

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Center for Research on Hispanic Children and Families
HHS-2023-ACF-OPRE-PH-0031
Application Due Date: 06/07/2023

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Funding Opportunity Title:
Center for Research on Hispanic Children and Families
Announcement Type:
Initial
Funding Opportunity Number:
HHS-2023-ACF-OPRE-PH-0031
Primary CFDA Number:
93.575
Due Date for Applications:
06/07/2023

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.

This 5-year cooperative agreement will fund a research center to lead and support investigation of the needs of Hispanic populations served by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and promising approaches to promote social and economic well-being among Hispanic children and families with low-incomes. This research center (hereafter referred to as "Center") will bring together a diverse, interdisciplinary team of academic, organizational, and community-based partners to provide leadership in culturally competent research that can inform policies concerning Hispanic families with low-incomes and to foster significant scholarship regarding the needs and experiences of the diverse Hispanic populations throughout the nation. Through a combination of research, research capacity building, and communication activities, this Center will address a range of relevant issues including, but not limited to, the following: a) definition and measurement of significant characteristics and experiences of Hispanic individuals, families, and communities; b) identification of barriers and facilitators of service utilization by Hispanic populations; c) examination of strategies to promote the social and economic well-being of Hispanic children and families and to strengthen Hispanic families; and d) evaluation of promising approaches to serving Hispanic populations.

The Center will be expected to develop research and data products, resources, and a comprehensive communication plan that aims to build research capacity in the field and to improve understanding of Hispanic populations in order to inform policy development and programmatic responses. The Center will focus broadly on child care and early education, Head Start, services to support self-sufficiency and economic mobility of families with low-incomes, and related issues such as family stability and children's healthy development and learning. The Center will also focus on the use and accessibility of data to inform human services policy

and enable data-driven service delivery and program administration.

The Center will be funded through a cooperative agreement. See Section II. Award Information for a description of the substantial involvement of the Federal Project Officer (FPO) of ACF in the performance of the grant recipient who is awarded this cooperative agreement.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

-Social Security Act, section 413, as amended by the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31), Title IV-A: Block Grants to States for the Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (42 U.S.C. 613)

-Social Services Research and Demonstration: Title XI, part A, section 1110 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1310)
-Child Care and Development Block Grant: section 658O of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9858m)
-Head Start Act, section 649 as amended by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, 2007 (42 U.S.C. 9844)

Description

A. PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES

ACF is interested in better understanding how Hispanic populations served by ACF access, experience, and benefit from ACF programs; systematic differences in their experiences with ACF programs; and factors associated with any differences.

The Center is intended to inform ACF efforts to assess policies, program implementation, and practices that may (1) contribute to disparities in access to services, enrollment in services, or in service delivery outcomes, or (2) reduce disparities. Center activities should aim to inform the goals and priorities outlined in the *Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* and support implementation of the goals outlined in the *ACF Strategic Plan*.

In particular, the Center should leverage a strengths-based lens to inform the following ACF program and policy priorities:

1. The diverse characteristics and underlying needs of low-income Hispanic children and families;
2. Disparities in enrollment, access, services, outcomes, and policies, and changes in disparities over time;
3. Program and policy implementation, structural barriers, implementation practices, and other factors that may contribute to or reduce disparities;
4. Data needs that can support policy development and program implementation and promising data practices that can be used to address equity concerns and reduce disparities around ACF program enrollment, access, services, and outcomes; and
5. Strategies and promising practices to improve the self-sufficiency, stable employment, economic mobility, early learning, health, stability, and well-being of low-income Hispanic families and their children.

To effectively inform these ACF program and policy priorities, the Center should collaboratively engage with and incorporate the voices and experiences of ACF program participants, personnel delivering services, and other community members.

The work of the Center will be supported by research funds connected to multiple related areas of ACF programming, and the activities funded by the Center will focus on the issues listed above specifically in light of the programmatic goals in these areas. Consistent with statutory authority, the Center's resources and activities should be dedicated proportionately to reflect the purposes of the funding streams supporting the Center. They are, as follows:

- *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*

The TANF block grant provides funds to states, eligible territories, and tribes to support a wide range of efforts to promote family economic stability. For example, TANF grant dollars are used for programs that promote job readiness through education and training; to provide assistance with child care, transportation, or other services that support employment activities; and to improve services that support family strengthening. One of the goals of the Center will be to increase understanding of how TANF and other programs that serve TANF and TANF-eligible populations can best support the self-sufficiency and economic well-being of Hispanic families. Priority areas of interest include, but are not limited to, equitable access to and delivery of human services; provision of supports critical to family stabilization such as cash assistance and housing; whole-family and community-based approaches to supporting economic and social well-being; and effective strategies for promoting career advancement including skill-building approaches and occupational training. Funds authorized by the Social Security Act, section 413 for research activities in this area contribute $500,000, or approximately 32 percent, of the Center’s total funds.

- *Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)*

CCDF aims to help low-income working families pay for child care and to improve the quality of child care for all children. One of the goals of the Center will be to increase understanding of child care and early education issues for low-income Hispanic families, including questions about improving access to high-quality child care and early education, supporting the needs of working parents, and implementation of child care and early education systems that equitably support Hispanic children, and families. Research funds associated with CCDF contribute $500,000, or approximately 32 percent, of the Center’s total funds.

- *Head Start.*

Head Start programs offer early learning; and nutritional, health, social, family well-being, and other services. Head Start programs are delivered through direct grants from the federal government to agencies in local communities throughout the nation that provide services in centers, schools, family child care homes, and through home visiting. One of the goals of the Center will be to inform efforts to promote equity in approaches to reach, recruit, and sustain enrollment of Hispanic families. In addition, a goal of the Center will be to improve

understanding of approaches to support the diverse strengths and needs of Hispanic families served by Head Start programs and Head Start staff, including those served by and working in Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs. The Center's Head Start work may explore implementation and outcomes of culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate family engagement, professional development, program policies, and teaching and learning practices. Research funds associated with Head Start contribute $500,000, or approximately 32 percent, of the Center's total funds.

- *Social Services Research and Demonstration.*

Section 1110 of the Social Security Act authorizes research and demonstration projects such as those which will help improve the administration and effectiveness of programs carried on or assisted under the Social Security Act and related programs. One of the goals of the Center will be to inform data sharing– including open data, or data that is made available to the public– and collaboration efforts to enable policy development and data-driven service delivery and program administration. Research funds associated with Social Services Research and Demonstration contribute $50,000 or approximately 3 percent, of the Center's total funds.

Consistent with statutory authority, the Center's expenditures that are paid with these grant funds may only be paid from an ACF programmatic area that authorizes such an expenditure. This means that the grant recipient will need to ensure that funds from each of the individual areas of ACF programming are only used to support costs that fall within that area. This may be accomplished by either:

1. Retaining the amount of funds that are from each of the sources in separate accounts, one pertaining to each program, and ensuring that each account is only used to pay costs that fall within that program's purpose, or;
2. Retaining the entire grant award (the funds from all four areas of ACF programming) in one account, and allot the funds to each program area, while ensuring that the total amount of costs paid in each program area does not exceed the amount of funding that was awarded from that program area.

It is expected that some of the Center's costs will be cross-cutting (i.e., fall within the scope of multiple program areas). In these instances, the grant recipient generally has discretion to select the program area to be charged. Any questions concerning this should be directed to the grants officer.

B. GRANT PROGRAM GOALS

The Center will be responsible for pursuing three key goals:

1. **Advancing Research:** Planning, initiating, and maintaining a focused research program to address key research questions of interest;
2. **Building Research Capacity:** Developing capacity in the scientific community to conduct research that is relevant to ACF program and policy goals as well as research that is valid, and culturally anchored in the experiences of Hispanic children and families in the United States; and

3. **Communicating Research:** Developing and maintaining an innovative communication plan and dissemination system to share research and information with key partners and the broader field.

Each of these goals should be a priority for the Center, and the grant recipient is expected to develop and realize a program that appropriately balances the Center's core infrastructure and administrative responsibilities with each of these three key program goals. It is also expected that the grant recipient will identify and develop effective strategies to sustain project activities in support of the grant program's goals after the period of federal funding ends. These goals and the related responsibilities of the Center are discussed in more detail below.

1. Advancing Research

The Center will be expected to plan, initiate, and maintain a focused and high-caliber research program. The Center's program of research should build on the existing literature related to low-income and vulnerable Hispanic children and families and should be relevant to the needs and interests of ACF, as well as of value to the field more generally. The research program may blend national, regional, and state issues, as needed. It may include ongoing or new social, behavioral, and economic policy-related research projects, including pilot and feasibility studies; evaluation of service approaches and program or policy implementation; development, testing, and refinement of research methods and instruments; secondary analysis of available data sets; or original data collections, as necessary to address ACF program and policy priorities.

All research activities supported with ACF funds must meet standards of scientific rigor and objectivity. The Center will strive for recognition from the research and policy communities for its scientific quality, fairness, and program and policy relevance. The research program should include basic and applied research, quantitative and qualitative research methods, primary data collection, and secondary data analyses, as best suited for the research questions and objectives pursued by the Center. The research program should support Center staff and other affiliated researchers in completing research that informs ACF's programmatic priorities. The Center should provide intellectual leadership in the national research community by establishing links with a broad range of scholars external to the awardee through a combination of mechanisms, which may include (but is not limited to) leadership roles, partnerships with other institutions of higher education, visiting and postdoctoral appointments, research assistantships, an extramural program of nonresident grants, etc.

The research program should include multi-disciplinary and multi-method approaches to address questions of significance to ACF, beyond what is possible from analysis within the framework of a single discipline or method. The Center team should possess competency in a range of economic, social, and behavioral disciplines and research methodologies, and the cultural and linguistic expertise required to meet Center objectives. Planning and execution of the research program shall always consider the program and policy implications of research findings in a non-partisan manner. The Center should link research to public and private efforts to improve the lives of low-income Hispanic individuals and families. A Steering Committee made up of both Center and federal staff will meet regularly to review and refine plans for Center activities. A Technical Work Group will meet to provide input for the Center's activities.

Approximately 50-60 percent of the Center's overall effort should be dedicated to the goal of

advancing research.

2. Building Research Capacity

The Center is expected to build research capacity and infrastructure to conduct valid and culturally competent research addressing questions of significance for ACF policies/programs within Hispanic populations. The Center will be responsible for developing tools, resources, and approaches for the field to conduct rigorous and valid research with Hispanic populations with low incomes. In addition, the Center is expected to contribute to the development and expansion of a diverse corps of emerging scholars/researchers who focus their research on the experiences of vulnerable Hispanic populations and those with low incomes, and on policies and programs to promote social and economic well-being among Hispanic families. In order to promote such research broadly in the field, the Center is expected to provide training and mentoring activities to support and encourage the work of emerging scholars/researchers investigating relevant questions (e.g., Ph.D. candidates, postdoctoral scholars, graduate research assistants), not only at the award institution, but also at other institutions. The Center should pursue innovative approaches to foster rigorous, relevant research and to encourage a diverse group of scholars to develop careers in policy-relevant research concerning vulnerable Hispanic children and families and those with low incomes.

Approximately 20-30 percent of the Center's overall effort should be dedicated to the goal of building research capacity.

3. Communicating Research

Making knowledge and information available to ACF's audiences is another integral goal of the Center. The Center will be expected to develop and maintain a communication plan and dissemination system that broadly and efficiently communicates research findings and aims to increase use of research, data, and relevant resources for a wide audience including researchers, federal and state policymakers, ACF grant recipients, and program administrators. Communication planning will be comprehensive and utilize diverse media, channels, and strategic partnerships as best suited to connect target audiences with the research findings and resources that can inform their work. The Center's dissemination system will include traditional, social, and innovative media, such as developing accessible written, visual, and audio products; holding events, such as webinars, workshops, roundtables, or symposia; and engaging in outreach activities such as listening sessions and presentations at research and practice-focused gatherings, collaboration with ACF technical assistance providers, and meetings with stakeholders and community members to inform stakeholders and to inform Center communication activities. The Center's communication plan will demonstrate strong links to the goals and objectives of the Center.

Approximately 10-20 percent of the Center's overall effort should be dedicated to the goal of communicating research.

C. GRANT PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Center's organizational structure will include the following key elements: the Center Director (or co-Directors); the Center's staff and academic partners; a Steering Committee; and a Technical Work Group. Each of these elements is described below:

Center Director. The Director of the Center will be the primary Center personnel representing the Center across all activities. His or her expertise, knowledge, and skills will inform each portion of the Center's activities and will contribute directly to the collaborative efforts involved. Through his or her efforts, the Center will advance the state of research concerning low-income and vulnerable Hispanic children and families. The Director will not only be primarily responsible for the successful completion of the Center's research activities, but will also be responsible for establishing and maintaining coherence in goals and purpose across the Center's activities and collaboration across the various structural elements and participants in the Center's activities.

The Director must have a Ph.D. or equivalent for their field and should be an established expert as demonstrated by a substantial body of published work, including peer-reviewed articles related to low-income and vulnerable Hispanic children and families. Gaps in the Director's skills should be addressed through additional Center leadership and staff, subcontracts with other institutions and organizations, and partnerships with other scholars and professionals (i.e., Co-Directors, consultants, logistics management support, research team members). Changes in the Center Director during the project period would constitute a major revision of the approved project and would require prior approval by ACF.

It will be of key importance that the Director commits appropriate time and effort to the Center, to ensure ongoing management and oversight, and high-quality results and products. The grant recipient should inform the FPO regarding any significant changes in these time demands over the course of the project period.

Center Staff and Partners. The Center's staff and partners (i.e., project managers, coordinators, writers, data collectors, subcontracted research and logistics support, research partners) are critical to the success of all of the Center's activities. The Center team must include individuals with experience and skills for completing research with Hispanic children and families of low-incomes, including sufficient bilingual staff to support all Center activities. The Center team must include individuals with expertise in ACF's program and policy priorities as identified in *Section I. Program Description*. The Center team must also include staff with competencies and experience required to support high-quality and effective dissemination of Center products and resources. Gaps in Director or Co-Director abilities may be addressed by identified strengths in the Center's staff and partners. It will be of key importance that key Center staff commit appropriate time and effort to the Center to ensure completion of a robust research program and communications. Key Center staff include the Center Director(s) (or Principal Investigator(s)) and other key staff, such as senior research staff, project managers, communications and technical personnel, etc. The grant recipient is encouraged to seek out and partner with other organizations, research institutions, and experts throughout the course of funding, given the depth of expertise that is required by this project. Changes in key personnel during the project period would constitute a major revision of the approved project and would require prior approval by ACF.

Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will consist of the Center's Director (or Co-Directors, if applicable), other selected key Center personnel, the FPO from Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), and other representatives of ACF (as needed and available).

This Steering Committee will meet regularly to discuss the Center's plans, activities, and progress, with a focus on ACF's goals for the Center. The Center Director and staff will be responsible for day-to-day operations and decisions. The Steering Committee will:
(a) Provide input on plans and products of the Center with an eye towards the Center's short- and long-term goals;
(b) Identify supplemental activities to address emerging programmatic concerns;
(c) Identify and support opportunities for dissemination of the Center's work;
(d) Identify opportunities for the Center to consult with policymakers and other key stakeholders;
(e) Facilitate communication and collaboration with other ACF-sponsored projects; and
(f) Provide problem-solving feedback regarding Center activities.
The committee will meet via teleconference or in person as needed to support strong communication across the Center staff, clarity and consistency in the Center's mission and procedures, and a robust research portfolio.

Community, Programmatic, Policy, and Research Engagement. The Center will engage community, programmatic, policy, and research experts to inform the rigor and relevance of the Center. This includes engagement, as appropriate, across the lifecycle of various Center activities from initial planning to external review of products as well as to inform communication efforts.

One component of this engagement shall be the establishment of a Technical Work Group made up of experts and community members from outside of the grant recipient/funded institution(s), with research, programmatic, and/or lived expertise in ACF's priorities of concern regarding Hispanic children and families. Those with lived expertise may include individuals who have participated in, are currently participating in, or may be eligible for participation in ACF or other human services programs, as well as those who have served as administrators or directors of such programs. This group will provide input and feedback to inform priorities and refine plans for Center activities. The Technical Work Group will be regarded as a resource for the Center, supporting the Center in defining the state of the field; identifying forward-looking questions, concerns, and major gaps in the knowledge base; and in ensuring that the Center's work will build research capacity while addressing issues relevant to policy and program leaders. The Center should convene and engage this group purposefully to help realize ACF's goals for the Center and to expand the reach of the Center's activities. Efforts will be made in selecting this group to assure representation from a broad range of organizations (such as academic, research, policy, and program organizations) and fields of study. To enable deeper discussions on selected topics and connections among experts and stakeholders, it is expected that the Technical Work Group will meet together at least once each year, via teleconference or in person, as needed.

D. ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRANT RECIPIENT

In support of the overarching grant program goals detailed in *Section I.B.*, the Center will be responsible for the following additional tasks:

Supplemental Activities. During the course of the project period, the Center will be called upon to complete several supplemental activities, as needed, to respond to pressing research and policy needs that fall within the scope of the Center. For designing, refining, and carrying out these supplemental projects, the Center will work through a consultative process with federal staff, and as needed and appropriate, with additional consultants and the Technical Work Group. The

Center is expected to plan for approximately 10 percent of its effort to support such activities. It is expected that these activities may overlap to some extent with projects/efforts developed in pursuit of the Center's primary research, research capacity building, and communication goals. Specific supplemental activities will be identified during the course of the grant. However, a few examples of potential activities include:

- Developing research briefs on specific topics of interest to ACF programs;
- Development and pilot testing of culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate research protocols to better engage and reflect the experiences of Hispanic individuals and families of low-incomes; and
- Development and validation of measures for inclusion in federal research examining experiences of Hispanic populations with ACF programs.

Meetings and Conferences. Participation in meetings and conferences can help deepen understanding, strengthen connections, and promote collaboration among individuals, institutions, and perspectives. In support of the research capacity-building and communication goals of this grant program, the grant recipient will be expected to attend (and, in some cases, to host) the following required meetings and conferences should they be held in-person. The proposed budget should reflect travel funds for the Director and at least one key personnel to attend the required meetings and all costs and logistical support (i.e., hotel, travel) for any proposed meetings or conferencing activities.

- *Steering Committee*. (Grant recipient will host/organize.) In addition to regular teleconferences, it may be appropriate for the entire Steering Committee to meet in person during the course of the project period. The Steering Committee is discussed in more detail in *Section I.C.*
- *Technical Work Group Meeting.* (Grant recipient will host/organize.) The Center will host an annual consultation with the Technical Work Group. The Technical Work Group should be convened and individual members engaged throughout the course of the project; however, an annual meeting would be an opportunity for deeper, sustained discussion with the work group regarding Center priorities and plans, specific issues or priorities for the field, recent developments in the field, or opportunities for collaboration. The Technical Work Group is discussed in more detail in *Section I.C.*
- *Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) Annual Meeting.* (Grant recipient will attend.) It is expected that key Center personnel will attend the annual meeting of CCEEPRC, which is typically held in Washington, DC. The meeting brings together grant recipients and contracted researchers funded by ACF and federal and state CCDF administrators to discuss child care policy research and is an excellent opportunity for the Center to build relationships with key stakeholders and to discuss implications of research developments and the Center's work.
- *ACF's National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC).* (Grant recipient will attend.) It is expected that key Center personnel will attend NRCEC, which is typically held biennially in the Washington, DC area. The next conference is expected to be held in June 2024. This conference aims to identify and disseminate research relevant to young children (birth to 8 years) and their families; encourage collaboration among

researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to build the evidence base for policy and practice; and foster discussion of research priorities, gaps, and needs.

- *Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS).* (Grant recipient will attend.) It is expected that key Center personnel will attend the biennial RECS, which is typically held in Washington, DC. The next conference is expected to be held in May 2024. This conference brings together researchers and administrators to discuss cutting-edge research on family economic self-sufficiency and social welfare programs and policies.
- *Other opportunities to meet with ACF stakeholders.* (Grant recipient will attend.) In addition, OPRE will identify and facilitate opportunities to present Center work and engage with federal and state policymakers, program administrators, ACF training and technical assistance providers, ACF-sponsored research teams, and other ACF audiences in order to maximize timely information sharing and coordination as appropriate. For example, the grant recipient may be asked to present at the annual meeting of state, territory, and tribal child care administrators (State and Territory Administrators Meeting (STAM)), which is typically held in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, or to participate remotely in briefings or webinars with ACF staff or technical assistance providers.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:
CA (Cooperative Agreement)

Estimated Total Funding:
$1,550,000

Expected Number of Awards:
1

Award Ceiling:
$1,550,000
Per Budget Period

Award Floor:
$500,000
Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:
$1,550,000
Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:
09/30/2023

Length of Project Periods:
60-month project period with five 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'
DEFINITIONS
Budget Period: The period of time for which funds are made available to a particular grant

recipient. There will be five 12-month budget periods for the project period. The project period will be 60 months in length.
Project Period: The total length of the proposed project is 60 months. The project period start date will be no later than September 30, 2023. As an example, for a 60-month proposed project, the project period would start September 30, 2023, and end September 29, 2028.

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.*

Funds for this project are authorized separately. The grant recipient will be required to maintain accounting records which track the funds and the associated activities/costs supported by each of the funding streams within the award. Any non-federal funds used to support Center activities must be properly documented, including disclosure of the source of such funds, and accounting records should track these funds separately showing the associated activities/costs supported with such funds.

The initial award will be made for the first 12-month budget period. The need for additional years of funding during the 60-month project period should be identified in the application (Item 17 on Standard Form (SF) 424), in the project narrative, and in the budget. Continuation awards for subsequent years will be considered on a noncompetitive basis, subject to the availability of funds, and any other “for cause” basis. Grant recipients will receive instructions on how to submit non-competing continuation applications during the first budget period to request funds for subsequent budget periods. For each additional year of funding requested, grant recipients must complete a *non-competing continuation application* no later than 90 days prior to the end of the current budget period. Applications for non-competing continuation awards should include a sufficiently detailed work plan for the next year of funding, linked to an updated plan of activities for the remaining years of the proposed project period.

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

Under this cooperative agreement, substantial involvement is anticipated between ACF and the grant recipient throughout the duration of the funded project.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OPRE
OPRE staff will collaboratively negotiate with the recipient of funds regarding the roles and responsibilities outlined in this announcement, prior to finalizing the cooperative agreement. This will include discussions regarding whether there are gaps or weaknesses identified by the review panel that need to be addressed, such as additional areas of expertise or support needed within the Center's organizational structure, and working with the grant recipient to address significant gaps or weaknesses.

ACF will monitor the grant recipient, providing guidance when necessary. ACF will work collaboratively with the grant recipient to facilitate accomplishment of project goals. ACF will facilitate collaboration and coordination with other ACF-sponsored grant recipients and projects (e.g., research projects, training and technical assistance providers) and ACF program offices (e.g., Office of Child Care, Office of Head Start, Office of Family Assistance).

The FPO and other ACF staff, as needed, will participate in the Steering Committee to provide input, information, assistance, and feedback reflecting ACF's programmatic and research goals and to remain informed about project activities and progress. ACF staff will provide feedback regarding proposed plans and products to ensure that the activities and the products developed are filling needs and are relevant and translatable to the policy and practice communities. ACF staff will also provide feedback to ensure that the Center's resources and activities are dedicated proportionately to reflect the purposes of the funding streams supporting the Center.

See *Section I. Program Description* for a description of the responsibilities and structure required of the grant recipient under this award.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

There are no limitations on eligible applicants other than individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities.

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:
Yes
Recipients are required to meet a non-federal share of the project cost, in accordance with Social Security Act Section 1110(a)(1)(A).

Recipients must provide at least 1 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF (federal) share and the non-federal share. The non-federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although recipients are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. For example, in order to meet the match requirements, a project requesting $1,550,000 in ACF (federal) funds must provide a non-federal share of the approved total project cost of at least $ 15,500, which is 1 percent of total approved project cost of $ 1,550,000.

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.**

Cost sharing is required for the $50,000 in funds authorized under Social Services Research and Demonstration, Title XI, Part A, section 1110 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1310). Applicants must provide a cost sharing amount in the application's Budget and Budget Justification. Cost sharing may be in cash or in-kind, including time spent on the project by third-party volunteers, and may include unrecovered indirect costs in accordance with 45 CFR 75.306. Since the cost sharing amount is not part of the federal share, it does not affect the Award Ceiling amount under the application disqualification factor. Please see *Section IV.2. Budget and Budget Justification, Commitment of Non-Federal Resources* and *Section V.1. Criteria, Budget and Budget Justification.*

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

OPRE Review Team: Hispanic Research Center
C/O ICF International
1902 Reston Metro Plaza
Reston
VA
20190
877-350-5913
HispanicResearch@icfi.com

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:

1. Page Limits and Numbering. Applicants must limit their ***entire*** **application (i.e., the two application files) to 125 pages.** Pages submitted beyond the first 125 in the two application submission files will be removed prior to panel review. See description in this Section for *Accepted Application Format* and *Application Upload Requirements*.
a) As described earlier in this Section, the required SF and OMB-approved forms are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files and, therefore, are not included in the 125-page limit. Applicants are reminded to include all required forms and materials.
b) Applicants must limit the file containing the Project Description and Budget Justification to *75 pages* total. Applicants must number the pages of the file, beginning with the Table of Contents. Note: References and Budget Justification may be single-spaced, as described in this Section in *Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements*.
c) Applicants must limit the Appendices file to 50 pages.

2. Writing Style. The proposal should be consistent with the format and style guidelines of the current *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

Organization of Application:
Applicants are strongly advised to use headings and subheadings that correspond to the required information, application sections, and evaluation criteria. **Sections must be carefully labeled to ease reviewers' identification of information relevant to the application review criteria.** Additional headers and sub-headers may also be used to organize the content of each section, as appropriate. References and project timelines must be included in the Project Description section, not in the Appendices.

1. Project Description: The project description should be carefully developed in accordance with ACF's research goals and agenda as described in *Section I. Program Description* and attend to the criteria that will be used to evaluate the applications as described in *Section V.I. Criteria*. **ACF suggests organizing the Project Description (narrative) file according to the sections presented below.** See additional instructions later in this Section (under "The Project Description") for details on preparing the full project description.
a) Table of Contents
b) Project Summary/Abstract (single-spaced, one page maximum)
c) Objectives and Proposed Priorities

d) Plan to Advance a Research Agenda
e) Plan to Build Research Capacity in the Field
f) Plan for Supplemental Activities
g) Plan to Disseminate Research
h) Staff and Organizational Plan
i) Project Sustainability Plan
j) Budget and Budget Justification

2. Appendices should include any documentation of eligibility status, resumes/curriculum vitaes, letters of support, memoranda of understanding or other evidence of agreements or partnerships described in the proposed project. **ACF suggests organizing the Appendices file in the order presented below (as applicable).**
a) Table of Contents
b) Required Documentation of Eligibility Status
c) Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds
d) Resumes/Curriculum Vitaes
e) Memoranda of Understanding and/or Letters of Agreement
f) Letters of Support
g) Other Materials in Support of the Proposal

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
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Form is available at http:// www.hhs.gov/ ohrp/ assurances/ forms/index.html. General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at http://www. hhs.gov/ ohrp/ . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email (OHRP@HHS.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900).
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 project award period. Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at: http://www.sam. gov.	See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)* for more information.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the	Required for all applications.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	application due date.	
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 application due date.	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants must cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If submission of this form is applicable, it	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	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.	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

SF-424 Key Contact Form

Specifically, include current contact information for proposed **Center Director** or, if different, person authorized and available to speak regarding application between date of submission and September 30, 2023.

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.

Letter of Intent
Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this funding opportunity. Please submit a letter of intent by the deadline date listed in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. The letter of intent should include the following information: number and title of this funding opportunity; the name and address of the applicant organization; and the name, phone number, fax number and email address of a contact person.

Letter of intent information will be used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to evaluate applications. **The letter of intent is optional**. Failure to submit a letter of intent **will not** impact eligibility to submit an application and **will not** disqualify an application from competitive review.

Submit the Letter of Intent to the following address:
OPRE Review Team: Center for Research on Hispanic Children and Families
c/o ICF International
1902 Reston Metro Plaza
Reston, VA 20190
Email: HispanicResearch@ICFI.com

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.

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.

For-Profits and Small Businesses
For-profit organizations (including small businesses) applying for funding must submit the following to provide proof of their legal status: Documentation establishing the power granted to the entity to enter into contractual relationships and/or accept awards (i.e., articles of incorporation, bylaws).

Small Businesses
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.

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

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

Applicants must provide a 5-year plan for accomplishing the goals set forth in *Section I*. The 5-year plan must include a detailed work-plan for the first 2 years that clearly identifies specific timelines, milestones, activities, and tasks (for an example, see Project Timeline and Milestones later in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, Project Description* for more information). In addition, applicants must clearly explain how the proposed organizational infrastructure and management will support the pursuit of these goals and the responsibilities defined in this funding opportunity announcement. ACF anticipates that the details of the Center's research agenda and work plan will be further refined and finalized once the award is made.

Specifically, applications must contain the following sections:

1. Objectives and Proposed Research Activities
Applicants must propose research activities related to ACF's program and policy priorities and the grant program purpose and goals discussed in *Sections I.A., 1.B.,* and *1.C.,* which will form the basis of the Center's 5-year agenda. Applicants must present a brief analysis of the key trends (e.g., social, demographic, economic) and knowledge base related to the Center's proposed research priorities, providing the justification for the proposed course of research and capacity-building activities. The analysis must demonstrate the applicant's grasp of the state of the field and of the implications for ACF's programmatic concerns regarding Hispanic children and families. The analysis must discuss critical gaps in the knowledge base, in research methodology and in research capacity that the applicant would prioritize among Center activities.

2. Plan to Advance a Research Agenda
Applicants must propose a 2-year research plan (at a minimum), outlining the major research themes to be investigated and including specific examples of activities to address these. In particular, applicants must describe activities planned for each of the research priorities proposed. It also must be specific about short- and long-term research themes and projects, demonstrating the basis for any proposed activities and products. The lines of research described must be concrete enough that project descriptions in subsequent work plans can be viewed as articulating a research theme discussed in the application.

The proposed research activities must be detailed and clear, describing the specific objectives and methodology, as appropriate, for each proposed activity; the skills, expertise and knowledge of any personnel involved; and any partnership development activities with scholars, programs, or other stakeholders. Applicants must discuss the appropriateness of the approaches proposed, including cultural and linguistic, as well as methodological considerations.

An application that simply contains an ad hoc categorization of an unstructured set of research projects or activities—as opposed to a set of projects that reflects a coherent theme—will be judged unfavorably. The successful applicant will demonstrate the importance of the proposed projects' activities to the field, will describe rigorous and appropriate approaches to conduct the activities, and will convincingly demonstrate that the activities will significantly enhance the knowledge base.

In addition, applicants must propose a long-term research planning process and quality assurance plan for all Center research activities over the course of the 5-year project period, including involvement of the Steering Committee and Technical Work Group. The first year of the process may reflect more developmental, but still substantial, activities (i.e., identifying gaps in the field; reviews and secondary analyses; piloting; team development; establishing formal partnerships; refining activities and schedule), while the plan for later years may reflect more substantial research activities such as data collection and data analysis.

3. Plan to Build Research Capacity in the Field

Applicants must propose a detailed plan to build capacity in the field to conduct valid and culturally competent research addressing ACF policies/programs related to Hispanic populations. The proposed plan must include two components– developing resources for the field and supporting emerging scholars.

First, applicants must propose a set of activities to build long-term capacity for valid, reliable, culturally and linguistically sound research on the social and economic well-being of Hispanic children and families and on programs to effectively serve them. Such activities might include the development of tools, resources, and approaches for the research field at large. Applicants must propose specific activities following from the research priorities identified. For example, specific activities might aim to improve the quality of survey data collected with Hispanic populations by identifying critical constructs and valid instruments to measure these, as well as developing resources and supports to increase their use in the field.

Second, applicants must propose training and mentoring activities for emerging scholars, describing how they will benefit from exposure to and participation in the ongoing research and other activities of the Center and how students and emerging scholars will be encouraged to pursue studies in the identified research priorities or focused on related areas concerning Hispanic populations. Applicants must provide details of any program to reach undergraduates or graduate students to expand participation in the field and to attract a diversified pool of talented researchers into careers focused on low-income and vulnerable Hispanic children and families.

This section should discuss any arrangements and expectations for students, research assistants, post-docs, resident scholars, etc., as well as any mentors, other staff, or organizations that will have roles in engaging and training emerging scholars. Applicants must discuss methods to ensure diversity and expand the diversity of scholars investigating poverty and related issues among Hispanics.

Applicants must demonstrate how scholars outside of the grant recipient organization will benefit from the activities of the Center that are focused on building capacity in the research field and

will be encouraged and supported to pursue culturally competent and policy-relevant research focused on low-income and vulnerable Hispanic children and families.

4. Plan for Supplemental Activities

Applicants must demonstrate capacity to conduct supplemental policy-relevant projects (e.g., relevant expertise and availability of Center personnel, proposed consultants, subcontracts, or other plans for timely and efficient completion of such activities) as discussed in *Section I. Program Description.* Applicants must discuss proposed infrastructure and processes to support this function, including the personnel, as well as the effort and funds devoted to completing supplemental activities as they arise. ACF does not expect applicants to provide highly detailed research plans for supplemental activities in the application; however, proposals must provide evidence of sufficient capacity, planning, and flexibility to support timely and high-quality responses to ACF requests for research expertise related to the Center's goals.

5. Plan to Communicate Research

Applicants must propose specific products or communications (interim, long-term) resulting from all research activities, as well as intended audience(s) for each and any specific channels proposed for dissemination, to support the goals of the Center. In addition to identifying potential products, applicants must include a detailed communication plan that describes a process for identifying and developing products and communications to effectively reach and inform key audiences, including the research community, federal and state policymakers, program administrators, and any partners or communities engaged in the course of research. The proposed plan must demonstrate strong links to the goals and objectives of the Center. The proposal must include details regarding Center resources and systems that will support dissemination (e.g., logistics and technical support, quality-control and management). As appropriate to the planned activities, the proposal will fully describe the expertise, skills, and knowledge of proposed personnel or partners with respect to the completion of high-quality products, including presentations, events, or communication through other media.

In developing a plan, applicants are encouraged to consult OPRE resources addressing dissemination of human services research, and particularly the report titled *The Value-Added Research Dissemination Framework* (available on ACF's website at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/opre-research-dissemination-project-2010-2012). Applicants are also encouraged to include procedures to support compliance with the standards for electronic media (Section 508 of the amended Rehabilitation Act–"Section 508") to eliminate barriers that might interfere with the ability of individuals with disabilities to fully access Web-delivered information and fully utilize Web-based tools and services.

6. Staff and Organizational Plan

Applicants must propose a staffing and organizational plan for the Center, including analysis and description of the skills and background needed among staff members and the Center's organizational structure and linkages with the host institution and other organizations. Applicants must specify how they will assure a genuinely interdisciplinary approach to achieving the goals of the Center, and where appropriate, the necessary links to university/college departments or units, other organizations and scholars engaged in research, and public/government and community stakeholders. Applicants must also demonstrate that proposed staff have the time and

capacity to engage in Center activities as proposed and that the Center is sufficiently staffed by senior research staff, project manager, and key personnel to complete the work proposed. In particular, the application must specify staff coverage of the activities proposed during the first two years of the grant.

Applicants must identify the Center Director(s) (or Principal Investigator(s)) and key Center staff, such as senior research staff, project managers, communications and technical personnel, etc. Full resumes or curriculum vitae of proposed staff members must be included in the Appendix of the application (see Organizational Capacity later in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, Project Description* for more information on documentation). Applicants must describe the roles and expected contributions of all proposed personnel. The time commitment to the Center and other existing commitments for each proposed Center staff member must be clearly indicated in chart form. In addition, the authors of the application and the roles that each person will play in the proposed Center must be specified.

If the applicant envisions an arrangement among two or more organizations, this section will describe the specifics about the relationships, including leadership, management, and administration. Applicants must describe what steps will be taken to develop the Center's presence in the broader research and policy communities.

Applicants must also discuss the proposed role, procedures, and expected contributions of the Technical Work Group and any additional experts, community members, or partners. In particular, the proposal must describe an approach to engagement with community, programmatic, policy, and research experts throughout the lifecycle of various Center activities. The proposal must include a list of proposed members of the Technical Work Group, including sufficient details to assess the relevance of individual members' experiences and potential contributions and the adequacy of the overall composition of the group. Clear and practical plans for communication and utilization of the Technical Work Group (in informing and refining Center activities) will strengthen the application.

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).

- 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.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities
Recipients are required to ensure proper oversight in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D.

These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

- Financial and Program Management
- Property (if applicable by program legislation)
- Procurement
- Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting
- Subrecipient Monitoring and Management
- Record Retention and Access
- Remedies for Noncompliance

Describe the framework (e.g., governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) in place to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D. The description must include: system(s) for record-keeping and financial management; procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues (e.g., audit findings, continuous program performance assessment findings, program monitoring); and those key staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff, and, if applicable, partner(s) and/or subrecipient(s).

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.

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

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

The proposed budget and budget justification (i.e., narrative) for the Center for Research on Hispanic Children and Families should reflect the full 5-year project period that is proposed by the applicant. This information should link the core management functions, research, capacity building, and dissemination activities to the Center funding level. This section should discuss how the budget for the full project period supports proposed research, capacity building, and dissemination activities, as well as supplemental activities. The budget for the **first 2 years of funding** should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate support for the specific activities proposed, while linking to the overall plan and budget for the full project period. The discussion should include the appropriateness of the level and distribution of funds to the successful completion of ACF's research, capacity building, and dissemination goals (as described in *Section I.C.*) and additional responsibilities (as described in *Section I.E.*) over the 5-year project period. Levels of effort and/or funding should reflect the required percentages to be devoted to specific program goals (as described in *Section I.C.).*

The availability, potential availability or prospects for other funds (from the host university, other universities, foundations, states, other federal agencies, etc.) and the uses to which they would be put, should be documented in this section. Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project should be identified in Block 18 of the SF-424. Inclusion of non-federal funding is required for the funds authorized under Social Services Research and Demonstration, Title XI, Part A, Section 1110 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1310). The value of non-federal funds will not be evaluated under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1*. Grant recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal funds in their application budgets and budget justifications, by budget period, or risk disallowances.

Budget Development by Funding Stream
The grant awarded under this NOFO is made up of multiple funding streams; therefore, applicants must provide additional detail in their budget and budget justifications that proportionately reflects the percentages and types of costs and activities by funding stream. A description of the multiple funding streams is available in *Section I. Program Description.*

In the SF-424A, applicants must show the amounts estimated under each Object Class Category, by funding stream, under each of the columns.
Section A–Budget Summary
Column (a) Grant Program, Function, or Activity: *List each funding stream*
Column (b) Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: *List the CFDA Numbers that appear in the Overview section of this NOFO*

Section B–Budget Categories
Object Class Categories: *Use multiple columns to provide cost detail for each Object Class Category by funding stream*

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

Due Date for Letter of Intent

Due Date for Letter of Intent 05/05/2023

05/05/2023
06/07/2023

Due Date for Applications

06/07/2023

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
OPRE Review Team
Center for Research on Hispanic Children and Families
C/O ICF International
1902 Reston Metro Plaza
Fairfax
VA
22031-6050

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 Proposed Research Activities **Maximum Points:** 10
Reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The proposal is clearly written, concise, organized, and provides appropriate details. Sections are clearly labeled to make it easier for reviewers to identify information relevant to the

evaluation criteria.
2. The brief analysis of the state of the field:

a. Conveys a strong understanding of past research, key trends, and the current state of research related to low-income and vulnerable Hispanic children and families;
b. Demonstrates the applicant's firm grasp of the significance of this past research, key trends, and current state of research for ACF's program and policy priorities, as identified in *Section I. Program Description*; and
c. Identifies critical gaps in the knowledge base, especially in light of ACF's program and policy priorities, as identified in *Section I. Program Description*.

3. The Center's proposed activities:

a. Are consistent with the analysis of past research, key trends, and the current state of the research, particularly any critical gaps identified in the knowledge base;
b. Address the ACF program and policy priorities described in *Section I. Program Description* of this announcement; and
c. Add value to the field more generally.

Approach **Maximum Points:** 50

Plan to Advance a Research Agenda (20 points)
Reviewers will consider the extent to which:
1. The plan to advance a research agenda demonstrates a clear and feasible strategy for planning, initiating, and maintaining a focused research program of high caliber, including:

a. A clear outline of the major research themes to be investigated over the first 2 years of the Center and concrete description of the activities planned by the applicant;
b. Clear justification of the importance of the proposed research activities;
c. A research agenda that combines basic and applied research, methods, and approaches to rigorously and appropriately meet the projects' objectives as well as enhance the knowledge base; and
d. A sound long-term research planning process for further defining and developing the research agenda over the course of the 5-year project period, involving input from experts and community members.

Plan to Build Research Capacity in the Field (10 points)
Reviewers will consider the extent to which:
2. The applicant demonstrates a clear, feasible, and innovative plan for building capacity and infrastructure to conduct valid and culturally competent research addressing ACF program and policy priorities as described in *Section I. Program Description* of this announcement, including:

a. A sound plan to develop and promote the use of tools, resources, and approaches for the field to conduct more rigorous and valid research with Hispanic populations with low-incomes;
b. A strong plan to develop and expand a diverse corps of emerging scholars – not only at the grant recipient organization, but also at other organizations – who focus their research on the experiences of Hispanic children and families with low-incomes; and
c. Strong strategies for promoting the diversity of scholars investigating poverty and related issues among Hispanics.

Plan to Communicate Research (10 points)
Reviewers will consider the extent to which:
3. Proposal includes a plan that would broadly and efficiently communicate research findings, data products, and resources to target audiences, including researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, and:

a. Demonstrates strong links and activities, including the development of strategic partnerships, to support short- and long-term goals of the Center;
b. For each planned activity, identifies specific audiences and appropriate products, channels, etc., with clear objectives consistent with goals of the Center;
c. Includes satisfactory procedures for developing high-quality 508 compliant products and activities; and
d. Includes details regarding sufficient Center resources and qualified staff to support efficient and effective communication and dissemination (e.g., cultural and linguistic competencies, logistics support, quality control, and management).

Quality of Overall Plan, Flexibility, and Plan for Supplemental Activities (10 points)
Reviewers will consider the extent to which:
4. Overall, the proposed plan:

a. Is detailed and clear;
b. Outlines culturally and linguistically appropriate, innovative approaches to foster rigorous, relevant research and to build research capacity in the field; and
c. Includes the appropriate balance of effort to achieve the goals of the Center (i.e., advancing research, building research capacity, and disseminating research) as well as additional responsibilities (i.e., supplemental activities, meeting and conference participation).

5. The proposal demonstrates the applicant's commitment to be flexible and to incorporate federal, Steering Committee, and Technical Work Group feedback to shape the Center's agenda and includes:

a. How the details of the Center's agenda and work plan will be refined and prioritized with input from the Steering Committee and Technical Work Group;
b. Plans for involving the Technical Work Group in the development of research agendas;
c. Adequate time and efforts in the first year of the award to consult with key community, programmatic, and research partners and to incorporate their input prior to finalizing the Center's agenda; and
d. Plans or procedures for consultation with community, programmatic, and research partners at critical points throughout the project period, in the course of developing and implementing Center activities, including research program, building research capacity in the field, and communications.

6. The applicant demonstrates the capacity and commitment to conduct supplemental research activities related to the Center's goals, including:

a. Clear documentation of relevant expertise and/or plans for acquiring needed expertise to complete ACF policy-relevant projects; and

b. Sound plans for timely completion and high-quality responses to ACF requests for supplemental activities.

Staff and Organizational Plan **Maximum Points:** 25

Proposed Staff (15 points)
Reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The proposed Center Director has a Ph.D. or equivalent for their field and is an established scholar and expert concerning low-income and vulnerable Hispanic children and families, as demonstrated by published work, public service, and/or other relevant experiences and commitments.
2. The proposed plan clearly details key positions required to carry out the project, including at a minimum, individuals proposed to serve as Center Director, Center staff, affiliated researchers and partners, and a detailed description of the scope of work and responsibilities they will perform, and:

a. Includes individuals demonstrating relevant skills, experience, accomplishments and contributions to the field, that are well suited for completing the activities proposed to achieve the goals of the Center;
b. Demonstrates the extent to which the Center Director and Center staff possess the management experience necessary to create and operate the Center;
c. Includes individuals who possess competency in quantitative and qualitative methodologies and various research approaches appropriate for the proposed research agenda; and
d. Demonstrates the appropriate time and effort is devoted to the Center by the Center Director and Center staff and research partners, to ensure ongoing management and oversight of multiple concurrent research and communications activities, as well as high-quality results and products.

3. The proposed Center Director, Center staff, and key partners demonstrate (as evident in curricula vitae and elsewhere in application):

a. Prior successful partnerships with policymakers, program administrators, and service agencies;
b. Understanding and sensitivity to significant issues of working with Hispanic communities, especially low-income and vulnerable Hispanic children and families;
c. Expertise pertinent to ACF's program and policy priorities (as described in *Section I. Program Description*); and
d. Commitment and successful experiences in supporting emerging scholars.

Organizational Structure and Plan (10 points)

Reviewers will consider the extent to which:
4. The organizational plan is detailed and clear, describing the Center's organizational structure and linkages with the grant recipient institution and other organizations.
5. The proposed plan demonstrates clearly how the Center will assure a genuinely interdisciplinary approach to research and to achieving the goals of the Center.
6. The staff and organizational plan demonstrates consideration and procedures to ensure cultural and linguistic competency throughout Center activities.
7. The proposal provides a detailed plan for the Technical Work Group, including a list of

proposed members with research, program, and lived expertise and a strong plan for communication and utilization of the committee.
8. The Center Director, key Center staff, and partners demonstrate experience with and/or willingness to participate in a cooperative agreement with federal involvement.
9. Organizational support, equipment, and other physical resources are available and adequate for the research, research capacity-building, and dissemination activities proposed.
10. The proposal includes a strong plan to support the work of members of the Center's staff and other affiliated researchers and establish links with a broad range of other scholars.
11. The proposal includes an efficient plan to productively seek out and partner with other organizations and experts beyond the grant recipient organization throughout the course of funding, given the depth and breadth of expertise and reach that is required to achieve the goals of the Center.

Budget and Budget Justification **Maximum Points:** 15

Reviewers will consider the extent to which:
1. The budget and budget justification demonstrate how the 5-year budget supports the proposed research, capacity-building, and dissemination activities, as well as supplemental activities of the Center over the entire (5-year) project period.
2. The budget for the first 2 years of funding clearly demonstrates adequate support for the specific activities proposed, while linking to the 5-year plan.
3. The budget demonstrates appropriateness of the level and distribution of funds to meet ACF's expected balance in research, capacity building, and dissemination goals over the 5-year project period.
4. The budget justification clearly describes how project costs and activities will be tracked so that they are attributed to each of the separate funding streams supporting the award.
5. The applicant's proposed project costs:

a. Are reasonable, sufficient, and appropriately allocated to successfully complete the research, capacity building, and communication plan;
b. Include adequate funds for participation in and/or support of the required meetings (see *Section I. Program Description*); and
c. Are justified according to the needs and time frame for carrying out the proposed activities.

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 refuse funding for projects with what it regards as unreasonably high start-up costs for facilities or equipment, or for projects with unreasonably high operating costs.

OPRE will conduct an administrative review of the applications and results of the competitive review panels and will make recommendations for funding to the Director of OPRE, taking into account the goals of the grant program as listed in *Section I. Program Description*. Applications may be funded in whole or in part depending on: (1) the ranked order of applicants resulting from the competitive review, (2) staff review and consultations, (3) the availability of funding, and (4) the best interests of the federal government.

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.

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

REPORTING TO OPRE
The grant recipient will submit to OPRE a semi-annual SF-PPR that describes activities including, at a minimum: a) major activities that occurred during the reporting period, b) significant findings, and c) issues and obstacles identified through implementation of the project. The grant recipient is required to track and report grant funds by each of the multiple funding sources on their SF-425 and PPRs. The grant recipient must assign costs only to those activities allowable under each of the funding streams authorization or appropriation.
Instructions on the electronic submission of reports will be provided with award documents.

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Ann
Rivera
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
c/o ICF International
1902 Reston Metro Plaza
Reston
VA
20190
877-350-5913

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget Shea
Westfall
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Grants Management
330 C Street SW. 3rd Floor
Washington
DC
20201
877-350-5913
bridget.sheawestfall@acf.hhs.gov

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/.

Application Checklist

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

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications*. See http://www.hhs.gov/ ohrp/ assurances/ forms/ index.html for additional information. This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
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 application and project award period.
SF-424 Key Contact 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 by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Certification Regarding Lobbying	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.*	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
(Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	
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.
Letter of Intent	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Project Description.*	Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4.*
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

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	The Project Summary is limited to one single-spaced page.	the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
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. Submission Dates and Times*.

Appendix

APPENDIX: RELATED PAST AND CURRENT FEDERAL EFFORTS

The demographic shifts in the composition of the U.S. population have triggered several federal actions. OPRE has funded several research initiatives to advance understanding of Hispanic families and children and other cultural and linguistic minority groups, and to increase research and evaluation addressing how ACF programs can better serve these populations. The Center will be informed by these efforts and will develop research and resources that build on insights from and knowledge generated by these projects, including:

- *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services.* Launched in 2015, this project has investigated how existing work on racial and ethnic disparities can inform more accurate identification and interpretation of ethnic and racial differences in participation rates and service experiences within ACF programs. A literature review, expert consultations, and preliminary data analyses have contributed to a plan for more comprehensive data analyses to reliably identify racial and ethnic disproportionalities and disparities in a range of ACF programs and services. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-human-services-2015-2017.
- *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services Analysis Execution Project.* This project builds on the earlier *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Human Services* project which helped build a base of knowledge to inform ACF's identification and understanding of ethnic and racial differences across the service delivery system. This project is implementing design plans for TANF and CCDF developed as part of the earlier project. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-human-services-analysis-execution-project-2018-2021.

- *National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families (https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/)* is a hub of research to help programs and policy better serve low-income Hispanics across three priority areas—: poverty reduction and economic self-sufficiency, healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood, and early care and education. The Center is dedicated to providing timely research findings, tools, and scholar opportunities. Launched in 2013, the Center has advanced research on the demographic characteristics, early education experiences, and economic conditions of low-income Hispanic families in the U.S., including the diversity of this heterogeneous population, and the implications of research findings for programs and policy. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/center-for-research-on-hispanic-children-families.
- *National African American Child and Family Research Center* is investigating the assets, needs, and experiences of the diverse population of African American families and children served (or potentially served) by ACF programs, as well as promising approaches to address economic and social inequities and, ultimately, promote social and economic well-being. The primary focus of this Center is on childcare assistance, TANF, and Head Start and Early Head Start programs and the populations they serve. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/african-american-child-and-family-research-center.
- *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures.* OPRE co-sponsored the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine to produce this Consensus Study report that examines the evidence on the developmental progress and school success of English learners, who live in homes in which a language other than English is spoken, from birth through grade 12. For more information, see https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24677/promoting-the-educational-success-of-children-and-youth-learning-english
- *H-Parents and Children Together (H-PACT): A Descriptive Study of Responsible Fatherhood Programs Serving Hispanic Men*. OPRE conducted the PACT evaluation of six ACF-funded responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs to learn about the challenges and successes of service implementation, the needs and experiences of participants, and the effectiveness of these services. A sub-study investigated the program strategies and adaptations used by selected responsible fatherhood programs serving Hispanic fathers. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/h-pact-a-descriptive-study-of-responsible-fatherhood-programs-serving-hispanic-men
- *Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) Study* was a descriptive study of the early childhood programs that serve young children of farmworkers and the children and families served by the MSHS program. MSHS programs serve children zero to 8 years of age. The study utilized surveys and onsite observations to examine program practices in multiple domains, including enrollment, recruitment and dual language support. The study also explored the well-being of children and families receiving services. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/migrant-and-seasonal-head-start-study.
- *Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Supplement to the National Agricultural Workers Survey*. Together with the Office of Head Start and the Department of Labors' Employment and Training Administration, OPRE developed, piloted, and implemented supplemental survey questions to provide a demographic portrait of families who are

currently accessing or eligible to access Migrant and Seasonal Head Start services nationwide. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/migrant-and-seasonal-head-start-supplement-to-the-national-agricultural.

- *Tribal Early Childhood Research Center (TRC)* seeks to address gaps in research on child outcomes for young American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children through research activities that: (1) Engage in a participatory-process of consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders to foster a community of learning; (2) Support and conduct research and measurement development; (3) Enhance program evaluation and research-to-practice activities; (4) Broadly disseminate TRC findings; and (5) Train the next generation of researchers to work effectively with Tribal communities to advance Tribal Head Start/Early Head Start, Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting and other early childhood programs serving AI/AN children and families. For more information, see https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/research-and-practice/centers-programs/caianh/projects/trc.
- *Research Grants Addressing Poverty and Inequality among Hispanic Populations*. OPRE co-sponsored a grant competition, administered by the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality, to support research on poverty, inequality, and social mobility among low-income Hispanics in the United States. The Center funded nine projects examining a variety of topics, including monitoring and explaining basic trends; associations between socioeconomic status and health; and the roles of neighborhood poverty and immigration policies on the mobility and well-being of Hispanic populations. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/poverty-inequality-and-mobility-among-hispanic-populations-2012-2015.
- *Center for Early Care and Education Research: Dual Language Learners.* This center was established as a cooperative agreement between ACF and the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. The primary goal of the Center is to advance the research field to improve assessment, child care, and education for dual language learners from birth through 5 years of age. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/center-early-care-and-education-research-dual-language-learners-2009-2014.
- *Hispanic Research Work Group.* OPRE convened experts in a wide range of content areas relevant to ACF's mission to assist ACF/OPRE in identifying research priorities concerning low-income Hispanic families. Work group discussions led to the development of briefs summarizing research on significant topics in human services, such as cultural competence and improving data to better understand diversity within the Hispanic population in the U.S. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/hispanic-research-work-group-2011-2014.
- *Descriptive Study of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program*. In 2017, OPRE, in coordination with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) launched this study with the goal of improving the field's understanding of the range of child welfare services and benefits provided through the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program. The report includes information on characteristics of youth in the program; services offered and provided to youth; innovative practices, successes, and lessons learned; and available data on youth's experiences and outcomes. For more information,

see: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/descriptive-study-unaccompanied-refugee-minors-urm-program-2017-2021.

- *Advancing Contextual Analysis and Methods of Participant Engagement (CAMPE)*. OPRE launched CAMPE in 2021 to identify and increase the use of equitable research practices in federally funded research and evaluation. CAMPE will focus on advancing the use of participatory methods and analysis of contextual factors in projects funded by OPRE. CAMPE will also directly engage people who have participated in programs like those OPRE evaluates, develop guidelines and tools to facilitate the use of equitable evaluation practices in current and future projects, and communicate findings to a broad range of stakeholders. For more information, see: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/advancing-contextual-analysis-and-methods-participant-engagement.

Other federal initiatives to better serve Hispanics and other cultural and linguistic minority groups and to assess equity in access to and outcomes of federal programs and policies include:

- *Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. This executive order calls for the Federal government to pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality. The Executive Order called for agencies to produce a plan to address any barriers to full and equal participation in a selection of the agency's programs and policies. For more information, see https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/.
- *Roadmap for Co-Creating Collaborative and Effective Evaluation to Improve Tribal Child Welfare Programs*. (Children's Bureau (CB), ACF). In recognition of intergenerational trauma and deep distrust of research and evaluation, the CB formed a workgroup of representatives from tribal child welfare programs, research and evaluation communities, federal offices, and other stakeholders to address pervasive challenges to successful evaluation of child welfare programs in tribal communities. The workgroup developed the roadmap to identify values and priorities that can foster trust and build the knowledge and skills of Tribes, their evaluation partners, and other stakeholders to improve evaluation practice. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/tribal-workgroup.
- *National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health Care* (Office of Minority Health, HHS). The CLAS standards are primarily directed at health care organizations to help reduce health disparities and achieve health equity; however, individual providers are also encouraged to use the standards to make their practices more culturally and linguistically accessible. For more information see https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas.
- *White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.* (Federal Inter-Agency Working Group, US Department of Education) Originally established in 1990 to address educational disparities faced by the Hispanic community, this multi-agency working group continues its charge to strengthen the nation's capacity to provide high quality education while increasing opportunities for Hispanic American participation in federal education programs. For more information, see https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/.

- *Hispanic Child Support Resource Center* (Office of Child Support Enforcement, ACF) provides information and materials, including the Child Support Hispanic Outreach Toolkit, designed to help child support professionals and community based organizations establish partnerships and develop effective communication plans to share the benefits of child support with the Hispanic community. For more information, see https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/child-support-professionals/working-with/hispanic-outreach.