

Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth, and Families - Children's Bureau

Field-Initiated Approach to Addressing Racial Bias and Inequity in Child Welfare

HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0020

Application Due Date: 07/31/2023

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Funding Opportunity Title:
Field-Initiated Approach to Addressing Racial Bias and Inequity in Child Welfare

Announcement Type:
Initial

Funding Opportunity Number:
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0020

Primary CFDA Number:
93.670

Due Date for Applications:
07/31/2023

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 grants, please visit "How to Apply for a Grant" on the ACF Grants & Funding Page at** https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant.

Child and family well-being for all families, including families most impacted by racial disparities, is the responsibility of equitable, diverse, and culturally competent systems and the community. The purpose of this NOFO is to fund grants that support the development, implementation, and evaluation of field-initiated approaches to addressing racial bias and inequity in child welfare; and improving the safety, stability, and well-being of families in traditionally underserved communities.

As a field-based initiative, this funding opportunity will enable communities to design and lead targeted solutions to local issues of systemic disproportionality and inequitable access to services experienced by traditionally underserved communities at varying points across the child welfare continuum.

Grant recipients will utilize supporting data, and any pre-analysis if available, from their respective states or communities that describes the problem of inequity and racial bias as it exists in their community. The Children's Bureau (CB) is open to the type of data submitted and encourages applicants to use the best information or evidence available. Recipients are encouraged to either establish partnerships to access needed data or to consider other publicly available data sources (i.e., Census, community organization data dashboards, etc.). Upon award, grant recipients will complete a thorough exploration or assessment that, at a minimum, involves a review of current practices, policies, and service delivery to the target population with input from community members and families with lived child welfare experience. Ultimately, applicants will demonstrate readiness and a commitment to inclusive, co-designed solutions to address issues of racial bias and inequity in child welfare and reflect what communities say they need to thrive.

I. Program Description

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

Description
BACKGROUND

Recently, many child welfare advocates, researchers, and practitioners have launched an illuminating spotlight on the United States history of systemic racism and its nexus to poor outcomes for many children and families who come to the attention of our nation's child welfare system. Specifically, Black, Native American, Hispanic, and other marginalized children and families involved with the system experience high rates of disproportionality, racial bias, disparity, and inequity across the child welfare continuum (Adoption Triad, 2022). This system, like many other "people serving" systems, is responsible for many structural barriers and racial biases that have contributed to family dysfunction, separation, and destruction under the guise of safety and well-being. A significant body of research has documented the overrepresentation of certain racial and ethnic groups in the child welfare system relative to their representation in the general population (e.g., Cénat et al., 2020; Ganasarajah et al., 2017; Wells, 2011). In 2019, American Indian and Alaska Native children made up 1 percent of the child population and accounted for 2 percent of the foster care population, while African-American children accounted for roughly 14 percent of the child population and 23 percent of the foster care population (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2020a; Children's Bureau, 2020b). That same year, White children made up half of the child population and just 44 percent of the foster care population. Although Hispanic children have historically been underrepresented in foster care at the national level, they were overrepresented in 20 states in 2018, when the most recent available data were collected (Puzzanchera & Taylor, 2020). In 2020, 813,589 Black or African American children were screened-in (i.e. met criteria to be accepted for investigation or assessment). Black or African American children account for 21.7 percent of all of the screened-in cases and 778,829 Hispanic or Latino children were screened-in. Hispanic or Latino children account for 23 percent of all of the screened-in cases (NCANDS). When considering lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth of color, "gaps in child welfare data systems inhibit the development of knowledge about these youth at entrance, during, and after system involvement, and impede monitoring over time. LGBTQ youth of color appear to stay longer in child welfare and juvenile justice systems and to be at elevated risk of discrimination and violence once system-involved compared to other groups of youth" (Wilson & Conron, 2019). "Although few studies have examined outcomes for LGBTQ youth in child welfare, LGBTQ youth who are also from communities of color are at risk of poor outcomes due to a range of intersecting vulnerabilities" (Briggs & Hoyt, 2019). Once families most impacted by racial disparities come to the attention of the child welfare system, they are often embarking on a seemingly continuous journey of surveillance, interruption, removal, and for many, eventual break down, leading to lasting adverse outcomes impacting generations.

Economically disadvantaged families of color are, oftentimes, the targets of surveillance and prolonged oversight by the child welfare system, due to perceived safety and well-being concerns. "Given the vague definitions of child maltreatment and the discretion given to people

who report, investigate, and respond to abuse and neglect allegations, it comes as no surprise that studies have discovered bias against Black families at every stage of decision making" (Roberts, 2022). These biases often contribute to misplaced and ineffective interventions and facilitate the system's targeting of Black communities for intervention (Roberts, 2022). The history of the child welfare system and the institutional racism and trauma that continue to shape the experiences of Black and Brown children and families today is so tragic that there is a movement to completely abolish the system altogether (Dettlaff et al., 2020). Acknowledging there are different schools of thought as to whether systemic racism is a primary or exacerbating factor, there is a consensus that the child welfare field needs new strategies to make significant changes to improve services and support for Black and Brown children and families. To that end, federal, state, and local child welfare professionals are assessing agency policies and practices for the ways they uphold or combat systemic racism (Adoption Triad, 2022).

On January 20, 2021, President Joseph Biden issued the Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities, prioritizing equity, civil rights, and racial justice as critical goals for all federal agencies. Ensuring consistent, systematic, fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals belonging to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, will serve as the roadmap going forward and the foundation for this funding opportunity. Consistent with this Executive Order, the term "underserved community" refers to a population sharing a particular characteristic, as well as a geographic community that has been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life or whose members have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality. Such communities include, among others, Black people, Hispanics and Latino/a/e people, Native American and other Indigenous people of North America (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts), Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is committed to advancing equity by reducing structural barriers including racism and other forms of discrimination that prevent the social and emotional well-being of children and families (ACF Strategic Plan, 2022). Through the critical work of ongoing self-evaluation with an equity lens, CB will be instrumental in leading, facilitating, and collaborating to develop innovative programming to dismantle the harmful impacts of the current child welfare system. As we move strategically towards eliminating the existing structures that harm, we will work to further support families and care for children by strengthening and expanding community-based efforts that already exist and launching new initiatives.

National child welfare data has consistently provided evidence that systemic racism and disproportionality has been an intractable reality that has negatively impacted families of color at every stage of the child welfare continuum for decades (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System). With this foundational knowledge, CB acknowledges that disparity and inequity presents differently in different communities and that solutions must be community-driven and tailored to each unique context. This NOFO will offer an opportunity for the broader child welfare field and impacted communities to describe what disproportionality and disparity looks like in their individual communities and to propose their own innovative solutions. Centering the voices and experiences of those with lived experience, CB expects to support

programs targeting any point on the child welfare continuum (prevention, intake, monitoring, surveillance, out of home care, residential care, etc.) and encourages cross-sector collaborative efforts to build more just and equitable systems that benefit all children, families, and communities.

To learn more about ACF's Equity in Action efforts, read the ACF Strategic Plan. Other helpful sources include Child Welfare Information Gateway's resources on equity.

PROJECT GOALS

The purpose of this NOFO is to fund eight projects for a 5-year period that bring forward innovative, community-supported approaches to addressing racial bias and inequity in child welfare systems. Projects will use supporting data to identify and define the problem that needs to be addressed in their community. Projects will work in sync with families with lived experience to co-design and develop solutions to racial bias, disproportionality, and disparities experienced by historically underserved families in their community at a selected point(s) on the child welfare continuum. Projects will focus efforts on historically underserved and overrepresented communities and actively work to reduce structural barriers to accessing services wherever possible.

Field-Initiated Projects will focus on meeting the following project goals:

1. Integrate the expertise of community members and establish meaningful roles for families and youth with lived expertise to develop or build upon innovative and effective strategies, activities, and solutions to address disproportionality, racial bias, and inequity in the child welfare system.
2. Explore and confirm the root cause and local drivers of racial bias and inequity in child welfare and its impact on families in specific communities.
3. Identify a point (or points) along the child welfare system continuum to focus innovative strategies or approaches to addressing disproportionality, racial bias, and inequity.
4. Develop opportunities to build equity and enhance the capacity of the child welfare system to reduce rates of racial disparities, including in investigation and surveillance.
5. Reduce racial disparities in family exposure to the existing child welfare system by identifying alternative resources, closing gaps in services and access, and developing community-based approaches to support safety and well-being.
6. Evaluate strategies and activities implemented using relevant research approaches, including methods to ensure the people who are the focus of the research are engaged in the process.
7. Enhance collaboration with those partners that are most appropriate for the project to address barriers for families most impacted by racial disparities in the child welfare system.
8. Improve relationships between communities and the child welfare system by changing child welfare norms and values, building trust and confidence, addressing bias in decision making, and improving actual and perceptions of fairness across the system.

Funded projects are encouraged to be innovative in their approaches and to think broadly about potential project-specific solutions. Projects may also seek to enhance existing child welfare

program services and activities by placing an emphasis on addressing bias and inequity, developing a shared understanding of the root causes of inequalities in child welfare systems, restructuring policies and practices to incorporate equity and to address bias and systemic racism, or institutionalizing program strategies and evaluation activities that support systemic equity and approaches to address community-identified needs and solutions.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

This section highlights project requirements in the following areas:

- Focus Area
- Equity Impact Assessment
- Collaboration
- Project Activities and Strategies
- Technical Assistance (TA)
- Planning Period
- Evaluation
- Project Sustainability
- Dissemination

Focus Area

The focus area for project implementation is a geographic area, demographic community, region or system identified by the community that would benefit from an in-depth analysis and subsequent development or expansion of innovative strategies and activities focused on reducing racial bias, disproportionality, and inequity in traditionally underserved and overrepresented communities.

Equity Impact Statement

With support from CB's TA providers, funded projects will be required to develop an equity impact statement using local data and input to identify those populations at highest risk for racial bias, inequity, or other disparities within the child welfare system. This data will build upon the preliminary data submitted in the application describing the local impact on underserved communities.

The equity impact statement must:

- identify a practice or outcome in the program or in the broader population that the recipient wants to address in its grant,
- identify demographic, cultural, linguistic, social, policy, historical, and/or other context that helps unpack root causes or drivers of disparities for population(s) considered at highest risk for disparities,

- be data-driven (including qualitative input from experts, such as those with lived experience, or other anecdotal community data),
- address how the project will reach targeted underserved communities, and
- outline a plan, consistent with applicable laws, including how the program will measure the effect of funded services on specific subpopulations and other areas for program improvement or evaluation, and incorporate the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care. The plan should also outline monitoring and assessment of the impact of the project on the program's equity goals to promote equity.

Collaboration

Child and family well-being for all families, including families most impacted by racial disparities, is the responsibility of equitable, diverse, and culturally competent systems and the community. A key component of this effort is cross-agency collaboration and a system that is co-designed and co-led by youth and families with lived expertise. Projects will establish and cultivate a shared vision, strategic coordination, and a willingness to share power as part of an improved child welfare system that reduces bias and inequitable practices and policies.

Grant recipients will establish a role for relevant community partners and families with lived experience to implement comprehensive strategies to address racial bias and inequities in the child welfare system. Collaboration activities may include, but are not limited to, defining the strengths and needs of the target area, ongoing coordination and consultation, developing and implementing a plan to share power and information, meaningful coordination of programming and reporting requirements with a focus on enhancing equitable conditions and access to services, and/or commitments to share data.

Project Strategies and Activities

Project activities and strategies will be based on and informed by community-identified needs of the focus area for project implementation and address racial bias and inequity at a selected point(s) along the child welfare continuum. Strategies and activities will be culturally responsive, community-driven, and support families of color that live in traditionally underserved communities. Strategies will aim to reduce disproportionality, disparities, racial bias, and inequity among families of color and demonstrate shared power in decision-making and offering solutions. Strategies and activities should be designed to address the goals of the NOFO as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Goals.*

Technical Assistance (TA)

Projects will receive TA from CB and CB's designated TA providers. Projects may use internal TA providers as long as the internal TA does not conflict with CB designated TA and they can effectively work with CB providers. The purpose of CB's provision of TA is to support projects in developing and designing required activities during the 6-month planning period (described in *Planning Period*) as well as throughout the life of the project including implementation and evaluation activities.

Planning Period

The project period will include an initial 6-month planning period to further develop and refine the proposed project and focus area(s) for project implementation. CB and CB's designated TA provider(s) will offer projects support and guidance as they review their data and map out steps for implementation. During the planning period, projects must continue meaningful engagement with youth and families with lived child welfare experience and integrate their expertise throughout the planning period and beyond. Additionally, projects will use this time to enhance or develop a project structure that may include identifying lead personnel, developing project timelines, creating a data plan, establishing new partnerships, refining proposed strategies, establishing representative steering committees, etc. Projects will need to allocate sufficient resources during the planning period to continue community-level needs assessments, identification of system gaps and inefficiencies, and further refine strategies to address racial bias and inequity. Once recipients have been able to establish a feasible plan and operational structure necessary to implement, the project will move forward with implementation and evaluation. For those recipients who may have existing infrastructures in place, the timeframe for the planning period may be flexible.

Project activities completed during the planning period with the support of CB and CB's TA provider(s) may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Developing an equity impact statement that builds upon the preliminary data presented in the application.
- Finalizing the focus area(s), demographic communities, region, and system for project implementation.
- Continuing identification and collection of reliable primary or secondary data for baseline and follow-up comparison data.
- Reassessing the strengths, needs, barriers, and gaps specific to the focus area and population.
- Continuing to co-design solutions to identified strengths and needs with community members and youth and families with lived child welfare expertise.
- Engaging additional partners as needed and finalizing all partnership agreements (including data-sharing agreements) necessary to support successful implementation.
- Reassessing the planned strategies, practices, or activities, and proposed timeline to ensure the appropriateness and fit for the focus area and population.
- Conducting rapid cycle responses to identified challenges.
- Developing an appropriate plan for securing informed consent and implementing an Institutional Review Board review and tribal review, if applicable.
- Refining project-specific implementation and evaluation plans.

Evaluation

Projects will conduct an objective, comprehensive evaluation to include both process and outcome elements and measure both participant-level and systems-level outcomes. The evaluation will examine how the project has integrated equity approaches to improve outcomes

for children and families in underserved communities. It will also describe the process for implementation, the types and quantities of strategies and activities delivered, the characteristics of the population served, and the numbers of families served. Projects will apply community-based participatory methods involving evaluators and community members collaborating in the process. Outcome elements will examine the extent to which child welfare norms and values are enhanced to promote racial equity and inclusion and address bias in decision making. Projects will be supported by and actively engage with CB and CB's designated evaluation TA provider in the design of the evaluation plan, measurement selection, data analysis, and reporting. Through these project evaluations, CB expects to better understand the core components and factors associated with developing innovative, field-initiated approaches to addressing racial bias and inequity in the child welfare system. Grant recipients must implement an evaluation plan that includes methods and criteria to evaluate the results and benefits of the project in terms of its stated objectives.

Evaluation activities will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Working with CB's designated evaluation TA provider to develop and finalize the evaluation plan;
- Coordinating with the grant recipient's identified program start up team, including establishing data-sharing agreements and collaboration with relevant partner organizations.
- Collecting evaluation data, including staff training, and ensuring sufficient time to collect data;
- Storing data, including costs for staff to conduct regular activities such as data entry, quality checks, reliability training for coding, etc.;
- Monitoring and reporting data, including costs for staff to analyze data, create and review reports, and plan and monitor adjustments.

Projects should either have sufficient in-house capacity to conduct an objective and robust evaluation or provide a sound plan for working with a third-party evaluator who has relevant experience and capacity. It is important that the evaluator has the necessary independence from the project to ensure objectivity. A skilled evaluator can help develop a logic model and assist in designing an evaluation strategy that is appropriate given the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Grant recipients may continue to finalize the evaluation plan during the planning period following grant award.

Dissemination

It is the intent of CB that the knowledge gained, lessons learned, and evidence generated from discretionary grants will help support the learning, innovation, and development of effective interventions, practices, and programs across the child welfare field. Projects will work with CB, designated TA provider(s), other CB-funded entities, and other projects in this grant cohort to:

- Develop a project-specific dissemination plan, including goals and objectives.
- Identify and engage with relevant target audiences to share project information and learning through selected channels.

- Develop quality materials for dissemination, such as training materials, briefs, and/or other products that will facilitate and enable learning in other states/jurisdictions.
- Coordinate, develop, and help disseminate summarized/synthesized cross-cutting information about the project.
- Produce a high-quality, comprehensive final report.
- Collaborate with Child Welfare Information Gateway to share, archive, and disseminate relevant project materials and reports.
- Ensure publications and websites are widely accessible. Section 508 compliance is strongly encouraged for all products, tools, publications, and other print and web-based content developed. (*See Terms and Conditions for more detailed information on 508 compliance*.)

Project Sustainability

CB is interested in the specific strategies, practices, and activities that will reduce disproportionality, racial bias, and inequity in child welfare and improve access to services and supports in underserved communities. Grant recipients will develop a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends to sustain elements of their grant projects (e.g., strategies or services, funding flexibilities, practice changes) that have been effective in reducing disproportionality, racial bias, and inequity. Projects will describe the approach to project sustainment that will be most effective and feasible, and the key individuals and/or organizations whose support will be required, and how that collaboration will be maintained after federal funding ends.

SUBAWARDS

Recipients under this grant program may opt to transfer a portion of substantive programmatic work to other organizations through subaward(s). The prime recipient must maintain a substantive role in the project. ACF defines a substantive role as conducting activities and/or providing services funded under the award that are necessary and integral to the completion of the project. Subrecipient monitoring activities alone, as specified in 45 CFR § 75.352, do not constitute a substantive role. Furthermore, ACF does not fund awards where the role of the applicant is primarily to serve as a conduit for passing funds to other organizations, unless that arrangement is authorized by statute.

Subrecipient(s) must meet the eligibility requirements identified in the NOFO, *Section III.1. Eligible Applicants*. Additionally, all subrecipient(s) must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number assigned by the System for Award Management (SAM), if they do not already have one. Prime recipients are required to check SAM to verify that the subrecipient(s) is/are not debarred, suspended, or ineligible.

Please reference the Award Term and Condition on Subawards on the ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements website for further requirements involving subawards.

BONUS POINTS

Under this Field-Initiated Approach Project, there is an option to receive up to 10 bonus points listed under Section V.I. Criteria. Bonus points and priority consideration will be awarded to applicants that:

1. Demonstrate their capabilities and competencies for implementing their proposed project(s) are enhanced because the applicant (or at least one proposed subrecipient) identifies as a culturally specific organization.
2. Describe how being a culturally specific organization (or funding a culturally specific subrecipient organization(s)) will enhance their ability to implement the proposed project(s). Applicants also specify which culturally specific populations are expected to be served under the proposed project(s).

For the purposes of this funding opportunity, culturally specific organizations are defined as private non-profit or tribal organizations whose primary purpose as-a-whole is to provide culturally specific services to communities historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by inequality in the child welfare system, including, among others, Black people, Hispanics and Latino/a/e people, Native American and other Indigenous people of North America (including Alaska Natives, Eskimos, and Aleuts), Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and/or Pacific Islanders.

Note: Addressing a priority area is one of many factors that CB considers in making funding decisions. Receiving priority consideration for one or more priority areas is not a guarantee of an award. *See Section V.2., Review and Selection Process.*

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:
CA (Cooperative Agreement)

Estimated Total Funding:
$4,000,000

Expected Number of Awards:
8

Award Ceiling:
$500,000
Per Budget Period

Award Floor:
$400,000
Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:
$500,000
Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:
09/29/2023

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.

Applications requesting an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period, or per project period, as stated in this section, will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period. Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors.*

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, 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, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A recipient's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** For more information on these requirements, see *Section III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching.*

The initial award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award continuation beyond each 12-month budget period will be the subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee (i.e., demonstrating a commitment to achieving expected outcomes and collaborating with CB to overcome any barriers), and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the federal government.

Description of ACF's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement Award

A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding federal assistance in which substantial federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of CB and the awardee prior to the award. CB anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. A signed cooperative agreement between the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF)/CB and the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) will be submitted prior to the beginning of Year 1. CB involvement and collaboration with the grantee includes:

- CB collaborations with the grant recipient in the planning process, as described in *Section 1. Program Description, Project Requirements*. This includes review of the application to potentially seek clarification of the approach, interventions, and evaluation plan presented in the grant recipient's application.
- CB review and support of the grant recipient's implementation and evaluation activities.
- CB and the grant recipient jointly collaborate (including active collaboration with the designated evaluation TA provider) in the performance of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, TA, publications or products, and evaluation).

- CB closely monitoring the grant recipient during performance, which may exceed those federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities to ensure compliance with the intent of this funding.
- CB review and approval of equity impact statements.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Per the statute, "The Secretary may make grants to, and enter into contracts with, entities that are states, Indian tribes, or tribal organizations, or public agencies or private agencies or organizations (or combination of such entities) …" (42 U.S.C. 5106 (a)).

Collaborative efforts are encouraged, but applicants must identify a primary applicant responsible for administering the cooperative agreement.

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors.*

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity. Faith-based organizations may apply for this award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at and, subject to the protections and requirements of 45 CFR Part 87 and 42 U.S.C. 2000bb *et seq.*, ACF will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, affiliation, or exercise.

Reference to Legal Status
See *Section IV.2. Legal Status of Applicant Entity* for documentation required to support eligibility.

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 require matching by statute, 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, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

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.**

III.3. Other

Application Disqualification Factors

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

Award Ceiling Disqualification

Applications that request an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period or per project period ("per project period" refers only to fully funded awards), as stated in *Section II. Federal Award Information*, will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period.

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at Grants.gov. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.**

Applicants that do not have an internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission."

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 pm ET on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.* Electronic applications submitted to Grants.gov 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 competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. That is, applications submitted to Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 am ET

on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Applications submitted to Grants.gov at any time during the open application period, and prior to the due date and time, which fail the Grants.gov validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by ACF.

Each time an application is submitted via Grants.gov, the submission will generate a new date and time-stamp email notification. Only those applications with on-time date and time stamps that result in a validated application, which is transmitted to ACF will be acknowledged.

The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 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 competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and 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

CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0020
6000 Executive Boulevard
Suite 410
Rockville
MD
20852
888-203-6161
CB@grantreview.org

Application Packages

Electronic Application Submission:

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

Applications in Paper Format:
For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications are available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" available in the NOFO's Grants.gov Synopsis under the Package tab at Grants.gov. See

Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission if applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to Grants.gov.

Federal Relay Service:
Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) for assistance at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS
Each applicant applying electronically via Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding SFs and Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)
AOR is the designated representative of the applicant/recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the award and administration of grants. In signing a grant application, this individual agrees that the organization will assume the obligations imposed by applicable Federal statutes and regulations and other terms and conditions of the award, including any assurances, if a grant is awarded.

Point of Contact
In addition to the AOR, a point of contact on matters involving the application must also be identified. The point of contact, known as the Project Director or Principal Investigator, should not be identical to the person identified as the AOR. The point of contact must be available to answer any questions pertaining to the application.

Application Checklist
Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials.

Accepted Font Style
Applications must be in Times New Roman (TNR), 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be TNR 10-point font. Pages that contain blurred text, or text that is too small to read comfortably, will be removed.

English Language
Applications must be submitted in the English language and must be in the terms of United States (U.S.) dollars. If applications are submitted using another currency, ACF will convert the foreign currency to U.S. currency using the date of receipt of the application to determine the

rate of exchange.

Page Limitations
Applicants must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:." Page limitation(s) do not include SFs and OMB-approved forms.

All applications must be double-spaced. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the Project Description file or the Appendices file will have extra pages removed, and those pages will not be reviewed.

Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements
The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced: the table of contents, the one-page Project Summary, required Assurances and Certifications, required SFs, required OMB-approved forms, resumes, logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, third-party agreements, letters of support, footnotes, tables, the line-item budget and/or the budget justification.

Adherence to NOFO Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements
Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the application. Pages will be removed before the objective review and will not be made available to reviewers.

Applications that have more than one scanned page of a document on a single page will have the page(s) removed from the review.

For applicants that submit paper applications, double-sided pages will be counted as two pages. When the maximum allowed number of pages is reached, excess pages will be removed and will not be made available to reviewers.

NOTE: Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended. The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

Corrections/Updates to Submitted Applications
When applicants make revisions to a previously submitted application, ACF will accept only the last on-time application for pre-review under the Application Disqualification Factors. The Application Disqualification Factors determine the application's acceptance for competitive review. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors* and *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options*.

Copies Required
Applicants must submit one complete copy of the application package electronically. Applicants

submitting electronic applications need not provide additional copies of their application package.

Applicants submitting applications in paper format must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all SFs and OMB-approved forms. The original copy must have original signatures.

Signatures
Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at Grants.gov.
The original of a paper format application must include original signatures of the authorized representatives.

Accepted Application Format
With the exception of the required SFs and OMB-approved forms, all application materials must be formatted so that they are 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins all around.

If possible, applicants are encouraged to include page numbers for each page within the application.

ACF generally does not encourage submission of scanned documents as they tend to have reduced clarity and readability. If documents must be scanned, the font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. Documents must be scanned page-for-page, meaning that applicants may not scan more than one page of a document onto a single page. Pages with blurred text will be removed from the application.

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

With the exception of SFs and OMB-approved forms, the application submission **is limited to 75 pages** in its entirety. The two files applicants must submit are the Project Description file and the Appendices file.

The **Project Description** file must include the following items in this order:

1. Table of Contents
2. Project Summary
3. Objectives and Need for Assistance
4. Approach
5. Evaluation
6. Organizational Capacity
7. Logic Model
8. Line-Item Budget and Budget Justification

The **Appendices** file must include the following items in this order:

1. Documentation (e.g., data reports, etc.) related to evidence of disparity, inequity and racial bias within the focus area(s) (see *Section IV.2., Project Description, Approach, Focus Area)*

2. Letters of Support (*see Section IV.2., Project Description, Letters of Support)*
3. Other third-party agreements
4. Staff and position information (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
5. Certifications and Assurances
6. Proof of Legal Status (if applicable)
7. Indirect Cost Rate Letter (if applicable)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically unless they have received an exemption that will allow submission in paper format. See *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options* for information about requesting an exemption**.**

Electronic applications will only be accepted via Grants.gov. **ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.**

Each applicant is required to upload ONLY two electronic files, excluding SFs and OMB-approved forms.

File One: Must contain the entire Project Description, and the Budget and Budget Justification (including a line-item budget and a budget narrative).

File Two: Must contain all documents required in the Appendices.

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement
No more than two files will be accepted for the review. Applications with additional files will be amended and files will be removed from the review. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

Application Upload Requirements
ACF strongly recommends that electronic applications be uploaded as Portable Document Files (PDFs). One file must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification; the other file must contain all documents required in the Appendices. Details on the content of each of the two files, as well as page limitations, are listed earlier in this section.

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Acrobat Reader software will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Acrobat Reader they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on “Applicants” at the top bar menu and select “Adobe Software Compatibility", which is listed under "Applicant Resources." The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their

version of the software by opening a test Workspace PDF form. Grants.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions for use, if an applicant is unable to open the test form.

The Adobe Software Compatibility page located on Grants.gov also provides guidance for applicants on filling out a Workspace PDF form. In addition, it addresses local network and/or computer security settings and the impact this has on use of Adobe software.

Required SFs and OMB-approved Forms
SFs and OMB-approved forms are uploaded separately at Grants.gov. These forms are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files. See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* for the listing of required SFs, OMB-approved forms, and required assurances and certifications.

Naming Application Submission Files
Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Please also see https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html.

Use only file formats supported by ACF
Applicants must submit applications using only the supported file formats listed here. While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two application submission files (Project Description and Appendices) are uploaded as PDFs in order to comply with the two-file upload limitation.** Documents in file formats that are not supported by ACF will be removed from the application and will not be used in the competitive review. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make any awards based on an incomplete application.

ACF supports the following file formats:

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

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files
If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the affected file will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This removal may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:
The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be

accepted for review. For more information on the exemption, see "*ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission'" at* www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6.

Format Requirements for Paper Applications
All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single NOFO, or multiple applications under separate NOFOs, each application submission must be packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled with the NOFO title and Funding Opportunity Number.

Applicants using paper format should download the application forms package associated with the NOFO's Synopsis on Grants.gov under the Package tab.

Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the federal government for review. **All application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes. All pages in the application submission must be sequentially numbered.**

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications
See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking an award under this funding opportunity must 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.	Required of all applicants. Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application and	See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)* for more information.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	project award period. Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at: http://www.sam.gov .	
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 the award of a grant.	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	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. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project.
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Submission is required for all applicants by the	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants must cite their primary location and up

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	application due date.	to 29 additional performance sites.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	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 the award of a grant.	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 Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

Mandatory Grant Disclosure

All applicants and recipients are required to submit, in writing, to the awarding agency and to the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG), all information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. (Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR § 75.113)

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Grants Management, ATTN: Grants Management Specialist, 330 C Street, SW., Switzer Building, Corridor 3200, Washington, DC 20201

And to:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, ATTN: Mandatory Grant Disclosures, Intake Coordinator, 330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen Building, Room 5527, Washington, DC 20201

Fax: (202) 205-0604 (Include “Mandatory Grant Disclosures” in subject line) or

Email: grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov

Non-Federal Reviewers

Since ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise

required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information. If applications are submitted electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review process.

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions
The Project Description provides the information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for financial assistance. It must address all activities for which federal funds are being requested and all application requirements as stated in this section. The Project Description must explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in *Section I. Program Description.* As a reminder, reviewers will be evaluating this section in accordance with *Section V.1. Criteria*.

The Project Description must be clear, concise, and complete. ACF is particularly interested in Project Descriptions that convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project Descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length.

Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting documents designated as required must be included 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 application project description. It must be clear, accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. The summary must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.

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.

Geographic Location
Describe the precise physical location of the project and boundaries of the area to be served by the proposed project.

Legal Status of Applicant Entity
Applicants must provide the following documentation:

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.

Objectives
Clearly state the principal and subordinate objectives of the project. Applicants must address how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of the program and describe how objectives will be achieved.

Applicants must present a clear understanding and description of the physical, economic, financial, institutional, systemic and/or other negative impacts of racial bias, disproportionality, and disparities in the child welfare system that require a solution in their community(ies). Applicants must use supporting data, including anecdotal, qualitative, quantitative, etc., to identify and define the problem that needs to be addressed and demonstrate a commitment to the involvement of families with lived experience in co-designing solutions. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the effects of systemic racism as it relates to child welfare system involvement of historically underserved and marginalized families in the targeted area.

Applicants must present a clear, appropriate, and convincing vision and short- and long-term objectives for the proposed project that includes a clear understanding of how to meet the goals of this NOFO as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Goals.*

Expected Outcomes
Identify the outcomes to be achieved from the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall program as described in *Section I. Program Description*. If research is part of the proposed work, outcomes must include hypothesized results and implications of the proposed research.

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.

Focus Area

Applicants must select a geographic area, demographic community, region, or system and describe how disproportionality, racial bias, and inequity affects families most impacted by racial disparities. Applicants must specify how they have meaningfully engaged and incorporated perspectives from community members and families and youth with lived expertise in the child welfare system in selecting the focus area(s) for project implementation. Applicants must describe how the focus area will benefit from an in-depth analysis and subsequent development of innovative strategies, or revision of existing services and activities, and include a preliminary description of the strengths and needs using relevant and available local data (e.g., child welfare administrative data, Census data, etc.). Applicants must describe the characteristics and demographic data of families and individuals living in the focus area(s); estimate the number of children, youth, and families that will be impacted; and, where relevant, the child welfare status and/or history (e.g., referrals and repeat referrals, differential response, and substantiated reports of abuse and neglect).

Applicants must provide the rationale for selecting the focus area(s) and population for project implementation, including community interest and commitment, and describe the strengths and needs of the focus area where proposed services or approaches will be offered. Applicants must provide an assessment of how the population-based services and supports will address incidences of racial bias and inequity in the target area(s) and/or communities. Applicants must describe how they have meaningfully engaged and incorporated perspectives from community members and families and youth with lived expertise in the child welfare system in selecting the focus area(s) for project implementation.

Applicants must also describe any foundational work that has taken place in the focus area(s) that supports readiness and commitment to co-design solutions to issues of inequity.

Collaboration

Applicants must demonstrate an awareness that child and family well-being for families most impacted by racial disparities is the responsibility of equitable, diverse, and culturally competent systems and the community. A key component of this effort is field-initiated collaboration and community-driven solutions that are co-designed and co-led by youth and families with lived expertise. Applicants must describe efforts to establish and cultivate a shared vision, build strategic coordination, and employ a willingness to share power as part of an improved child welfare system void of inequitable practices, policies, and racial bias.

Collaboration activities may include, but are not limited to, the following: defining the strengths and needs of the focus area; building cross-agency partnerships; ongoing coordination and consultation; sharing power and information; coordinating programming and reporting requirements with a focus on enhancing equitable conditions; and sharing data.

Applicants must describe collaboration activities and identify the benefits of collaborative work

among community-based agencies, cross-agency partners, the child welfare system, other relevant community partners, and families and youth with lived expertise. Applicants must demonstrate how the strengths and needs identified by the community will be incorporated into solutions and how collaboration may evolve as the planning and implementation process progresses.

Applicants must provide letters of support from each cross-agency partner that demonstrate their commitment to a shared vision and a willingness to coordinate and share data to meet project goals. See *Section IV.2., Project Description, Letters of Support.*

Project Activities and Strategies

Applicants must provide data to demonstrate and describe how racial bias and inequity in the child welfare system has impacted their community. Applicants must clearly describe the proposed project strategies, processes, and activities that will be implemented and explain why they have been selected. Applicants must describe a plan to impact change within the child welfare system and target proposed strategies to a specific point(s) on the child welfare continuum to address racial bias and inequity.

Applicants must demonstrate that project activities and strategies will be based on and informed by community-identified needs of the focus area for project implementation and address racial bias and inequity. Applicants must describe how projects will employ strategies that are culturally responsive, community-driven, and support families that live in traditionally underserved communities to reduce disproportionality, racial bias, and inequity. Strategies and activities should be designed to promote family resiliency, reduce unnecessary system involvement, and decrease disparities and inequities.

Applicants must provide clear and reasonable plans to meet each of the project goals as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Goals*.

Planning Period

Applicants must provide a clear and reasonable plan to utilize the 6-month planning period as described in *Section I. Program Description, Planning Period* and describe how they will engage the support of CB and CB's TA provider(s).

Applicants must include how they plan to continue meaningful engagement with youth and families with lived child welfare experience and integrate their expertise throughout the planning period and beyond. The description must include how applicants plan to use this time to enhance or develop a project structure and how they plan to allocate sufficient resources to continue community-level needs assessments, identification of system gaps and inefficiencies, and further refine strategies to address racial bias and inequity.

Project Timeline and Milestones

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections (for the entire project period) of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity, in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. Data may be organized and

presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

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

- Organizational charts.
- Resumes.
- Curricula Vitae (CV).
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description).
- College transcripts for graduate student research fellows.
- 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.
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's personnel policies.

In demonstrating organizational capacity, applicants must provide information about the following:

- Evidence that the organization has knowledge of the impacts of historical racism, systemic barriers, overrepresentation, racial bias and inequity, and provides examples of past experience addressing these issues.
- Evidence of the leadership, staff, and partner commitment, capacity, and infrastructure that is necessary to design and/or enhance cross-agency efforts to support a comprehensive community-based support system for families from traditionally underserved communities impacted by racial bias and inequity.
- Evidence that the organization has a deep understanding of community context, mutual trust, and plans for open communication.
- Evidence of existing partnerships or plans to partner and share power with community organizations, members, and youth/families with lived expertise.
- A detailed management plan that clearly describes the timeline, management, and coordination of activities carried out by the applicant, key partners (including those with lived expertise), subcontractors, consultants, and internal and external TA providers, if applicable, to ensure achievement of the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget.

If known at the time of application submission, the applicant must disclose their intent to enter into subaward arrangements in their application. Applicants are encouraged to enter into

subaward arrangements with community-based organizations. For each proposed subaward, the applicant must include a description of the work to be performed by the 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, 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 resulting information will be used to inform improvement of funded activities; and any processes that support the overall data quality of the performance outcomes.

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.

Applicants must describe a clear plan for a project-specific process and outcome evaluation, or the development of an evaluation plan, that is co-designed with families and communities and addresses racial bias, inequity, and families' experiences at a selected point(s) on the child welfare continuum. If an applicant intends to work with a third-party evaluator, the applicant must include sufficient information in their submission to demonstrate how the proposed work will be evaluated and a plan to finalize the evaluation plan during the planning period. At a minimum, applicants must describe their intent to implement an evaluation plan that measures progress and, to the extent applicable based on the goals and objectives of the proposed project, identify evidence of the project's impact and outcomes. While the applicant must include sufficient information in their submission to demonstrate how the proposed work will be evaluated, they may also include a plan to finalize details of the evaluation plan during the planning period after award.

Applicants must describe how their plan for evaluation will answer the following questions:

1. What strategies, activities, and/or policy/practice innovations were implemented?
2. Were the strategies, activities, and/or policy/practice innovations implemented as intended?
3. To what extent did the strategies, activities, and/or policy/practice innovations reduce incidences of disproportionality, inequity, and racial bias along the child welfare continuum?
4. What strategies, activities, and/or policy/practice innovations did the project deliver to families, communities, and program staff?
5. What steps did sites take to support the continuation of the strategies, activities, and/or policy/practice innovations beyond the life of the current project period?
6. What short-term effects did the strategies, activities, and/or policy/practice innovations have on the identified outcomes?

7. What effects did the strategies, activities, and/or programs have on the identified intermediate- and long-term outcomes (e.g., changes in systems' infrastructure, policies and practices, and/or families who receive grant-supported activities)?

Applicants must propose a plan to collect data that will examine how the strategies, activities, or policy/program innovations are implemented. Projects must identify reliable primary or secondary data sources for the collection of baseline and follow-up comparison data. Applicants must provide a data security plan outlining how sensitive information will be collected and safeguarded (see *Section IV. Application and Submission Information, Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information* for additional information*).* If applicable, applicants may propose a plan for working with a third-party evaluator to develop a collection plan.

Applicants must describe a plan for evaluation that will document and track intermediate outcomes linked to the intended outcomes (e.g., changes in norms and values). The plan must specifically assess the impact on the child welfare system (e.g., staff training), cross-agency collaboration and coordination, and community engagement and experience. Applicants must present a realistic plan for using evaluation findings to produce ongoing documentation of project activities and results. The plan must describe a plan for continuous quality improvement (CQI) and include performance feedback and periodic assessment of program progress that can serve as a basis for program adjustments. The applicant's plan for evaluation must demonstrate an understanding of each stage of evaluation that will take place while evaluating their funded efforts, from determining evaluation priorities, to deciding the evaluation design, to collecting data, to analysis, and then to interpretation and dissemination. The applicant must include sufficient information to demonstrate how the proposed work will be evaluated but may continue to finalize the evaluation plan during the planning period following grant award.

Skilled Evaluator

Applicants must either demonstrate sufficient in-house capacity to conduct an objective and robust process and outcome evaluation, or provide a sound plan for working with a third-party evaluator who has the experience and capacity to run an evaluation of this depth and breadth. Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed evaluator has sufficient experience with research and/or evaluation, understands the population of interest, and has experience in obtaining and analyzing relevant community-level and child welfare data. Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed evaluator has experience with successfully implementing human services evaluations utilizing research designs similar to the proposed effort, developing logic models, and designing an evaluation strategy that is appropriate, given the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Applicants must also describe a plan for the applicant and the evaluator to work collaboratively with CB and CB's designated evaluation TA provider(s) to establish targets for the identified outcomes and conduct site-specific activities during the planning period and throughout implementation.

Logic Model

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their projects. A logic model is a diagram that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the links among program elements. Logic models must target the identified objectives and goals of the

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

- Inputs (e.g., additional resources, organizational profile, collaborative partner(s), key staff, budget);
- Target population (e.g., the individuals to be served, identified needs);
- Activities, Mechanisms, Processes (e.g., evidence-based practices, best practices, approach, key intervention and evaluation components, continuous quality improvement efforts);
- Outputs (i.e., the immediate and direct results of program activities);
- Outcomes (i.e., the expected short and long-term results the project is designed to achieve, typically described as changes in people or systems), and
- Goals of the project (e.g., overarching objectives, reasons for proposing the project).

Applicants will be required to describe the plan to work with their designated evaluator to develop or refine a logic model during the planning period. See Change and Implementation in Practice: Monitoring, Evaluating, and Applying Findings Brief and theLogic Model Builder for more information about how to develop a logic model.

Project Sustainability Plan
Applicants must propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. Recipients are expected to sustain key elements of their grant projects, e.g., strategies or services and interventions, which have been effective in improving practices and outcomes.

Describe the approach to project sustainability that will be most effective and feasible. Provide a description of key individuals and/or organizations whose support will be required. Address the types of alternative support that will be required to maintain the program. If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how their cooperation and/or collaboration will be maintained after the end of federal funding.

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
Provide a description of how protected personally identifiable information 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.

Dissemination Plan
Applicants must propose a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or grant project outputs so that project information is provided to key target audiences. Dissemination plans must include:

- Dissemination goals and objectives;
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences;
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes;
- A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended, and

- The timeline for dissemination.

Third-Party Agreements

Third-party agreements include Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Letters of Commitment. Letters of Commitment and MOUs must both 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. The Letters of Commitment and MOUs 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 to be third-party agreements.

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment or MOUs 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 successful applicant is awarded the grant.

Collaboration/consortia applicants must provide Letters of Commitment or MOUs identifying the primary applicant and all collaborators that are responsible for project activities.

Letters of Support
Provide statements from community, public, and/or commercial leaders that support the project proposed for funding. All submissions must be included in the application package. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the individual writing the letter, the organization they represent, the date, and reason(s) for supporting the project.

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 budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form. 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.

Special Note: *The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2022 and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this funding opportunity*

may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. For the Executive Level II salary, 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 for the initial budget period only (typically the first 12 months of the project) using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable. Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for only the first budget period 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.

Funds for evaluation must appear in the budget. Applicants must state the percentage of the total budget that will be allocated to evaluation and provide a rationale showing that the budgeted amount is sufficient to conduct the proposed evaluation, including the required activities as listed in *Section IV.2., Project Description, Evaluation.*

Applicants must allocate sufficient funds in their budgets to support the following required travel: a) within 3 months after the award, the Project Director, Evaluator, and/or key staff must attend a 2-day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC; and b) the project director, evaluator, and/or key staff must attend the annual grantee meeting, usually held in the spring in Washington, DC. In the event of an extension of the public health emergency due to COVID-19 or any other national emergency, these meetings may be held virtually. Applicants should specify in their budget funds for technology to assist in attending virtual meetings, such as software, cameras, computers, and other needs.

For applicants proposing to use subaward(s), if the total amount budgeted for subawards exceeds 50 percent of total direct costs for the budget period, the applicant must provide a justification for subawarding the portion of the project and must explain how the prime recipient plans to maintain a substantive role in the project. Applicants must explain why the participation of the subrecipient is necessary and why the applicant cannot achieve the objectives without the subrecipient(s)' participation.

General

Use the following guidelines for preparing the project budget and budget justification. The budget justification includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail. Applications should only include allowable costs in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages. See 45 CFR § 75.430 for more information on allowable personnel costs. Do not include the personnel costs of consultants, contractors and subrecipients under this category.

Justification: For each position, provide: the name of the individual (if known), their title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-

time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application.

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees in addition to regular salaries and wages. For more information on Fringe Benefits please refer to 45 CFR § 75.431. Do not include the fringe benefits of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients.

Typically, fringe benefit amounts are determined by applying a calculated rate for a particular class of employee (full-time or part-time) to the salary and wages requested. Fringe rates are often specified in the approved indirect cost rate agreement. Fringe benefits may be treated as a direct cost or indirect cost in accordance with the applicant's accounting practices. Only fringe benefits as a direct cost should be entered under this category.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act taxes, retirement, taxes, etc.

Travel

Description: Costs of project-related travel (i.e., transportation, lodging, subsistence) by employees of the applicant organization who are in travel status on official business. Travel by non-employees such as consultants, contractors or subrecipients should be included under the Contractual line item. Local travel for employees in non-travel status should be listed on the Other line. Travel costs should be developed in accordance with the applicant's travel policies and 45 CFR § 75.474.

Justification: For each trip show: the total number of travelers; travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used to travel out of town; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key project staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops/conferences/recipient orientations should be detailed in the budget justification.

Equipment

Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) $5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in, or excluded from, acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.) See 45 CFR §75.439 for more information.

Justification: For each type of equipment requested provide: a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use on the project; as well as use and/or disposition of the equipment after the project ends.

Supplies

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property, other than included under the Equipment category. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than $5,000. See 45 CFR § 75.453 for more information.

Justification: Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

Contractual

Description: Cost of all contracts and subawards except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contract or subawards with secondary recipient organizations (with budget detail), including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. Costs related to individual consultants should be listed on the Other line. Recipients are required to use 45 CFR §§ 75.326-.340 procurement procedures, and subawards are subject to the requirements at 45 CFR §§ 75.351-.353.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Applicants must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold stated in 48 CFR § 2.101(b). Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

Indicate whether the proposed agreement qualifies as a subaward or contract in accordance with 45 CFR § 75.351. Provide the name of the contractor/subrecipient (if known), a description of anticipated services, a justification for why they are necessary, a breakdown of estimated costs, and an explanation of the selection process. In addition, for subawards, the applicant must 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.

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel, insurance, food (when allowable), 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. Please note costs must be allowable per 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

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

Indirect Charges

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category has one of two methods that an applicant can select. An applicant may only select one.

1. The applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by HHS or another cognizant federal agency.

   Justification: An applicant must enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. If the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed. Choosing to charge a lower rate will not be considered during the objective review or award selection process.

2. Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f) Indirect (F&A) costs, "any non-Federal entity [i.e., applicant] that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, ... may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in Section 75.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as the non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time."

   Justification: This method only applies to applicants that have never received an approved negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposal may request the 10 percent *de minimis* rate. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424. This line should be used to indicate required and/or voluntary committed cost sharing or matching, if applicable.

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 of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching or cost sharing by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources (at or above the statutory requirement) in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching or cost sharing amount (and any voluntary committed amount in excess) may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, recipients are not expected to provide cost sharing or matching. However, recipients are allowed to voluntarily propose a commitment of non-federal resources. If an applicant decides to voluntarily contribute non-federal resources towards project costs and the costs are accepted by ACF, the non-federal resources will be included in the approved project budget. The applicant will be held accountable for all proposed non-federal resources as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to meet the voluntary amount of non-federal resources that was accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that was identified in the approved 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.**

Justification: If an applicant is relying on cost share or match from a third-party, then a firm commitment of these resources (letter(s) or other documentation) is required to be submitted with the application. Detailed budget information must be provided for every funding source identified in Item 18. "Estimated Funding ($)" on the SF-424.

Applicants are required to fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions they propose in order to meet a matching requirement. Applicants are also required to provide documentation in their applications on the sources of funding or contribution(s). In-kind contributions must be accompanied by a justification of how the stated valuation was determined. Matching or cost sharing must be documented by budget period (or by project period for fully funded awards).

Applications that lack the required supporting documentation will not be disqualified from competitive review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity.

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 03/31/2025. 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

Electronic Submission via Grants.gov

This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for ACF program applications. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic Delivery

ACF is participating in the Grants.gov initiative to provide the grant community with a single site to find and apply for funding opportunities. ACF applicants are required to submit their applications online through Grants.gov.

How to Register and Apply through Grants.gov

Read the following instructions about registering to apply for ACF funds. Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

Organizations must have an active System for Award (SAM) registration which provides a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and Grants.gov account to apply for grants.

Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but SAM registration may take several weeks. Therefore, an organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact the entities ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

***Register with SAM*:** All organizations (entities) applying online through Grants.gov must register with SAM. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. For detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

***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*:** A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant). If you work for or consult with multiple organizations, you can have a profile for each organization under one Grants.gov account. In such cases, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all your grant profiles. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the UEI for the organization in the UEI field. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html

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 in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been assigned the AOR role. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html

***Track Role Status*:** To track your role request, refer to:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html

When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role; this step is often missed and is crucial for valid and timely submissions.

How to Submit an Application to ACF via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each NOFO, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

For an overview of applying on Grants.gov using Workspaces, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

***Create a Workspace*:** Creating a workspace allows you to complete an application online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

***Complete a Workspace*:** Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

***Adobe Reader*:** If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drive(s), then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html

***Mandatory Fields in Forms*:** In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

***Complete SF-424 Fields First*:** These forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and SAM UEI. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

***Submit a Workspace*:** An application may be submitted through Workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

***Track a Workspace*:** After successfully submitting a Workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html

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 the specific funding opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

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

All applications must be received by 11:59 pm ET on the due date established for each program. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgment of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ACF successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submission, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

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

Applicants with slow internet connections should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Therefore, applicants should allow enough time to prepare and submit the application before the package closing date.

Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received submission message in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role.

Issues with Federal Systems

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

To request an exemption from required electronic submission, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission" document for complete guidance.

Paper Format Application Submission

An exemption is required for the submission of paper applications. See the preceding section on "*Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.*"

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application

must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* of this funding opportunity for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 pm ET on the due date.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times* in this funding opportunity.

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

All applicants must have a UEI and an active registration with SAM (https://www.sam.gov) prior to applying to a funding opportunity.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, the SAM registration must be active throughout the life of the award. Your SAM registration must be renewed every 365 days to keep it active.

Plan ahead. Allow at least 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM and at least an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems, i.e., Grants.gov.

This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application through Grants.gov or prevent the award of a grant. Applicants should maintain documentation (with dates) of their efforts to request a UEI, register for, or renew a registration, at SAM.

Please see the "Help" tab at https://sam.gov/content/help for more information and assistance with this process.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal grant funds from any HHS Agency to:

- Be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration by an OPDIV;
- Provide its UEI in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV; and
- Ensure any proposed subrecipient(s) have obtained and provided to the recipient their UEI(s) prior to making any subawards (**Note:** Subrecipients are not required to complete full SAM registration.).

ACF is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. At the time an award is ready to be made, if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements, ACF:

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and
- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

07/31/2023

Due Date for Applications

07/31/2023

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* section and in this section. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Electronic Applications

The deadline for submission of electronic applications via Grants.gov is 11:59 pm ET on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 am ET on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically via Grants.gov unless they received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.*

ACF does not accommodate transmission of applications by email or facsimile.

Instructions for electronic submission via Grants.gov are available at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

Applications submitted to Grants.gov at any time during the open application period prior to the due date and time that fail the Grants.gov validation check will not be received at ACF. These applications will not be acknowledged.

Mailed Paper Format Applications

The deadline for receipt of mailed, paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date. Mailed paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

Hand-delivered applications must be received on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 am ET and 4:30 pm ET Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays).

Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

Hand-delivered paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Hand-delivered paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

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

- Applications submitted electronically via Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 pm ET on the due date.
- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Paper format applications received from applicant organizations that were not approved for an exemption from required electronic application submission under the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Submission* will be disqualified.

Emergency Extensions
ACF may extend an application due date when circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit their applications on time. Only events such as documented natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc.), or a verifiable widespread disruption of electrical service, or mail service, will be considered. The determination to extend or waive the due date, and/or receipt time, requirements in an emergency situation rests with the Grants Management Officer listed as the Office of Grants Management Contact in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)*.

Acknowledgement of Received Application

Acknowledgement from Grants.gov

Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to Grants.gov. This email will provide a **Grants.gov Tracking Number**. Applicants should refer to this tracking number in all communication with Grants.gov. The email will also provide a **date and time stamp**, which serves as the official record of the application's submission**.** Receipt of this email does not indicate that the application is accepted or that it has passed the validation check.

Applicants will also receive an email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process**, after which a third email is sent with the information that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, the series of checks and validations.

Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged by ACF.

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

Applicants will be sent additional email(s) from ACF acknowledging that the application has been retrieved from Grants.gov by ACF. Receipt of these emails is not an indication that the application is accepted for competition.

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:
ACF will not provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

This program is not subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," or 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." No action is required of applicants under this funding opportunity with regard to E.O. 12372.

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable. Fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting the Federal program objectives are allowable with prior written approval from the Federal awarding agency. (45 CFR § 75.442)

Proposal costs are the costs of preparing bids, proposals, or applications on potential Federal and non-Federal awards or projects, including the development of data necessary to support the non-Federal entity's bids or proposals. Proposal costs of the current accounting period of both successful and unsuccessful bids and proposals normally should be treated as indirect (F&A) costs and allocated currently to all activities of the non-Federal entity. No proposal costs of past accounting periods will be allocable to the current period. (45 CFR § 75.460)

Pre-award costs are not allowable.

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.

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. Also see *ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6*.

Submission by Mail
CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
ATTN: HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CA-0020
6000 Executive Boulevard
Suite 410
Rockville
MD
20852

Hand Delivery
Same as Above

Electronic Submission
See *Section IV.2.* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via Grants.gov.

For all submissions, see *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: With the exception of the notice of funding opportunity and relevant statutes and regulations, reviewers must not access, or review, any materials that are not part of the application documents. This includes information accessible on websites via hyperlinks that are referenced, or embedded, in the application. Though an application may include web links, or embedded hyperlinks, reviewers must not review this information as it is not considered to be part of the application documents. Nor will the information on websites be taken into consideration in scoring of evaluation criteria presented in this section. Reviewers must evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and must not refer to, or access, external links during the objective review.

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. The corresponding point values indicate the relative importance placed on each review criterion. 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 objective 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.

Objectives and Need for Assistance **Maximum Points:** 20

In reviewing the objectives and need for assistance, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant:

1. Clearly states the fundamental objectives of the project and how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of the program.
2. Uses relevant local data to present a clear understanding and description of the physical, economic, financial, institutional, systemic and/or other negative impacts of racial bias, disproportionality, and disparities in the child welfare system that require a solution in their community(ies).
3. Comprehensively demonstrates an understanding of the effects of systemic racism and inequity as it relates to child welfare involvement of historically underserved and marginalized families in their community.
4. Presents a clear, appropriate, and convincing vision for the proposed project that includes a commitment to co-designing solutions with families with lived expertise to meet the goals of this NOFO as described in *Section I. Program Description, Project Goals*.
5. Describes the characteristics and demographic data of families and individuals living in the focus area(s); estimates the number of children, youth, and families that will be impacted; and, where relevant, describes the child welfare status and/or history.

Approach **Maximum Points:** 40

In reviewing the approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant completes the following:

1. The applicant proposes a clear, convincing, and sound technical approach to establish an unbiased, equitable child welfare system that meets project goals, as described in *Section I., Program Description, Project Goals.*

2. Presents a convincing rationale for choosing the identified focus area(s) and population for project implementation with a focus on traditionally underserved communities impacted by racial bias and inequity. Rationale must include a description of the strengths and needs of the focus area(s) and population with input from communities and families with lived expertise.
3. Presents a well-defined description of the proposed project to address racial bias and inequity in the child welfare system through building new and innovative solutions or enhancing existing efforts that are based on and informed by community-identified strengths and needs.
4. Presents a distinct plan and process for cultivating a common vision, strategic coordination, and a willingness to share power and responsibility across relevant cross-agency partnerships and families.
5. Clearly articulates a strong and achievable plan and justification to target strategies, processes, and activities at a specific point(s) along the child welfare continuum.
6. Clearly describes how project will employ strategies that are culturally responsive, community-driven, and support families that live in traditionally underserved communities to reduce disproportionality, racial bias, and inequity.
7. Presents a clear and practical description of how the project will change child welfare norms and values, build trust and confidence, address bias in decision making, and improve families' experience of the child welfare system.
8. Describes collaboration activities and identifies the benefits of collaborative work among community-based agencies, cross-agency partners, the child welfare system, other relevant community partners and families and youth with lived experience; and provides letters of support from these entities that demonstrate a shared vision.
9. Clearly describe how they will continue meaningful engagement with youth and families with lived child welfare experience and integrate their expertise throughout the planning period and beyond.
10. Presents a distinct and reasonable timeline that demonstrates an understanding of how to use the Planning Period effectively and efficiently to refine their proposed project plan with the assistance and support of CB and CB's TA provider(s).
11. Presents a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or grant project outputs so that project information is provided to key target audiences as described in *Section IV.2., Project Description, Dissemination Plan.*
12. Clearly articulates an effective and feasible plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends as described in *Section 1V.2., Project Description, Project Sustainability Plan.*

Evaluation **Maximum Points:** 20

In reviewing the evaluation, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant:

1. Presents a clear plan for a project-specific process and outcome evaluation that measures both participant-level and systems-level outcomes, or develops an evaluation plan that is co-designed with families and communities and addresses the research questions listed in *Section IV.2., Project Description, Program Performance Evaluation Plan;* or includes a plan to finalize details of the evaluation plan during the planning period after award.

2. Provides a preliminary logic model that is consistent with the intent of the project.
3. Provides preliminary data to demonstrate and describe how racial bias and inequity in the child welfare system has impacted their community.
4. Proposes an initial plan to collect data that will examine how the strategies, activities, or policy/program innovations are implemented.
5. Describes any potential barriers for implementing the evaluation plan and how those barriers will be addressed.
6. Proposes descriptions of the inputs, key activities, and expected outcomes of the funded activities and describes a plan for CQI that uses the resulting information to inform improvement or adjustments of funded activities.
7. Demonstrates sufficient in-house capacity to conduct an objective and robust process and outcome evaluation using community-based participatory methods or provides a sound plan for contracting with a third-party evaluator who has the experience and capacity to run an evaluation of this depth and breadth.
8. Presents a realistic plan for using evaluation findings to produce ongoing documentation of project activities and results.

Organizational Capacity **Maximum Points:** 15

In reviewing the organizational capacity, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant:

1. Demonstrates evidence of a knowledge base around historical racism, systemic barriers, overrepresentation of historically underserved families in systems, racial bias and inequity, and provides examples of experience in addressing these issues.
2. Describes existing partnerships or plans to partner with community organizations, members, and youth and families with lived expertise.
3. Provides evidence of the leadership, staff, and partner commitment, capacity, and infrastructure that is necessary to implement the proposed project, including an understanding of community context, mutual trust, and plans for open communication.
4. Details a sound organizational chart and management plan that clearly describes the management and coordination of activities carried out by the applicant, key partners, subcontractors, consultants, and internal and external TA providers, if applicable, to ensure achievement of objectives.
5. Describes the roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including partners, consultants, and subrecipients (e.g., job descriptions).
6. Describes a plan to enter into a subaward arrangement with community-based organizations, and a description of the work to be performed by the subrecipient.

Budget and Budget Justification **Maximum Points:** 5

In reviewing the budget and budget justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant:

1. Presents the costs of the proposed project as reasonable in view of the activities to be conducted and the expected results.
2. Presents the percentage of the total budget that will be allocated to evaluation and provides a rationale showing that the budgeted amount is sufficient to conduct the

proposed evaluation, including the required activities as listed in *Section IV.2., Project Description, Evaluation*.

3. Details reasonable costs associated with travel for the Project Director, Evaluator, and one or two key staff (e.g. representatives from partnering agencies) to attend the kick- off and annual grantee meetings in Washington, DC.

Bonus Points **Maximum Points:** 10

In reviewing the justification for bonus points and priority consideration, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant:

1. Convincingly describes how being a culturally specific organization (or funding the culturally specific subrecipient organization(s)) will enhance their ability to implement the proposed project(s). This description must specify which culturally specific populations are expected to be served under the proposed project(s).
2. Describes plans to expand innovative partnerships with culturally specific organizations to enhance their ability to implement the proposed project.
3. The applicant provides a strong and achievable plan demonstrating how they will meaningfully and ethically engage a culturally specific organization in project activities in accordance with *Section I. Program Description.*

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this funding opportunity on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant that does not have a UEI and an active SAM registration. See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)*.

Initial ACF Screening

Each application will be screened to determine whether it meets any of the disqualification factors described in *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Disqualified applications are considered to be "non-responsive" and are excluded from the competitive review process. 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.

Objective Review and Results

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include three reviewers and one chairperson.

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process. If identified in *Section I. Program Description*, ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund

organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. In addition, ACF reserves the right to evaluate applications in the larger context of the overall portfolio by considering geographic distribution of federal funds (e.g., ensuring coverage of states, counties, or service areas) in its pre-award decisions.

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. In addition, ACF may elect to not allow a prime recipient to subaward if there is any indication that they are unable to properly monitor and manage subrecipients.

Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested.

ACF may elect to give priority consideration to applicants that have proposed innovative efforts to serve traditionally underserved and overrepresented communities and that are in alignment with demonstrating meaningful and ethical partnerships with culturally specific organizations that enhance their ability to implement proposed projects.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), www.fapiis.gov/, 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.

Non-Federal Reviewers Reference
Please refer to *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* of this funding opportunity for information on non-federal reviewers in the review process.

Approved but Unfunded Applications
Applications recommended for approval in the objective review process, but not selected for award may receive funding if additional funds become available in the current Fiscal Year. For those applications determined as “approved but unfunded,” notice will be given of the determination 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 sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. 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.
Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. 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.

Information on allowable pre-award costs and the time period under which they may be incurred is available in *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions,* if applicable. Project costs that are incurred prior to the receipt of the NoA are at the recipient's risk.

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 issued under this funding opportunity are subject to 45 CFR Part 75 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards currently in effect or implemented during the period of award, other 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. Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are available at: www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements.

An application funded with the release of federal funds through a grant award does not constitute or imply compliance with federal regulations. Funded organizations are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations.

Please review all HHS regulatory provisions for Termination at 2 CFR § 200.340.

HHS Grants Policy Statement
The HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services' single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. ACF grant awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS GPS, which covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. The general terms and conditions in the HHS GPS will apply as indicated unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary that are specified in the NoA. The HHS GPS is available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/discretionary-post-award-requirements#book_content_0.

Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations

A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the federal government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom, nondiscrimination, and conscience protections in federal law, including the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (42 U.S.C. 2000bb *et seq.*), the Coats-Snowe Amendment (42 U.S.C. 238n), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e–1(a) and 2000e–2(e)), Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12113(d)(2), section 1553 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18113), the Weldon Amendment (e.g., Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, Public Law 116–94, 133 Stat. 2534, 2607, div. A, sec. 507(d) (Dec. 20, 2019)), or any related or similar federal laws or regulations. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

Consistent with 45 CFR § 87.3(b), a faith-based organization that receives direct financial assistance from HHS may not engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the HHS awarding agency. Such an organization, whether faith-based or not, also shall not, in providing services funded by HHS, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice, as provided in 45 CFR § 87.3(d).

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports:
Semi-Annually

Reporting Requirements

Recipients under this funding opportunity will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting requirements is available on the ACF website at www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-2.

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

Financial Reports:
Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Tracy Fields
CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
6000 Executive Boulevard
Suite 410
Rockville
MD

20852
888-203-6161
CB@grantreview.org

Office of Grants Management Contact
Bridget Shea Westfall
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Administration
Office of Grants Management
CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410
Rockville
MD
20852
888-203-6161
CB@grantreview.org

Federal Relay Service:
Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

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 "How To Apply For A Grant" 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 www.grants.gov/ web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html.

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

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

Roberts, Dorothy. 2022, *Torn Apart: How the Child Welfare System Destroys Black Families and How Abolition Can Build a Safer World (pp. 75-80),* First edition, Basic Books.

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021). *Child welfare practice to address racial disproportionality*
and disparity. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families,
Children's Bureau. https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/racial-disproportionality/

Alan J. Dettlaff et al., It Is Not a Broken System, It Is a System That Needs to Be Broken: The upEND Movement to Abolish the Child Welfare System, 14 J. Pub. Child Welfare 500, 508-513 (2020);

Dorothy Roberts, Abolishing Policing Also Means Abolishing Family Regulation, The Imprint (June 16, 2020), https://imprintnews.org/child-welfare-2/abolishing-policing-also-means-abolishing-family-regulation/44480

Alan Dettlaff et al., What It Means to Abolish Child Welfare As We Know It, The Imprint (October 14, 2020), https://imprintnews.org/race/what-means

Adoption Triad, April 2022, *Addressing Racial Disproportionality and Disparity*, https://www.childwelfare.gov/news-events/adoptiontriad/editions/apr2022/.

K.J. Conron & B.D.M. Wilson (2019). Executive Summary. In K. J. Conron & B. D. M. Wilson (Eds.), A Research Agenda to Reduce System Involvement and Promote Positive Outcomes with LGBTQ Youth of Color Impacted by the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems (pp. 4-5). Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute.

Harold E. Briggs & Kimberly Hoyt (2019). LGBTQ Youth of Color in Systems. In K. J. Conron & B. D. M. Wilson (Eds.), A Research Agenda to Reduce System Involvement and Promote Positive Outcomes with LGBTQ Youth of Color Impacted by the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems (pp. 45-46). Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute.

Puzzanchera, C., & Taylor, M. (2020). Disproportionality rates for children of color in foster care dashboard. National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Application Checklist

Applicants may use this checklist as a guide when preparing an application package.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* 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 *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)* in the funding opportunity. To obtain a UEI and SAM registration, go to http://www.sam.gov.	A UEI and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
		application and project award period.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* 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.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Table of Contents	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.*	Submit with the application by the due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Project Summary	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.*	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview*

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	The Project Summary is limited to one single-spaced page.	and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity*.	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the application due date and time listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4.* of the NOFO. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications*.	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 *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.	Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C. Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
The Project Description	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4.*

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
		Submission Dates and Times.