



Office of Community Services
Division of Community Assistance

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Essentials for Improved Outcomes

Opportunity number: HHS-2026-ACF-OCS-ET-0030



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Before you begin

If you believe you are a good candidate for this funding opportunity, secure your [SAM.gov](#) and [Grants.gov](#) registrations now. If you are already registered, make sure your registrations are active and up to date.

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

You must have an active Grants.gov registration. Doing so requires a Login.gov registration as well.

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Apply by the application due date

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, August 24, 2026.



To help you find what you need, this NOFO uses internal links. In Adobe Reader, you can go back to where you were by pressing Alt + Left Arrow (Windows) or Command + Left Arrow (Mac) on your keyboard.



Step 1:

Review the Opportunity

In this step

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Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Office of Community Services

Division of Community Assistance

Strengthening understanding of CSBG requirements, critical program elements, and compliance, to increase the impact of CSBG.

Summary

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Essentials for Improved Outcomes will support a national competition to identify one organization to help states, tribes, territories, and eligible entities:

- Strengthen their understanding of CSBG statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Enhance their implementation of critical program elements. Examples include:
 - A community needs assessment.
 - A tripartite board.
 - Monitoring and reporting compliance.
- Support the coordination and development of additional anti-poverty resources that support the overall administration of CSBG.

Strengthening capacity to navigate complex systems is critical to successful CSBG administration. By fostering collaboration and service models for navigating systems like foster care, behavioral health, housing, and other public assistances, recipients can ensure children and families receive specialized support for building stable, permanent environments.



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

Key facts

Opportunity name:
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Essentials for Improved Outcomes

Opportunity number:
HHS-2026-ACF-OCS-ET-0030

Federal assistance listing:
93.569

NOFO version:
Original

Key dates

Application submission deadline:
August 24, 2026

Expected project start date:
September 30, 2026

See [intergovernmental review](#) for other submission processes that may apply to this NOFO.

Funding details

Type: Cooperative agreement

Expected total program funding: \$600,000

Total expected awards: 1

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): \$600,000

Maximum award amount for the first budget period (award ceiling): \$600,000

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

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

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

As prescribed by Section 678A(c)(2) of the CSBG Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 9913(c)(2)), eligible applicants are CSBG-eligible entities, or statewide or local organizations or associations, with demonstrated expertise in providing training to individuals and organizations on methods of effectively addressing the needs of low-income families and communities.

Any subrecipient(s) must meet these eligibility requirements.

Other eligibility criteria

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships), federal entities, and foreign entities are not eligible to apply.

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

Disqualifying factors

We will review your application to make sure it meets these responsiveness requirements.

We won't consider an application that:

- Requests funding above the [award ceiling](#).
- Is submitted after the [deadline](#).
- Is from an individual (including a sole proprietorship), a federal entity, or a foreign entity.
- Is received in paper format that didn't have a previously approved exemption from ACF.

Application limits

If you submit the same application more than once under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), we will only acknowledge the last on-time submission.

Cost sharing

This program has no cost-sharing requirement, meaning you do not need to contribute to the costs of this project.

Post-award requirements

Before you apply, make sure you understand the requirements that come with an award.

See [Step 6: Learn What Happens After Award](#) for information on regulations that apply, reporting, and more.

If you choose to include cost-sharing funds, we won't consider it during review. If you receive an award, we will include your voluntary commitment in the award, and you must report on the funds. If you don't provide your promised amount, we may have to decrease your award amount or use other enforcement actions.

Statutory authority

Sections 674(b)(2)(A) and 678A of the CSBG Act, as amended ([42 U.S.C. 9903\(b\)\(2\)\(A\)](#) and [9913](#)).

Agency priorities

Required alignment with ACF vision, mission, values, priorities, and guiding principles

The recipient of this award must implement any funds awarded under this NOFO to effectuate program goals or agency priorities in accordance with [ACF's vision, mission, values, priorities, & guiding principles](#) when authorized. Funded activities must advance ACF's vision of resilient, safe, healthy, and economically secure children, youth, families, and communities, and support ACF's mission to foster health and well-being through effective, accountable, and compassionate human services when awarded in any programs that authorize these priorities.

Consistent with ACF's values, in carrying out any project that is funded under this NOFO, the recipient is required to adhere to the following principle:

1. **Program integrity and fiscal stewardship:** Administer funds in accordance with all applicable federal statutes, regulations, and award conditions; maintain strong internal controls; and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

The recipient is also required to adhere to the following principles when consistent with the authority and scope of the award and its activities:

2. **Evidence-based and outcome-focused practices:** Design and deliver services using evidence-based or evidence-informed approaches, establish measurable performance goals, and use data to monitor outcomes and drive continuous improvement.
3. **Partnership and local leadership:** Coordinate with state, tribal, territorial, local, and community partners, as appropriate, and tailor services to meet community-identified needs while respecting local decision-making authority.

In addition, in keeping with ACF's priorities, the recipient must administer any project that is awarded under this NOFO in accordance with the following objectives when consistent with the scope of the award and its activities in programs that are authorized to advance them:

4. **Family stability and child well-being:** Strengthen families, promote safe and stable home environments, and improve outcomes for children and youth through prevention-focused and developmentally appropriate services.
5. **Work, self-sufficiency, and economic mobility:** Support pathways to employment, job retention, and economic independence for individuals and

families, including through workforce development, education, and supportive services.

6. **High-quality early care and learning:** Where applicable, invest in high-quality early childhood programs that support school readiness, healthy development, and long-term success.

The recipient must demonstrate ongoing compliance with these values and priorities, in all programs that are authorized to advance them, through program design, implementation, reporting, and evaluation. Failure to meaningfully align funded activities with the applicable requirements may result in corrective action, additional reporting requirements, or other enforcement actions consistent with federal grant regulations found at 2 CFR Part 200 and the terms and conditions of this award.

Program description

Background

CSBG is a federal block grant that funds states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. territories, and federally and state-recognized tribes and tribal organizations (hereinafter referred to as CSBG grant recipients).

CSBG supports a wide range of individual-, family-, and community-level services and strategies to address the needs of individuals and families with low incomes in rural and urban areas to:

- Minimize the causes and conditions of poverty.
- Revitalize communities.
- Empower individuals and families with low incomes to become self-sufficient.

Tribal grant recipients provide services directly to individuals and families. State and territory grant recipients work with eligible entities to tailor CSBG-funded programs and services to meet the most pressing needs in their local communities.

Common areas where the CSBG network designates funding include:

- Collaboration and linkages across anti-poverty programs and organizations.
- Crisis and emergency supports.
- Assistance with housing, nutrition, utility, transportation, employment, and educational needs.
- Income- and asset-building services.
- Upstream services aimed at creating pathways out of poverty.

CSBG essentials for improved outcomes project summary

The agreement will support TTA that helps the CSBG network:

- Increase their knowledge and understanding of statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Enhance their ability to implement critical program elements.
- Support the coordination and development of their anti-poverty resources.

You will be expected to provide TTA that enhances CSBG networks' ability to:

- Improve how they apply statutory requirements to administrative, fiscal, and program operations, as well as in varying community contexts.
- Use workforce development strategies to retain qualified staff.
- Develop cross-system partnership models to serve multi-need families.
- Improve performance measures to better reflect client outcomes.
- Assist clients in navigating complex systems such as:
 - Foster care.
 - Veterans' services.
 - Reentry supports for justice-involved people.
- Serve families at risk of child welfare involvement.
 - This supports ACF's A Home for Every Child initiative, which aligns with CSBG's mission of self-sufficiency.

You will be responsible for:

- Developing and promoting practices that enhance organizational, fiscal, and governance effectiveness, grounded in statutory and regulatory compliance.
- Delivering responsive and innovative TTA through various formats.
- Supporting the use of CSBG Organizational Standards to improve accountability and performance across the network.
- Collaborating with national partners to meet the goals of the CSBG Performance Management Framework (See definition in [Appendix A](#)).
- Guiding the development of systems and partnerships that support client navigation of key service areas, including:
 - Foster care.
 - Veterans' benefits.
 - Justice system reentry.

You will also collect data and report on your work to show outcomes and measurable improvements. OCS will be substantially involved throughout the cooperative agreement to ensure alignment with CSBG priorities and to assess the effectiveness of the TTA provided.

Objectives of CSBG essentials for improved outcomes

You will be required to provide planned and ad hoc high-quality, tailored TTA and consultation. You will also be required to develop, implement, and disseminate TTA resources and tools that address **three main objectives**.

As needed, you will develop resources and tools that address the TTA needs of eligible entities.

Objective 1: Strengthening the understanding of CSBG statutory and regulatory requirements

You must focus TTA efforts on the following:

- Strengthening operational capacity for CSBG administration through foundational knowledge of CSBG statutory and regulatory requirements.
- Promoting practices and policies that align with the CSBG legislation and regulations.
 - These must be responsive to organizational, fiscal, and governance challenges, including but not limited to:
 - Tripartite boards.
 - Board bylaw provisions.
 - Contract provisions.
 - Personnel policies.
 - Organizational.
- Integrating enhanced and newly acquired knowledge of CSBG statutory requirements into administrative, fiscal, and programmatic policies and operating procedures, and providing guidance to ensure knowledge is sustained long term.
- Engaging and integrating territories and directly funded tribes and tribal organizations into TTA efforts.
- Organizational stability, capacity, and efficiency particularly for eligible entities that are considering options for strategic restructuring, shared administrative or service arrangements, mergers, or implementation of organizational standards.

Objective 2: Enhancing implementation of critical program elements

Your TTA efforts must:

- Promote implementation of evidence-informed service delivery models and strategic partnership models.
 - These will be tools for CSBG network staff.
- Provide structure to ease navigation and support coordination of complex systems (e.g., child welfare, veterans' services, etc.).
- Provide tangible guidance that improves CSBG grant recipients and subrecipients ability to develop and conduct critical administrative operations. The guidance should include:
 - Community needs assessment.
 - Tripartite board.
 - Monitoring.
 - Service delivery.
- Provide TTA to new CSBG state staff and eligible leadership that addresses basic knowledge of CSBG. Basic knowledge includes:
 - History of community action.
 - Structure of the CSBG network.
 - CSBG statutory and regulatory requirements.
 - Other critical elements of administering a CSBG program including community needs assessments, grants management, and reporting.
- Align CSBG services with other prevention efforts. Examples include:
 - Family First Prevention Plans.
 - Title IV-E prevention services.
- Support administrative priorities such as ACF' Initiative, A Home for Every Child.

Objective 3: Applying compliance requirements to administrative and program operations

Your TTA efforts must:

- Strengthen governance and fiscal oversight to reduce opportunities for fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Support consistent implementation of CSBG Organizational Standards using guidance on performance enhancement techniques.

- Equip states, territories, and eligible entities to recognize warning signs that predict child welfare involvement and trauma.
 - This also includes providing guidance on navigating complex systems that support family stability and self-sufficiency.
- Address CSBG-specific staff onboarding, orientation, and professional development.

CSBG support of ACF priorities

OCS' work supports the [ACF objective of ensuring a home for every child](#) by relieving the underlying socioeconomic factors that contribute to family breakdown and child-welfare interventions.

The initiative works toward a ratio of greater than 1:1 for the number of foster homes to the number of children in the foster care system. By strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the CSBG network, CSBG may reduce the need for child welfare and foster care interventions.

This funding opportunity aligns with the following ACF priority: [Promoting work and self-sufficiency](#). CF will prioritize programs and policies that promote work as the primary pathway to self-sufficiency and economic independence. TTA offered under this opportunity should assist CSBG grant recipients in providing meaningful workforce development, financial literacy, and other related supports as needed.

CSBG training and technical assistance

Through CSBG discretionary awards, OCS provides funding to support CSBG training and technical assistance (TTA) efforts. Eligible applicants for these awards include statewide or local organizations or associations with demonstrated expertise in providing training to individuals and organizations to help address the needs of families, individuals, and communities with low incomes.

These organizations collaborate with OCS and support CSBG-funded states, territories, tribes and tribal organizations, and eligible entities to increase effectiveness and accountability and to generate robust results for the people and communities served.

With the support of CSBG funding, CSBG TTA award recipients provide the CSBG network with information on promising practices and capacity building resources to streamline operations and reduce potential instances of waste, fraud, and abuse.

CSBG Implementation of ACF Priorities

OCS' work supports the [ACF objective of ensuring a home for every child](#) by relieving the underlying socioeconomic factors that contribute to family breakdown and child-welfare interventions.

The initiative aims for a ratio of greater than 1:1 for the number of foster homes to the number of children in the foster care system. By strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the CSBG network, CSBG may reduce the need for child welfare and foster care interventions.

This funding opportunity aligns with the following ACF priority:

CSBG performance management

You must provide TTA related to the implementation of organizational standards, which are a component of the CSBG Performance Management Framework.

The Performance Management Framework (as defined in [CSBG-Information Memorandum-152](#)) aligns with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010.

The Performance Management Framework focuses on strengthening the CSBG network to meet current challenges, while positioning it for growth and increased capabilities to achieve family, agency, and community outcomes. Its components currently include:

- Performance measurement tools (e.g., the Community Needs Assessment, customer satisfaction survey) [organizational standards](#).
- Results Oriented Management and Accountability [ROMA] Next Generation [NG] [Accountability measures](#).
- Reporting tools (e.g., the CSBG State Plan, the CSBG Annual Report, the [CSBG Report to Congress](#), and the OCS Annual Report).
- Monitoring and oversight.

CSBG essentials for improved outcomes timeline

The CSBG Essentials for Improved Outcomes cooperative agreement has a 36-month project period that will be separated into two distinct phases.

The activities for each phase must be aligned closely with and promote promising practices [toward the program's priorities](#).

Phase One (one to four months): Planning and preparation

During this phase, you must develop a work plan for implementation of TTA as well as an approach for identifying any additional TTA needs within the network.

OCS will provide a template for a work plan that covers the performance period.

The work plan must document and track the following:

- Detailed project goals, performance measures, and intended outcomes responsive to the [project objectives](#).
- Timelines for implementing the proposed project, including major milestones and target dates.
- A clear plan for supporting grant recipients and subrecipients through practices and policies that are responsive to organizational, fiscal, and governance challenges across the CSBG network in support of the [CSBG essentials project objectives](#).
- A clear plan for using SMEs with demonstrated experience in providing guidance on issues impacting the administration of CSBG at the state and/or local level.
- A clear plan for managing planned and ad hoc TTA requests and activities that are responsive to the needs of the CSBG network in the areas of administrative and regulatory compliance, implementation of critical program elements, and overall program administration.
- How the work will be completed (i.e., individualized one-on-one virtual or in-person TTA, mass virtual or in-person training, and training materials).
- Progress on defined products (i.e., training materials, webinars, manuals).

In Phase One, you must consider how the TTA tools and resources can be beneficial to the entire CSBG network.

In addition to the work plan, activities for Phase One also include the following:

- A draft outline of the TTA tools that will be implemented in Phase Two.
- An updated Project Performance Evaluation Plan, as needed.
- An engagement plan for integrating territories and directly funded tribes and tribal organizations into TTA efforts.
 - The plan should document the unique needs of territories, direct-funded tribes and tribal organizations, eligible entities, and state associations within the network.
- A dissemination plan for presenting and socializing the tools with the CSBG network. Socializing tools should happen through:
 - Presentations.

- Conferences.
- Webcasts.
- Outreach campaigns.
- Small group TTA sessions.

Phase Two (remainder of project period): Implementation and evaluation

During Phase Two, you will provide TTA as noted in your work plan. You will also develop, refine, and disseminate TTA tools and resources for the entire CSBG network that focus on administering CSBG, including activities such as:

- Webinars.
- Training modules.
- Podcasts.
- Presentations.
- Toolkits.
- Other learning tools.

TTA tools and resources must incorporate practices and policies focused on ensuring the effective and efficient administration of CSBG programming, as well as responsive services and positive outcomes in the areas of administrative and regulatory compliance, implementation of critical program elements, and overall program administration.

The tools will be distributed among the CSBG network using per the [dissemination plan](#), and then housed in a resource library, as specified by OCS.

Semi-annual and final reports

Throughout Phase Two, you must continue to engage in:

- Ongoing program performance evaluation to inform semi-annual Performance Progress Reports (PPR).
- A final PPR to be delivered to OCS.

In the semi-annual and final reports, you must provide qualitative and quantitative data that reflects the focus areas and data points noted in the Project Performance Evaluation Plan.

In the final report, you must discuss:

- Outcomes based on activities defined in the work plan.
- How the effectiveness of the TTA tools and resources created were measured and evaluated.
- The development of a body of knowledge, lessons learned, and promising practices.
 - How they can be replicated for future TTA deployments.
- How the project will promote community-wide, transformative, and sustainable changes beyond the project period.

During this phase, you must also work closely with OCS staff to refine the work plan, logic model, Project Performance Evaluation Plan, and dissemination plan, as needed.

Activities for Phase Two include the following:

- Revised engagement plan, as needed.
- Sustainability Plan describing how TTA resources will outlive the award and can be adapted for future use by OCS and the CSBG network.
- Creation of defined TTA tools.
- Assessment on the return of investment.

CSBG TTA needs assessment survey

In FY22, OCS invited CSBG recipients to complete the online CSBG TTA Needs Assessment Survey. The survey's goals were to inform and strengthen OCS-funded TTA to ensure that OCS is meeting the TTA needs of the CSBG network.

The survey results continue to help inform OCS' TTA Learning Agenda for CSBG discretionary awards and contracts, including this cooperative agreement. OCS published the results of the survey in the [CSBG Needs Assessment Dashboard \(FY22\)](#).

You should use the TTA Needs Assessment Survey and the [dashboard](#) to drive decisions.

You should also model future survey materials using the original survey questions to continue your data analysis.

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey data

Since 2015, OCS has used American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) data, collected through surveys of eligible entities and CSBG grant recipients, to understand how public-facing activities affect the satisfaction of different target populations.

You will be expected to use recent ACSI data to inform your work, analyzing feedback for:

- Linkages.
- Training and technical assistance.
- Communication.

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

SMEs can serve an essential role in accomplishing the major objectives outlined in this NOFO by providing knowledge, technical expertise, analysis, and innovative recommendations that lead to successful outcomes to meet the TTA needs of the CSBG network. The award recipient must engage with individuals or organizations with demonstrated experience in providing guidance on administrative, fiscal, and program operations impacting the CSBG network and the administration of CSBG programs.

OCS response to nationally declared emergency

If there is a nationally declared emergency during your project period, both you and OCS will remain flexible and adjust program or cooperative agreement requirements as needed.

OCS may decide to allow requirements to be met virtually and may adjust timelines.

Cooperative agreement— Description of ACF's involvement

OCS will have substantial involvement directly with the award recipient. The responsibility for the management, control, direction, and performance of the project will be shared by OCS and the award recipient. OCS will have the right to intervene (including interruption or modification) in the conduct or performance of project activities if the award recipient does not adhere to the goals, objectives, and requirements as outlined in this NOFO and the signed cooperative agreement. OCS and the award recipient will collaborate on all activities involving the design and direction of TTA products, training, or any other activities.

OCS program involvement will include:

- Providing program guidance and input, as appropriate.
- Approving all work plans and schedules.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on the activities, documentation, procedures, measures, and tools established throughout the project period.

- Reviewing, providing feedback, and agreeing with activities, procedures, tools, measures, products, and written materials prior to external communication and dissemination.
 - This will happen on an ongoing basis.
- Reviewing or participating in TTA activities, including webinars and one-on-one trainings.

Funding policies and limitations

Changes in HHS regulations

As of October 1, 2025, HHS adopted [2 CFR 200](#), with some exceptions included in [2 CFR 300](#). These regulations replace those in 45 CFR 75.

General policies

- We will only make awards if this program receives funding. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
- Support beyond the first budget period will depend on:
 - Appropriation of funds.
 - Satisfactory progress in meeting your project's objectives.
 - A decision that continued funding is in the government's best interest.
- If we receive more funding for this program, we will consider:
 - Funding more applicants.
 - Extending the period of performance.
 - Awarding supplemental funding.
- To the extent permitted by law, including any relevant court orders, you may not use funds from this NOFO for any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEI and DEIA) activities. This includes:
 - DEI- or DEIA-related research.
 - Activities that discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or other protected traits.
 - Any efforts that promote a "discriminatory equity ideology."
- To the extent permitted by law, including any relevant court orders, ACF will also not allow funds awarded under this NOFO to support any services or activities that inculcate or promote gender ideology.

For guidance on other types of costs that we restrict or do not allow, see General Provisions for Selected Items of Costs of the Uniform Guidance, [2 CFR part 200](#).

Program-specific limitations and policies

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

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

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those shared across multiple projects and not easily separated.

To charge indirect costs you can select one of two methods:

Method 1 — Approved rate. If you currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency, you may use that rate.

Method 2 — *De minimis* rate. If you do not have a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate (see [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#)). This rate may be up to 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See the definition of MTDC ([2 CFR 200.1](#)). You can use this rate indefinitely.

You may not charge costs included in your indirect cost pool as direct costs.

Subawards

As the prime recipient, you must maintain a substantive role in the project. This means that you conduct funded activities and provide services necessary and integral to completing the project.

Monitoring your subrecipient's activities alone as described in [2 CFR 200.332](#) is not a substantive role.

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

All subrecipients must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

Subrecipients must meet the [eligibility requirements](#) of this NOFO.

Salary rate limitation

The salary rate limitation in the current appropriations act applies to this program. You may not use awarded funds to pay a salary at a higher rate than the rate for Executive Level II.

For the Executive Level II salary, please see [the Office of Personnel Management information on executive and senior level employee pay](#).

The salary limitation reflects a person's base salary (including any portion of the salary that is paid with indirect costs). It does not include fringe benefits or any income the person is allowed to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization.

This salary limitation also applies to subawards, contracts, and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.



Step 2:

Get Ready to Apply

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Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it at this NOFO's Grants.gov opportunity page. Then select the Package tab.

We recommend that you select the **Subscribe button** from the View Grant Opportunity page for this NOFO to get updates.

If you can't use Grants.gov to download application materials or have other technical difficulties, including issues with application submission, [contact Grants.gov](#) for assistance.

Get registered

SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov to apply. SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. Begin that process today.

To register:

- Go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and select Get Started. From the same page, you can also select the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register.
- You must agree to the [financial assistance general certifications and representations \[PDF\]](#) specifically. Those for contracts are different.

When you register, you will also receive your required Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Once you register:

- You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.
- If your organization has multiple UEIs, use the one associated with your physical location.

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with [Grants.gov](#). You can see step-by-step instructions at the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

Need help? See [Contacts and Support](#).

Learn more

Visit [Applying for an ACF Grant Award](#) on the ACF Grants page.



Step 3:

Build Your Application

In this step

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Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply. You will find the forms in Grants.gov.

File one: Narratives

Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.

Component	Included in page limit?
☐ Table of contents	Yes
☐ Project summary	Yes
☐ Project narrative	Yes
☐ Line-item budget and budget narrative	Yes

File two: Attachments

Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.

Component	Included in page limit?
☐ ACF priorities alignment attestation	No
☐ Indirect cost agreement	Yes
☐ Legal proof of nonprofit status	Yes
☐ Legal proof of for-profit status	Yes
☐ Legal proof of small businesses	Yes
☐ Additional eligibility documentation	No
☐ Organizational capacity supporting information (including organization chart)	Yes
☐ Third-party agreements	Yes

Standard forms

Use each required form in Grants.gov.

Component	Included in page limit?
☐ Project Abstract Summary	No
☐ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	No
☐ Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	No
☐ Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	No
☐ Key Contacts	No
☐ Grants.gov Lobbying form	No
☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	No
☐ Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	No

Application contents and format

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

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application.

Required format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 75 pages

File format: Portable Document Format (PDF) is recommended, but not required. ACF supports the following file formats when you attach files to the Project Narrative Attachment form and the Other Attachments form:

Accepted file formats

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

Document formats

Paper size: 8 ½ inches x 11 inches

Margins: 1 inch all around

Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

Do not include external links to information you want reviewers to assess because reviewers will score the application solely on information provided in the application.

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

Color: Black

Size: 12-point font

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

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced

Project summary: Must be single-spaced

Project narrative: Must be double-spaced

Objectives: Can be single-spaced

Expected Outcomes: Can be single-spaced

Approach: Can be single-spaced

Project Timeline and Milestones: Can be single-spaced

Logic Model: Can be single-spaced

Program Performance Evaluation Plan: Can be single-spaced

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities: Can be single-spaced

Line-item budget and budget narrative: Can be single-spaced

Attachments: Can be single-spaced

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

See [disqualifying factors](#) to understand what may disqualify your application from consideration.

See [intergovernmental review](#) to find out if you need to make any other submissions.

File one: Narratives

To submit file one, you will use the Project Narrative Attachment form found in the Grants.gov application package for this NOFO.

This file includes:

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

Table of contents

At the beginning of file one, insert a table of contents that guides a reader through the contents of both files in your application. If possible, include links to the relevant content in file one.

Project summary

Provide a one-page summary of the project description. Do not cross-reference to other parts of your application. The summary must include:

- At the top, the project title, applicant name, address, phone numbers, email addresses, and any website URL.

- A brief description of the project, including the needs and population you will address, your proposed services or research questions.

Project narrative

The project narrative is where you address all your proposed activities. It is a critical section of your application, which we evaluate using [merit review criteria](#) and rank based on application scores.

Remember that substance and measurable outcomes are more important than length. We are particularly interested in project narratives that convey strategies for achieving intended performance.

In it, you must:

- Explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in [the program description section](#).
- Make sure your narrative is clear, concise, and complete.
- Use cross-referencing rather than repetition.
- Be sure to include any required supporting documents noted. You generally provide these in your [attachments](#).
- Use the headings and order of the sections that follow.

Purpose and need

Objectives

State your main objectives and any sub-objectives. Address how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of this program and describe how you will achieve the objectives.

Specifically:

- Clearly describe how the goals and objectives of proposed project activities will advance the capacity for knowledge, program implementation, and compliance across the CSBG network.

Response

Approach

Outline your action plan. Describe the scope of your proposed project and describe in detail how you will accomplish it. Account for all functions or activities you identify in your application.

Explain potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing your project goals. Explain the strategies you will use to address them.

Your plan must:

- Present a well-conceived overall approach to the project.
- Describe how the project will follow the [phases](#), including a strategy for achieving the [project goals](#) within the 36-month period, and [provide a clear plan for developing the required activities and milestones associated with those phases](#).
- Include details demonstrating that the project will be implemented effectively and will achieve the [objectives](#).
- Clearly identify how the proposed project will support and promote TTA efforts within the CSBG network.
 - It must include an engagement plan to integrate territories and directly funded tribes and tribal organizations into TTA efforts.
- Focus on assessment, planning, the development and implementation of TTA strategies and follow-up.
- Present a clear description of how the created TTA tools and resources will develop a body of knowledge that can be replicated and implemented across the CSBG network.
- Describe the factors that could accelerate or hinder project implementation and explain how these factors would be managed.
- Include a description of the anticipated processes and procedures to implement training and education relevant to the CSBG network.
- Include a description of how you will develop and sustain strategic partnerships and engage SMEs to meet the administrative, fiscal, and program operations TTA needs.
- Clearly describe how the proposed [strategic partnerships](#) and [SMEs](#) will help ensure high quality, tailored TTA that address the major [objectives](#).
 - Describe how proposed partners will contribute to the goals and objectives of the project.

Project timeline and milestones

Provide a timeline for your project that includes milestones. To do so:

- Organize the information by task and subtask, showing related milestones.
- Provide monthly or quarterly quantitative projections for tasks you plan to complete and by when. For example, provide the number of people you plan to serve or the number of a certain activity you plan to complete by a specific date.
- Provide target dates for activities you can't quantify.
- Cover the full period of performance in your timeline.

Logic model

You must submit a logic model for designing, managing, and evaluating the project. A logic model is a diagram that:

- Presents how inputs drive activities to produce outputs, outcomes, and the ultimate goals of the proposed project.
- Explains the links among project elements.
- Targets the identified objectives and goals of the project.

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

- Inputs such as additional resources, organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, and budget.
- Target population, such as the individuals to be served or identified needs.
- Activities, mechanisms, and processes such as evidence-based practices, best practices, approach, key intervention and evaluation components, and continuous quality improvement efforts.
- Outputs, which include the immediate and direct results of program activities.
- Outcomes, which include the short- and long-term results you expect the project to achieve. These are typically described as changes in people or systems.
- Project goals, such as overarching objectives and reasons for proposing the project.

Impact

Project performance evaluation plan

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

- How you will monitor ongoing activities and progress toward the project's goals and objectives.
- The inputs, key activities, and expected outcomes of the funded activities. Inputs might include your collaborative partners, key staff, budget, service processes, or other resources.
- How you will measure the inputs, activities, and outcomes.
- How you will use the resulting information to improve your funded activities.
- Any processes that support overall data quality.
- The organizational systems and processes you will use to track performance outcomes.

- How your organization will collect and manage data in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. This might include assigned skilled staff, data management software, and data integrity.
- Any potential obstacles to implementing the project performance evaluation and how you will address them.
- A timeline for how you will review information from the performance evaluation and apply it to your ongoing project.

Specifically:

- Demonstrate innovative approaches to TTA delivery and implementation and highlight proven methods for identifying emerging trends in economic support services that can modernize the CSBG network across all levels.
- Describe a plan for a program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement and will be used to [monitor ongoing activities and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project](#).
- Clearly identify how the proposed project will promote TTA efforts within the CSBG network and [produce desired outcomes](#).
- Clearly present a plan for developing resources that reduces opportunities for fraud, waste, and abuse.

Expected outcomes

Identify the outcomes you plan to achieve from the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall program as described in the [program description section](#). If research is part of the proposed work, outcomes must include hypothesized results and implications of the proposed research.

Resources and capabilities

Organizational capacity

Provide the following information for your full project team, including the applicant organization and any cooperating partners, contractors, and subrecipients:

- Provide evidence that your team has the relevant experience and expertise needed to carry out your project.
- Describe your team's experience (including any partnering organizations) with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- Provide evidence that your team, including partnering organizations, has the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions effectively.
- You must disclose your plan to enter into subaward agreements. If planning subawards, describe the work each subrecipient will complete.

- Organizational Charts
- Resumes.
- Provide some supporting information in the organizational capacity supporting information section of your [attachments](#).

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

You must ensure proper award oversight. The regulation that governs this oversight is [2 CFR part 200](#). It includes standards for:

- Financial and program management.
- Property management.
- Procurement.
- Performance and financial monitoring and reporting.
- Subrecipient monitoring and management.
- Record retention and access.
- Remedies for noncompliance.
- Prior written approval.

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

- A description of the governance, policies and procedures, and systems you use for record-keeping and financial management.
- A description of the procedures you use to identify and mitigate risks and issues. These might include audit findings, continuous performance assessment findings, and monitoring.
- The key staff who will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program staff and any partners or subrecipients.

Protection of sensitive or confidential information

Describe how you will collect and safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive. Make sure your approach is consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality. Provide:

- The methods and systems you will use to make sure that you properly handle confidential and sensitive information, including information from any subrecipients or contractors.
- A plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the period of performance.

For more information, see [2 CFR 200.303\(e\)](#).

Dissemination plan

Propose a plan to disseminate reports, products, and project outputs to key target audiences. Include:

- Dissemination goals and objectives.
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences.
- How you will allocate enough staff time and budget for dissemination.
- A preliminary plan to evaluate whether target audiences receive project information and use it as intended.
- The dissemination timeline.

Line-item budget and budget narrative

The line-item budget and budget justification support the information you provide in the Budget Information Standard Form SF-424A.

HHS now uses the definitions for [equipment](#) and [supplies](#) in [2 CFR 200.1](#). The new definitions change the threshold for equipment to the lesser of the recipient's capitalization level or \$10,000 and the threshold for supplies to below that amount.

Justify the costs you ask for and provide detail, including calculations for the “object class categories” in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for each year of the period of performance. See information on [funding periods](#).

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See the [funding policies and limitations](#).
- Please also review the Standard Form instructions.

To create your line-item budget and justification, see [detailed budget instructions on our website](#).

In general, you must:

- Indicate the method you will use for your indirect cost rate. See the [indirect costs](#) section for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail necessary for the calculation to be duplicated.
- For any cost sharing, include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance.

- For applicants planning to use subawards, if your subaward budget is more than 50% of total direct costs, justify why you are subawarding that portion of the project. Explain:
 - How you plan to maintain a substantive role in the project.
 - Why you cannot achieve your goals without the subrecipients' participation.

Specifically, you must also:

- Provide a well-prepared specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time based (SMART) budget.
- The budget must include the itemized expenses for each phase of the project and a narrative justification that clearly explains all the calculations comprising the amount requested.
- If known at the time of application submission, the budget must include the anticipated compensation for each proposed subaward.
- The budget must clearly support the initial 12-month project period and structured to present the two phases of the project:
 - Phase One (one to four months): planning and preparation.
 - Phase Two (remainder of the initial project period): implementation and evaluation.
- The budget justification must include a line item for each proposed SME, and strategic partnership.

The budget must include funding for travel for one key staff member to attend and present at a CSBG TTA national conference or meeting in Washington, DC, during each year of the award, if requested to attend.

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

Clearly identify any salary or other proprietary information or personally identifiable information within your application. Identification will ensure this information is not shared with reviewers. Note on page 1 of the attachments file (file two) where the information to be redacted is located.

File two: Attachments

To submit file two, you will use the Other Attachments form found in the Grants.gov application package for this NOFO.

This file includes all attachments.

ACF priorities alignment attestation

Note: Not included in the page limit. This should be submitted with the application or before award.

You must self-certify that you will align with the ACF priorities that are relevant to this funding opportunity, as identified in both the Program description and *Step 4*, under Merit review process, Scoring criteria, Alignment with *ACF Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles*, elements 2 and 3. You must provide the following on your organization's letterhead.

I hereby attest and certify that:

_____ (Applicant Name) affirms its commitment to supporting and advancing ACF's published Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), consistent with applicable federal statutes, regulations, and Administration priorities.

Insert Date of Signature:

Print Name and Title of the AOR:

Signature of AOR:

Indirect cost agreement

If you include indirect costs in your budget using an approved rate, include a copy of your current agreement approved by your [cognizant agency for indirect costs](#). If you use the *de minimis* rate, you do not need to submit this attachment.

See the [indirect costs](#) section for more information.

Legal proof of nonprofit status

If your organization is a nonprofit, you need to attach proof. We will accept any of the following:

- A reference to your listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations.
- A copy of a current tax exemption certificate from the IRS.

- A letter from your state's tax department, attorney general, or another appropriate state official saying that your group is a nonprofit and that none of your net earnings go to private shareholders or others.
- A certified copy of your certificate of incorporation or similar document. This document must show that your group is a nonprofit.
- Any of these documents for a parent organization. Also include a statement signed by an official of the parent group that your organization is a nonprofit affiliate.

Legal proof of for-profit status

If your organization is a for-profit, including a small business, you need to attach proof.

Include documentation establishing your organization's power to enter into contractual relationships or accept awards. This might include your articles of incorporation or bylaws.

Legal proof of small businesses

In addition to the proof that your organization is for-profit required in the previous section, small businesses must submit a certification signed by the chief executive officer or designee that states that the entity qualifies as a small business under [13 CFR 121.101-121.201](#).

Organizational capacity supporting information

You must attach the following information to support the information in your [organizational capacity](#) section:

- Organizational charts, including all partners.
- Resumes, biographical sketches, or curricula vitae for all key personnel.
- List of your board of directors.
- Financial statements adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), if available, for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years (this requirement does not apply to start-up organizations).
- Audit reports or statements from certified public accountants or licensed public accountants, if available, for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years (this requirement does not apply to start-up organizations).
- Copy or description of your organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.

Third-party agreements

You must submit agreements with all third parties involved in the project. Third parties include subrecipients, contractors, and other cooperating entities. Third-party agreements include letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, and memoranda of agreement.

Any such agreement must:

- Describe each party's roles and responsibilities for project activities.
- Describe the support and resources that the third party is committing to the proposed project.
- Be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments.
- Detail work schedules and estimated compensation with an understanding that the parties will negotiate a final agreement after award.
- Identify the primary applicant and all collaborators responsible for project activities if the agreement is for a collaboration or consortia application.

Standard forms

You will need to complete some other required standard forms other than those in files one and two. You can find them in the NOFO [application package](#) or review them and their instructions at [Grants.gov Forms](#).

Forms	Submission requirement
Project Abstract Summary	With the application.
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With the application.
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With the application.
Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	With the application.
Key Contacts	With the application.
Grants.gov Lobbying form	With the application or before award.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable based on instructions, with the application or before award.
Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	With the application. Cite your primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.

Important: public information

When filling out your SF-424 form, pay attention to Box 15: Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project.

We share what you put there with [USAspending](#). This is where the public goes to learn how the federal government spends taxpayer money.

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

[See instructions and examples \[PDF\]](#).



Step 4:

Learn About Review and Award

In this step

Application review	<u>44</u>
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Application review

Initial review

We will review your application to make sure that it meets the responsiveness requirements listed in the [disqualification factors section](#). If your application does not meet these criteria, we will disqualify it and we will not move it to the merit review (scoring) phase.

We will let you know if your application is disqualified within 30 days of the application deadline. You won't receive any notice from ACF if your application failed Grants.gov validation checks.

If you submit more than two files in addition to your forms, we will remove the extra files. We will let you know if this happens.

We will also remove blurred or illegible pages and any file formats that are not supported.

We will not review any pages that exceed the page limit.

If your application fails to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements, we will adjust your application by removing page(s) from the application. We will remove the pages before the merit review and will not send them to reviewers.

If we do so, we will send you a letter after we make awards to notify you that we amended your application.

Merit review process

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The panel members use the criteria shown in each section of the project narrative and in the line-item budget and budget narrative section.

Our reviewers typically are not federal employees. See the section on [proprietary and personally identifiable information](#).

Criteria summary

Criterion	Total number of points = 110
1. Purpose and need	5 points
2. Response	30 points
3. Impact	30 points
4. Resources and capabilities	25 points
5. Budget and Budget Narrative	10 points
6. ACF Priority Alignment	10 points

Scoring criteria

1. Purpose and need

Maximum points: 5

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Clearly describe how the goals and objectives of proposed project activities will advance the capacity for knowledge, program implementation, and compliance across the CSBG network. **(0 to 5 points)**

2. Response

Maximum points: 30

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Clearly present a well-conceived overall approach to the project, including details demonstrating that the project will be implemented effectively and will achieve the objectives stated in the [objectives](#). **(0 to 5 points)**
- Clearly describe how the TTA efforts under this cooperative agreement will identify, support, promote, and disseminate TTA resources to the CSBG network. **(0 to 5 points)**
- Present a clear description of how the created TTA tools and resources will develop a body of knowledge that can be replicated and implemented across the CSBG network. **(0 to 5 points)**
- Present a clear description of how [strategic partnerships](#) will help ensure high-quality, tailored TTA that addresses the [objectives](#), describing how proposed partners will contribute to the goals and objectives of the project. **(0 to 5 points)**

- Describe how the project will follow the [phases](#), including a strategy for achieving the [project goals](#) within the 36-month period, and provide a clear plan for developing the required activities and milestones associated with those phases. **(0 to 5 points)**
- Present a well-defined logic model that guides the proposed project. **(0 to 5 points)**
 - The logic model demonstrates strong linkages between your expected achievements and likely short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes.
 - The logic model also addresses the [objectives](#).

3. Impact

Maximum points: 30

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Demonstrate innovative approaches to TTA delivery and implementation and highlight proven methods for identifying emerging trends in economic support services that can modernize the CSBG network across all levels. **(0 to 10 points)**
- Describe a plan for a program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement and will be used to monitor ongoing activities and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project. **(0 to 5 points)**
- Clearly identify how the proposed project will promote TTA efforts within the CSBG network and produce desired outcomes. **(0 to 10 points)**
- Clearly present a plan for developing resources that reduces opportunities for fraud, waste, and abuse. **(0 to 5 points)**

4. Resources and capabilities

Maximum points: 25

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Provide evidence of organizational capacity for and prior experience in successfully completing projects similar to those described in this NOFO, including work in communities with low incomes and work implementing and evaluating emerging practices. **(0 to 5 points)**
- Clearly document the roles, responsibilities, TTA activities and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including SMEs, consultants, subcontractors, and partners. **(0 to 5 points)**
 - These positions must be well-defined and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project with respect to the target population.

- Provide strong evidence of the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities of the proposed Project Director and primary staff members. **(0 to 5 points)**
 - Document how their specific qualifications and level of expertise will support the successful project implementation.
- Present a detailed framework (e.g., governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) that ensures proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D. The description must include: **(0 to 5 points)**
 - System(s) for record-keeping and financial management.
 - Procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues (e.g., audit findings, continuous program performance assessment findings, program monitoring).
 - Key staff who will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff, and, if applicable, partner(s) and/or subrecipient(s).
- Describe how you will collect and safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive. **(0 to 5 points)**

5. Budget and budget narrative

Maximum points: 10

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Present a Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) budget that consists of a line-item budget that includes detailed calculations for object class categories. **(0 to 5 points)**
 - It must include a narrative justification that clearly explains all the calculations for the amount requested, including each proposed SME, strategic partnership, subaward.
- Present a budget that clearly supports the initial 12-month project and is structured to present the [two phases](#) of the project. **(0 to 5 points)**
 - Proposed costs are fully justified and reasonable to complete the proposed activities.

We do not consider voluntary cost sharing during merit review.

6. Alignment with ACF vision, mission, values, priorities, and guiding principles (Up to 10 points)

ACF's published Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles inform programmatic and administrative expectations under this funding opportunity.

Applicants must demonstrate alignment by describing how the proposed project advances relevant ACF priorities through program design and evaluation. Applicants should clearly identify which ACF priorities are relevant and explain how those priorities are reflected in the proposed approach. Applicants are encouraged to provide examples of prior experiences that can show alignment efforts that have already been achieved. Examples should describe strategies used, measurable results (if available), and lessons learned.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to organize their response using the three criteria below.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the application demonstrates clear, specific, and measurable connections between ACF priorities and the proposed project. Scores will reflect the strength, clarity, and specificity of those connections.

Scoring Considerations for the next three criteria:

- **High-scoring applications** will demonstrate clear understanding, intentional integration, and measurable alignment with ACF priorities across all three criteria.
- **Moderate-scoring applications** may reference ACF priorities but provide limited specificity, uneven integration, or minimal connection to measurable outcomes.
- **Low-scoring applications** will show minimal or unclear understanding of ACF priorities and lack meaningful connection to program design or performance.

1. Demonstrated Review and Understanding (Up to 2 Points)

The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has reviewed ACF's Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles and explains their relevance to the proposed project.

Reviewers will look for:

- Identification of specific ACF priorities (not general or vague references).
- A clear explanation of how those priorities relate to the proposed project.

2. Operationalization in Program Design and Implementation (Up to 3 Points)

The degree to which the following one or more ACF priorities are translated into specific elements of the proposed project: Promoting work and self-sufficiency.

Reviewers will assess if the applicant:

- Connects the identified ACF priority to program design, service delivery, and implementation.
- Demonstrates how this priority influences partnerships, staffing, or key program decisions.
- Provides clear, actionable examples of how alignment will be carried out in practice.

3. Integration into Performance and Continuous Improvement (Up to 5 Points)

The extent to which the following one or more ACF priorities are reflected in measurable outcomes and ongoing program improvement: Promoting work and self-sufficiency.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the application:

- Aligns performance measures and expected outcomes with the identified priority.
- Includes evaluation methods or performance indicators that reflect this priority.
- Describes how data will be used for continuous quality improvement.

Risk review

Before making an award, we review the risk that you will mismanage federal funds or fail to complete the project objectives. We need to make sure you've handled any past federal awards well and demonstrated sound business practices.

We use [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) Responsibility/Qualification and Exclusions to check this history for all awards likely to be over \$250,000.

If we find a significant risk, we may choose not to fund your application or to place specific conditions on the award.

For more details, see [2 CFR 200.206](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-200/subpart-206).

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review and scoring results, including the ten points for Alignment with *ACF Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles* to the extent permitted by law. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- Organizations serving emerging, unserved, or underserved populations.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution.
- The past performance of the applicant.
- The application's compliance with this NOFO's prohibition on using funds awarded under this NOFO to support [DEI and DEIA activities](#), to the extent permitted by law, including any relevant court orders.
- Funding Preference for Alignment with Agency Priorities. Before final funding decisions are made, division leadership will review awards for consistency with applicable laws and alignment with [agency priorities](#).

We may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Decide not to fund a project with high start-up costs or unreasonably high operating costs.
- Choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems.
- Designate your application as “approved but unfunded” if it was successful but there was not sufficient funding to make an award. You may receive funding if additional funds become available within the fiscal year.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.

We will not fund:

- A [disqualified application](#).
- An incomplete application.

Award notices

If you are successful, we will email or transmit through our grant systems a Notice of Award (NoA) to your authorized official. We will email you if your application is disqualified or unsuccessful.

The NoA is the only official award document. The NoA tells you about the amount of the award, important dates, and the terms and conditions you need to follow. Until you receive the NoA, you have not received an award. Project costs that you incur before you receive a NoA are at your risk.

By drawing down funds, you accept the terms and conditions of the award. The award incorporates the requirements of the program and funding authorities, the grant regulations, the GPS, and the NOFO.

If you want to know more about NoA contents, go to [Notice of Award at ACF's website](#).



Step 5:

Submit Your Application

In this step

Application submission and deadlines

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Application submission and deadlines

Application

Deadline

Due on Monday, August 24, 2026.

- For electronic submissions, the due time is 11:59 p.m. ET.
- If you receive an exemption from electronic submission, the due time is 4:30 p.m. ET. See the section on [exemptions for paper submissions](#).

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application. If you submit the same application more than once, we will accept only the last on-time submission.

The grants management officer may extend an application due date based on emergency situations such as documented natural disasters or a verifiable widespread disruption of electric or mail service.

Grants.gov submission

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. See information on [getting registered](#).

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files. We encourage you to leave yourself plenty of time to upload documents.

See [Contacts and Support](#) if you need help.

Issues with federal systems

If you experience a systems issue with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to [ACF's Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues \[PDF\]](#).

Exemptions for paper submissions

We need to give you an exemption before you can apply on paper. See the [ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission \[PDF\]](#).

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

To submit your application, mail it to:

Janice Realeza

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Grants Management

HHS-2026-ACF-OCS-EE-0030

1401 Mercantile Lane, Suite 401

Largo, MD 20774

Follow these requirements when you submit your paper application:

- Print your application and all copies one-sided.
- Submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all required forms.
- Submit both the original and additional copies in a single package. If you plan to submit more than one application under this NOFO or others, you must submit them separately. Clearly label each package with the NOFO title and funding opportunity number.
- Your authorized organization official must sign the application. The original application must include an original signature.

Intergovernmental review

You will need to submit application information for intergovernmental review under [Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#).

Under this order, states may design their own processes for commenting on some applications. Some states have this process and others don't.

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

This requirement never applies to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations.



Step 6:

Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration [57](#)

Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

There are important rules you'll need to follow if you get an award. You must follow:

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award, including the [ACF Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and, if applicable, any program-specific terms and conditions. We incorporate this NOFO by reference.
- The rules listed in [2 CFR 200](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, effective October 1, 2025. These replace those in 45 CFR 75, with some exceptions in [2 CFR 300](#).
- The HHS [Grants Policy Statement \(GPS\)](#). This document has terms and conditions tied to your award. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your Notice of Award.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in the [HHS Grants Policy Statement](#), Appendix D: HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements and the [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).
- [45 CFR Part 87 Appendix B, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations](#). This appendix explains the obligations of and protections for faith-based organizations applying for grants.
- Applicable program statute and regulations at 42 U.S.C. 9901, as amended.
- ACF- and CSBG-specific [Award Terms and Conditions](#).

Reporting

As a recipient, you will have to submit performance and financial reports. To learn more about reporting, see [Reporting at the ACF website](#).

- Submit Signed Letters of Commitment from SMEs by February 1, 2027
- Performance report form: **ACF-OGM-PPR**
 - Performance report frequency: Semiannually
- Financial report form: **SF-425 FFR**
 - Financial report frequency: Semiannually
- Office of Community Services Community Services Block Grant Training and Technical Assistance Tracking Form: **OMB #0970-0558** (Expires November 30, 2026.)
 - Report frequency: Quarterly

Publications

All publications developed or purchased with funds awarded under this notice must be consistent with the requirements of CSBG:

- Pursuant to [2 CFR § 200.315](#), the award recipients, to the extent permitted by law, may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed, or for which ownership was acquired, under this award.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes and to authorize others to do so.
- This includes the right to require recipients and subrecipients to make such works available through HHS-designated public access repositories.
- If applicable, the specific scope of ACF rights with respect to a particular award-supported effort will be addressed in the cooperative agreement.
- You will be responsible for ensuring that data and copyright-protected works developed by a subrecipient also are subject to the federal government's copyright license and data rights.



Contacts and Support

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Agency contacts

Program

Cheryl Zuni

Cheryl.Zuni@acf.hhs.gov

202-401-5020

Grants management

Janice Realeza

Janice.Realeza@acf.hhs.gov

215-861-4007

Help with systems

Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. Hold on to your ticket number.

- Phone: 1-800-518-4726
- Email: support@grants.gov

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can:

- Call 866-606-8220.
- Live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

Reference websites

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#)
- [Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\)](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Applying for an ACF Grant Award](#)
- [Grants.gov Accessibility Information](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#)
- [United States Code \(U.S.C.\)](#)
- [Award Terms and Conditions](#) (see also the [ACF Standard Terms and Conditions \[PDF\]](#))
- [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#)
- [ACF Property Guidance](#)
- [Community Services Block Grant \(CSBG\)](#)
- [Office of Community Services \(OCS\)](#)

Paperwork Reduction Act disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the project description (project narrative, line-item budget, and justification) is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information.

The project description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires April 30, 2029. 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.

Appendices

Appendix A: Definitions

The following definitions apply to this funding opportunity and applicants are strongly encouraged to review these carefully prior to applying:

A Home for Every Child – An ACF initiative that prioritizes matters that safely decrease the number of children entering foster care through effective prevention, while also increasing the number of foster homes through diligent recruitment, prioritizing kin, and improving retention of existing caregivers.

Abuse - Excessive or improper use of a thing, or to use something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for its use. Abuse can occur in financial or non-financial settings.

Capacity Building – Activities that assist states, state associations, territories, directly-funded tribes and tribal organization, and eligible entities to improve or enhance their overall or specific capability to plan, deliver, manage, and evaluate programs efficiently and effectively to produce intended results for low-income individuals. Activities may include, but are not limited to, upgrading internal financial management or computer systems, establishing new external linkages with other organizations, improving board functioning, evaluating program outcomes, implementing leadership development programs, improving knowledge management approaches, adding or refining a program component, replicating techniques or programs piloted in another local community, or making other cost-effective improvements.

Community Needs Assessment (CAN) – A process which identifies existing resources in a particular community and where needs and challenges may remain unmet. A CNA must be comprehensive enough to represent the needs of the entire population and recognizes how solutions can be best deployed to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

Cooperative Agreement – An award instrument of financial assistance used when substantial involvement is anticipated between the awarding office (the federal government) and the award recipient during performance of the contemplated project. Substantial involvement will include collaboration or participation by OCS staff in activities specified in the award and oversight of the progress, goals, and objectives outlined in the project work plan.

CSBG Annual Report – An annual document on the measured performance of the state and its eligible entities which each state must prepare and submit to the HHS Secretary, as required by the CSBG Act [Section 678E(a)(2)]. Per section 678E, the reports must

include information that is pertinent and comprehensive, and that describes in detail CSBG activities and services as well as addresses outcomes that measure how CSBG funds were used to promote self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization.

CSBG Lead Agency – The agency designated by the Governor or Chief Executive Officer of a state or territory to submit the official CSBG plan, CSBG Annual Report, monitor the activities of eligible entities, and assure compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements for CSBG.

CSBG network – The CSBG network includes OCS, states, territories, directly-funded tribes and tribal organizations, Eligible entities, state associations, and the CSBG national TTA providers that plan and implement TTA that supports anti-poverty programs and services on behalf of people with low income. OCS and the CSBG national TTA providers are also included in the CSBG network; however, for the purposes of this cooperative agreement, they are not included as direct recipients of the TTA provided through this cooperative agreement.

CSBG Performance Management Framework – A framework designed to increase accountability across all levels of the CSBG network (federal, state, and local) and to enable program administrators at all levels to make better data-based decisions. The elements of the framework include: 1) organizational standards for local Eligible entities, 2) accountability measures, 3) ROMA NG, and 4) the CSBG Annual Report which includes an updated and refined set of CSBG outcome measures.

CSBG State Plan – A critical document for both state and federal oversight of CSBG. According to section 676(b) of the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9908(b)), states and territories must prepare and submit a State Plan for CSBG funding. OCS provides funds to CSBG award recipients based on the determination that their State Plan, which also serves as an application, is complete and in accordance with all requirements of the CSBG Act. To qualify for CSBG funding, each CSBG lead agency must prepare and submit a 1- or 2-year state plan application to OCS by September 1 of each year using the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved form (OMB No. 0970-0492).

CSBG Tribal Annual Report - An OMB-approved form that tribes and tribal organizations must submit annually to receive CSBG funding as required by the CSBG Act, Section 678E (P.L. 42 USC 9917) The Tribal Annual Report is a truncated version of the OMB-approved CSBG Annual Report (OMB No. 0970-0492).

CSBG Tribal Annual Report (Short Form) - An OMB-approved form that tribes and tribal organizations must submit annually to receive CSBG funding as required by the CSBG Act, Section 678E (P.L. 42 USC 9917) The Tribal Short Form is truncated version of the Tribal Annual Report (OMB No. 0970 0492).

CSBG Tribal Plan and Application - An Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved form that tribes and tribal organizations must submit annually (covering one-year) or biennially (covering two-years) to receive CSBG funding as required by the CSBG Act, Section 676 (P.L. 42 USC 9908).

CSBG Tripartite Board – The board of eligible entities that must be composed as follows: 1) one-third of the board must consist of elected public officials; 2) no fewer than one-third must be persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that the members are representative of individuals and families with low income in the neighborhood served and, if they represent a specific neighborhood, that they live in that neighborhood; and 3) the remainder must be members or officials of the private groups and interests in the community (business, industry, labor, religious, law enforcement, education, or other major groups and interests). Board members must fully participate in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the CSBG activities.

Eligible Entities - Local public or private non-profit organizations, primarily Community Action Agencies (CAAs), designated by states to receive CSBG funding. Eligible entities include CAAs, limited purpose agencies, migrant or seasonal farmworker organizations, and tribes or tribal organizations. Approximately 80 percent of these agencies are 501(c)(3) non-profits, and 20 percent are public entities, part of a city or county government

Fraud - Wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain. Fraud includes false representation of fact, making false statements, or by concealment of information.

Innovate– To implement a new approach to an activity in a manner that successfully results in an improvement to the corresponding outcome. This can include an actual, tangible output or an increase in efficiency and resource management. Innovation requires making changes to an established idea or methodology.

Knowledge Management–The process of gathering, classifying, analyzing, and sharing information so that an organization can collectively pursue its objectives efficiently. Components of knowledge management include people, processes, and technology. The process of knowledge management should be supported by an appropriate investment in training and technology.

Promising Practice– A practice with at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness in small-scale interventions or for which there is potential for generating data that will be useful for making decisions about taking the intervention to scale and generalizing the results to diverse populations and settings.

Quality Improvement– A systematic approach to specifying the processes, services, activities, and outcomes of a program through regular data collection and the application of strategies that lead to performance improvements.

Rapid-Cycle Learning (RCL)– An evidence-informed approach that organizations can use to improve and strengthen services by focusing on answering short-term questions through repeated, small-scale cycles and systematic learning methods. Rapid-Cycle Learning helps organizations improve services in a low-stakes, small-scale way before scaling them up.

SMART Goals – Objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. This framework for setting concrete goals aims to be descriptive and produce stronger outcomes for accountability.

State Associations – Membership organizations, also referred to as State Community Action Associations, that support the CSBG network, particularly CAAs, by providing TTA, coordination, training, and advocacy services for eligible entities.

Subject Matter Expert (SME) – A person who is an authority and has specific expertise in a particular area or topic. This authority is demonstrated by the person’s degree, licensure, and/or through years of professional experience with the area or topic.

Substantial Involvement–The active, collaborative, and ongoing participation by federal staff in a project, going beyond routine oversight. This may involve sharing responsibility, providing technical guidance, or reserving the right to intervene in project activities.

Technical Assistance (TA)– An activity, generally using the services of an expert aimed at enhancing capacity, improving programs and systems, or solving specific problems. Such services may be provided proactively to improve systems or as an intervention to solve specific problems.

Territories- American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands are territories for the purposes of CSBG, per the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9905). Historically, American Samoa is the only territory included in this cooperative agreement. Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands consolidate their funding into the Social Services Block Grant, Consolidated Block Grant. For the purposes of CSBG, Puerto Rico is treated as a state rather than a territory.

Training– An educational activity or event that is designed to impart knowledge and understanding or increase the development of skills. Such training activities may be in the form of assembled events such as workshops, seminars, conferences, or programs of self-instructional activities.

Waste - Thoughtless or careless expenditure, mismanagement, or abuse of resources to the detriment (or potential detriment) of the U.S. government. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs resulting from inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

Modifications

Modification Description	Updated Date