

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Application due Friday, August 7, 2026



Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Children's Bureau

Kinship Navigator Programs: Evaluations

Opportunity number: HHS-2026-ACF-ACYF-CF-0004



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Before you begin

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

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

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

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

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

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

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

Apply by the application due date

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, August 7, 2026.



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



Step 1:

Review the Opportunity

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Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Children's Bureau

Evaluating Kinship Navigator Programs to show their efficacy at improving child welfare outcomes.

Summary

This funding opportunity is to support the implementation and rigorous evaluation of existing Kinship Navigator Programs (KNPs) that are not currently rated on the [Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#) (Clearinghouse). The purpose is to expand the number of state and tribal child welfare agencies implementing KNPs that propose to meet the [PI-18-11](#) requirements for the optional [Title IV-E Kinship Navigator](#) federal program. By generating strong evidence that KNPs improve outcomes for kinship caregivers and the children in their care, this funding will position more KNPs for Clearinghouse review with potential designations as promising, supported, or well-supported. This opportunity prioritizes states and tribal communities that are not currently operating a Title IV-E KNP.

Funding details

Type: Cooperative agreement

Expected total program funding: \$4,800,000

Total expected awards: 8

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): \$400,000

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

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

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



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

Key facts

Opportunity name:
Kinship Navigator
Programs: Evaluations

Opportunity number:
HHS-2026-ACF-ACYF-
CF-0004

Federal assistance listing:
93.605

NOFO version: Original

Key dates

**Application submission
deadline:** August 7, 2026

**Expected project start
date:** September 30, 2026

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

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

Eligible organizations are state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies and private nonprofit organizations. Institutions of higher education as defined under section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001) are also eligible to apply.

If the applying organization is not the title IV-E agency, it is highly recommended that the organization have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the IV-E agency stating that the IV-E agency is committing to implementing the KNP program if it receives a rating of promising, supported, or well supported from the Clearinghouse. See the [additional eligibility documentation section of the attachments](#).

You may apply with other states or tribes to increase the overall number of children served through the grant. This program will prioritize applicants with a letter of commitment from a state/tribal title IV-E agency that has not implemented the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program. See the [letter of commitment section of the attachments](#) for more information.

Other eligibility criteria

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

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

Disqualifying factors

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

We won't consider an application that:

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

Application limits

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

Cost sharing

This program requires you to contribute 25% of the project's total cost. You can calculate this cost-sharing requirement in two ways:

Method 1: Start with the federal share.

Calculation: Divide the federal share by 3.

For example: $\$600,000 / 3 = \$200,000$.

Method 2: Start with the total project cost.

Calculation: Multiply the total project cost by 25%.

For example: $\$800,000 \times 25\% = \$200,000$.

Types of cost sharing

You can meet your match requirement through any combination of:

- Cash contributed by your organization, partners, or other third parties.
- In-kind (non-cash) contributions from partners or other third parties.
- In-kind (non-cash) contributions from partners or third parties are encouraged to meet the match requirements. No more than 50% of the non-federal share may be in kind, which could include plant, equipment, or services per [section 427\(e\) of the Act \[PDF\]](#).

Cost-sharing commitments

If awarded, you must provide the amount of cost-sharing funds you promised, even if you promised more than the required minimum. We put these commitments in the Notice of Award.

If you don't provide your promised amount, we may decrease the amount of funding we give you or use other enforcement actions.

You'll have to include your cost-sharing funds when you fill out your [federal financial reports](#).

Cost-sharing waiver

We waive cost sharing up to \$199,999 for awards to the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands (except for the consolidated awards under [45 CFR part 97](#)). You must meet any amount of cost sharing over \$199,999. See [48 USC 1469a\(d\) Congressional declaration of policy respecting “Insular Areas.”](#)

Post-award requirements

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

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

Statutory authority

Section 427 of Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (the Act) ([42 U.S.C. 627](#)) as amended by [Pub. L. 118-258](#).

Agency priorities

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

The recipient of this award must implement any funds awarded under this NOFO to effectuate program goals or agency priorities in accordance with ACF's vision, mission, values, priorities, & guiding principles^[1] when authorized. Funded activities must advance ACF's vision of resilient, safe, healthy, and economically secure children, youth, families, and communities, and support ACF's mission to foster health and well-being through effective, accountable, and compassionate human services when awarded in any programs that authorize these priorities.

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

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

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

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

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

4. **Family Stability and Child Well-Being:** Strengthen families, promote safe and stable home environments, and improve outcomes for children and youth through prevention-focused and developmentally appropriate services.
5. **Work, Self-Sufficiency, and Economic Mobility:** Support pathways to employment, job retention, and economic independence for individuals and

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

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

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

Program Description

Background

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is guided by [values](#) that emphasize the importance of putting families and community first. This project promotes these values through initiatives to strengthen families, empower parents, and partner with community resources, such as faith-based organizations, to improve outcomes for children. This opportunity also aligns with [A Home for Every Child](#) initiative, which prioritizes initiatives that safely decrease the number of children entering foster care through effective prevention, while also increasing the number of licensed foster homes through diligent recruitment, prioritizing kin placement, and improving retention of existing caregivers.

The term “kinship care” encompasses a variety of situations in which children are raised by other family members, relative caregivers, or close non-related caregivers when the child’s parents are unable to care for the child. Kinship care has become increasingly important in meeting the needs of children involved in the child welfare system or at risk of becoming involved with that system. The U.S. Census indicates substantial growth in the number of children living with relatives other than their parents. In 2023, [2.74 million children \[PDF\]](#) were living in relative households without a parent. Of those children, 59% lived with grandparents, 27% lived with other relatives, and 14% lived with non-relatives, known as fictive kin.

More than one-third of children in foster care (about 123,294 [in FY 2022](#)) were placed in relative foster homes. Research from the [National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being](#) shows that children living with relatives experience fewer behavioral problems and greater placement stability than those placed with non-relatives. [Federal law \[PDF\]](#), therefore, requires child welfare agencies to prioritize identifying and placing children with relatives when removal from parents is necessary and allows title IV-E agencies to use different [licensing standards](#) for kinship foster homes.

Most kinship care occurs outside the foster care system—over 70% of the roughly 2 million children in kinship care live in informal arrangements facilitated by families or with limited child welfare involvement. While kinship caregivers play a critical role in keeping children out of foster care, many receive little financial support and are less likely to access training, respite care, or peer support services, highlighting the need for stronger supports for these families.

Kinship Navigator Programs (KNPs), provided through title IV-E agencies, help relative and kin caregivers. These KPNs have programs and services to meet caregiver needs and the needs of the children in their care. KNP must be rated as *promising*, *supported*, or *well-supported*, according to the Clearinghouse, to be used by title IV-E agencies. The Clearinghouse rates KNP according to the following three criteria as defined in the [Handbook of Standards and Procedures \[PDF\]](#) version 2.0. This criteria is defined as:

- **Well-supported.** A program or service is rated as a well-supported practice if it has at least two randomized control trial (RCT) or quasi-experimental design (QED) studies carried out in usual care or practice settings that achieve a design and execution rating of high or moderate and demonstrate favorable effects in a target outcome domain. At least one of the contrasts must demonstrate a sustained favorable effect of at least 12 months beyond the end of treatment on at least one eligible outcome.
- **Supported.** A program or service is rated as a supported practice if it has at least one RCT or QED study carried out in a usual care or practice setting that achieves a design and execution rating of high or moderate and demonstrates a sustained favorable effect of at least 6 months beyond the end of treatment on at least one eligible outcome.
- **Promising.** A program or service is designated as a promising practice if it has at least one study that utilizes some form of control, achieves a design and execution rating of high or moderate, and demonstrates a favorable effect on at least one eligible outcome. The Prevention Services Clearinghouse is planning to develop and pilot standards for studies with single case designs and determine how such designs can contribute to the promising rating.

[Seven KNP models](#) currently meet these criteria. You are encouraged to review the evaluation design and methods of the these KNP, which include the following:

- Promising level (statistically significant outcomes)
- [Foster Kinship Navigator Program](#)
- [Ohio's Kinship Supports Intervention](#)
- [Arizona Kinship Support Services](#)
- [Colorado Kinconnected](#)
- [Kinship Interdisciplinary Network Technologically Advanced Model](#)
- [Washington State Kinship Navigator Program](#)

The project director and evaluator are expected to attend one annual grantee meeting per year in Washington, DC.

Purpose

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to support the implementation and rigorous evaluation of existing Kinship Navigator Programs (KNPs). The goal is to expand the number of state and tribal child welfare agencies implementing KNPs as defined in [section 427\(a\)\(1\) \[PDF\]](#) of the Act. Strengthening the evidence base will position more programs for review by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse and potential designation as promising, supported, or well-supported. This opportunity is intended for states and tribal communities that are not currently operating a [Title IV-E Kinship Navigator Program](#) per [section 474\(a\)\(7\) of the Act](#).

A priority of this opportunity is to encourage states or tribes that have not received approval to implement the [Title IV-E KNP](#). The merit reviewers will award bonus points to applicants that demonstrate the KNP will be implemented in one of the jurisdictions with no approved Title IV-E KNP.

This program primarily supports the following ACF priorities:

- **Ensuring Value Alignment in Funding:** This NOFO aligns with this priority by supporting projects that strengthen families, promote kinship care, improve child well-being, and advance ACF priorities related to family stability, evidence-based practice, and responsible stewardship of federal resources. Applicants must demonstrate how their project design, partnerships, implementation, and outcomes align with ACF's vision, mission, values, and guiding principles.
- **Gold-Standard Research:** The NOFO advances this priority by requiring rigorous evaluations of Kinship Navigator Programs using randomized controlled trials (RCTs) or quasi-experimental designs (QEDs) that meet Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse standards. Funded projects will generate high-quality evidence on program effectiveness, helping expand the number of Kinship Navigator Programs eligible for Clearinghouse review and future title IV-E funding.

Project requirements

Objectives

Project activities will be completed in two overarching phases. The first phase is an initial 6-month collaborative planning phase. The second phase covers the evaluation of the KNP following Children Bureau's (CB) approval of the evaluation for the remainder of year 1 through year 3. In Phase I, projects will implement the KNP and begin the evaluation in collaboration with CB and the Evaluation Technical Assistance (TA) provider to review and revise the KNP and the evaluation plan to ensure each meet the requirements as outlined in Social Security Act, [section 427\(a\)\(1\)](#) and [Clearinghouse Handbook of Standards and Procedures](#).

In Phase II, with CB and the Evaluation TA Provider, the project will focus on evaluating KNP services to build evidence of effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for children and families.

To meet its goals across Phases I and II, projects will be completed in alignment with [ACF's values](#) and focus on the objectives in the following subsections:

Implementing KNP Services

You will implement an existing KNP that proposes to meet the requirements outlined in [PI-18-11](#), to include the following:

- Coordinate with other state or local agencies who promote service coordination or referral services (i.e., 2-1-1^[2] or 3-1-1^[3] information systems). ACF encourages you to leverage technology and modernization strategies to improve the speed and efficiency of delivering information and referral services to kinship caregivers statewide, with particular attention to those living in rural areas.
- Plan and operate in consultation with kinship caregivers, youth raised in kinship care, and organizations representing the caregivers' interests and provide outreach to kinship families.
- Establish information and referral services that link kinship caregivers with relevant training and legal assistance.
- Provide outreach to kinship care families (e.g., kinship care website, or other relevant guides or outreach materials). Any website must comply with the [Stevens Amendment](#).
- Promote partnerships between public and private agencies.

CB requires that when KNP services are not delivered directly by the title IV-E child welfare agency, the recipients must have a formal partnership with the state or tribal title IV-E agency. Partnerships are critical to collaboration and accountability. You will work across and with partners in good faith, focusing on transparency, honoring commitments, and holding each other responsible to project objectives to ensure that kinship caregivers receive services based on their needs timely.

Examples of additional partners may include:

- Other public child and family serving agencies (e.g., Head Start, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs, etc.)
- Faith-based organizations
- Community-based services (e.g., child or respite care, family resource centers, community-based child abuse prevention programs, etc.)
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Schools
- Family or Probate Courts

You will identify criteria for families to be eligible for the KNP, which may include families:

- With a child placed in a licensed relative foster home for those in formal foster care.
- With a child placed in an unlicensed relative foster home,
- Participating in guardianship arrangements under the [Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program](#) (GAP).
- Raising a relative child with no formal involvement with the child welfare agency, children informal foster care.

You will develop a comprehensive KNP program manual that clearly describes the following core components:

- KNP service description, including outreach and referral processes to ensure kinship families have information on and access to relevant services, resources, and benefits.
- Dosage of services (i.e., duration, frequency, and intensity), describe the clear start and end dates for the intervention for when kinship families can be served by the KNP.
- Location and delivery setting (i.e., in-person or virtual).
- Training requirements for KNP staff (e.g., education or certification requirements, training topics, etc.)

Building evidence and knowledge

You will implement evaluations of KNP services in Phase II, following CB approval of the evaluation plan.

Evaluations must clearly outline the sample population of the evaluation. Evaluations may include an implementation, impact, and cost study, as detailed below. Evaluations can be conducted by either an internal or external evaluator to the agency who demonstrates the knowledge and expertise to oversee rigorous evaluation design projects in child welfare. Single group pretest-posttest designs, in which a single group receives an intervention and the outcomes are assessed before and after the intervention, are not eligible because such designs do not include an appropriate comparison condition.

An implementation study that describes and evaluates the following:

- Components of the KNP (e.g., target population, eligibility criteria, outreach and referral strategies, etc.).
- The extent to which the KNP is being implemented and practiced with fidelity.
- Involvement of partners in the implementation of services.
- Factors that facilitated and hindered progress.

An impact study that tests the effectiveness of the KNP using a rigorous design and includes the following:

- Adheres to design and execution standards for a randomized control trial (RCT) design or a quasi-experimental design (QED) as described in Chapter 5 of the [Clearinghouse Handbook of Standards and Procedures](#).
- Projects that use a QED design must justify and describe services received by the comparison group (i.e., services received as usual or with minimal intervention).
- Demonstrates evidence of effectiveness (i.e., a causal link between interventions and intended outcomes).
- Measures at least one of the target outcomes as described in Chapter 4 of the [Clearinghouse Handbook of Standards](#).
- Includes a valid and reliable measurement plan and sound methodological design.

Target outcomes may include child permanency and well-being. You may assess:

- Child permanency by examining whether children who received KNP services show changes in licensed kinship placements, placement stability, time in foster care, maltreatment, foster care entry, and reunification, adoption, or guardianship outcomes.
- Child and caregiver well-being by examining whether KNP services lead to improvements in academic performance, employment, stress, physical or mental health, and family needs.

A cost study to better understand the costs of the program and a comparison of KNP costs to foster care maintenance payments per child. Examples of cost study research questions may include:

- On average, how much does it cost to implement the KNP?
- What is the cost of providing KNP services to a family defined as a kinship caregiver and one child?
- How much does the cost of the KNP increase if the family has more children in the household?
- What is the cost of providing KNP services to a child living with an informal kinship caregiver that is receiving preventive services? How does this compare to the costs of providing foster care services to that child?

Your cost study may include the total annual costs of operating the KNP, and how both personnel (e.g., salaries, benefits) and non-personnel (e.g., facilities, overhead, contracts) resources are allocated among cost categories and program activities.

Demonstrating improved outcomes for kinship families

The goal is for your final evaluation report to demonstrate statistically significant findings of positive outcomes for children and relative caregivers who received the KNP services. Upon completion, you may submit this final report to the [Clearinghouse](#) for review. If the Clearinghouse determines the KNP meets the evidence criteria for well-supported, supported, or promising, then this evidence-based program will qualify for the Title IV-E KNP federal funding per Children's Bureau instructions [PI-18-11](#).

Cooperative agreement—Description of ACF's involvement

A cooperative agreement is a method of awarding federal assistance that includes substantial federal involvement. The agreement clearly defines the responsibilities of the Children's Bureau and the awardee. Our involvement and collaboration will include the following.

- We will work with you to plan and carry out your key project activities.
- We will work with you to plan and carry out a rigorous local evaluation designed in accordance with the [Handbook of Standards and Procedures Version 2.0](#).
- We will monitor your project to make sure it follows the requirements for target population and scope of services.

Funding policies and limitations

Changes in HHS regulations

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

General policies

- We will only make awards if this program receives funding. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
- Support beyond the first budget period will depend on:
 - Appropriation of funds.
 - Satisfactory progress in meeting your project's objectives.
 - A decision that continued funding is in the government's best interest.
- If we receive more funding for this program, we will consider:
 - Funding more applicants.
 - Extending the period of performance.
 - Awarding supplemental funding.
- To the extent permitted by law, including any relevant court orders, you may not use funds from this NOFO for any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEI and DEIA) activities. This includes:
 - DEI- or DEIA-related research.

- Activities that discriminate or show preference based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or other protected traits.
- Any efforts that promote a “discriminatory equity ideology.”
- To the extent permitted by law, including any relevant court orders, ACF will also not allow funds awarded under this NOFO to support any services or activities that inculcate or promote gender ideology.

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

Program-specific limitations and policies

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

- Construction.
- Purchase of real property.
- Major renovation.
- Fundraising.

Indirect costs

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

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

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

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

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

Subawards

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

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

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

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

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

Salary rate limitation

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

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

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

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

Program income

If you earn any money from your award-supported project activities (known as program income), you must use it for the purposes and under the conditions of the award. Find more about program income at [2 CFR 200.307](#).



Step 2:

Get Ready to Apply

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Find the application package

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

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

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

Get registered

SAM.gov

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

To register:

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

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

Once you register:

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

Grants.gov

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

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

Learn more

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



Step 3:

Build Your Application

In this step

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Application checklist

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

File one: Narratives

Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.

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

File two: Attachments

Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.

Component	Included in page limit?
☐ ACF Priorities Alignment Attestation	No
☐ Indirect cost agreement	Yes
☐ Legal proof of nonprofit status	Yes
☐ Legal proof of for-profit status	Yes
☐ Legal proof of small businesses	Yes
☐ Organizational capacity supporting information (including organization chart)	Yes
☐ Third-party agreements	Yes
☐ Letters of commitment	Yes
☐ Brief Description of KNP Manual	Yes
☐ Maintenance of effort certification	Yes
☐ Protection of human subjects certification	No

Standard forms

Use each required form in Grants.gov.

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

Application contents and format

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

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application.

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

Required format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 100 pages.

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

Accepted file formats

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

Document formats

Paper size: 8 ½ inches x 11 inches

Margins: 1 inch all around

Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

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

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

Color: Black

Size: 12-point font

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

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced

Project summary: Must be single-spaced

Project narrative: Must be double-spaced

Logic model: Can be single-spaced

Resumes: Can be single-spaced

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

Attachments: Can be single-spaced

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

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

File one

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

This file includes:

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

Table of contents

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

Project summary

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

- At the top, the project title, applicant name, address, phone numbers, email addresses, and any website URL.
- A brief description of the project, including the needs and population you will address, your proposed services or research questions.

Project narrative

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

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

In it, you must:

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

Purpose and need

Geographic location

Provide the precise physical location of your project and boundaries of the area you will serve. If you will include any subrecipients in your project that will serve specific geographic areas include their locations as well.

Need for assistance

Identify the problems you plan to solve. These problems could be physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, etc. To do so:

- Demonstrate the need, including the nature and scope of the problem.
- Provide, as appropriate, supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials, in your attachments.
- Include any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments. You may refer to them in the endnotes or footnotes of your application.
- Use demographic data and participant or beneficiary information where you can.
- Applicants should demonstrate how their proposed activities support improved child safety, permanency, well-being, and alignment [with ACF priorities](#) related to family stability.

Objectives

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

- Describe your understanding of the need to implement and build evidence on the effectiveness of KNP's to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children in or at risk of entry into foster care.
- Outline your vision for implementing KNP services as defined by section 427 of the Act and conducting a rigorous evaluation to demonstrate effectiveness of the services in for the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator program per section 474(a)(7) of the Act.

Response

Approach

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

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

You must respond to the objectives discussed in the project requirements and describe how you will carry them out. Include your approach to each of the following:

- Describe how your proposed project aligns with the applicable [ACF priorities](#) identified in the [program description](#). This includes how your project activities, partnerships, delivery, and expected outcomes support these priorities.
- Describe how you will implement the KNP services as outlined in [PI-18-11](#), specifically the following five components:
 - Coordinating with other state or local agencies who promote service coordination or referral services.
 - Planning and operating in consultation with kinship caregivers, youth raised in kinship care, and organizations representing the caregivers' interests and providing outreach to kinship families.
 - Establishing information and referral services that link kinship caregivers with relevant training and legal assistance.
 - Providing outreach to kinship care families (i.e., kinship care website, or other relevant guides or outreach materials).
 - Promoting partnerships between public and private agencies.

- Describe the anticipated number of children and kinship caregivers to be served in each year of the project.
- Establish a written KNP manual by providing a summary of the following core components:
 - Description of the KNP services, to include processes for identifying families; conducting outreach; referring eligible families to relevant services, resources, and benefits; and a clear start and end date for the intervention.
 - Dosage (e.g., duration, frequency, and intensity) and length of time families can remain involved in KNP services.
 - Location and delivery setting (i.e., in-person or virtual).
 - Training requirements for KNP staff (e.g., education or certification requirements, training topics, etc.)
- Develop partnerships to maximize collaboration, accountability, and impact of KNP services. If you are not a title IV-E child welfare agency, demonstrate a commitment to working with them. Identify other partnerships and how they contribute to project goals.
- Identify and use modernization strategies, such as technology, to enhance project impact.
- Collaborate with CB and the evaluation TA provider during the planning phase and make necessary revisions to ensure the KNP services considers statutory requirements and evaluation requirements outlined in ACYF-CB-PI-18-11.
- Using findings from prior experiences with implementing and evaluating KNP services to inform this project.

Project timeline and milestones

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

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

Logic model

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

- Presents how inputs drive activities to produce outputs, outcomes, and the ultimate goals of the proposed project.

- Explains the links among project elements.
- Targets the identified objectives and goals of the project.

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

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

Impact

Project performance evaluation plan

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

- How you will monitor ongoing activities and progress toward the project's goals and objectives.
- The inputs, key activities, and expected outcomes of the funded activities. Inputs might include your collaborative partners, key staff, budget, service processes, or other resources.
- How you will measure the inputs, activities, and outcomes.
- How you will use the resulting information to improve your funded activities.
- Any processes that support overall data quality.
- The organizational systems and processes you will use to track performance outcomes.
- How your organization will collect and manage data in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. This might include assigned skilled staff, data management software, and data integrity.
- Any potential obstacles to implementing the project performance evaluation and how you will address them.

A timeline for how you will review information from the performance evaluation and apply it to your ongoing project.

Activities evaluation plan

Describe your plan for rigorous evaluation of funded activities. The evaluation must:

- Assess activities and progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.
- Assess whether the project is having the expected impacts.
- Specify expected outcomes and any research questions, as well as how the evaluation results will help you understand and improve the funded activities.
- Include a valid and reliable measurement plan, detailed timeline, and sound methodological design.
- Describe the details of the proposed data collection activities, participants, data management, data integrity, and analysis plans.
- Describe any potential obstacles in implementing the evaluation and how you will address them.

Expected outcomes

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

Organizational capacity

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

- Provide evidence that your team has the relevant experience and expertise needed to carry out your project.
- Describe your team's experience (including any partnering organizations) with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- Provide evidence that your team, including partnering organizations, has the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions effectively.
- Disclose your plan to enter into subaward agreements. If planning subawards, describe the work each subrecipient will complete.
- Provide some supporting information in the organizational capacity supporting information section of your [attachments](#).

Current and pending funding support

Provide a list of your current and pending funding for ongoing projects and proposals. Include all sources, such as federal, state, and local governments; public or private foundations; and for-profit organizations.

Indicate which projects and proposals require committed time from the project director, principal investigator, or other key personnel of the project you are proposing in this application.

Show the total award amount, awarding entity, and the amount of time each key staff member will devote to each project.

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

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

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

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

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

Project sustainability plan

You must propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. We expect you to sustain key elements of your project. These elements can include strategies or services and interventions that have improved practices and outcomes.

- Provide an approach to project sustainability that is effective and feasible.

Describe:

- The key people and organizations whose support you will require.
- The types of alternative support you will require to maintain the project.
- If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how you will maintain their cooperation or collaboration after the federal funding ends.

Protection of sensitive or confidential information

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

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

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

Dissemination plan

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

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

Line-item budget and budget narrative

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

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

Justify the costs you ask for and provide detail, including calculations for the “object class categories” in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this

information for each year of the period of performance. See information on [funding periods](#).

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See the [funding policies and limitations](#).
- You must demonstrate that you have set aside sufficient resources to complete a rigorous evaluation that meets all of the requirements in the evaluation section including, but not limited to, data collection activities, incentives for program participants, software development costs, and the costs of the evaluation staff completing the KNP evaluation. Grant funds will also support the implementation and maintenance of KNP services.
- Please also review the Standard Form instructions.

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

In general, you must:

- Indicate the method you will use for your indirect cost rate. See the [indirect costs](#) section for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail necessary for the calculation to be duplicated.
- For any cost sharing, include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance.
- For applicants planning to use subawards, if your subaward budget is more than 50% of total direct costs, justify why you are subawarding that portion of the project. Explain:
 - How you plan to maintain a substantive role in the project.
 - Why you cannot achieve your goals without the subrecipients' participation.

Your proposed budget must include the following:

- A detailed narrative and line-item budget justification for the first year of the project showing that the costs of the proposed project are reasonable.
- Allocation of sufficient funds to support a rigorous evaluation of the KNP and to meet the financial match requirements.
- Evidence that your fiscal controls and accounting procedures will ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of award funds.

- Costs to support attendance of the project director and evaluator at annual grantee meeting (one per year) in Washington, DC.

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

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

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

File two: Attachments

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

This file includes all attachments.

ACF priorities alignment attestation

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

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

I hereby attest and certify that:

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

Insert Date of Signature:

Print Name and Title of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR):

Signature of AOR:

Indirect cost agreement

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

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

Legal proof of nonprofit status

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

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

Organizational capacity supporting information

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

- Organizational charts, including all partners.
- Resumes, biographical sketches, or curricula vitae for all key personnel.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- Copy or description of your organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.

Third-party agreements

You must submit agreements with all third parties involved in the project. Third parties include subrecipients, contractors, and other cooperating entities. Third-party agreements include letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, and memoranda of agreement. We do not consider general letters of support to be third-party agreements.

Any such agreement must:

- Describe each party's roles and responsibilities for project activities.
- Describe the support and resources that the third party is committing to the proposed project.
- Be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments.
- Identify the primary applicant and all collaborators responsible for project activities if the agreement is for a collaboration or consortia application.
- Signatures of the authorized officials of the applicant and third-party organization.

Letters of commitment

If you are a state, local, or tribal Child Welfare Agency, you must provide a letter of commitment from a relevant community-based organization with experience serving kinship families when applicable, or a description of how the organization plans to coordinate its services and activities with those offered by the relevant community-based organization.

If you are not the state or tribal child welfare agency, provide a letter of commitment or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the state or local child welfare agency describing how kinship families will be referred to the program, and the agency's roles and responsibilities in implementing the KNP. The letter must also describe a data-sharing agreement between your organization and the child welfare agency. The child welfare agency commitment letter must outline staff roles and responsibilities, describe services for kinship caregivers, and explain data collection and sharing procedures with the evaluation team.

Merit reviewers will award bonus points to applicants who provide a letter of commitment from a state or tribe to implement the KNP in one of the 39 eligible states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or in a tribal area without an approved [Title IV-E KNP](#).

Brief outline of the KNP manual

If you have an existing KNP manual, you must provide a copy as part of your application. If a manual has not yet been developed, you must provide a brief summary (not to exceed three pages) outlining the core components that will be included in the KNP manual to be developed during the grant period, as described in the program description.

Protection of human subjects certification

Not included in the page limit.

You must attach a Protection of Human Subjects: Assurance Identification / Certification / Declaration of Exemption form. You can find this form at the [Office of Human Research Protections Forms](#) website.

For more on this topic see [the Office of Human Research Protections](#) website. If you have questions, you can email them at OHRP@HHS.gov or call them at 240-453-6900.

Standard forms

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

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

Important: Public information

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

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

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

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



Step 4:

Learn About Review and Award

In this step

Application review	<u>43</u>
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Application review

Initial review

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Merit review process

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

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

Criteria summary

Criterion	Total number of points with bonus = 120
1. Purpose and need	10 points
2. Approach	25 points
3. Evaluation	30 points
4. Organizational capacity	30 points
5. Budget	5 points
6. Alignment with ACF vision, mission, values, priorities, and guiding principles	10 points
7. Bonus	10 points

Scoring criteria

Purpose and need

Maximum points: 10

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- 1.1 Describe the geographic location of your project and the boundaries of the area you plan to serve, to include anticipated number of children and kinship caregivers who will be served.
- 1.2 Describe your understanding of the need to build evidence on the effectiveness of KNP services in achieving child safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for the Title IV-E Kinship Navigator program per section 474(a)(7) of the Act.
- 1.3 Present your plan for implementing KNP services and conducting a rigorous evaluation to demonstrate effectiveness of the services.

Approach

Maximum points: 25

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- 2.1 Describe your plan for defining the target population and engaging them in KNP services.
- 2.2 Describe your approach to providing KNP and how it will meet the five required project components during the grant period.
- 2.3 Describe your process for establishing comprehensive manual to ensure consistent

implementation of the KNP. Include a summary of KNP services, dosage, length of time families can remain in KNP, location and delivery, and training requirements.

2.4 Outline your plan for identifying and using modernization strategies, such as technology, to increase efficiency and impact of the KNP services.

2.5 Describe your plan to collaborate with CB and the evaluation TA provider during the planning phase to finalize the administration and evaluation of KNP services.

2.6 Provide a timeline and milestones for your project, including the collaborative planning phase and the evaluation phase of the project.

2.7 Explain past experiences with implementing and evaluating KNP services and how finding from those experiences will inform your approach to this project.

2.8 Provide a sound sustainability plan for continuing this project beyond the period of federal funding.

Evaluation

Maximum points: 30

The reviewer will assess how well you:

Evaluation Experience (Maximum points: 10)

3.1 Present an evaluation plan that is strongly guided by the project's logic model and addresses the research questions for the implementation study and impact study.

3.2 Propose a reasonable implementation, impact, or cost evaluation design to address your research questions. The cost study may analyze direct services, as well as management and implementation activities, and include both case-level and aggregate data that can reasonably be obtained and tracked.

3.3 Describe plans to work with an external or internal evaluator from the applicant's organization that demonstrates the knowledge and expertise to oversee rigorous evaluation design projects in child welfare.

Rigor of Evaluation (Q1-8, Maximum points: 20)

3.4 Propose a clear plan to evaluate the project that satisfies the requirements in the program description, the performance evaluation plan, and the activities [evaluation plan section](#) of the project narrative. Describe the evaluation design methodology of either a randomized control trial or quasi-experimental design.

3.5 Present a sampling plan to recruit kinship families to ensure statistically significant results on key outcomes. Describe the recruitment strategies you will use to achieve this sample size and how you will address any challenges.

3.6 Describe how the proposed outcome measures meet the outcome standards of face validity, reliability, and consistency of measurement between intervention and comparison groups (as applicable). Describe how the evaluation will review one of the following target outcomes: (a) Child Safety, (b) Child Permanency, (c) Child Well-Being,

(d) Adult Well-Being, (e) Access to Services, (f) Referral to Services, and/or (g) Satisfaction with Programs and Services.

Organizational Capacity

Maximum points: 30

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- 4.1 Provide evidence that your team, including partnering organizations, have the relevant experience and expertise to carry out your project.
- 4.2 Demonstrate expertise in implementing, developing, carrying out, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- 4.3 Show expertise in providing KNP to kinship caregivers and children in their care that supports the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in care. Demonstrate expertise in collecting data necessary for meeting the evaluation requirements. Applicants that are private nonprofit organizations must demonstrate experience working with children in foster care or children in kinship care arrangements.
- 4.4 Provide appropriate roles and responsibilities. Demonstrate that your key partners have committed to the project and will provide services to kinship caregivers.
- 4.5 Describe your plan for developing partnerships to maximize collaboration and accountability, and how the partnership will impact the KNP services.
- 4.6 Demonstrate that you have the required partnerships:
- 4.7 For private organizations – letter of commitment of MOU from the child welfare agency.
- 4.8 For state, local, or tribal child welfare agencies – letter of commitment of MOU from and coordination with a relevant community-based organization with experience serving kinship families.

Budget

Maximum points: 5

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- 5.1 Provide a detailed narrative and line-item budget justification for the first year of the project.
- 5.2 Include the percentage of grant funds dedicated to evaluation and costs for required travel to meetings in Washington, DC.
- 5.3 Include costs that are reasonable based on the program and evaluation activities you are conducting, expected results, and benefits. Describe financial funds available to support the match requirements.

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

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

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

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

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

Scoring Considerations for the next three criteria:

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

6.1 Demonstrated Review and Understanding (Up to 2 Points)

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

Reviewers will look for:

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

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

The degree to which the following one or more ACF priorities are translated into specific elements of the proposed project:

- Ensuring Value Alignment in Funding
- Gold-Standard Research

Reviewers will assess if the applicant:

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

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

The extent to which the following one or more ACF priorities are reflected in measurable outcomes and ongoing program improvement:

- Ensuring Value Alignment in Funding
- Gold-Standard Research

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the application:

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

7. Bonus

Maximum points: 10

The reviewer will assess how well you:

7.1 Applicants will receive bonus points for providing a letter of commitment from a state or tribe to implement the KNP in one of the 39 eligible states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or in a tribal area without an approved [Title IV-E KNP](#).

We do not consider voluntary cost sharing during merit review.

Risk review

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

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

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

For more details, see [2 CFR 200.206](#).

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

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

We may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Decide not to fund a project with high start-up costs or unreasonably high operating costs.
- Choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems.

- Designate your application as “approved but unfunded” if it was successful but there was not sufficient funding to make an award. You may receive funding if additional funds become available within the fiscal year.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.

We will not fund:

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

Award notices

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

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

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

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



Step 5:

Submit Your Application

In this step

Application submission and deadlines

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Application submission and deadlines

Application

Deadline

Due on Friday, August 7, 2026.

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

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

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

Grants.gov submission

You must submit your application through Grants.gov unless we give you an exemption for a paper submission. See information on [getting registered](#).

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

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

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

Issues with federal systems

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

Exemptions for paper submissions

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

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

To submit your application, mail it to:

Children's Bureau Operations Center

c/o LCG, Inc.

6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410,

Rockville, MD, 20852

Follow these requirements when you submit your paper application:

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

Intergovernmental review

[Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#) does not apply to this NOFO. You do not need to take any action.



Step 6:

Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration [55](#)

Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

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

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

Reporting

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

- Performance report form: **ACF-OGM-PPR**
 - Performance report frequency: Semiannually
- Financial report form: **SF-425 FFR**
 - Financial report frequency: Semiannually



Contacts and Support

In this step

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Agency contacts

Program

Lilana Hernandez Chakrabarti

cb@grantreview.org

888-203-6161

Grants management

Sarah Viola

cb@grantreview.org

888-203-6161

Help with systems

Grants.gov

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

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

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can:

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

Reference websites

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

Paperwork Reduction Act disclaimer

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

The project description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires April 30, 2029. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Modifications

Modification Description	Updated Date

Endnotes

1. [ACF Mission Values](#) ↑
2. United Way. [Get Connected. Get Help. The Facts about 211.](#) ↑
3. International City Management Association. [Call 311: Connecting Citizens to Local Government Final Report.](#) ↑