



Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies and Initiatives:

Implementation Grants

HHS-2023-ACF-OPRE-YE-0040

Application Due Date: 06/15/2023

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Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies and Initiatives: Implementation Grants

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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>.**

In September 2021, the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF), funded ten cooperative agreements under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901 (Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies and Initiatives; Phase I). Those grants provided funding to support partnerships between CCDF lead agencies and researchers to develop rigorous, policy-relevant evaluation plans that examine the impact of child care subsidy payment policies (i.e., family co-payments and/or provider payment rates) on access to high quality child care for families with low incomes. This NOFO will fund Phase II grants to implement the evaluation plans developed under the planning grants. Because much of the work conducted under the planning grants was foundational, only institutions awarded planning grants under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901 will be eligible to apply for funds under this NOFO.

This NOFO will fund grants for a 48-month project period with four 12-month budget periods. Grants will support research partnerships between CCDF lead agencies and researchers to implement evaluations of child care subsidy payment policies and to collectively, as part of coordinated evaluations, build knowledge about the effectiveness of different payment policies to increase access to high-quality child care and early education services for families with low incomes. In addition, grants are designed to continue strengthening the evaluation capacity of CCDF lead agencies.

Projects must be conducted through partnerships between CCDF lead agencies (i.e., subsidy administering agencies in states, territories, tribes, and localities) and research partners from institutions of higher education, research organizations, or other organizations with demonstrated

capacity to conduct rigorous research that received funding under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901. The research supported by this NOFO should be collaborative from start to finish. Specifically, the CCDF lead agency and their research partners must work together to refine and implement the evaluation plan developed under the planning grant. Grant recipients will be expected to articulate plans for strengthening the evaluation capacity of CCDF lead agencies throughout the grant period.

Projects will be expected to inform the field at large through participation in a consortium of grant recipients and coordinated evaluation activities. The consortium of Phase II grant recipients will meet and communicate regularly to share lessons learned, develop common measures and data collection protocols, identify opportunities for pooled analyses, and develop collective expertise and resources for the field. Grant recipients will also be expected to participate in the documentation of local subsidy policies and policy contexts and project-specific data protocols to inform coordinated evaluation activities across projects.

Grant recipients will be funded through the cooperative agreement mechanism. See *Section II. Award Information* for a description of the substantial involvement of the Federal Project Officer in the performance of these cooperative agreements.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

Section 658O(a)(5) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9858m(a)(5)).

Description

A. Purpose

This NOFO aims to address research questions of relevance to state, territory, tribal, or local CCDF policy contexts while building collective knowledge about the effectiveness of child care subsidy policies and practices. A primary goal of this program is to evaluate a single area of policy across lead agencies, with sponsored projects examining common research questions, constructs, and outcomes. Specifically, funding multiple research partnerships evaluating one policy area will support understanding of the implementation and effects of subsidy payment policies (i.e., provider payment rates and family co-payments) on access to child care for families with low incomes both within specific states, territories, and tribes and also across these sites. Research projects must be carried out by research partnerships that received funding to develop evaluation plans under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901. Together, sponsored project teams will refine and implement evaluation plans developed under Phase I to examine the effectiveness of child care subsidy payment policies and practices in their state, territory, or tribe. Grant recipients will be expected to implement their proposed research designs to adequately address the research questions of interest and provide valuable information that can help guide CCDF lead agencies in the refinement and improvement of policies. In addition, collaborative, coordinated research activities across the grant recipients will be expected throughout the project period, in order to increase both the capacity of the individual projects to meet their research objectives and the potential for learning across projects about best practices in subsidy payment rate and co-payment policy and in research and evaluation. Such knowledge may also inform research and policy-making in other states, territories, tribes, and localities.

B. Background

CCDF is a partnership between the federal government and states, territories, and tribes, administered by the Office of Child Care (OCC) within ACF. CCDF is the primary federal funding source for child care subsidies to help eligible working families with low incomes access child care that meets health and safety requirements and supports child development, and to improve the quality of child care for all children. As a block grant, CCDF gives funding to states, territories, and tribes to provide child care subsidies as vouchers or certificates to families with low incomes or through grants and contracts with providers. CCDF promotes improvement in the quality of care by supporting child care licensing and quality improvement systems, and by supporting child care professionals to attain more training and education. CCDF funds providers in a range of settings, including family child care homes (licensed and legally operating but license exempt) and centers that may be operated by a public, private, or non-profit entity or a public-private partnership. To learn more about the goals and initiatives of the CCDF and OCC, please visit the OCC website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/>.

The passage of the CCDBG Act of 2014 (the Act, codified at 42 U.S.C. 9857 *et seq.*) reauthorized the law governing CCDF. The Act defines health and safety requirements for child care providers, outlines family-friendly eligibility policies, expands quality improvement efforts, and ensures that parents and the public have transparent information about the child care choices available to them. Under the Act, states, territories, and tribes have flexibility within federal guidelines over key policy levers—including subsidy payment rates and co-payment amounts contributed by the family.

The Act and the associated 2016 CCDF Final Rule (the Rule, codified at 45 CFR Part 45) demonstrate a commitment to increasing access to stable, high-quality child care for children from low-income households. In part, this means ensuring that families who are using CCDF subsidies have access to child care that is comparable to the arrangements used by families not receiving subsidies. Recognizing the business constraints of child care providers, the Rule establishes policies intended to stabilize the revenue streams of providers accepting subsidies and, in turn, to increase the supply of child care and the options available to families receiving subsidies. (For more information about requirements governing CCDF subsidy payment rates, see <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/ccdf-fundamentals/setting-payment-rates/>).

First, as part of ensuring equal access, CCDF lead agencies must set base subsidy payment rates at least at a level sufficient to cover the costs to providers incurred by federal health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements, and to take into account the cost of higher quality. Lead agencies are also expected to consider their specific context, and thus, must use a recent market rate survey or pre-approved alternative methodology to set payment rates, with the understanding that setting payment rates at the 75th percentile (thus allowing families to access 75 percent of available care) is recommended for promoting equal access. (Please note that equal access does not necessarily guarantee equitable access. Find a discussion on equity further down within this section). Second, most families utilizing CCDF-funded care are required to contribute co-payments to providers. The Rule establishes a recommended federal benchmark for affordable co-payments to be no greater than 7 percent of family income, although co-payment rates may differ across states and within priority populations. Within these broad federal guidelines for the

CCDF program, states, territories, and tribes have substantial flexibility in setting specific co-payment policies (*e.g.*, which families are required to pay a co-payment, how copayments are collected, if providers can require families to pay the difference when the provider's charge exceeds the maximum rate). The CCDF Policies Database (<https://ccdf.urban.org/>) explores in more detail state-level variations in relevant policies, including specific information related to payment rates and co-payment structures. Finally, within states, policies decided at the state level may not immediately or consistently translate to the practices of frontline subsidy case workers.

Currently, the field lacks rigorous evidence about how different variations of payment policies (*i.e.*, provider payment rates and family co-payments) affect access to high-quality child care for families with low incomes, limiting policymakers' ability to make well-informed decisions about child care subsidy policies and to fulfill the goal of the Act to increase access to stable, high-quality child care. In 2021, OPRE funded ten cooperative agreements under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901 (Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Policies and Initiatives; Phase I) to support partnerships between CCDF lead agencies and researchers to develop rigorous, policy-relevant evaluation plans that examine the impact of child care subsidy payment policies (*i.e.*, family co-payments and/or provider payment rates) on low-income families' access to high quality child care. This NOFO will fund Phase II grants to implement the evaluation plans developed under the planning grants and generate knowledge about how these policies can support access to child care.

To understand how subsidy payment rates and family co-payment policies affect families' access to care, it is important to consider not only the supply of care, but also the breadth of families' constraints and preferences. Recent work funded by ACF defines "access" as a multi-dimensional construct—one that encompasses the extent to which families are able to secure care with reasonable effort, the affordability of care, care that meets parents' needs, and care that supports children's development (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/cceepra_access_guidebook_final_213_b508.pdf).

[More recent work](#) on child care access also funded by ACF expanded the conceptualization of access to include equity as a key consideration. As defined under the Executive Order (EO) on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government ([EO 13985](#)), equity means “the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality”. Although CCDF policies may promote equitable access, more work is needed to understand the extent to which subsidized high-quality child care is equitably accessible to and accessed by families with low incomes.

Since fiscal year (FY) 2000, the CCDF program has provided funding for research intended to help child care decision-makers in crafting policies and initiatives that support positive outcomes for families and children; to increase the capacity for child care research at the national, state,

and local levels; and, to promote linkages among research, policy, and practice. To date, these funds have supported research efforts that have increased the field's knowledge about the efficacy of child care subsidy policies and programs in enhancing employment and economic self-sufficiency of low-income families, and in improving quality in child care and early education settings to support learning and development of children. Descriptions of current and past research projects funded with these research set aside funds can be found at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/topic/overview/child-care>.

C. Program Goals and Expectations

The overall goal of the Coordinated Evaluations of CCDF Policies and Initiatives: Implementation Grants is to build knowledge about how subsidy payment policies and practices (*i.e.*, provider payment rates and family co-payments) at the local, state, and national levels affect access to child care. Funded partnerships will refine and implement the evaluation plans jointly developed under Phase I to examine how child care subsidy payment policies and practices (*i.e.*, provider payment rates and family co-payments) impact access to quality child care for families with low incomes. Results of the projects funded through this NOFO are expected to inform policies and evaluations in selected sites as well as other sites; identify and demonstrate links between policies, practices, or activities, and key outcomes; support building knowledge of the effects of child care subsidy policies and practices on key outcomes of interest; and inform federal subsidy policy.

Grant recipients will have the opportunity to work with a cohort of other grant recipients in a consortium to share lessons learned, coordinate measurement, identify opportunities for collaborative analyses, and develop collective expertise across sites. Grant recipients are expected to contribute to the development of common measures and data collection protocols intended to support strong and consistent assessment of key constructs and outcomes of interest across projects, with the flexibility that would allow individual sites to address the questions of their specific evaluations. Coordination across projects will support triangulation of findings and analyses of data across sites. Thus, project activities will include collective refinement of evaluation design, data and measurement protocols, and analytic approach, as well as sharing data and supporting the development of collective publications, if such publications are identified. Grant recipients are expected to participate in a process evaluation of the grant program, if one should take place.

It is not the expectation that each of the funded evaluation plans will be exactly the same across states, territories, tribes, or localities, since there is variation in CCDF lead agencies' data and research capacity and their systems' readiness for evaluation. Some partnerships may have evaluation plans developed under Phase I that include experimental or quasi-experimental approaches. Some projects may have designs focusing more on evaluating the implementation of policies and practices, utilizing mixed methods to understand fidelity of implementation and the experiences of providers and families. All projects must have evaluation plans that reflect the current status of policy implementation in their local context. All grant recipients, however, will be expected to conduct a rigorous evaluation of subsidy payment policies, to coordinate measurement and data collection protocols across projects, to participate in any collectively identified cross-site analyses, and to implement strategic and research-capacity building dissemination plans.

The specific goals and expectations of the grant program include the following:

Goal 1. To conduct rigorous evaluations examining the implementation and outcomes of subsidy payment policies and practices (i.e., provider payment rate and family co-payment) in the state, territory, or tribe.

Projects funded through this funding opportunity will refine and implement research plans developed under Phase I for evaluations examining the implementation and outcomes of subsidy payment policies and practices (i.e., provider payment rate and family co-payment) in the state, territory, tribe, or locality. In order to support knowledge building across projects, each project must design their evaluations to address the following overarching research question:

How do subsidy payment policies (i.e., provider payment rates and co-payment structures) and payment practices impact access to high quality child care, specifically with regard to whether care is affordable, meets parents' needs, requires reasonable effort, and supports children's development, for families with low incomes?

Evaluations will incorporate rigorous methods appropriate for addressing critical questions in the specific policy context, which should have clearly been developed in close collaboration between CCDF lead agencies and research partners during Phase I. In line with the consideration of child care access as a multi-dimensional construct, sponsored research will examine the impact of these policies on families' access to care along the following five access dimensions:

1. meets the parents' needs,
2. supports children's development,
3. affordability,
4. reasonable effort, and
5. equity (Thomson et al., 2020).

As part of their projects, successful applicants will target these outcomes and will examine whether specific payment rate and co-payment policies are effective in supporting families' access to care. They will have clearly articulated logic models that describe the mechanisms through which the selected policies are hypothesized to affect selected outcomes, which shall include access to child care. Individual project logic models must include, at a minimum, the selected policies, implementation elements and processes, intended results (both short and long-term), and any unintended results, incorporating elements of the coordinated logic model developed collaboratively by grant recipients during Phase I project period.

Key issues underlying these policies that are of significant interest to ACF include the following:

1. How do provider payment policies affect availability and access to care among families receiving subsidies and subsidy-eligible families? In addition:
 - Do provider payment rates affect providers' willingness to participate in the subsidy system?
 - Do provider payment rates affect staff wages and/or recruitment and retention?

2. How do payment rate policies (*e.g.*, differential rates) affect access to higher quality care?
3. How do payment practices (*e.g.*, grants or contracts to provide direct services, payment on basis of enrollment vs. attendance, paying prospectively vs. retroactively) affect availability of and access to child care among families receiving subsidies and subsidy-eligible families?
4. How do family co-payment policies affect access to care? In other words:
 - Do family co-payments affect affordability and access to subsidized care?
 - Do family co-payments and exemptions and adjustments of co-payment policies based on specific family characteristics (*e.g.*, the number of children in care, whether care is part- or full-time, and whether the care is being provided for a child with special needs) affect parent preferences, choices, and use of different types of care or care of varying quality?
5. What role do subsidy payment policies and practices play in improving equitable access to high quality child care?
 - Are there differential effects of payment rate and/or co-payment policies for key populations of interest (*e.g.*, home-based child care providers, children with special needs, American Indian and Alaska Native communities, or rural communities)?
 - How do payment rate policies affect access to care for different sub-populations (*e.g.*, children of different ages, children with disabilities, etc.)?
 - How do payment practices affect access to care across different populations and communities?

In addition, each grant recipient will examine the impact of policies and practices on key constructs. Although specific evaluations will be based on the specific context, timeline of policy implementation, and research priorities, each grant recipient will coordinate measurement of some constructs and outcomes of interest with other funded grant recipients to support learning across sponsored projects. Key constructs within grant recipients' evaluations will include the following:

- Alignment of payment practices for subsidy-receiving providers that are comparable to other providers (*e.g.*, pay based on enrollment rather than attendance, pay for registration fees);
- Consistency of implementation of payment structures and practices throughout state, territory, or tribe;
- Supply of providers eligible for subsidized care and accepting child care subsidies (*e.g.*, child care centers, small and large family child care homes, in-home providers, etc.)—percentage and characteristics of providers available to eligible children, including ages served, number of subsidized children they serve, service hours, prices charged for care, geographic location, quality of care;
- Percentage and characteristics of subsidized children in each type of care, in different levels of care quality;
- Demand for care among subsidy-eligible families (*e.g.*, number of children/families on waiting lists, what families report they want/need), including among key vulnerable

populations (*i.e.*, children in foster care, children from families experiencing homelessness, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children who need care during nontraditional hours); and

- Subsidized families' access to child care, defined multi-dimensionally.

In addition, successful applicants must gain access to and analyze administrative data collected by the lead agency, if such data exist. This will include within the first year of the grant, at minimum, identifying sources of and assessing the quality of administrative data for potential use in the proposed or future evaluations of CCDF policies and practices. Administrative data may include but not be limited to information on the number of children and families eligible for child care subsidies, number of children and families receiving child care subsidies, number of providers eligible to participate in the child care subsidy program, number and type of providers receiving subsidy payments, and the geographic distribution of children and families receiving subsidies. In addition, applicants proposing to analyze administrative data as part of their project must develop analytic plans and complete initial analyses within the first year of the grant. Activities focused on administrative data should strengthen the research and evaluation capacity of the lead agency (see Goal 2 below) and the potential to effectively use administrative data in future evaluations of CCDF policies and practices.

Projects funded through this grant are expected to utilize rigorous research designs, methods, and analytic techniques that incorporate an equity perspective and are appropriate and sufficient to address the research questions of interest and contribute to the knowledge base regarding how policies related to payment rates and co-payment structures affect subsidized families' access to care.

Sponsored project teams should develop innovative research projects that draw on the resources and opportunities available to rigorously examine the questions above about subsidy payment rates and co-payment rates and structures. Rigorous research incorporates the following criteria:

- **Credibility:** Ensuring what is intended to be evaluated is actually what is being evaluated; making sure that descriptions of the phenomena or experience being studied are accurate and recognizable to others; ensuring that the method used is the most definitive and compelling approach that is available and feasible for the question being addressed. If conclusions about program efficacy are being examined, the study design should include a comparison group (*i.e.*, randomized control trial or quasi-experimental design).
- **Applicability:** Generalizability of findings beyond current project (*i.e.*, when findings fit into contexts outside the study situation). Ensuring the sample being studied represents one or more of the populations being served by the program.
- **Consistency:** When processes and methods are consistently followed and clearly described, someone else could replicate the approach, and other studies can confirm what is found.
- **Neutrality:** Producing results that are as objective as possible and acknowledge the bias brought to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the results.

Please see ACF's Evaluation Policy for a more detailed definition of "rigor" at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/acf-evaluation-policy-november-9-2021.pdf>.

Grant recipients will also contribute to the field's understanding of best methods to demonstrate the relationship between policies and practices related to subsidy payment rates and co-payments and families' access to high-quality child care. To do this, the consortium of grant recipients will meet regularly to share lessons learned, coordinate data collection protocols and measures, identify opportunities for collaborative analyses and engage in activities that support such analyses, and participate in the development of collective dissemination products.

Goal 2. To develop research partnerships that support collaboration among child care researchers and CCDF lead agencies and build the capacity of lead agencies to plan and conduct rigorous research that can inform federal, state, territory, tribal, and/or local subsidy policy.

Research sponsored by CCDF funding is intended to provide valuable information that can help inform child care decision-makers in crafting policies and initiatives to support positive outcomes for families and children. Sponsored project teams must include a state, territory, tribal, or local CCDF lead agency and a research partner from an institution of higher education, a research organization, or an organization with demonstrated capacity to conduct rigorous policy research. Partnerships may be formalized through memoranda of understanding, contracts, or sub-award agreements during the course of the grant.

The research partner and lead agency (or agencies) must actively collaborate with each other through all phases of the grant (*i.e.*, refining the evaluation plan, developing procedures to access and use existing data or protocols to collect new data, establish a mechanism to discuss results as they are obtained, consider the practice and policy implications of the results, and disseminate results to multiple audiences). Grant recipients will develop plans for strengthening the evaluation capacity of the lead agency throughout the grant period, which may include activities that support lead agencies in increasing the capacity to conduct internal research or engage in innovative analyses of administrative data.

Partnerships may involve multiple lead agencies or sites to support comparison of varied subsidy payment rate and co-payment policies, if appropriate. Projects funded through this grant will significantly inform policies and practices. Ongoing collaboration between partners ensures that the research will be of direct use to the lead agency, as well as to the field at large.

Grant recipients will consult with other child care policy stakeholders, especially organizations that are critical to the implementation of child care policies or initiatives central to the proposed research objectives. For example, the following entities may also be included as part of a research partnership project, in addition to the CCDF lead agency and research partner:

1. Partnerships across state, territory, tribal, and/or local agencies;
2. Departments, agencies, and organizations that administer child care programs for low-income children, including public or private child care centers, Head Start, or public pre-K;

3. Resource and referral organizations;
4. State agencies or organizations that oversee Quality Rating and Improvement Systems or licensing initiatives;
5. Planning councils, commissions, advisory groups, and other organizations that participate in child care planning and policy making;
6. Institutions of higher education and non-academic research organizations;
7. Tribal, county, or local agencies that administer child care subsidy programs;
8. Family child care providers or networks; and
9. Providers of technical assistance or consumer education, and other stakeholders.

Goal 3. To foster active communication and collaboration among grant recipients in order to strengthen individual projects and to build knowledge about child care subsidy policies.

Grant recipients will be expected to participate in a consortium of grant recipients, supported by an ACF-designated evaluation coordination team. After award, grant recipient teams for each partnership will work together with other consortium members to identify common constructs and measures, data collection protocols, tools, data management protocols, and analyses, wherever appropriate to allow greater understanding of the policies being evaluated. Grant recipients' evaluations will use approaches that measure and explore multiple dimensions of access to child care, as outlined in *Section I. Program Description, C. Program Goals and Expectations, Goal 1* and described in the recent work supported by ACF (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/defining-and-measuring-access-to-high-quality-early-care-and-education-ece-a-guidebook-for-policy-makers-and-researchers>).

Grant recipients will be expected to meet and communicate regularly with federal staff and the consortium to share lessons learned, identify common measures and data collection protocols, identify opportunities for collaborative analyses, plan for dissemination, and develop collective expertise and resources to be shared with the field at large. Specifically, the coordination of measures and data collection protocols will enable the consortium to explore how similar policies and initiatives may yield different effects across sites based on differences in policy, administrative practices, or targeted populations. Grant recipients will provide staffing time and effort for collaborative activities that will improve the quality of consortium projects and products.

Grant recipients will work with a designed evaluation coordination team, funded by ACF to support the work of all grant recipients' project teams and facilitate collaborative research and dissemination efforts. With the help of the designated coordination team, each grant recipient will contribute to the documentation of site-specific policies, of data sources, and of evaluation plans in order to complete the following:

1. inform policy evaluations in other sites,
2. identify potential links between policies, practices or activities, and outcomes,
3. support building knowledge of the effects of subsidy policies and practices on key outcomes of interest, and
4. inform federal subsidy policy.

In addition, each project team must participate in the development of cross-project publications and presentations, supported by the coordination team.

To support shared learning and dissemination, grant recipients must attend, and should budget for, the following required meetings and conferences:

- **Consortium Kick-Off Meeting:** Key project personnel (*i.e.*, Principal Investigator(s) and CCDF lead agency partners) are expected to attend the 2-day, in-person, kick-off meeting. This meeting is typically held in Washington, DC, within the first 3 months of the project period. Upon award, grant recipients will be notified of the date of this meeting.
- **Consortium Meetings:** For the duration of the project period, grant recipients will meet monthly by videoconference to support joint exploration and shared learning about research methods.
- **Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) Annual Meeting:** It is expected that key project personnel (*i.e.*, Principal Investigator(s) and CCDF lead agency partners) will attend the CCEEPRC Annual Meeting, which is typically held in Washington, DC, for 2 full days. The meeting brings together grant recipients, contracted researchers funded by ACF, and federal and state CCDF administrators to discuss child care policy research. This meeting is an excellent opportunity for grant recipient teams to build relationships with key stakeholders and to discuss implications of research developments and the work of the research partnerships. Grant recipients will attend each year of the project.
- **Annual Grant Recipient Meeting:** It is expected that key project personnel (*i.e.*, Principal Investigator(s) and CCDF lead agency partners) will attend the annual grant recipient meeting to discuss project developments, issues of common interest, and potential collaborative products and resources. This meeting is typically held 1 day prior to or following the CCEEPRC meeting in Washington, DC.

Additionally, grant recipients are encouraged, but not required to attend:

- **State and Territories CCDF Administrators Meeting (STAM).** STAM is hosted annually in Washington, DC, typically in August.
- **ACF's National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC).** NRCEC is hosted bi-annually in Washington, DC, typically in June. The next meeting will be held in summer 2024.

Goal 4. To increase the dissemination and use of child care research at the national, state, territory, tribal, and/or local levels.

Results of the research activities funded through this announcement, including the implications of results for subsidy policies at the national and state levels, will be made widely accessible. Grant recipients must create a project dissemination plan describing project dissemination goals, target audiences, and products/activities (*e.g.*, written briefs, specific venues for presentation, briefings for key stakeholders, website, direct emails). The overall project dissemination plan

should serve to guide the creation and execution of dissemination activities and products over the course of the project.

Project products and data may be archived with the Child and Family Data Archive (<https://www.childandfamilydataarchive.org/cfda/pages/cfda/index.html>) or another suitable archive. Early in the project, grant recipient teams will confer with the archive and establish an understanding of the effort, expectations, and a timeline appropriate for archiving. Grant recipients will work with the archive to select the data sets that are most appropriate for archiving and decide among the options for dissemination that best address all concerns related to privacy, intellectual property rights, data ownership, and other issues. Specifications and additional information regarding data preparation and archiving can be found on the following webpage: <https://www.childandfamilydataarchive.org/cfda/pages/cfda/share.html>.

D. Additional Project Requirements

Under the cooperative agreements, substantial involvement is anticipated between ACF and the grant recipients throughout the duration of the funded projects. Please see *Section II. Federal Award Information, Description of ACF's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement* for more information.

E. Subawards

Project teams may, but are not required or encouraged to, structure and fund their partnerships through subawards. Consistent with the eligibility criteria, any eligible entity may serve as a subrecipient (i.e., a recipient of the subaward). If partnerships will be structured with a subaward, applicants must include a subaward selection process that includes a risk assessment of potential subrecipients. Consistent with the expectations for project teams discussed throughout this funding opportunity, the applicant must clearly identify and justify the roles, responsibilities, and management plan for all subrecipients.

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

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

Please reference "Award Term and Condition on Subawards" on the [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#) website for further requirements involving subawards.

F. References

OCC. (2020). *Setting Payment Rates*. Available at: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/ccdf-fundamentals/setting-payment-rates>

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2020). *Child Care (webpage)*. Accessed at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/topic/child-care>

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II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:

CA (Cooperative Agreement)

Estimated Total Funding:

\$8,000,000

Expected Number of Awards:

5

Award Ceiling:

\$400,000

Per Budget Period

Award Floor:

\$200,000

Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:

\$400,000

Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:

09/30/2023

Length of Project Periods:

48-month project period with four 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'**Additional Information on Awards:**

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

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

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A recipient's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** For more information on these requirements, see *Section III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching*.

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

ACF is anticipated to:

- Monitor the project and provide technical assistance and feedback when necessary.
- Provide leadership to maximize cooperation and collaboration among grant recipients, including organizing periodic consultations and monthly teleconferences to discuss research activities, share information and promote coordination among the sponsored projects.
- Schedule and host meetings of the consortium of grant recipients—two in-person meetings and regular teleconferences throughout project period, as well as set the agenda and coordinate activities for each meeting.
- Collaborate in activities specified in the award and review and approve specific project milestones including a set of common measures and the production of project materials.
- Act as a liaison between the grant recipient and OCC to help ensure that project developments are communicated to federal stakeholders and that research products developed by consortium are accessible to the policy community.
- Work collaboratively with grant recipients to facilitate accomplishment of project goals.

- Facilitate collaboration and coordination with other grant recipients, the coordinating center, ACF program offices (*e.g.*, OCC) and their technical assistance providers, and other contractors.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Applicants are required to submit written evidence that they are one of the ten grant recipients under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901 as part of the application submission. Documentation must demonstrate that the applying research partner and CCDF lead agency are the same entities in the partnership funded under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*. The required documentation is described in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation*.

Applicants are required to provide either:

1. a letter showing approval of the application from, or
2. a letter of proof that the applicant is,

the CCDF lead agency that is responsible for setting relevant subsidy policies (*i.e.*, lead agency in states, territories, tribes, or localities). Applicants who fail to submit either form of the required documentation will be disqualified from review and award. The required documentation is described in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation*. See *Section 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. 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.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:

No

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

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the**

statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.

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

III.3. Other

Application Disqualification Factors

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

Award Ceiling Disqualification

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

Required Electronic Application Submission

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

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

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 pm ET on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times. Electronic applications submitted to Grants.gov after 11:59 pm ET on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. That is, applications submitted to Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 am ET on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

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

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

The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times. Paper applications received after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.**

Letter of Approval from, or Proof of, CCDF Lead Agency Designation

Applications that do not include from the CCDF lead agency either of the following will be disqualified from review and from funding under this NOFO. See *Section III.1. Eligible Applicants, Additional Information on Eligibility*, and *Section IV.2. Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation*.

1. A letter showing approval of the application, or
2. a letter of proof that the applicant is the designated CCDF lead agency.

The letter must be from the CCDF lead agency that is responsible for setting relevant subsidy policies (i.e., lead agency in states, territories, tribes or localities).

Evidence of Award Under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901

Written evidence that the organization is one of the ten grant recipients funded under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901 is required. The evidence must include either the award letter, notice of grant award, or signed cooperative agreement. In addition, evidence must include proof that the applying research partner and CCDF lead agency are the same entities funded under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901. Applications that do not include this documentation will be disqualified from review and from funding under this NOFO. See *Section III.1. Eligible Applicants, Additional Information on Eligibility*, and *Section IV.2. Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation*.

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: Coordinated Evaluations of Child
Care and Development Fund Policies & Initiatives
c/o ICF International
1902 Reston Metro Plaza
Reston
VA
20190
ccdf.eval@icf.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](https://www.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:

Page Limits. Applicants must limit the entire application to **100 pages**. This page limit applies to the length of the Project Description File and the Appendices File, combined. Applicants must number the pages of the file, beginning with the Table of Contents.

Organization of Application. Applicants are strongly advised to use heading and subheadings that correspond to the required application sections. Sections must be carefully labeled to ease reviewers' identification of information relevant to the application review criteria. Additional headers and subheaders may also be used to organize the content of each section.

The required SF, assurances, and certifications are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files, therefore, they are not included in the 100-page limit.

The **Project Description File** includes the following sections. We suggest organizing the file according to the sections and in the order presented below. See additional instructions later in this section (under "*The Project Description*") for details on preparing the full project description.

1. Table of Contents
2. Project Summary
3. Approach
 - a. Objectives and Significance
 - b. Research Design and Methodology
 - c. Dissemination Plan
 - d. Description of the Research Partnership
 - e. Management Plan
 - f. Project Timeline and Milestones
 - g. Organizational Capacity (for details, see *Section IV.2. Project Description, Organizational Capacity*)
 - h. Staff Roles and Qualifications
 - i. Subawards (if applicable)
4. Budget and Budget Justification

The **Appendices** file includes the following sections. ACF suggests organizing the file according to the sections and in the order presented below:

1. Additional Eligibility Documentation: Letter of Approval from, or Proof of CCDF Lead Agency, Evidence of Award Under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901
2. Supporting Documentation of Organizational Capacity and Staff Qualifications

3. Letters of Support, Third-Party Agreements and/or Memoranda of Understanding
4. References
5. Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
6. Plan for Oversight of Federal Awards Funds
7. Proof of Legal Status of Applicant Entity (if applicable)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement

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

Application Upload Requirements

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

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

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

guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions for use, if an applicant is unable to open the test form.

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

Required SFs and OMB-approved Forms

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

Naming Application Submission Files

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

Use only file formats supported by ACF

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

ACF supports the following file formats:

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

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

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

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be accepted for review. For more information on the exemption, see "*ACF Policy for Requesting an*

Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission" at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6.

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

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

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

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

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking an award under this funding opportunity must submit the listed SFs, assurances, and certifications with the application. All required SFs, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this NOFO at Grants.gov.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
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 <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> . 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).

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

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
		cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

Mandatory Grant Disclosure

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

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

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

And to:

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

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

Email: grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov

Non-Federal Reviewers

Since ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information. If applications are submitted electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review process.

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions

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

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

Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting documents designated as required must be included in the Appendix of the application.

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.

Letters of intent should be submitted via e-mail to ccdf.eval@icf.com or mailed to the following address:

OPRE Review Team: Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund Policies & Initiatives
c/o ICF International
1902 Reston Metro Plaza
Reston, VA 20190

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).

Additional Eligibility Documentation

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

Letter of Approval from, or Proof of CCDF Lead Agency Designation

Applicants must submit from the CCDF lead agency either:

1. a letter showing approval of the application, or
2. a letter of proof that the applicant is the designated CCDF lead agency.

The letter must be from the CCDF lead agency that is part of the collaborative partnership. The documentation must show that the CCDF lead agency is responsible for setting relevant subsidy policies (i.e., lead agency in states, territories, tribes, or localities). One of the two letters described are required documentation and must be included in the application. Lack of required documentation will disqualify the applicant from review and from award. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Evidence of Award Under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901

Written evidence that the organization is one of the ten grant recipients funded under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901 is required. The evidence must include either the award letter, notice of grant award, or signed cooperative agreement. In addition, evidence must include proof that the applying research partner and CCDF lead agency are the same entities funded under HHS-2021-ACF-OPRE-YE-1901. Lack of required documentation will disqualify the applicant from review and from award. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

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 are to submit an application for the activities to be performed in the grant. This section must describe, in detail, the technical approach for addressing the issues and achieving the objectives of the project. Clearly describe the research design, procedures, measures, and analytic strategy. Explain how they are appropriate and sufficient for addressing the goals, objectives, and research questions of the project. Describe the partnership between the researchers and the CCDF lead agency. Explain how the project will inform and expand the knowledge base regarding the association between subsidy payment policies (i.e., provider payment rates and family co-payments) and access to high-quality child care for families with low incomes. Discuss the strengths and limitations of each aspect of the design; cite relevant literature as appropriate. Identify any technical or logistical challenges that may arise, and propose solutions for them. The *Approach* section must also describe how the project will work collaboratively with fellow grant recipients and program partners.

Describe any design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and/or community involvement in the project. Provide a list of organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals that will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution. Applicants must include a complete list of references in the Appendices file of the application.

Project proposals must reserve effort for collaborative activities that will contribute to the knowledge base and capacity for child care policy research more broadly. In addition, projects must reserve effort for planning and coordination with consortium members.

A. Objectives and Significance

- Applicants must:
 - Outline and justify the objectives of the proposed research project and summarize how the expected outcomes will inform CCDF policy, specifically related to subsidy payment policies (i.e., provider payment rates and family co-payments).
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the current state of knowledge relevant to the policy issues being studied and link the identified issues to the goals and research questions of the proposed project.

- Include hypotheses that demonstrate understanding of the policies to be evaluated and the critical policy issues and research needs of the partnering CCDF lead agency and the federal subsidy program, and if applicable, local stakeholders.
- Describe how the project will inform the understanding of the effectiveness of methods of setting provider payment rates and family co-payment policies for increasing low-income families' access to care both for the CCDF lead agency of the partnership as well as other lead agencies.
- Describe how the project will inform specific programmatic and/or policy decisions of the CCDF lead agency and may be applied to the policymaking in other states, territories, tribes, and/or localities.

B. Research Design and Methodology

- Applicants must fully describe the technical approach for addressing the key issues and achieving the project objectives and research questions laid out in the *Objectives and Significance* section.
- Applicants must clearly articulate the link between the research questions, design, key constructs, methods, analyses, and expected outcomes. It may be helpful to include diagrams or tables that portray the interrelationships among the proposed research issues, questions, variables, and data elements.
- Applicants must describe, in detail, the research design and methods that will be used to address the research questions, and explain how the methods address the objectives and research questions. Projects can use quantitative and/or qualitative methods. Research designs must be rigorous as defined by the ACF Evaluation Policy described in *Section I. Program Description*. Applicants must discuss the strengths and limitations of each aspect of the design including any technical or logistical challenges that may arise, and propose solutions for them.
- Applicants must describe how the proposed research design will address the specific research questions of this grant program (described in *Section I. Program Description, C. Program Goals and Expectations*).
- This section must include a description of the following elements, at minimum:
 - Logic model, conceptual framework, or theory of change:
 - Describe the logic model, conceptual framework, or theory of change that details the selected policies, implementation elements and processes, intended results (both short and long-term), any unintended results, and the relations between the variables of interest and expected outcomes, incorporating elements of the coordinated logic model developed collaboratively by grant recipients during Phase I project period. Include theoretical justifications and empirical evidence and
 - Describe the component or components of the child care subsidy policies and practices that are hypothesized to lead to anticipated changes in families' access to quality care. A more complete model or framework could include further details, such as the sample representing the target population, key moderators, and the specific measures used for the outcomes.

- Data sources, sample, and methods:
 - For administrative or secondary data:
 - Describe the nature of the data and how it would be accessed; for administrative data, specify how it will be accessed in the first year of the grant.
 - Describe the characteristics of the sample and how it would be constructed.
 - Describe the characteristics of the data and variables or data elements to be used and how these fit within the research plan.
 - Describe how confidentiality of individual records would be maintained.
 - Provide clear proof that the research team has the authority to access the data, including written permissions and/or agreements from the offices or agencies that authorize access.
 - If applicable, include information on measures that were used including psychometric properties.
 - If the project involves the collection of new data:
 - Describe how the sample will be chosen and recruited. Describe the strengths and limitations of the proposed approach, with consideration of relevant cultural or ethical issues.
 - Describe all of the activities and procedures for the proposed research.
 - Identify and define the key constructs. Describe how the constructs will be measured, including psychometric properties of instruments, as applicable.
 - Describe the approach to measuring access to child care along the five access dimensions.
 - Describe the data that will be collected and the methods that will be used to collect the data.
 - If the proposed research will link the data collected to administrative data, describe how they will be linked to address the research questions.
- Analytic Plan
 - Describe the analytical approach, statistical techniques, and methods of inference that will be used to analyze the data; for projects using administrative data to answer research questions describe initial analyses to be completed within the first year of the grant.
 - Describe the results of power analyses that demonstrate that the sample size will be sufficient to detect effects using the proposed analytic techniques, if applicable.
 - Describe a plan, to be executed within the first year of the grant, for assessing the quality of administrative data and determining whether the data can be used in the proposed or future evaluations of CCDF policies and practices, if such data exist.

- Equity and Inclusion
 - Discuss whether and how the proposed project will address or consider equity and inclusion. For example, as applicable, applicants should discuss: whether the project will focus on equitable access to programs or services for any sub-groups of interest and the implications of the proposed work for those groups; how consideration of equity and inclusion informed the proposed research design and approach; how individuals from populations of interest and/or with lived experiences will be engaged in the research process to inform the research questions, measures, or design.
 - Discuss consideration of the cultural, linguistic and ethical issues that may arise
- Collaboration with the Consortium
 - Describe a plan for collaborating with the consortium of grant recipients to identify and coordinate common data collection protocols, measures, tools, research design and methodologies, and analyses, including a plan to modify proposed plans, as needed, to incorporate these common research components.
 - Also describe a plan for participating in the development of collaborative research products and resources for the field at large.
- Security
 - Describe the procedures that will be used to ensure data quality and security.
 - Describe how the proposed project will provide for adequate protection of human subjects. This includes the plan to protect confidentiality of all the data used and/or collected and the consent procedures.
- Applicants must describe how activities would contribute to the field's capacity to rigorously study child care subsidy policies and practices, such as documentation of research protocols, strategies to disseminate data and methods innovations, plans for archiving data.
- The technical approach must include a plan for flexibility in the research approach that addresses the possibility for:
 - Making improvements to the research design over the course of the grant based on lessons learned and collaboration with the consortium, and
 - Challenges in the CCDF lead agency's ability to implement policies successfully, including how such challenges will be addressed in the research design.

C. Dissemination Plan

- Applicants must propose a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or grant project outputs so that project information is provided to key target audiences. Dissemination plans must include:
 - Plans to consult and/or collaborate with partner agencies to review and interpret the project's findings and its implications for CCDF and/or early care and

education policies and agencies. Plans should describe potential contributions from partner agencies and other relevant interested parties in developing products and/or disseminating findings;

- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences, including (but not limited to):
 - Researchers and evaluators;
 - Policymakers, technical assistance providers, and practitioners in the fields of child care and early care and education (as appropriate); and
 - State, territory, or tribal CCDF lead agencies or local government agencies or non governmental agencies that administer CCDF programs on behalf of CCDF lead agencies and other project partners, if applicable;
- Specific products and/or activities that are intended for specific, key target audiences. Applicants must identify both research and policy-oriented products to communicate project developments and findings. In addition to traditional written research products and dissemination channels (*e.g.*, conference presentations, technical papers or reports, peer-reviewed scholarly publications), plans should identify activities to communicate and/or facilitate use of the sponsored research by policymakers, CCDF administrators and agencies, and/or other interested parties. As examples, products may include presentations or research briefs tailored for state policymakers, software, or web-based tools, if applicable. Dissemination plans and products may differ substantially depending on the target audiences;
- Preliminary proposal(s) for collaborative, cross-project dissemination products;
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes; and
- The timeline for dissemination.

D. Description of the Research Partnership

- Applicants must discuss the composition, stage, and goals of their research partnership. Specifically, applicants must:
 - Describe all organizations that will form the project team (at a minimum, representatives of a state, territory, tribal, or local CCDF lead agency and an entity with demonstrated research capacity) and provide evidence that each partner is committed to the partnership (*e.g.*, formal letters of specific commitment or support from each partner).
 - Describe the stage of the partnership (*e.g.*, a new partnership or a mature one), and explain how the partnership's maturity will affect the type of work proposed under the grant, the roles of the partners, and the expectations for the results of the project including both the research produced and the future of the partnership. Partnerships at any stage are acceptable, but it is important to show that the partnership is prepared to complete a rigorous evaluation.
 - Describe how the partnering organizations collaborated during Phase I to identify the research questions and project design proposed and, if applicable, any proposed changes to improve the strength of the partnership during Phase II.

- Describe how the partners, including the CCDF lead agency and research partner, will be involved in all stages of the project (*e.g.*, refining the evaluation design, interpreting findings).
- Outline how the project team will effectively collaborate and communicate about the project with research partners and CCDF lead agencies, as well as project stakeholders and target audiences at key points throughout the project.
- Describe any (existing or planned) partnerships, subawards or data agreements and outline a plan for collaboration among all research and policy stakeholders.
- Include a description of past or current partnerships among project team members, if applicable, that demonstrate the ability to carry out collaborative research.
- Discuss the partnership's review and decision-making process (*e.g.*, how it will determine research design directions and will review and approve publications/presentations of project findings).
- Discuss how the proposed project will improve the CCDF lead agency's capacity to participate in and use data and research to inform CCDF policies.

E. Management Plan

- Applicants must provide a management plan that describes a sound and feasible plan of action for how the proposed project will be carried out among all members of the partnership. This section must:
 - Demonstrate the roles, responsibilities, and relationships among the partners.
 - Describe, in detail, how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. This is especially important for projects involving multiple institutions carrying out different tasks that must be coordinated and/or integrated.
 - Describe how the project will be managed by the grant recipient to ensure that members of the partnership operate as a cohesive team and that the goals of the project are carried out efficiently and cost-effectively.
 - Detail how research activities will be appropriately completed within the timeframe of the grant.
 - Describe all subcontracts, subawards, and other formal relationships within the partnership.
 - Describe any (existing or planned) data use agreement or memoranda of understanding that will allow the research partners to gain access to and analyze administrative data from the CCDF lead agency. Partners who will provide access to data or records must provide a letter stipulating the terms of their agreement with the project team.
 - Discuss the partnership's agreement and strategy for sharing and housing data. This should include the main sources of data that will be shared, where the data will be housed, how the data will be managed, who will develop the documentation necessary for their use, and the availability of the data to partners and other interested parties.

- Discuss potential problems or challenges to accomplishing the project's objectives, including factors that may affect the quality of the research or its outcomes, may undermine the ability of partners to collaborate effectively, and may hinder the sharing, review, and dissemination of information. This should include a description of how problems and challenges will be discussed and handled by participating partnership organizations.

F. 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.

G. Staff Roles and Qualifications

- Applicants must demonstrate that the project team has the experience to manage a research project of comparable size, scope, and complexity, as well as the expertise to carry out the proposed project on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. More specifically, applicants must:
 - Describe experience of the project leadership, including the Principal Investigator, in managing research projects of comparable size, scope, and complexity as the proposed project.
 - Provide evidence that the Principal Investigator and other personnel (*e.g.*, collaborators, consultants, advisors) have knowledge and expertise in CCDF, subsidy policy, and other areas addressed by the proposed research, if any.
 - Describe the expertise of the project leadership in conducting research with low-income families and agencies administering subsidy or other public assistance programs.
 - Identify all proposed consultants or advisors, document their expertise, and describe their roles and responsibilities or how their services will be utilized. Include letters of commitment or intent, if possible.
 - Identify staff responsible for managing all key project activities, including management of the budget, and describe their roles and responsibilities, their professional and/or technical qualifications to execute proposed activities, the proportion of time they will be committed to the project in relation to their other duties, the period of time they will be employed, and whether their continued employment will be dependent solely on the funds to be awarded under this announcement. This includes describing personnel responsible for managing the budget and federal funds.
 - Identify the authors of the proposal and describe their continuing role in the project if funded.
 - Provide evidence that the proposed project leadership has experience building and sustaining research partnerships and collaborating in the development, implementation, and dissemination of research.

- Demonstrates that proposed staffing levels are adequate to carry out all project activities on time, within budget, and with a high level of quality and attention over the course of the research project.
- If proposing to use subaward(s), explain how the prime recipient plans to maintain a substantive role in the project.

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.
- Applicants must:
 - Demonstrate that each partner has the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time, within budget, and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur.
 - Include organizational plans for the project, including a description of the organizational structure and linkages among project partners, and the respective roles and resources contributed by each partner organization.
 - If known at the time of application submission, the applicant must disclose their intent to enter into subaward arrangements in their application. For each proposed subaward, the applicant must include a description of the work to be performed by the subrecipient(s), explain why the participation of the subrecipient is necessary, and why the applicant cannot achieve the objectives without the subrecipient(s)' participation.
 - Demonstrate each partner organization's ability to efficiently carry out its assigned roles and functions for a project with the proposed project's size, complexity, and scope, including evidence of successful management of federal funds. This section includes additional information on documentation that may be used to demonstrate organizational capacity.
 - Describe how the proposed partners are appropriate and significantly committed to the project's research goals. This includes demonstrating that all partners have sufficient fiscal commitment and organizational support.

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

I. Subawards

If applicable, applicants must state their intention to subaward and describe how they plan to meet the requirements and expectations outlined in *Section I. Program Description, Subawards*. Applicants must describe their plan to monitor all subrecipients in accordance with 45 CFR section 75.352. In addition, ACF reserves rights to the work produced under the Federal award, per 45 CFR 75.322(b) and (d). Grant recipients will be responsible for obtaining any necessary agreements such that ACF will have the same rights to any work produced under the grant (e.g., through/by a subawardee) as if the grant recipient had produced it. *This option requests that applicants provide a project management plan, including a project timeline, and a description of key milestones in their proposed project.*

References

Applicants must include a list of references for any resources that are cited within the application

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).

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

Provide a description of how protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive, consistent with applicable federal, state, local and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, will be collected and safeguarded. The applicant must provide the methods and/or systems that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and if applicable, address the process for

subrecipient(s) and/or contractors. Also, provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period.

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.

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 budget must reflect the entire 48-month grant period, with each 12-month budget period presented separately.
- The budget must include a detailed budget table clearly describing estimated costs for completion of the project, consistent with the budget categories and amounts reported in *SF 424-A*, and a detailed narrative budget justification that explains all of the calculations.
- The budget must include funds to collaborate with the consortium of grant recipients to develop common data collection protocols, measures, and tools, and coordinate research designs, methodologies, and analyses.
- The budget and budget justification must include support for key project personnel to participate in mandatory meetings and consortium activities (as described in *Section I. Program Description*) over the course of the project period.
- For applicants proposing to use subaward(s), if the total amount budgeted for subawards exceeds 50 percent of total direct costs for the budget period, the applicant must provide a justification for subawarding the portion of the project and must explain how the prime recipient plans to maintain a substantive role in the project. Applicants must explain why the participation of the subrecipient is necessary, and why the applicant cannot achieve the objectives without the subrecipient(s)' participation.
- Indirect costs are counted towards the award ceiling.

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

05/15/2023

Due Date for Applications

06/15/2023

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 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: Coordinated Evaluations of Child Care and Development Fund Policies & Initiatives

c/o ICF International

1902 Reston Metro Plaza

Reston

VA

20190

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 Significance

Maximum Points: 15

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant demonstrates a strong understanding of the current state of knowledge in the field relevant to the policies being studied and clearly links the identified issues with the goals and research questions of the proposed project.
2. The applicant's hypotheses clearly demonstrate a solid understanding of the policies to be evaluated and the critical policy issues and research needs of the partnering CCDF lead agency and, if applicable, local stakeholders.
3. The applicant demonstrates that the project will significantly contribute to the understanding the effectiveness of methods of setting provider payment rates and/or family co-payment policies for increasing low-income families' access to high-quality child care.
4. The applicant demonstrates how the project will inform future specific programmatic and/or policy decisions of the CCDF lead agency related to subsidy payment policies (i.e, provider payment rates and/or family co-payments).
5. The applicant demonstrates how the project will inform the federal CCDF program and/or OCC policies and initiatives, and subsidy policy-making in other states, territories, tribes, and/or localities.

Research Design and Methodology

Maximum Points: 35

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant clearly outlines the technical approach for addressing the key issues and achieving the project objectives and research questions as described in *Section IV.1. The Project Description, Objectives and Significance*.

2. The applicant adequately links the research questions, research design, key constructs, methods, analyses, and expected outcomes.
3. The applicant's proposed approach employs technically sound, rigorous, and appropriate design, methods, and procedures and thoroughly outlines how the proposed approach will meet the project's research objectives and address the research questions.
4. The applicant's proposed approach clearly addresses the specific research questions of this grant program (described in *Section I. Program Description, C. Program Goals and Expectations*).
5. The application includes a detailed logic model, conceptual framework, or theory of change grounded in theory and empirical evidence that clearly outlines the selected policies, implementation elements and processes, intended results (both short- and long-term), and any unintended results as well as relations between the variables of interest and expected outcomes and sufficiently describes the component or components of the child care subsidy policies and practices that are hypothesized to lead to anticipated changes in subsidized families' access to quality care.
6. The proposed research design includes adequate and comprehensive descriptions of data sources, sample, and methods used to address the proposed research questions. The applicant clearly describes how variables map onto the research questions and an approach to measuring access to child care along the five access dimensions.
7. The applicant clearly describes a clear plan for accessing, assessing the quality of, and determining whether administrative data can be used in the proposed or future evaluations of CCDF policies and practices, all within the first year of the grant. If no relevant administrative data exist, the applicant describes what information, if any, may be available from the lead agency for analysis. For projects using administrative data to answer research questions, the applicant clearly describes initial analyses of these data to be completed within the first year of the grant.
8. The applicant thoughtfully and thoroughly addresses and considers equity and inclusion throughout the research design (which may include in the research questions, methods, and analyses) and demonstrates sensitivity to relevant cultural, linguistic, and ethical issues.
9. The applicant clearly describes procedures that will be used to ensure data quality and security, including how the proposed project will provide for adequate protection of human subjects.
10. The application fully describes how activities would contribute to field's capacity to evaluate child care subsidy policies and practices, such as documenting research protocols, disseminating data and methods innovations, and archiving data.
11. The applicant demonstrates adequate flexibility to make improvements in the research design over the course of the grant and to respond to challenges in the CCDF lead agency's ability to implement policies successfully.
12. (*This sub-criterion is worth a maximum of 5 points.*) The applicant describes a robust plan to collaborate with the consortium of grant recipients to share lessons learned, identify common measures and data collection protocols, identify opportunities for collaborative analyses, and participate in the development of collaborative research products and resources for the field at large in addition to contributing to the documentation of project-specific policies to inform collective evaluation activities across projects.

13. *(This sub-criterion is worth a maximum of 5 points.)* The applicant describes a specific and comprehensive dissemination plan that includes: plans to consult and/or collaborate with partner agencies to review and interpret the project's findings and its implications for CCDF and/or early care and education policies and agencies; strategies to identify and engage with target audiences including but not limited to researchers and evaluations, policymakers, technical assistance providers practitioners, and government agencies; identifies specific products and/or activities that are intended for the specific, key target audiences identified; and preliminary proposal(s) for collaborative, cross-project dissemination products.

Description of the Research Partnership

Maximum Points: 10

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The project team clearly includes a state, territory, tribal, or local CCDF lead agency. The application demonstrates the partnering lead agency's commitment to the project and their role in the project. This includes evidence that the partnering agency is responsible for determining policies related to provider payment rates and/or family co-payments.
2. The project team clearly includes an entity with demonstrated research capacity. The application demonstrates that the partnering organization has a history of research as a primary activity and capacity to design and implement rigorous research.
3. The applicant clearly identifies all the participating members and organizations that form the project team and provides evidence of each partner's commitment to the project. This could include a memorandum of understanding, a description of all subcontracts or other formal relationships, letters of specific commitment or support, and/or data-sharing agreements.
4. The applicant thoroughly describes the stage of the research partnership and explains how the partnership's maturity affects the work proposed, the roles of the partners, and the expectations for the results of the project.
5. The applicant provides a detailed description of how the partnering organizations collaborated during Phase I and in the development of this application to identify the research questions and project design proposed and, if applicable, clearly describes proposed changes to improve the strength of the partnership during Phase II.
6. The applicant convincingly demonstrates how the partners, including the CCDF lead agency and research partner, will be involved in all phases of the project (e.g., refining the evaluation design, interpreting findings).
7. The applicant clearly outlines how the project team will effectively collaborate and communicate at key points throughout the project. This includes research partners, CCDF lead agencies, and project stakeholders, and clearly describes processes for review and decision-making about research plans and communicating project developments.
8. The applicant provides evidence of sufficient partnership development among research and policy stakeholders to meet the need for active collaboration and dialogue throughout all phases of the project.
9. The applicant demonstrates how the proposed project will improve the CCDF lead agency's capacity to participate in and use research to inform state, territory, tribal, and/or local CCDF policies.

Management Plan

Maximum Points: 10

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant presents a comprehensive and sound management plan that will ensure coordination of activities among all members of the partnership to efficiently accomplish the goals of the proposed project. This includes clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and functional relationships among the different partners, and, if applicable, the subrecipients expected to contribute (e.g., consultants, advisors, steering or management committees, technical workgroups, and/or coordinating bodies.)
2. The applicant clearly details the management structure and procedures that will be used to keep the project on track, to ensure high quality of work, and to manage costs.
3. The applicant adequately describes a timeline that ensures research activities will be appropriately completed within the timeframe of the grant.
4. The applicant clearly describes the partnership's agreement and strategy for sharing and housing project data. This includes discussing how data will be shared, where the data will be housed, how the data will be managed, and the availability of these data to partners or other parties. This also includes a letter from the partners who will provide access to data or records stipulating the terms of the data sharing agreement.
5. The applicant includes adequate discussion of potential problems or challenges to accomplishing the project's objectives, including factors that may affect the quality of the research or its outcomes, may undermine the ability of partners to collaborate effectively, and may hinder the sharing, review, and communication of information. The applicant describes a reasonable plan for how partners will make decisions and address problems and challenges.
6. The applicant includes a detailed and reasonable project timeline with feasible target completion dates for major milestones and products. The timeline demonstrates that the proposed research objectives will be completed within the project period.

Organizational Capacity

Maximum Points: 5

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant clearly demonstrates that each partner has the capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time, within budget, and to a high standard of quality. This includes demonstrating that partners have the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur in the course of the proposed project.
2. The application includes organizational plans for the project, such as a clear description of the organizational structure and linkages among project partners, and the respective roles and resources contributed by each partner organization.
3. The applicant sufficiently demonstrates each partner organization's experience and ability to carry out assigned roles and functions for the project. If the applicant proposes to use subaward(s), the applicant explains why the participation of the subrecipient is necessary, and why the applicant cannot achieve the objectives without the subrecipient(s)' participation.
4. The applicant adequately demonstrates that partner organizations can effectively and efficiently complete a project with the proposed project's size, complexity and scope. This includes evidence of successful management of federal funds.

5. The application thoroughly describes how the proposed project partners are appropriate and significantly committed to the project's research goals. This includes demonstrating that all partners have sufficient fiscal commitment and organizational support.

Staff Roles and Qualifications

Maximum Points: 15

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant clearly demonstrates that the Principal Investigator and staff responsible for managing all key project activities have sufficient experience to manage a research project of comparable size, scope, and complexity.
2. The applicant adequately demonstrates that the Principal Investigator and other personnel (*e.g.*, collaborators, consultants, advisors) have expertise in CCDF, subsidy policy, and other policy areas addressed by the proposed research, if any. Evidence of expertise includes relevant professional experience, training, and published work on related research or similar projects.
3. The application demonstrates that the Principal Investigator and key personnel have sufficient experience and expertise conducting research with low-income families and agencies administering subsidy or other public assistance programs.
4. The application clearly identifies and describes all proposed consultants or advisors and their qualifications for assigned roles or responsibilities.
5. The applicant reasonably identifies staff responsible for managing all key project activities and describes their roles and responsibilities, their professional and/or technical qualifications to execute proposed activities, the proportion of time they will be committed to the project in relation to their other duties, the period of time they will be employed, and whether their continued employment will be dependent solely on the funds to be awarded under this announcement. This includes describing personnel responsible for managing the budget and federal funds.
6. The applicant clearly identifies the authors of the proposal and describe their continuing role in the project if funded.
7. The applicant clearly communicates how the project leadership has experience building and sustaining research partnerships and collaborating in the development, implementation, and dissemination of policy research.
8. The applicant provides sufficient evidence that the Principal Investigator or other personnel (*i.e.*, Project Directors, CCDF lead agency representatives) have experience in the management of federal funds.
9. The applicant demonstrates that proposed staffing levels are adequate to carry out all project activities on time, within budget, and with a high level of quality and attention over the course of the research project.
10. If the applicant proposes to use subaward(s), the applicant explains how the prime recipient plans to maintain a substantive role in the project.

Budget and Budget Justification

Maximum Points: 10

In this section, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant includes a detailed budget with the itemized expenses and a narrative justification that clearly explains all of the calculations comprising the amount requested.

2. The budget clearly supports the entire 48-month project period and proposed costs, including personnel costs, are fully justified and reasonable to complete the proposed research objectives within this period, including, but not limited to, research activities, management, and dissemination/communication activities.
3. The applicant has adequately budgeted funds to collaborate with the consortium of grant recipients to develop common data collection protocols, measures, and tools, and coordinate research designs, methodologies, and analyses.
4. The budget and budget justification includes sufficient support for key project personnel (i.e., Principal Investigator(s) and CCDF lead agency partners) to participate in the annual CCEEPRC and grant recipient meetings as well as the kick-off meeting, all of which are typically held in Washington, DC.
5. If the applicant proposes to use subaward(s) and the total amount budgeted for subrecipients exceeds 50 percent of total direct costs for the project, applicant provides a clear justification for allocating the portion of the project.

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 reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or underserved populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. ACF will also consider the geographic distribution of federal funds in its award decisions.

The competitive review will be conducted by a panel of federal and non-federal expert reviewers knowledgeable in the areas of child care subsidy policy, human services research, and evaluation. Any federal reviewers on the panel will be chosen for their technical expertise and will be from outside of OPRE. Application review panels will assign a score to each application and identify its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the evaluation criteria.

It is unlikely that multiple applications with the same CCDF lead agency or research institution will be funded if there are applications from different lead agencies or organizations that qualify for support.

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, objectives and priorities of the grants as listed in *Section I. Program Description*.

On the basis of the review of an application, ACF will: (a) approve the application for funding, or (b) disapprove the application.

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.

ACF reserves the right not to fund applications from agencies or organizations who were previously grant recipients and did not meet or struggled to meet the requirements of their grant.

Government agencies generally define plagiarism as the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. It is prohibited by federal regulations. Any suspected plagiarism will be reported to the applicant organization and the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General for investigation.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), www.fapiis.gov/, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a

federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in [45 CFR § 75.205\(a\)\(2\) Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants](#).

Non-Federal Reviewers Reference

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

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval in the objective review process, but not selected for award may receive funding if additional funds become available in the current Fiscal Year. For those applications determined as “approved but unfunded,” notice will be given of the determination by email.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

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

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a NoA that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The NoA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via email or by GrantSolutions, or the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), whichever is relevant.

Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

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

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

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

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

HHS Grants Policy Statement

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

Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations

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

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

on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice, as provided in 45 CFR § 87.3(d).

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports:

Semi-Annually

Reporting Requirements

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

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

Financial Reports:

Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Ann

Rivera

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

c/o ICF International

1902 Reston Metro Plaza

Reston

VA

20190

ccdf.eval@icf.com

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget

Shea Westfall

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Grants Management

330 C St SW

Washington

DC

20024

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](http://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 <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . 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 <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> . 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 <i>Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> 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 <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . 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 <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . 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 <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	
Letter of Intent	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4</i> .
Table of Contents	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submit with the application by the due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Project Summary	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . The Project Summary is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity</i> .	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the application due date and time listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4</i> of the NOFO. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications</i> .	If applicable, concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i> .	Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C. Submission is required with the

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
		application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDR)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i>. The IDR must be submitted with the application package.	If the IDR is available by the application due date, it must be submitted with the application package. If it is not available by the application due date, listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>, it may be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .