff (e.g., a credential that allows the staff member to be a teacher assistant with credit that applies to an associate degree program). Based on the assessment of need with AIAN Head Start recipient partners, TCU-HS recipients are encouraged to include tribal language and/or culture classes within their degree requirements. TCU-HS recipients can review the free in-person and online higher education courses available through the EarlyEdU alliance (<https://earlyedualliance.org/member-benefits/courses/>). OHS funded the development of this high-quality coursework and it is available to colleges and universities.

Working with OHS

TCU-HS recipients will be required to attend no more than two meetings per year to share information on progress, improvements, and innovations with OHS and other TCU-HS recipients in Washington, DC, or other identified venue by OHS.

Program Performance: Evaluation Plan

Ultimately, TCU-HS recipients will be evaluated on their success in enrolling and graduating the target number of students within the identified timelines. We encourage recipients to accurately assess needs and barriers and propose robust solutions with a high likelihood of success.

TCU-HS recipients must have the ability to respond quickly and effectively to unforeseen events and challenges that will likely affect recipient success. TCU-HS recipients will collect and

submit quarterly data about enrollment and progress and are expected to use such data within the partnership to constantly refine and improve their efforts.

Overview of the Head Start Program

The Head Start program is administered by ACF, an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). OHS awards funds to public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to predominately economically disadvantaged children and families. Head Start's primary purpose is to prepare children to be ready for school. In program year 2023, Head Start programs were funded to serve 778,420 children and families across more than 1,500 Head Start grant recipients.

Overview of the Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start Partnership Program

Head Start has played a historic role in professionalizing the field of early childhood education. Educators who possess child development knowledge, key teaching and relationship competencies, and are culturally and linguistically responsive to the children and families they serve are vital to improving child outcomes. Head Start also recognizes parents as their children's first teachers and requires that parents have roles in the program's operations and governance.

Partnerships with colleges and universities have contributed by increasing the number and accessibility to early childhood education degree programs, including the entry-level Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Head Start has had a trajectory of increasing the credential requirements of their staff since 1970. Parents have opportunities for Head Start employment. Often, parents begin their employment within the program in paraprofessional positions, then are supported in attaining degrees and achieving career mobility. This contributes to the ability of Head Start programs to employ staff who are representative of the enrolled children and families as well as offering career opportunities for parents. Over 23 percent of the Head Start work force are current or former Head Start parents.

The Head Start Act describes the minimum qualifications for Head Start educators, which includes the following requirements:

- CDA or equivalent for Early Head Start teachers;
- Associate's degree for center-based preschool teachers; and
- Possessing, or being enrolled to obtain, a CDA or equivalent credential for preschool teacher assistants.

While approximately 97 percent of Head Start preschool teachers nationwide have an associate's degree and 74 percent of Head Start preschool teachers have a baccalaureate degree, AIAN Head Start programs often face greater challenges recruiting and retaining qualified staff for education positions than many other Head Start programs. AIAN Head Start programs are often geographically isolated, have reduced educational opportunities, and have higher poverty and unemployment rates compared to other communities. Additional challenges include finding staff who have the early childhood content expertise and education as well as cultural and language knowledge of the communities they are serving.

Currently, 77 percent of teachers in AIAN Head Start classrooms possess the required minimum of an associate degree and 67 percent of teachers in AIAN Early Head Start classrooms possess

the minimum of a CDA or equivalent. An even larger number of preschool teacher assistants do not meet the minimum credential requirement and are not enrolled in a credential program.

Paradoxically, Head Start programs in closer (less than 20 miles) proximity to tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) have some of the lowest rates of credentialed teachers.

Paperwork Reduction Act and Information Collections

Note: Consistent with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, (44 U.S.C. 3501-3521) OHS will not conduct or sponsor and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information covered by such Act, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. If the PRA applies to any activities under this award, OHS will work with the office on OMB approval.

Identification of Federal Support

Note: When issuing statements, press releases, publications, requests for proposal, bid solicitations, and other documents - such as toolkits, resource guides, websites, and presentations - describing the projects or programs funded - in whole with HHS federal funds, the grantee must include a certification statement as follows:

This [project/publication/program/website, etc.] [is/was] supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$XX with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, Administrative and National Policy Requirements."

For those recipients that use federal funds for website development, it will be important to make sure that the Federal page is separate from the organization's page, especially in those instances where there might have been donation buttons and/or lobbying requests.

Subawards

As the prime recipient, you must maintain a substantive role in the project. We define a substantive role as conducting funded activities and providing services that are necessary and integral to completing the project. Monitoring your subrecipients' activities alone as described in 45 CFR 75.352 is not a substantive role.

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

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

Subrecipients will need to meet the same eligibility requirements as prime recipients.

Please reference the *Award Term and Condition on Subawards*, Administrative and National Policy Requirements on the ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements website <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements> for further requirements involving subawards.

Post-Award Requirements

The successful recipient awarded under this NOFO must adhere to the following:

- The project will be operational within 60 days following the notice of award date.
- Within 120 days of the project start date of the financial assistance award, key TCU-HS recipient staff will meet OHS for the initial briefing on plans, timelines, and deliverables for this project.
- Within 45 days of the initial project briefing with OHS, the TCU recipient(s) will address any OHS comments or requested clarifications.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:

G (Grant)

Estimated Total Funding:

\$6,000,000

Expected Number of Awards:

12

Award Ceiling:

\$6,000,000

Per Budget Period

Award Floor:

\$500,000

Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:

\$500,000

Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:

09/30/2025

Length of Project Periods:

60-month project period with five 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'

Additional Information on Awards:

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

If an application asks for more money than the award ceiling, it will not be considered for review or funding. Please see [Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors](#).

Award Ceiling

Please note that the award ceiling represents the total amount of funding available per budget period. Applications may request an award amount that is less than the award ceiling but must

not exceed the award ceiling per budget period. Please see [Section III.3. Other, Award Ceiling Disqualification](#) for more information.

Non-competing continuation awards will be offered for the second and third budget periods of the project based on the availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the recipient, and review and approval of the continuation application. The Federal Project Officer will use the recipient's semi-annual performance progress and financial reports and other supporting documentation to determine if satisfactory progress is being made. Additionally, this information will be used to assess progress in: 1) accomplishing the project goals, objectives, and activities; 2) completing proposed activities; and 3) documenting allowable expenses that support project goals, objectives, and the approved budget. Please refer to [Section VI.3. Reporting](#) for more information on required reports.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include the following: TCUs, as defined in section 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 1059c(b)).

Applicants other than TCUs will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. See [Section III.3. Eligibility Information, Other, Application Disqualification Factors](#).

Applications from individuals, including sole proprietors, and foreign entities are not allowed and will not be considered for review or funding. See [Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors](#).

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:

No

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost-sharing or matching when such contributions meet all criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that do not require matching or cost-sharing by statute, where "cost-sharing" refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by a recipient or subrecipient and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the recipient will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NoA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For more information see Commitment of Non-Federal Resources at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/prepare-budget>.

III.3. Other

Application Disqualification Factors

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from the merit review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

If an application asks for more money than the award ceiling, it will not be considered for review or funding.

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at Grants.gov. **Paper applications are not allowed unless they have prior approval.**

You may contact ACF for an exemption if you do not have an internet connection or sufficient capacity to upload large documents to the internet. Please see the [ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission](#) for more information.

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

Electronic applications must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 pm ET on the due date listed in the [Overview](#) and in [Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times](#). Applications submitted after 11:59 pm ET on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from Grants.gov, will be disqualified from review and funding.

Applications which fail their Grants.gov validation check will not be received or acknowledged by ACF. If you submit an application for the same NOFO more than once, only the last on-time submission will be acknowledged.

Paper applications with an approved exemption from the electronic submission requirement must be received by 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the [Overview](#) and in [Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times](#). Paper applications received after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be disqualified from the merit review and funding.

Additional Application Disqualification Factors

Funding made available through this funding opportunity is limited to TCUs fully accredited by the U.S. Department of Education. Applications received from entities who do not submit their accreditation verifying that they are fully accredited as a TCU will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity.

Notification of Application Disqualification

Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this NOFO.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

HHS-2025-ACF-OHS-YT-R11-0156

Office of Head Start

OHS Grant Review Team c/o Guardians of Honor

1990 K Street, NW.

Suite 650

Washington

DC

20006

888-242-0684

OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/funding>

Application Packages

Electronic Application Submission:

The electronic application submission package is available in the NOFO's listing at Grants.gov.

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

General Requirements

1. **Two-File Requirement:** Upload only two electronic files via Grants.gov, excluding Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms. Extra files will be removed before review.
2. **Authorized Organization Representative (AOR):** Designate an AOR to sign all required forms. The AOR's signature confirms compliance with all applicable Federal statutes and regulations.
3. **Font Style and Size:** Use Times New Roman 12-point font for the main text and 10-point font for footnotes. Ensure scanned documents are legible and are no more than one scan to a page. Blurred or illegible pages will be removed.
4. **Language and Currency:** Submit applications in English and in U.S. dollars. See 45 CFR §75.111 for more information.
5. **Page Limitations:** Follow the page limits specified under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS." Extra pages will be removed and not reviewed.
6. **Double-space all application pages. Exemptions:** The following can be single-spaced:
 - Table of Contents
 - One-page Project Summary
 - Required Assurances and Certifications
 - SFs and OMB-approved forms
 - Resumes, Logic Models, Proof of Legal Status/Non-Profit Status, Third-Party Agreements, Letters of Support, footnotes, and tables
 - Line-Item Budget and/or Budget Justification

7. Formatting Adherence: Applications that do not observe the formatting requirements will have pages removed before merit review. Applicants will be notified of any adjustments and the reason for the adjustment after awards are issued.
8. Corrections/Updates: Only the last on-time application will be considered for pre-review under the Application Disqualification Factors. [See Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors](#) and [Section IV.2. Application Submission Options](#).
9. Copies Required: Submit one complete copy of the application package electronically via Grants.gov.
10. Accepted Application Format: Use 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins. Include page numbers if possible.

The page limitation is 75 pages for the Project Summary/Abstract, Table of Contents, Project Description, and Appendices. Applications that exceed the 75-page limit for all components in the First and Second Files or pages will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. Page limitations are identical for electronic and paper format application submissions.

First File

- Project Summary/Abstract (*single-spaced*) - limited to 1 page
- Table of Contents (*single-spaced*) - suggested 1 page
- Project Description (*double-spaced*)
- Approach
- Management Accountability
- TCU Staff Accountability
- Coursework and Delivery
- Working with OHS
- Program Performance Evaluation Plan
- Project Budget and Budget Justification

Second File Appendices

- (*must be readable*)
 - Proof of Legal Status of Applicant
 - Organizational Capacity documentation (e.g., resumes, curricula vitae, job descriptions, organizational charts)
 - Third-party agreements
 - Indirect cost rate agreement
 - Plan for Oversight of Federal Awards Funds and Activities
 - Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
 - Additional Eligibility Documentation
 - Other supporting documents

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

Electronic Application Submission

1. Submission: Only through Grants.gov. No applications will be accepted through facsimile or email.
2. File Upload: Upload only two files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms:
 - File One: Entire Project Description, Budget, and Budget Justification.
 - File Two: All documents required in the Appendices.
3. File Naming: Follow Grants.gov naming conventions. Limit file names to 50 characters. <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters>.
4. Suggested File Format: PDF format for both files. ACF recommends applicants merge documents electronically using Adobe Acrobat Reader or PDF converter software compatible with Grants.gov.
5. Other supported File Formats:
 - Adobe PDF (.pdf)
 - Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
 - Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx)
 - Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt)
 - Image Formats (.JPG, .GIF, .TIFF, .BMP)

Documents in file formats not listed here will be removed from the application and will not be used in the merit review. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

1. No Encryption or Password Protection: Do not encrypt or password-protect files. Inaccessible files will not be reviewed.

Paper Application Submission

1. Exemption Requirement: Obtain an exemption to submit a paper application. Follow the [ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission](#).
2. Application Requirements: Download the forms package associated with the NOFO's synopsis on Grants.gov under the Package Tab.
3. Submission Package: Submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all SFs and OMB-approved forms. The original must have original signatures. All pages must be one-sided and sequentially numbered. Submit all copies in a single package. Clearly label with the NOFO title and Funding Opportunity Number.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Please submit the listed SFs, assurances, and certifications with the application. All required SFs, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this NOFO at Grants.gov.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	<p>Required of all applicants.</p> <p>Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application and project award period.</p> <p>Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at: http://www.sam.gov.</p>	See Section IV.3. <i>Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> for more information.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to award.	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
<p>SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs</p>	<p>Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. SFs must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.</p> <p>By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination .</p>	<p>Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project.</p>
<p>SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)</p>	<p>Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.</p>	<p>Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants must cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.</p>
<p>SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities</p>	<p>If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to award.</p>	<p>If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to</p>

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
		Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

Proprietary Information and Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

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

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

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions

Purpose: The Project Description is used to evaluate and rank your application against others for financial assistance. Reviewers will evaluate this section based on the criteria in [Section V.1.Criteria](#).

Content Requirements:

- Address all activities for which federal funds are requested.
- Meet all application requirements as stated in this section.
- Explain how the project will fulfill the purpose of the NOFO (see [Section I. Program Description](#)).

Clarity and Conciseness: Ensure the Project Description is clear, concise, and complete.

Focus on Strategies and Outcomes: Emphasize strategies for achieving intended performance and measurable outcomes. Substance is more important than length.

Cross-Referencing: Use cross-referencing to avoid repetition.

Supporting Documents: Include all required supporting documents in the Appendix of the application.

Table of Contents

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers. The table of contents may be single spaced.

Project Summary

Provide a summary of the project description. The summary must include a brief description of the applicant's proposed project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed activities or services, and if applicable, the population group(s) to be served. The summary must be clear,

accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. Please place the following at the top of the Project Summary:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax, Cell)
- Email Address
- Website Address, if applicable

The Project Summary must be single-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, and limited to one page in length. Additional pages will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Funding made available through this funding opportunity is limited to TCUs fully accredited by the U.S. Department of Education. Applications received from entities who do not submit their accreditation verifying that they are fully accredited as a TCU will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity.

Non-Profit Organizations

Proof of Non-Profit Status Options:

Option 1: 501(c)(3) and non-501(c)(3) non-profit organizations are eligible

Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate.
- A statement from a state taxing body, state attorney general, or other appropriate state official certifying that the applicant organization has non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholders or individuals.
- A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes non-profit status.
- Any of the items in the subparagraphs immediately above for a state or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant organization is a local non-profit affiliate.

Unless directed otherwise, applicants must include proof of non-profit status in the *Appendices* file of the application submission.

Additional Eligibility Documentation

Applicants must provide the additional, required documentation, or required credentials, to support eligibility for an award, as described in *Section III. Eligibility Information* of this funding opportunity.

Approach

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must account for all functions or activities identified in the application.

Cite potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies that will be used to address these challenges.

Applicants must include a plan for how the TCU-HS Partnership Program will increase the number of qualified Head Start and Early Head Start educators working in, or available to work in, AIAN Head Start recipient programs.

- Applicants must describe their partnership with one or more AIAN Head Start recipients;
- The need for the partnership, including current staff qualification gaps in AIAN Head Start recipient programs;
- The solutions to existing barriers;
- The number of people to be enrolled; the supports to ensure the access and success of enrolled students; and
- How many students are projected to receive credentials or degrees.

Additionally, applicants must outline a plan of action for 5 years of the project and a detailed plan for year one, specifically describing:

- How current or potential AIAN Head Start staff will be recruited;
- Target outcomes; and,
- How activities will be accomplished to meet the goals for credential or degree attainment.

Management Accountability

Applicants must describe effective ongoing communication and partnership with one or more AIAN Head Start recipients. Describe how the AIAN Head Start recipient partners will provide meaningful initial and ongoing input in the design and oversight of the partnership, including recruitment and support of enrolled staff members. Explain how partners will be mutually aware of goals and timelines to ensure expectations are being met.

Applicants must describe their management structure that will ensure adequate communication between partners and with OHS to assure all stakeholders that the project is meeting its specific goals to recruit, retain, and award credentials or degrees to the identified number of current or potential AIAN Head Start staff. A signed partnership agreement will define the responsibilities of the TCU-HS recipient and AIAN Head Start program(s) partners and must be submitted with the application.

A partnership between the TCU-HS recipient and AIAN Head Start recipient will include the following:

- Evidence that the AIAN Head Start recipient partner(s) was included in the application development;
- Detailed education plans, including the identification of existing plans, to be adopted or developed course work; Established matriculation agreements;
- Established explicit requirements for course work per semester;
- Plan for individualized student advising and coaching; and

- Plan for providing ongoing support to help the current or potential AIAN Head Start staff overcome the added challenges that nontraditional students face

TCU Recipient Staff Accountability

Applicants must provide a staffing plan that includes at least one full-time staff person who is dedicated to the award and has full responsibility for meeting all related coordination, communication, and reporting requirements, including financial requirements.

Applicant staff is expected to be familiar with the HSPPS and the partner program operations. Describe expertise in varying delivery methods needed to reach and retain diverse adult students who may be spread across a wide geographic area with extremely varied experience and knowledge upon program entry. Include a plan for how TCU-HS recipient staff will provide quarterly reporting to OHS and attend in-person meetings in Washington, DC, or other venue, up to two times per year.

Coursework and Delivery

Applicants must explain how coursework will lead to degrees and credentials that meet the needs of their AIAN Head Start recipient partners. Applicants must also describe which of the following degrees will be offered: associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees or entry-level credential for infant and toddler teachers or preschool teacher assistants. TCUs recipients must determine the need for the proposed credential and degree programs and describe how the selection offers the best career pathway for AIAN Head Start recipient partner staff (e.g., applicants describe the degree and credential options they will provide based on the needs of their AIAN Head Start recipient partners and how entry-level credentials may articulate with degree programs).

Applicants will explain how their credential and degree paths will increase the number of qualified AIAN Head Start staff through programming that meets the following requirements:

Is responsive to the specific needs of the AIAN Head Start recipient partner(s), including identifying need for specific credentials and degree; Identifies and meets needs for access to technology and corresponding technical support; Meets the educational needs of adult learners with diverse backgrounds; Mitigates or eliminates access barriers, such as location or scheduling, through distance learning, on-site or community-based classes, or innovative approaches; Includes both knowledge and competencies required for effective teaching of young children in AIAN Head Start programs, including tribal culture and language; Supports individual enrollee needs, as necessary, through help accessing tuition reimbursement programs, direct tuition assistance, provision of books and technology, assistance with transportation, and other costs related to enrollment as well as ongoing student support and academic counseling; Considers and incorporates course design and delivery methods, such as online course work with necessary technical and location-based coaching, that yield highest completion rates for adults in higher education; and Incorporates learning cohorts or communities, use of on-site tutors or coaches, and other program and peer supports shown to result in higher completion rates.

Working with OHS

Applicants will be required to attend no more than two meetings per year to share information on progress, improvements, and innovations with OHS and other TCU-HS Partnership recipients in Washington, DC, or other identified venue by OHS.

Organizational Capacity

Provide the following information on the applicant organization and, if applicable, on any cooperating partners:

- Organizational charts.
- Resumes.
- Curricula Vitae (CV).
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this funding opportunity.

In addition to these requested documents, please include the following:

- Clear descriptions of TCU-HS recipient staff roles and identify how these roles will meet the requirements of the program, as described in [Section I. Program Description](#); and
- A detailed narrative of each partners' staff, activities, outputs, and expected outcomes on this project.

If known at the time of application submission, the applicant must disclose their intent to enter into subaward arrangements in their application. For each proposed subaward, the applicant must include a description of the work to be performed by the subrecipient(s).

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

Recipients are required to ensure proper oversight in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D.

These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

- 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 the framework (e.g., governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) in place to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D. The description must include: system(s) for record-keeping and financial management; procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues (e.g., audit findings,

continuous program performance assessment findings, program monitoring); and those key staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff, and, if applicable, partner(s) and/or subrecipient(s).

Program Performance Evaluation Plan

Applicants must describe a plan for the program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement. The program performance evaluation must monitor ongoing activities and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project. Include descriptions of the inputs (e.g., organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, budget, service processes and other resources), key activities, and expected outcomes of the funded activities. The plan must explain how the inputs, activities, and outcomes will be measured; how the information will be used to inform improvement of funded activities; and any processes that support data quality.

Applicants must describe the organizational systems and processes that will effectively track performance outcomes, including a description of how the organization will collect and manage data (e.g., assign skilled staff, data management software, data integrity, etc.) in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles for implementing the program performance evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed. Applicants must include a timeline for how information from the quality improvement evaluation will be reviewed and applied to the ongoing project.

Specifically, the plan will include a description for how the applicant will measure and report staff enrollment, progress, and attainment of goal.

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

Provide a description of how protected PII and other information that is considered sensitive, consistent with applicable federal, state, local and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, will be collected and safeguarded. The applicant must provide the methods and/or systems that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and if applicable, address the process for subrecipient(s) and/or contractors. Also, provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period. See 45 CFR § 75.303(e) for more information.

Third-Party Agreements

Third-party agreements include Letters of Commitment, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Memoranda of Agreement (MOA). Letters of Commitment, MOUs and MOAs must clearly describe the roles and responsibilities for project activities and the support and/or resources that the third-party (i.e., subrecipient, contractor, or other cooperating entity) is committing. Letters of Commitment, MOUs, and MOAs must be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments on behalf of their organization. General letters of support are **not** considered third-party agreements.

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment, MOUs, or MOAs between recipients and third-parties (i.e., subrecipients, contractors, or other cooperating entities). In addition to clearly describing the roles and responsibilities for project activities and support and/or resources that the third-party is committing, these agreements must detail work schedules and estimated remuneration with an understanding that a finalized agreement will be negotiated once the aware is made to the successful applicant.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is entered on the Budget Information SF, either SF- 424A or SF-424C. Applicants are encouraged to review the form instructions in addition to the guidance in this section. The project budget consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information SF. Applicants must indicate the method they are selecting for their indirect cost rate. See Indirect Charges for further information.

Project budget calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If cost sharing or matching is a requirement, applicants must include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance). See the table in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* listing the appropriate budget forms to use in this application.

Salary Special Note:

Salaries in excess of Executive Level II. are unallowable, in compliance with the Annual appropriations legislation for the Department of Health and Human Services.

- *For the Executive Level II salary level, please see "Executive & Senior Level Employee Pay Tables" under <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>*
- *The salary limitation reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits, indirect costs and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization.*
- *This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

Provide a budget using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable, for each year of the proposed project.

Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for each year of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

Project Budget and Budget Justification

Applicants must designate adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities and ensure that the proposed costs are reasonable and necessary in relation to the anticipated results and benefits. The budget must also reflect the following:

- Justification for costs to provide sufficient support for enrolled participants while ensuring the funds are used efficiently so as many participants obtain credentials and degrees as possible within reasonable time periods;
 - For example, coursework and/or curriculum purchases are allowable

- Adequate TCU-HS recipient staff to implement the program, ensure coordination and communication with AIAN Head Start partner recipient(s), and provide oversight and program improvement;
- Travel for key staff to meet with OHS for the initial briefing regarding the plans for carrying out all components of this project;
- Travel and materials needed for one to two meetings per year with OHS and other TCU-HS recipients, as described under the [Section I. Program Description](#).

Applicants must submit an annual (12-month) budget. The funding amount listed on Line 18a (Federal) of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, must reflect a full 12 months of funding. The federal funding amounts reflected on the SF-424 and in the applicant's budget submission must match.

For applicants planning to use subawards, if your subaward budget is more than 50 percent of total direct costs for the budget period, justify why you are subawarding that portion of the project. Explain:

- how you plan to maintain a substantive role in the project; and
- why you cannot achieve your goals without the subrecipients' participation.

To create a line-item budget and justification, see detailed budget instructions at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/prepare-budget>

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 is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 03/31/2026. 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.

Application Submission Options

Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic Delivery

ACF applicants are required to submit their applications online through [Grants.gov](#).

How to Register through Grants.gov

Read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process.

Organizations must have:

- An active [System for Award \(SAM\) registration](#), which provides a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and may take several weeks to complete. **Therefore, complete this step early to ensure it does not affect the applicant's ability to submit an application on time.**

- Grants.gov account to apply for awards under funding opportunities, which can be created in minutes online.

Find complete instructions here: <https://grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

Create a Grants.gov Account: The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Follow the on-screen instructions provided on the registration page.

Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account: For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles: After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC is then expected to log into Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov.

For questions related to this funding opportunity, please contact the number listed in the application package.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist ACF with tracking and understanding background information on the issue.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Simplified Submission Instructions

Submission Deadline: All applications must be received by 11:59 pm ET on the due date for each program.

Proof of Submission:

- Grants.gov automatically records proof of timely submission.
- The Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgment of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov.
- An email with the official date/stamp and Grants.gov tracking number will serve as proof of timely submission.

Acknowledgment from ACF:

- When ACF retrieves the application from Grants.gov, an electronic acknowledgment will be sent to the AOR's email.

Late Applications: Applications received by Grants.gov after the due date will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by ACF.

For Issues with Federal Systems, including Grants.gov or SAM.gov:

Please refer to ACF's "[Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues](#)" for complete guidance.

To Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission:

Please refer to ACF's "[Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission](#)" for complete guidance.

Paper Application Submission

See [Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements](#) of this funding opportunity for address information for paper application submissions.

IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a UEI.

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.

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

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

01/21/2025

Due Date for Applications

01/21/2025

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the [Overview](#) and in this section.

Electronic Applications

Applications submitted via Grants.gov are due by 11:59 pm ET on the due date.

Applications that fail the Grants.gov validation check will not be received or acknowledged by ACF.

Mailed Paper Applications

Mailed paper applications are due by 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the Overview and in this section. Applications should be mailed to the address provided in [Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements](#).

No appeals will be considered for applications classified as late under the following circumstances:

- Grants.gov submissions that are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 pm ET on the due date.
- Paper applications received by mail after 4:30 pm ET on the due date.
- Paper applications from organizations that not approved for an exemption from electronicsubmission, as described in [Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Submission](#).

Emergency Extensions

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.

Acknowledgement of Received Application

Acknowledgements from Grants.gov

Applicants will receive:

- An email with the Grants.gov **tracking number** and a **date and time stamp** upon application submission. Please use the tracking number in any communications with Grants.gov. The date and time stamp is the official record of application submission. *This email does not indicate that the application was accepted or validated.*
- An email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process**.

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

Applicants will receive email(s) from ACF acknowledging that ACF retrieved the application from Grants.gov. These emails do not indicate that the application is accepted for competition.

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper application:

ACF will acknowledge receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

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

To find out your state's approach, see the [list of state single points of contact](#). If there's a contact on the list for your state, contact them as soon as possible to learn their process. If there is no 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.

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

Grant awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

Construction is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.

Purchase of real property is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.

Major renovation is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to the following address.

Submission by Mail

HHS-2025-ACF-OHS-YT-R11-0156

Office of Head Start

OHS Grant Review Team c/o Guardians of Honor

1990 K Street NW.

Suite 650

Washington

DC

20006

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: Reviewers must evaluate and score an application based only on the application documents, notice of funding opportunity and relevant statutes and regulations. They must not access any other materials, including information accessible on websites referenced in the application.

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. Points will be allocated based on the extent to which the application proposal addresses each of the criteria listed. Applicants should address these criteria in their application materials, particularly in the project description and budget justification, as they are the basis upon which competing applications will be judged during the merit review. The required elements of the project description and budget justification may be found in [Section IV.2. The Project Description](#) of this funding opportunity.

The merit review panel will evaluate the proposals and the required elements of the project description found in [Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission](#), which is in accordance with the relevant sections of the HSPPS (45 CFR Parts 1301-1305). The review of applications under this NOFO will result in a numerical score as evaluated by a panel of non-federal reviewers. The review panel will assign numerical scores for each evaluation criterion based on a range of points (0 points - total point value) taking into consideration the extent to which the application narrative includes substantial and compelling evidence.

1. Management Accountability

Maximum Points: 20

To evaluate Management Accountability, reviewers will consider the applicant's ability to design and implement an organized and transparent management structure that includes ongoing communication with AIAN Head Start recipient partner(s). In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will consider the degree to which the following narrative elements are well-thought-out, well-designed, and well-described:

- The approach to administering the project, including organizational development, project implementation, and evaluation.
- The signed partnership agreement(s) with one or more AIAN Head Start program(s) that includes a detailed description of roles and responsibilities of the TCU and AIAN Head Start program(s).

- The specific numbers of students to be recruited and enrolled, efforts to ensure students are retained, and the number of credentials or degrees to be awarded.
- The plan for how the management structure will ensure effective oversight and monitoring of recruitment, enrollment, and progress of current or potential AIAN Head Start staff as well as the timely and proper expenditure of grant funds.
- The timeline for meeting proposed goals for degree and credential attainment.

2. Staff Accountability

Maximum Points: 20

To evaluate Staff Accountability, reviewers will consider the applicant’s ability to ensure that key staff will have expertise, knowledge, and credentials relevant to assigned role(s) (e.g., early childhood education, Head Start, cultural and linguistic competencies, adult learning, distance learning,) as well as experience working with diverse communities. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will consider the degree to which the following narrative elements are well-thought-out, well-designed and well-described:

- Staff qualifications and experience demonstrates proposed staff have Head Start/Early Head Start experience.
- Staff reflects on Head Start’s culture and language diversity and have experience in working with diverse adult learners.
- Staff qualifications and experience demonstrates knowledge and skill in:
 - Communicating effectively to build relationships between programs, ensure mutual understanding, identify and solve problems;
 - Knowledge of how the AIAN Head Start program operates, including familiarity with HSPPS and understanding of staffing needs and challenges;
 - Adult learning strengths and challenges.
 - Varied delivery methods to meet unique needs and challenges of enrollees, include site-based course, online learning, and innovative approaches.
 - Financial administration of a federal grant.

3. Coursework and Delivery

Maximum Points: 30

To evaluate Coursework and Delivery, reviewers will consider the applicant’s ability to assess diverse audience needs and provide responsive and high-quality credential and degree programs that meet the required academic and competency requirements of Head Start and Early Head Start staff. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will consider the degree to which the following narrative elements are well-thought-out, well-designed, and well-described and:

- The project responds to the specific needs of the AIAN Head Start recipient partner(s), including identifying needs such as access to technology and corresponding technical support;
- The plan provides a detailed description of how it will meet the educational needs of adult learners with diverse backgrounds;
- The plan mitigates or eliminates access barriers, such as location or scheduling, through distance learning, on-site or community-based classes, or innovative approaches;

- The description includes both knowledge and competencies required for effective teaching of young children in AIAN Head Start programs;
- The plan provides specific instruction and resources supporting the language and culture of enrolled teachers and the young children they teach, including supporting the development of home language;
- The plan supports individual enrollee needs, as necessary, through help accessing tuition reimbursement programs, direct tuition assistance, provision of books and technology, assistance for transportation, and other costs related to enrollment;
- The plan considers and incorporates course design and delivery methods that yield highest completion rates for adults in higher education;
- The plan incorporates learning cohorts or communities, use of on-site tutors or coaches, and other program and peer supports shown to result in higher completion rates.

4. Working with OHS

Maximum Points: 10

To evaluate Working with OHS, reviewers will review the extent to which the applicant describes:

- Its well-thought-out and well-designed plan for providing ongoing communication with the input and perspective of the AIAN Head Start recipient partner(s) and OHS including information on challenges and the program's progress.

5. Program Performance Evaluation Plan

Maximum Points: 10

To evaluate Program Performance Evaluation and Continuous Improvement, reviewers will consider the applicant's plan to ensure it will enroll and graduate the target number of students within the identified timelines. The applicant's ability to review, collect, and use data for improvements that resolve challenges and result in an efficient, effective program leading to increased credentials and degrees for current or potential AIAN Head Start staff. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will consider the degree to which the following narrative elements are well-thought-out, well-designed, and well-described:

- Plan to accurately assess need and barriers and propose robust solutions with a high likelihood of success.
- Description of applicant capacity to respond quickly and effectively to unforeseen events and challenges
- Plan for collecting data on enrollment and participant progress and expected use of such data within the partnership to constantly refine and improve approach.

6. Project Budget and Budget Justification

Maximum Points: 10

To evaluate the Project Budget and Budget Justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant designates adequate resources to carry out the expected and proposed activities while ensuring that the proposed costs are reasonable. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- The budget is clearly outlined and aligned with the activities of the TCU-HS Partnership Programs, as referenced in *Section IV.2. Application Submission Information, Content*

and Form of Application Submission, The Project Budget and Budget Justification, and includes a narrative justification for the amount requested. The explanations of the calculations sufficiently show that the costs are critical to the success of the project. The budget is reasonable and appropriate for the project, for example coursework and/or curriculum are allowable costs.

- All personnel funds are reasonable for the responsibilities and time dedicated to the TCU- HS Partnership Programs activities, as described in *Section IV.2. Application Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.
- The applicant specifies sufficient funding to successfully carry out project activities, as referenced in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Requirements and Section IV.2. Application Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, The Project Budget and Budget Justification*, including travel and materials for meetings in Washington, DC; any trainings and conferences; and the proposed initial meeting for year 1. Funds are allocated accordingly.
- The applicant's fiscal controls and accounting procedures ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of the funds received and multiple funding streams described under this NOFO, as referenced in *Section IV.2. Application Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities*.
- The applicant demonstrates strong evidence that the organization has the fiscal, administrative, and performance management capacity to effectively administer grant funds, as referenced in *Section IV.2. Application Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities*.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

Incomplete applications will not receive an award. .

Initial ACF Screening

Disqualified applications are considered “non-responsive” and are excluded from the merit review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this NOFO.

Merit Review and Results

Review panels use criteria described in [Section V.1. Criteria](#) to review and evaluate applications. Reviewers are typically not federal employees.

When making funding decisions, ACF considers

- Merit review results. They are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- Organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those in pockets of poverty.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution.
- The applicant’s past performance.

ACF may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at lower amount than requested.
- Choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems.
- Decide not allow a prime recipient to subaward if they are not able to properly monitor and manage subrecipients properly.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

ACF must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), <https://sam.gov/reports/ei/static>, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in [45 CFR § 75.205\(a\)\(2\) Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants](#).

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval in the merit review process, but not selected for award may receive funds if additional funds become available in the current Fiscal Year. Applicants with “approved but unfunded” status will be notified by email.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Announcement of awards and the disposition of applications will be provided to applicants at a later date. ACF staff cannot respond to requests for information regarding funding decisions prior to the official applicant notification.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a NoA that identifies:

- amount of funds awarded,
- terms and conditions,
- effective date,
- budget period for which initial support will be given,
- applicant’s non-federal share (if applicable), and
- total planned project period.

The NoA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via email or by GrantSolutions, or the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), whichever is relevant. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

Organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified after the funding decisions have been finalized by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head.

Recipients may translate the Federal award and other documents into another language. In the event of inconsistency between any terms and conditions of the Federal award and any translation into another language, the English language meaning will control. Where a significant portion of the recipient's employees who are working on the Federal award are not fluent in English, the recipient must provide the Federal award in English and in the language(s) with which employees are more familiar.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Awards are subject to:

- The rules listed in [45 CFR part 75](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards in effect at the time of award and any updates, or any superseding regulations. Effective October 1, 2024, HHS adopted the following superseding provisions:
 - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Modified Total Direct Cost.
 - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Equipment.
 - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Supplies.
 - [2 CFR 200.313\(e\)](#), Equipment, Disposition.
 - [2 CFR 200.314\(a\)](#), Supplies.
 - [2 CFR 200.320](#), Methods of procurement to be followed.
 - [2 CFR 200.333](#), Fixed amount subawards.
 - [2 CFR 200.344](#), Closeout.
 - [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#), Indirect (F&A) costs.
 - [2 CFR 200.501](#), Audit requirements.
 - Department regulations and policies in effect at the time of award, and applicable statutory provisions. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is available at www.ecfr.gov.

HHS will adopt and implement effective October 1, 2025, the remainder of the Uniform Guidance.

Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary awards are available at: www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements.

Funded organizations are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations. Receiving federal funds through an award does not mean the application or the applicant organization complies with federal regulations.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

ACF awards must follow the HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS), which covers basic award processes, standard terms and conditions, points of contact, and important agency-specific requirements. The HHS GPS is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/policy-guidance/hhs-grants-policy-statement>.

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports:
Semi-Annually

Reporting Requirements

Recipients must submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Reporting requirements are available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/manage-grant/reporting>.

For planning purposes, the required reporting frequency for awards under this funding opportunity are as follows:

Financial Reports:

Semi-Annually

Recipients will be required to track and report grant funding and activities for OHS on their Financial Reports and Semi-Annual Performance Progress Reports.

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Amanda

Bryans

Administration for Children and Families

OHS Grant Review Team c/o Guardians of Honor

1990 K Street NW.

Suite 650

Washington

DC

20006

888-242-0684

OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/funding>

Office of Grants Management Contact

Laura

Landry

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Grants Management

15 New Sudbury Street

Room 2000

Boston

MA

02203

OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs/funding>

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) www.hhs.gov/

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) www.acf.hhs.gov/

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs www.grants.gov/

ACF "Applying for an ACF Award" <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant>

ACF Property Guidance <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/real-property-and-tangible-personal-property>

Grants.gov Accessibility Information <https://www.grants.gov/accessibility-compliance>

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) <http://www.ecfr.gov/>

United States Code (U.S.C.) <http://uscode.house.gov/>

Head Start Act <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/head-start-act>

Head Start Program Performance Standards <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii>

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>

Applicant Support Resources

OHS strongly encourages applicants interested in applying for this funding opportunity to visit <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant#chapter-3>. This webpage provides information on applying for grants, registering and applying through www.Grants.gov, submitting an application, and understanding the grant review process. All interested applicants are reminded to frequently refer to this NOFO when preparing their application.

Prospective applicants will also have the opportunity to send questions to OHS by e-mail at OHSgrants@koniag-gs.com. A summary of the questions and OHS responses will be posted for public view on the applicant support website as soon as they become available.

Interested applicants may also contact the OHS Operations Center at (888) 242-0684 or TTY: 711 if they have additional questions

Application Checklist

Applicants can use this checklist to prepare their application package.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i> This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i>
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award	Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award</i>	A UEI and registration at SAM.gov are

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Management (SAM) registration.	<p><i>Management (SAM)</i> in the funding opportunity.</p> <p>To obtain a UEI and SAM registration, go to http://www.sam.gov.</p>	<p>required for all applicants.</p> <p>Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p>
SF-424 Key Contact Form	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package or prior to award.</p>
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>These forms are available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. They are required for applications that include only non-construction activities.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	<p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in</p>	<p>If submission of this form is applicable, it is</p>

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	<p><i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.</p>	<p>due at the time of application.</p> <p>If not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to award.</p>
Table of Contents	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i>	Submit with the application by the due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i>
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications.</i>	If applicable, concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification.</i>	<p>Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C.</p> <p>Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i>	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i>

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Project Summary/Abstract	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>.</p> <p>The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>