


**Administration for Community Living**

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research

# Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) On Employment Among People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision

HHS-2025-ACL-NIDILRR-RTEM-0124

03/31/2025

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**ACL Center:**
National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research

**Funding Opportunity Title:**
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) On Employment Among People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision

**Funding Opportunity Number:**
HHS-2025-ACL-NIDILRR-RTEM-0124

**Primary CFDA Number:**
93.433

**Due Date for Letter of Intent:**
02/06/2025

**Due Date for Applications:**
03/31/2025

**Date for Informational Conference Call:**
01/27/2025

Applications that fail to meet the application due date will not be reviewed and will receive no further consideration. You are strongly encouraged to submit your application a minimum of 3-5 days prior to the application closing date. Do not wait until the last day in the event you encounter technical difficulties, either on your end or, with https://www.grants.gov. Grants.gov can take up to 48 hours to notify you of a successful submission.

# Executive Summary

## Additional Overview Content/Executive Summary

The Administrator of the Administration for Community Living invites applications for a new award for fiscal year (FY) 2025 for a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Employment Among People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision. NIDILRR's RRTC program is authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The purpose of the RRTCs is to achieve the goals of, and improve the effectiveness of, services authorized under the

Rehabilitation Act through well-designed research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities in important topical areas as specified by NIDILRR. These activities are designed to benefit people with disabilities, family members, rehabilitation service providers, policymakers and other research stakeholders.

# I. Funding Opportunity Description

**Background:**

There are more than 8 million working-age people with blindness or low vision in the United States. Between 2012 and 2022, the employment rate among people who are blind or have low vision increased from 37% to 51% (Erickson, Lee, C. & Von Schrader, 2022). Yet even with these employment gains, people who are blind or have low vision are significantly less likely than those without disabilities to be employed (Erickson, Lee, C. & Von Schrader, 2022). People who are blind or have low vision are diverse in terms of their onset age, cause of blindness, and many sociodemographic characteristics. This variation is related to employment experiences and outcomes and has implications for habilitation and rehabilitation efforts aimed at achieving competitive, integrated employment.

Three important, understudied subpopulations of people who are blind or have low vision include people with vision loss due to traumatic brain injury (TBI), people with deaf blindness, and people with vision loss due to Long COVID. More research is needed to increase knowledge that can be used to improve employment services and outcomes among these important subpopulations.

Visual impairments occur for 20 to 40% of TBI patients in neurological rehabilitation centers, and include difficulties with binocular vision, mobility, reading, and visual memory, all of which may impact re-entry into the workforce (Kerkoff, 2000; Sen, 2017). Visual impairments among people with TBI decrease the likelihood of achieving employment outcomes through vocational rehabilitation. Optic technologies or environmental accommodations may offer promising rehabilitative strategies (Fox, Koons, & Dang, 2019; Winkler, et al, 2022; Simpson & Hunt, 2018).

Another understudied subpopulation is people with deaf blindness. While rare, deaf blindness may result from hereditary syndromes, prenatal complications, postnatal complications, or other causes (National Center on Deafblindness, 2024). People with deaf blindness often have one or more additional disabilities and complex healthcare needs. The most recent data for young adults with deaf blindness showed that while most received services after high school, over half reported needing additional services, particularly occupational/life skills training, and vocational rehabilitation (McDonnell & Cmar, 2017). For example, most young adults with deaf blindness and co-occurring cognitive disabilities received no vocational rehabilitative services despite reported needs (McDonnell & Cmar, in press).

A third understudied subpopulation is people with sensory loss due to Long COVID. Olfactory, hearing and vision losses may occur though are most often transient (Landis, et al 2022; Sharma et al, 2024; Koumpa, et al, 2020). Permanent vision loss is rare. People with diabetes, high blood

pressure and other blood disorders are at a higher risk of developing visual impairments after COVID infection (Mukamal & Nezgoda, 2023). Retinal artery occlusion, retinal hemorrhage, optic neuritis or uveitis may result in permanent vision loss (Sen, et al, 2021a). Blurry vision, light sensitivity, or vision loss may result depending on the timing and availability of effective treatments (Sen, et al, 2021; Dogahe, et al, 2023).

Beyond these variations in causes and manifestations of vision impairment, web inaccessibility remains a global employment and community participation barrier for many people with blindness or low vision (Thompson et al, 2024). While web accessibility has been improving over time, accessibility errors persist across the world-wide web. More studies of the positive employment impacts of accessible website design are needed to further advance and promote ongoing improvements in web accessibility – particularly for websites and web tools that people use to find and apply for jobs.

Technology aside, attitudinal barriers among employers and human resources staff remain an ongoing barrier to employment. NIDILRR-funded research has determined that an hour-long meeting between a blind vocational rehabilitation (VR) professional and hiring managers can significantly decrease negative attitudes that employers have about the competence of potential employees who are blind or have low vision (McDonnell and Antonelli, 2022).

More research is needed at the intervention efficacy and scale up evaluation stages to build knowledge about effective employment services and supports for people who are blind or have low vision. This research must build upon emerging knowledge of services and interventions that are showing promise in early-stage research studies. This research must also take into account emerging knowledge about the variation in employment experiences and outcomes among the wide diversity of people who are blind or have low vision.

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**Priority:**

The Administrator of the Administration for Community Living establishes a priority for a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Employment Among People Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision. The purpose of this RRTC is to contribute to improved employment outcomes of people who are blind or have low vision through high-quality research, training, and related activities.

To contribute to improved employment outcomes of people who are blind or have low vision, you must address in your proposal the following requirements of this RRTC:

(a) Conduct well-designed research activities in one or more of the following priority areas. You may focus your research either on people with blindness or low vision as a group, or people with blindness or low vision in specific disability or demographic subpopulations:

(i) Technology to improve employment outcomes.

(ii) Individual factors associated with improved employment opportunities or outcomes.

(iii) Employer or work environment factors associated with improved employment opportunities or outcomes.

(iv) Interventions that are designed to contribute to improved employment outcomes. Interventions can include any strategy, practice, program, policy, service, or tool that is designed to contribute to improvements in employment outcomes.

(v) Effects of government practices, policies, and programs on employment outcomes.

(b) Describe and justify why you are focusing on your proposed population or subpopulations of people with blindness or low vision.

(c) Conduct research activities at one or more stages of research, according to NIDILRR's definition of stages of research. You must:

(i) Justify the need and rationale for research at the proposed stage or stages.

(ii) Fully describe appropriate methodologies for the proposed research. If you conduct research at more than one stage, including research that progresses from one stage to

another, you must clearly describe and justify those stages and methodologies in your application.

(iii) Conduct at least one research project at the "intervention efficacy" or "scale-up evaluation" stage.

(d) Demonstrate that people with blindness or low vision from diverse racial and ethnic communities will be included in proposed research samples in sufficient numbers to generate knowledge and products that are relevant to the racial and ethnic diversity of the population being studied.

(e) Serve as a national resource center on employment among people with blindness or low vision. This includes conducting knowledge translation activities to promote the use or implementation of the RRTC's research findings. You must:

(i) Include people who are blind or have low vision in planning and conducting your research, training, dissemination, and technical assistance activities.

(ii) Collaborate with people who are blind or have low vision, employers, disability service providers, employment service providers, and other relevant stakeholder groups to develop, evaluate, or implement strategies to increase use of the RRTC's research findings.

(iii) Conduct training and dissemination activities to facilitate the use of research findings by people who are blind or have low vision, employers, disability service providers, employment service providers, and other relevant stakeholder groups.

(iv) Provide technical assistance to people who are blind or have low vision, employers, disability service providers, employment service providers, and other relevant stakeholder groups.

(v) Share information with ACL, NIDILRR, and other agencies across the Federal government. These agencies may include but are not limited to the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).

(vi) Coordinate on research projects of mutual interest with relevant NIDILRR-funded projects as identified by the NIDILRR Project Officer. These may include but are not limited to knowledge translation grantees and other grantees conducting disability employment research.

(vii) Conduct a state-of-the-science conference on employment among people who are blind or have low vision. The RRTC must conduct this conference in the fourth year of the grant, and publish a comprehensive report on the outcomes of the conference at the beginning of the fifth year of the grant.

**Statutory Authority**
29 U.S.C. § 764(b)

# II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:
G (Grant)

Estimated Total Funding:
$925,000

Expected Number of Awards:
1

Award Ceiling:
$925,000
Per Budget Period

Award Floor:
$920,000
Per Budget Period

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

**Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'**
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers are limited to an indirect cost rate of 15%. The maximum amount of the award includes both direct and indirect costs.

The Administration has requested funding for the NIDILRR program for FY 2025. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final Congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2026 from the list of approved but unfunded applicants from this competition.

# III. Eligibility Information

## 1. Eligible Applicants

States; public or private agencies, including for-profit agencies; public or private organizations, including for-profit organizations; IHEs; and Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

Foreign entities are not eligible to compete for, or receive, awards made under this announcement.

## 2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:
No

**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 ACL, 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 ACL 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.**

## 3. Responsiveness and Screening Criteria

**Application Responsiveness Criteria**
To be considered for review under this grant opportunity, applicants must propose to run a RRTC that is responsive to each of the requirements in the priority section of this notice of funding opportunity.

**Application Screening Criteria**
We will screen all applications, and will reject any applications that:

- Are submitted after the established deadline;
- Propose a budget that exceeds $925,000 in any single budget year;
- Propose a project period that exceeds 60 months.

# IV. Application and Submission Information

## 1. Address to Request Application Package

Application materials can be obtained from https://www.grants.gov or https://www.acl.gov/grants/applying-grants.

Please note, ACL requires applications for all announcements to be submitted electronically through http://www.grants.gov in Workspace. Grants.gov Workspace is the standard way for organizations and individuals to apply for federal grants in Grants.gov. An overview and training on Grants.gov Workspace can be found here at: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

The Grants.gov registration process can take several days. If your organization is not currently registered, please begin this process immediately. For assistance with https://www.grants.gov, please contact them at support@grants.gov or 800-518-4726 between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

- At the https://www.grants.gov website, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, including the hours of operation. ACL strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application due date to begin the application process because of the time involved to complete the registration process.
- All applicants must have a UEI and be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM, www.sam.gov) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete, and should a grant be made, throughout the life of the award. Effective June 11, 2018, when registering or renewing your registration, you must submit a notarized letter appointing the authorized Entity Administrator. Please be sure to

read the FAQs located at www.sam.gov to learn more. Applicants should allot sufficient time prior to the application deadline to finalize a new, or renew an existing registration. 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 or receive an award. Maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register or renew at least two weeks before the deadline. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: SAM.GOV Quick Start Guide for Financial Assistance Registrations.

Note: Once your SAM registration is active, allow 24 to 48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov before you can submit an application through 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 or receive an award.

- Note: Failure to submit the correct EIN Suffix can lead to delays in identifying your organization and access to funding in the Payment Management System.
- Effective October 1, 2010, HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for and ultimately receive federal grant funds from any HHS Operating/Staff Division (OPDIV/STAFFDIV) or receive subawards directly from the recipients of those grant funds to:

1. Register in SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
2. 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; and
3. Provide its UEI number in each application or plan to submit to the OPDIV.

Additionally, all first-tier subaward recipients must have a UEI number at the time the subaward is made.

- The Federal Government will transition from the DUNS Number to the New Unique Entity Identifier. As of April of 2022, the federal government stopped using the DUNS number to uniquely identify entities. At that point, entities doing business with the federal government will use a Unique Entity Identifier (SAM) created in SAM.gov. It is entered on the SF-424. It is a unique, nine-digit identification number, which provides unique identifiers of single business entities.
- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information included on the SF424 and all necessary assurances and certifications. In accordance with the Federal Government's efforts to reduce reporting burden for recipients of federal financial assistance, the general certification and representation requirements contained in the Standard Form 424B (SF-424B) – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs, and the Standard Form 424D (SF-424D) – Assurances – Construction Programs, have been standardized federal-wide. Effective January 1, 2020, the updated common certification and representation requirements will be stored and maintained within SAM. Organizations or individuals applying for federal financial assistance as of January 1, 2020, must validate the federally required common certifications and representations annually through SAM located at SAM.gov.
- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment from https://www.grants.gov that contains https://www.grants.gov

tracking number. The Administration for Community Living will retrieve your application form from https://www.grants.gov.

If you have any questions about the programmatic or substantive requirements of this funding opportunity, please contact the competition manager:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Community Living

Courtney Ward-Sutton
courtney.ward-sutton@acl.hhs.gov

## 2. Content and Form of Application Submission

### Letter of Intent

Number of Days from Publication 35

02/06/2025
Applicants are requested, but not required, to submit a letter of intent to apply for this funding opportunity to assist ACL in planning for the application independent review process. The purpose of the letter of intent is to allow our staff to estimate the number of independent reviewers needed and to avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review. Letters of intent should be sent to:

Megan.Alvarado@acl.hhs.gov

In your email include:

- The funding opportunity number and title.
- The name and contact information for the project principal investigator.
- A brief description of the proposed activities.
- A list of key individuals and their organizations that will have a significant role in your project.
- A list of individuals whose selection as a peer reviewer might constitute a conflict of interest due to their involvement in the application development.

For further information regarding the LOI submission process, contact Megan Alvarado.

### Project Narrative

The Project Narrative portion of your application is where you describe your proposed project and address each of the review criteria. Applicants should directly address each of the review criteria (see Section V), in the project narrative. Each applicant must limit the Project Narrative to the equivalent of no more than 80 pages using the following standards:

- A page is 8.5" x 11" on one side only with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides;
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all narrative text in the project narrative. You are not required to double space titles, headings, footnotes, references, captions, or text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs. Applicants who unnecessarily place narrative text in tables to avoid the double-spacing requirement run the risk of exceeding the page limit;

- Use a font that is not less than size 12 and is Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial;
- Include all critical information, including the Work Plan, in the Project Narrative, minimizing the need for additional appendices;
- Ensure that you attach PDF files only for any attachments to your application. While you are able to attach files to your application in formats other than PDF, non-PDF files are converted into PDF format before reviewers see and evaluate your application. The conversion to PDF format may not maintain your original formatting. Therefore, to ensure the integrity of your application documents we strongly recommend that you attach only PDF files as you submit your application.

NOTE: The page limit for the Project Narrative does not apply to the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the table of contents, budget narrative/justification, the forms, the summary/abstract, the vitae/ biosketches, references, the letters of commitment from key participating organizations and agencies, the summary of involved individuals and organizations, data management plan, or the data safety and monitoring plan (if applicable).

For project narratives that exceed 80 double-spaced pages, NIDILRR will instruct reviewers to disregard all of the content on the pages beyond the 80th page.

## Table of Contents

The table of contents should show where and how the important sections of your proposal are organized. While the application will be submitted electronically, the reviewers may use printed copies during the review process. The table of contents will assist reviewers in more efficiently and effectively evaluating your application.

## Summary/ Abstract

The one-page abstract should be a comprehensive description of the whole project (all years) and not a description of the competency of the institution or Project Director/PI. It is not an executive summary. The abstract can be single-spaced.

## Work Plan

Applicants must provide a Work Plan (Plan of Operation) in their Project Narrative. The Work Plan should cover all years of the project period. The Work Plan should include a statement of the project's overall goal(s), anticipated outcome(s), and the major tasks that are proposed to achieve the goal and outcome(s). For each major task, the Work Plan should identify timeframes involved and the lead person responsible for the task. A "Project Work Plan - Sample Template" is provided in the Appendix section of this Funding Opportunity Announcement.

## Vitae/Biosketches of Key Project Personnel

Vitae or biosketches of key project personnel should include information that is specifically pertinent to the applicant's proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to use NIH's biosketch format, which provides reviewers with a concise description of training, expertise, and productivity that is relevant to the proposed project.

## References

Applicants should provide references for works cited in the Project Narrative. Applicants may provide references in any format (i.e., APA, AMA, MLA), though the formatting should be consistent.

## Data Management Plan

You must provide a data management plan for your project. We will review the data management plan for compliance before making an award.

The data management plan is your plan for making your NIDILRR-funded data available to the public at the end of your grant. The Data Management Plan must include the following:

- A description of the types of data you will collect for your project.
- A description of how you will organize, store, and preserve your project data.
- A description of the metadata to be provided for useful analysis of the data by others. Metadata include descriptions and labels for variables and values in your dataset.
- A description of the data repository that you will use to make your data available to the public at the end of your grant. We recommend that you use the ICPSR as your data repository, but you may select a different data repository.
    - If you select a different data repository, you must provide information on how the data repository will provide long-term preservation and free public access to the project data.
- If applicable, describe why your data cannot be submitted to a data repository.
- A description of the informed consent process that will enable data sharing.
- Costs associated with data management can be included in your budget.

If you require technical assistance in preparing your data management plan for this application, contact ICPSR at ICPSR-help@umich.edu or 734-647-2200.

## Budget Narrative/Justification

The applicant must submit an itemized budget breakdown for each project year and the basis for estimating the costs of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs, and any other projected expenditures.

The Budget Narrative/Justification can be provided using the “Budget Narrative/Justification – Sample Format” included in this document. Applicants are encouraged to pay particular attention to this document, which provides an example of the level of detail sought. A combined multi-year Budget Narrative/Justification as well as a detailed Budget Narrative/Justification for each year of potential grant funding is required. This information will be uploaded in the "Budget Narrative/Justification" section under the "Optional" category. If applicable, address cost share in a separate section of the budget narrative labeled "cost share."

## Letters of Commitment from Key Participating Organizations and Agencies

Include letters of commitment from key participating organizations and agencies after the Budget Narrative/Justification.

## Summary of Involved Individuals and Organizations

Submit an appendix that lists every collaborating organization, and every individual who is named to a professional role in the proposed project. These individuals should include staff, consultants, contractors, and advisory board members. We will use this information to screen for conflicts of interest with potential peer reviewers.

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

The Grants.gov registration process can take several days. If your organization is not currently registered, please begin this process immediately. For assistance with https://www.grants.gov, please contact them at support@grants.gov or 800-518-4726 between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

- At the https://www.grants.gov website, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, including the hours of operation. ACL strongly recommends that you do not wait until the application due date to begin the application process because of the time involved to complete the registration process.
- All applicants must have a UEI number and be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM, www.sam.gov) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete, and should a grant be made, throughout the life of the award. Effective June 11, 2018, when registering or renewing your registration, you must submit a notarized letter appointing the authorized Entity Administrator. Please be sure to read the FAQs located at www.sam.gov to learn more. Applicants should allot sufficient time prior to the application deadline to finalize a new, or renew an existing registration. 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 or receive an award. Maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register or renew at least two weeks before the deadline. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: SAM.GOV Quick Start Guide for Financial Assistance Registrations.

Note: Once your SAM registration is active, allow 24 to 48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov before you can submit an application through 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 or receive an award.

- Note: Failure to submit the correct EIN Suffix can lead to delays in identifying your organization and access to funding in the Payment Management System.
- Effective October 1, 2010, HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for and ultimately receive federal grant funds from any HHS Operating/Staff Division (OPDIV/STAFFDIV) or receive subawards directly from the recipients of those grant funds to:

1. Register in SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;

2. 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; and
3. Provide its UEI number in each application or plan to submit to the OPDIV.

Additionally, all first-tier subaward recipients must have a UEI number at the time the subaward is made.

- The Federal Government will transition from the DUNS Number to the New Unique Entity Identifier. As of April of 2022, the federal government stopped using the DUNS number to uniquely identify entities. At that point, entities doing business with the federal government will use a Unique Entity Identifier (SAM) created in SAM.gov. They will no longer have to go to a third-party website to obtain their identifier. This transition allows the government to streamline the entity identification and validation process, making it easier and less burdensome for entities to do business with the federal government. If your entity is registered in SAM.gov today, your Unique Entity ID (SAM) has already been assigned and is viewable in SAM.gov. This includes inactive registrations. The Unique Entity ID is currently located below the DUNS Number on your entity registration record. Remember, you must be signed in to your SAM.gov account to view entity records. To learn how to view your Unique Entity ID (SAM) go to this help article.
- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information included on the SF424 and all necessary assurances and certifications. In accordance with the Federal Government's efforts to reduce reporting burden for recipients of federal financial assistance, the general certification and representation requirements contained in the Standard Form 424B (SF-424B) – Assurances – Non-Construction Programs, and the Standard Form 424D (SF-424D) – Assurances – Construction Programs, have been standardized federal-wide. Effective January 1, 2020, the updated common certification and representation requirements will be stored and maintained within SAM. Organizations or individuals applying for federal financial assistance as of January 1, 2020, must validate the federally required common certifications and representations annually through SAM located at SAM.gov.
- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment from https://www.grants.gov that contains https://www.grants.gov tracking number. The Administration for Community Living will retrieve your application form from https://www.grants.gov.

## 4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications 03/31/2025

03/31/2025

Date for Informational Conference Call:

01/27/2025

Applications that fail to meet the application due date will not be reviewed and will receive no further consideration. You are strongly encouraged to submit your application a minimum of 3-5 days prior to the application closing date. Do not wait until the last day in the event you encounter technical difficulties, either on your end or, with http://www.grants.gov. Grants.gov can take up to 48 hours to notify you of a successful submission.

In addition, if you are submitting your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and (2) register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined at the following Grants.gov web page: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html.

After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only)

If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, please contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice and provide a written explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. ACL will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

**Note: We will not consider your application for further review if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.**

If for any reason (including submitting to the wrong funding opportunity number or making corrections/updates) an application is submitted more than once prior to the application due date, ACL will only accept your last validated electronic submission, under the correct funding opportunity number, prior to the Grants.gov application due date as the final and only acceptable application

Unsuccessful submissions will require authenticated verification from http://www.grants.gov indicating system problems existed at the time of your submission. For example, you will be required to provide an http://www.grants.gov submission error notification and/or tracking number in order to substantiate missing the cut off date.

Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov) will automatically send applicants a tracking number and date of receipt verification electronically once the application has been successfully received and validated in http://www.grants.gov.

## Informational Conference Call:

An informational conference call will be held between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. (Eastern time) on the date listed above for the informational conference call. Interested parties are invited to participate in the pre-application meeting to discuss the funding priority and to receive information and technical assistance. You must contact Megan.Alvarado@acl.hhs.gov in order to participate in this meeting. NIDILRR staff also will be available to provide information and technical assistance via individual phone consultations from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the date listed above. Requests for individual consultations during this one-hour window must be made in advance to Megan Alvarado.

## 5. Intergovernmental Review

This program is not subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.

## 6. Funding Restrictions

A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report has raised considerable concerns about grantees and contractors charging the Federal government for additional meals outside of the standard allowance for travel subsistence known as per diem expenses. Executive Orders on Promoting Efficient Spending (E.O. 13589) and Delivering Efficient, Effective and Accountable Government (E.O. 13576) have been issued and instruct Federal agencies to promote efficient spending. Therefore, if meals are to be charged in your proposal, applicants should understand such costs must meet the following criteria outlined in the Executive Orders and HHS Grants Policy Statement:

- Meals are generally unallowable except for the following:
    - For subjects and patients under study (usually a research program);
    - Where specifically approved as part of the project or program activity, e.g., in programs providing children's services (e.g., Head Start);
    - When an organization customarily provides meals to employees working beyond the normal workday, as a part of a formal compensation arrangement; and
    - As part of a per diem or subsistence allowance provided in conjunction with allowable travel.

The following updated sections 2 CFR 200.216 "Prohibition on certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment" became **effective on or after August 13, 2020**.

Recommended Actions for any recipient that has received a loan, grant, or cooperative agreement **on or after August 13, 2020**:

- Develop a compliance plan to implement 2 CFR 200.216 regulation.
- Develop and maintain internal controls to ensure that your organization does not expend federal funds (in whole or in part) on covered equipment, services or systems.
- Determine through reasonable inquiry whether your organization currently uses "covered telecommunication" equipment, services, or systems and take necessary actions to comply with the regulation as quickly as is feasibly possible.

## 7. Other Submission Requirements

You must comply with all regulations for the protection of the rights, welfare, and well-being of human subjects involved in research conducted or supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The HHS Office for Human Research Protections has information and resources related to these important requirements.

# V. Application Review Information

## 1. Criteria

Applications will be scored by members of a NIDILRR-administered peer review panel, who will assign a maximum of 100 points across the criteria listed below. Each of these review criteria come directly from NIDILRR's program regulations (45 CFR 1330.24).

**Importance of the Problem**

**Maximum Points:** 10

In determining the importance of the problem, the Director considers the following factors:
(1) The extent to which the applicant clearly describes the need and target population.
(2) The extent to which the proposed project will have beneficial impact on the target population

**Design of Research Activities**

**Maximum Points:** 45

In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Director considers the following factors:
(1) The extent to which the research activities constitute a coherent, sustained approach to research in the field, including a substantial addition to the state-of-the-art.
(2) The extent to which the methodology of each proposed research activity is meritorious, including consideration of the extent to which—
(A) The proposed design includes a comprehensive and informed review of the current literature, demonstrating knowledge of the state-of-the-art;
(B) Each research hypothesis or research question, as appropriate, is theoretically sound and based on current knowledge;
(C) Each sample is drawn from an appropriate, specified population and is of sufficient size to address the proposed hypotheses or research questions, as appropriate, and to support the proposed data analysis methods;
(D) The source or sources of the data and the data collection methods are appropriate to address the proposed hypotheses or research questions and to support the proposed data analysis methods;
(E) The data analysis methods are appropriate;
(F) Input of individuals with disabilities and other key stakeholders is used to shape the proposed research activities;
(G) Implementation of the proposed research design is feasible, given the current state of the science and the time and resources available; and
(H) The applicant identifies and justifies the stage of research being proposed and the research methods associated with the stage.

**Design of Dissemination Activities**

**Maximum Points:** 5

In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Director considers the following factors:
(1) The extent to which the methods for dissemination are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration.
(2) The extent to which the information to be disseminated will be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Design of Training Activities**

**Maximum Points:** 10
In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Director considers the following factors:
(1) The extent to which the proposed training materials are likely to be effective, including consideration of their quality, clarity, and variety.
(2) The extent to which the proposed training methods are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration.
(3) The extent to which the proposed training materials and methods are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Design of Technical Assistance Activities**
**Maximum Points:** 5
In determining the extent to which the design is likely to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the project, the Director considers the following factors:
(1) The extent to which the methods for providing technical assistance are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration.
(2) The extent to which the technical assistance is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

**Project Staff**
**Maximum Points:** 15
In determining the quality of the applicant's project staff, the Director considers the following factors:
(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from people with disabilities, who may include but are not limited to people with disabilities who have the greatest support needs.
(2) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from people who are members of other groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in research professions based on race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, or age.
(3) The extent to which the key personnel and other key staff have appropriate training and experience in disciplines required to conduct all proposed activities.

**Plan of Operation**
**Maximum Points:** 5
In determining the application's plan of operation, the Director considers the following factors:
(1) The adequacy of the plan of operation to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, and timelines for accomplishing project tasks.
(2) The adequacy of the plan of operation to provide for using resources, equipment, and personnel to achieve each objective.

**Adequacy and Accessibility of Resources**
**Maximum Points:** 5
In determining the adequacy and accessibility of resources, the Director considers the following factors:
(1) The extent to which the applicant is committed to provide adequate facilities, equipment, other resources, including administrative support, and laboratories, if appropriate.
(2) The extent to which the facilities, equipment, and other resources are appropriately accessible

to individuals with disabilities who may use the facilities, equipment, and other resources of the project.

### 2. Review and Selection Process

As required by 2 CFR Part 200 of the Uniform Guidance, effective January 1, 2016, ACL is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), https://www.fapiis.gov before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $150,000) 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. ACL 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 2 CFR Section 200.206 Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants (https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1205&rgn=div8).

An independent review panel of at least three individuals will evaluate applications that pass the screening and meet the responsiveness criteria if applicable. These reviewers are experts in their field, and are drawn from academic institutions, non-profit organizations, state and local governments, and federal government agencies. Based on the Application Review Criteria as outlined under section V.1, the reviewers will comment on and score the applications, focusing their comments and scoring decisions on the identified criteria.

Final award decisions will be made by the Administrator, ACL. In making these decisions, the Administrator will take into consideration: recommendations of the review panel; reviews for programmatic and grants management compliance; the reasonableness of the estimated cost to the government considering the available funding and anticipated results; and the likelihood that the proposed project will result in the benefits expected.

### 3. Anticipated Announcement Award Date

Award notices to successful applicants will be sent out prior to the project start date.

The anticipated project period start date for this announcement is: 09/01/2025

## VI. Award Administration Information

### 1. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive an electronic Notice of Award. The Notice of Award is the authorizing document from the U.S. Administration for Community Living authorizing official, Office of Grants Management. Acceptance of this award is signified by the drawdown of funds from the Payment Management System. Unsuccessful applicants are generally notified within 30 days of the final funding decision and will receive a disapproval letter via e-mail. Unless indicated otherwise in this announcement, unsuccessful applications will not be retained by the agency and will be destroyed.

## 2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The award is subject to HHS Administrative Requirements, which can be found in 45 CFR Part 75 and the Standard Terms and Conditions, included in the Notice of Award as well as implemented through the HHS Grants Policy Statement.

If you receive an award, you must follow all applicable nondiscrimination laws. You agree to this when you register in SAM.gov. You must also submit an Assurance of Compliance (HHS-690). To learn more, see the HHS Office for Civil Rights website.

A standard term and condition of award will be included in the final notice of award; all applicants will be subject to a term and condition that applies the terms of 48 CFR section 3.908 to the award and requires the grantees inform their employee in writing of employee whistleblower rights and protections under 41 U.S.C. 4712 in the predominant native language of the workforce.

Applicants may follow their own procurement policies and procedures when contracting with Project Funds, but You must comply with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.317-200.326. Additionally, when using Project Funds to procure supplies and/or equipment, applicants are encouraged to purchase American-manufactured goods to the maximum extent practicable. American-manufactured goods are those products for which the cost of their component parts that were mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States exceeds 50 percent of the total cost of all their components. For further guidance regarding what constitutes an American manufactured good (also known as a domestic end product), see 48 C.F.R. Part 25.

As of October 1, 2024, 2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards updated to a new version. The eCFR is currently updating its site with the newly adopted content. Until that time, the links below to 2 CFR 200 will not include the changes. If you need to see specific changes while they complete that work, see 78 FR 78608.

Also as of October 1, 2024, HHS adopted several provisions in the new 2 CFR 200 that affect your application. These new provisions supersede those previously used in 45 CFR 75. The changes include:

**Indirect costs**

**De minimis rate**

If you use the de minimis rate to calculate indirect costs:

- When you calculate this rate, you will now use 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) rather than 10%. See 2 CFR 200.414(f).
- Additionally, when you calculate MTDC, you can now use up to $50,000 of subawards and subcontracts rather than $25,000. See 2 CFR 200.1.

Training awards

If your application is for a training award, your indirect cost rate remains capped at 8% of MTDC. However, when calculating MTDC , you can now use up to $50,000 of subawards and subcontracts rather than $25,000. See 2 CFR 200.1.

**Budget**

When planning your budget, 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.

**All changes**

HHS adopted all the following superseding provisions on October 1, 2024:

- 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Modified Total Direct Cost.
- 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Equipment.
- 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions, Supplies.
- 2 CFR 200.313(e), Equipment, Disposition.
- 2 CFR 200.314(a), Supplies.
- 2 CFR 200.320, Methods of procurement to be followed.
- 2 CFR 200.333, Fixed amount subawards.
- 2 CFR 200.344, Closeout.
- 2 CFR 200.414(f), Indirect (F&A) costs.
- 2 CFR 200.501, Audit requirements.

## 3. Reporting

**Reporting**

If you are successful, you will have to submit financial and performance reports. To learn more about reporting, see Managing a Grant, funding requirements on our website.

**Financial and performance reports**

The terms and conditions in the Notice of Award will have information on performance and financial reports including:

- How often you will report
- Any required form or formatting
- How to submit them

**Complying with the Administration for Community Living (ACL) Public Access Plan**

If you receive a grant under this opportunity, you must comply with ACL's Public Access Plan requirements for making your data and your publications accessible to the public.

## 4. FFATA and FSRS Reporting

The Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires data entry at the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (http://www.FSRS.gov) for all sub-awards and sub-contracts issued for $30,000 or more as well as addressing executive compensation for both grantee and sub-award organizations.

For further guidance please follow this link to access ACL's Terms and Conditions: https://www.acl.gov/grants/managing-grant#

## VII. Agency Contacts

**Project Officer**

**First Name:**
Courtney

**Last Name:**
Ward-Sutton

**Phone:**
(202) 240-3164

**Office:**
National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research

**Grants Management Specialist**

**First Name:**
Carolyn

**Last Name:**
Anderson

**Phone:**
(202) 240-3134

**Office:**
Office of Grants Management

## VIII. Other Information

Application Elements

- SF 424, required – Application for Federal Assistance (See "Instructions for Completing Required Forms" for assistance).
- SF 424A, required – Budget Information. (See Appendix for instructions).
- Separate Budget Narrative/Justification, required (See "Budget Narrative/Justification - Sample Format" for examples and "Budget Narrative/Justification – Sample Template.") NOTE: Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grant projects are REQUIRED to provide a Narrative/Justification for each year of potential grant funding, as well as a combined multi- year detailed Budget Narrative/Justification.
- SF 424B – Assurance, required. Note: Be sure to complete this form according to instructions and have it signed and dated by the authorized representative (see item 18d on the SF 424).
- Lobbying Certification, required.
- Proof of non-profit status, if applicable.
- Copy of the applicant's most recent indirect cost agreement or cost allocation plan, if requesting indirect costs. If any sub-contractors or sub-grantees are requesting indirect costs, copies of their indirect cost agreements must also be included with the application.

- Project Narrative with Work Plan, required (See "Project Work Plan – Sample Template" for formatting suggestions).
- Vitae/Biosketches for Key Project Personnel.
- Letters of Commitment from Key Participating Organizations and Agencies, if applicable.
- Summary of Involved Individuals and Organizations.
- Abstract.
- Supplemental Information Form for the SF-424.
- Data Management Plan
- Data Safety and Monitoring Plan, if applicable.

Note: NIDILRR does not require applicants to submit an organizational capability statement outside of their project narrative. NIDILRR assesses organizational capability via the peer review process, including application of criteria related to project staff, and the adequacy and accessibility of applicant resources.

## The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13)

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. The project description and Budget Narrative/Justification is approved under OMB control number 0985-0018. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed and reviewing the collection information.

# Appendix

**Accessibility Provisions for All Grant Application Packages and Funding Opportunity Announcements**

Should you successfully compete for an award, recipients of federal financial assistance (FFA) from HHS will be required to complete an HHS Assurance of Compliance form (HHS 690) in which you agree, as a condition of receiving the grant, to administer your programs in compliance with federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex and disability, and agreeing to comply with federal conscience laws, where applicable. This includes ensuring that entities take meaningful steps to provide meaningful access to persons with limited English proficiency; and ensuring effective communication with persons with disabilities. The HHS Office for Civil Rights provides guidance on complying with civil rights laws enforced by HHS. See https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/nondiscrimination/index.html.

- Recipients of FFA must ensure that their programs are accessible to persons with limited English proficiency. HHS provides guidance to recipients of FFA on meeting their legal obligation to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to their programs by persons with limited English proficiency. Please see https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/special-topics/limited-english-proficiency/fact-sheet-guidance/index.html and https://www.lep.gov. For further guidance on providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services, recipients should review the National

Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care at https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/.

- Recipients of FFA also have specific legal obligations for serving qualified individuals with disabilities. Please see http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/understanding/disability/index.html.
- HHS funded health and education programs must be administered in an environment free of sexual harassment. Please see https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/sex-discrimination/index.html; https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/shguide.html; and https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment.
- Recipients of FFA must also administer their programs in compliance with applicable federal religious nondiscrimination laws and applicable federal conscience protection and associated anti-discrimination laws. Collectively, these laws prohibit exclusion, adverse treatment, coercion, or other discrimination against persons or entities on the basis of their consciences, religious beliefs, or moral convictions. Please see https://www.hhs.gov/conscience/your-protections-against-discrimination-based-on-conscience-and-religion/index.html
- Please contact the HHS Office for Civil Rights for more information about obligations and prohibitions under federal civil rights laws at https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/about-us/contact-us/index.html or call 1-800-368-1019 or TDD 1-800-537-7697.

If you receive an award, HHS may terminate it if any of the conditions in 2 CFR 200.340(a)(1)-(4) are met. No other termination conditions apply.

## Instructions for Completing Required Forms

This section provides step-by-step instructions for completing the four (4) standard Federal forms required as part of your grant application, including special instructions for completing Standard Budget Forms 424 and 424A. Standard Forms 424 and 424A are used for a wide variety of Federal grant programs, and Federal agencies have the discretion to require some or all of the information on these forms. ACL does not require all the information on these Standard Forms. Accordingly, please use the instructions below in lieu of the standard instructions attached to SF 424 and 424A to complete these forms.

**a. Standard Form 424**

1. **Type of Submission:** (REQUIRED): Select one type of submission in accordance with agency instructions.
   - Preapplication
   - Application
   - Changed/Corrected Application – If ACL requests, check if this submission is to change or correct a previously submitted application.

2. **Type of Application**: (REQUIRED) Select one type of application in accordance with agency instructions.
   - New
   - Continuation
   - Revision

3. **Date Received:** Leave this field blank.

4. **Applicant Identifier**: Leave this field blank

5a **Federal Entity Identifier**: Leave this field blank
5b. **Federal Award Identifier**: For new applications leave blank. For a continuation or revision to an existing award, enter the previously assigned Federal award (grant) number.
6. **Date Received by State:** Leave this field blank.
7. **State Application Identifier:** Leave this field blank.
8. **Applicant Information**: Enter the following in accordance with agency instructions:
**a. Legal Name**: (REQUIRED): Enter the name that the organization has registered with the System for Award Management (SAM), formally the Central Contractor Registry. Information on registering with SAM may be obtained by visiting the Grants.gov website (https://www.grants.gov) or by going directly to the SAM website (www.sam.gov).
**b. Employer/Taxpayer Number (EIN/TIN):** (REQUIRED): Enter the Employer or Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN or TIN) as assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. In addition, we encourage the organization to include the correct suffix used to identify your organization in order to properly align access to the Payment Management System.
**c. Organizational UEI** (REQUIRED): If your entity is registered in SAM.gov today, your Unique Entity ID (SAM) has already been assigned and is viewable in SAM.gov. This includes inactive registrations. The Unique Entity ID is currently located below the DUNS Number on your entity registration record. Remember, you must be signed in to your SAM.gov account to view entity records.
**d. Address**: (REQUIRED) Enter the complete address including the county.
**e. Organizational Unit:** Enter the name of the primary organizational unit (and department or division, if applicable**)** that will undertake the project.
**f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application**: Enter the name (First and last name required), organizational affiliation (if affiliated with an organization other than the applicant organization), telephone number (Required), fax number, and email address (Required) of the person to contact on matters related to this application.
9. **Type of Applicant:** (REQUIRED) Select the applicant organization "type" from the following drop down list.
A. State Government B. County Government C. City or Township Government D. Special District Government E. Regional Organization F. U.S. Territory or Possession G. Independent School District H. Public/State Controlled Institution of Higher Education I. Indian/Native American Tribal Government (Federally Recognized) J. Indian/Native American Tribal Government (Other than Federally Recognized) K. Indian/Native American Tribally Designated Organization L. Public/Indian Housing Authority M. Nonprofit with 501C3 IRS Status (Other than Institution of Higher Education) N. Nonprofit without 501C3 IRS Status (Other than Institution of Higher Education) O. Private Institution of Higher Education P. Individual Q. For-Profit Organization (Other than Small Business) R. Small Business S. Hispanic-serving Institution T. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) U. Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs) V. Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions W. Non-domestic (non-US) Entity X. Other (specify)
10. **Name of Federal Agency**: (REQUIRED) Enter U.S. Administration for Community Living
11. **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number/Title:** The CFDA number can be found on page one of the Program Announcement.

12. **Funding Opportunity Number/Title:** (REQUIRED) The Funding Opportunity Number and title of the opportunity can be found on page one of the Program Announcement.
13. **Competition Identification Number/Title:** Leave this field blank.
14. **Areas Affected by Project:** List the largest political entity affected (cities, counties, state etc.)
15. **Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:** (REQUIRED) Enter a brief descriptive title of the project (This is not a narrative description).
16. **Congressional Districts Of**: (REQUIRED) 16a. Enter the applicant's Congressional District, and 16b. Enter all district(s) affected by the program or project. Enter in the format: 2 characters State Abbreviation – 3 characters District Number, e.g., CA-005 for California 5th district, CA-012 for California 12th district, NC-103 for North Carolina's 103rd district. If all congressional districts in a state are affected, enter "all" for the district number, e.g., MD-all for all congressional districts in Maryland. If nationwide, i.e. all districts within all states are affected, enter US-all. See the below website to find your congressional district:
https://www.house.gov/
17. **Proposed Project Start and End Dates**: (REQUIRED) Enter the proposed start date and final end date of the project**. If you are applying for a multi-year grant, such as a 3 year grant project, the final project end date will be 3 years after the proposed start date.** In general, all start dates on the SF424 should be the 1st of the month and the end date of the last day of the month of the final year, for example 7/01/2014 to 6/30/2017. The Grants Officer can alter the start and end date at their discretion.
18. **Estimated Funding:** (REQUIRED) If requesting multi-year funding, enter the full amount requested from the Federal Government in line item 18.a., as a multi-year total. For example and illustrative purposes only, if year one is $100,000, year two is $100,000, and year three is $100,000, then the full amount of federal funds requested would be reflected as $300,000. The amount of matching funds is denoted by lines b. through f. with a combined federal and non-federal total entered on line g. Lines b. through f. represents contributions to the project by the applicant and by your partners during the total project period, broken down by each type of contributor. The value of in-kind contributions should be included on appropriate lines, as applicable.
**NOTE:** Applicants should review cost sharing or matching principles contained in Subpart C of 45 CFR Part 75 before completing Item 18 and the Budget Information Sections A, B and C noted below.
All budget information entered under item 18 should cover the total project period. For sub-item 18a, enter the federal funds being requested. Sub-items 18b-18e is considered matching funds. For ACL programs that have a cost-matching requirement (list here), the dollar amounts entered in sub-items 18b-18f must total at least 1/3 of the amount of federal funds being requested (the amount in 18a). For a full explanation of ACL's match requirements, see the information in the box below. For sub-item 18f (program income), enter only the amount, if any, that is going to be used as part of the required match. Program Income submitted as match will become a part of the award match and recipients will be held accountable to meet their share of project expenses even if program income is not generated during the award period.
There are two types of match: 1) non-federal cash and 2) non-federal in-kind. In general, costs borne by the applicant and cash contributions of any and all third parties involved in the project, including sub-grantees, contractors and consultants, are considered **matching funds**. Examples of **non-federal cash match** includes budgetary funds provided from the applicant agency's

budget for costs associated with the project. Generally, most contributions from sub-contractors or sub-grantees (third parties) will be non-federal in-kind matching funds. Volunteered time and use of third party facilities to hold meetings or conduct project activities may be considered in-kind (third party) donations.

NOTE: **Indirect charges** may only be requested if: (1) the applicant has a current indirect cost rate agreement approved by the Department of Health and Human Services or another federal agency; or (2) the applicant is a state or local government agency. State governments should enter the amount of indirect costs determined in accordance with HHS requirements. **If indirect costs are to be included in the application, a copy of the approved indirect cost agreement or cost allocation plan must be included with the application. Further, if any sub-contractors or sub-grantees are requesting indirect costs, a copy of the latest approved indirect cost agreements must also be included with the application, or reference to an approved cost allocation plan.**

19. **Is Application Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?** Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Information, 4. Intergovernmental Review to determine if the ACL program is subject to E.O. 12372 and respond accordingly.

20. **Is the Applicant Delinquent on any Federal Debt?** (Required) This question applies to the applicant organization, not the person who signs as the authorized representative. If yes, include an explanation on the continuation sheet.

21. **Authorized Representative**: (Required) To be signed and dated by the authorized representative of the applicant organization. Enter the name (First and last name required) title (Required), telephone number (Required), fax number, and email address (Required) of the person authorized to sign for the applicant. A copy of the governing body's authorization for you to sign this application as the official representative must be on file in the applicant's office. (Certain federal agencies may require that this authorization be submitted as part of the application.)

**Standard Form 424A**

NOTE: Standard Form 424A is designed to accommodate applications for multiple grant programs; thus, for purposes of this ACL program, many of the budget item columns and rows are not applicable. You should only consider and respond to the budget items for which guidance is provided below. Unless otherwise indicated, the SF 424A should reflect a multi-year budget.

**Section A - Budget Summary**

**Line 5**: Leave columns (c) and (d) blank. Enter TOTAL Federal costs in column (e) and total non federal costs (including third party in-kind contributions and any program income to be used as part of the grantee match) in column (f). Enter the sum of columns (e) and (f) in column (g).

**Section B - Budget Categories**

Column 1: Enter the breakdown of how you plan to use the Federal funds being requested by object class category.

Column 2: Enter the breakdown of how you plan to use the non-Federal share by object class category.

Column 5: Enter the total funds required for the project (sum of Columns 1 and 2) by object class category.

**Section C - Non-Federal Resources**

Column A: Enter the federal grant program.

Column B: Enter in any non-federal resources that the applicant will contribute to the project.
Column C: Enter in any non-federal resources that the state will contribute to the project.
Column D: Enter in any non-federal resources that other sources will contribute to the project.
Column E: Enter the total non-federal resources for each program listed in column A.

**Section D - Forecasted Cash Needs**

**Line 13:** Enter Federal forecasted cash needs broken down by quarter for the first year only.
**Line 14**: Enter Non-Federal forecasted cash needs broken down by quarter for the first year.
**Line 15:** Enter total forecasted cash needs broken down by quarter for the first year.
Note: This area is not meant to be one whereby an applicant merely divides the requested funding by four and inserts that amount in each quarter but an area where thought is given as to how your estimated expenses will be incurred during each quarter. For example, if you have initial startup costs in the first quarter of your award reflect that in quarter one or you do not expect to have contracts awarded and funded until quarter three, reflect those costs in that quarter.

**Section E – Budget Estimates of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of the Project (i.e. subsequent years 2, 3, 4 or 5 as applicable).**

Column A: Enter the federal grant program
Column B (first): Enter the requested year two funding.
Column C (second): Enter the requested year three funding.
Column D (third): Enter the requested year four funding, if applicable.
Column E (forth): Enter the requested year five funding, if applicable.

**Section F – Other Budget Information**

**Line 21:** Enter the total Indirect Charges
**Line 22**: Enter the total Direct charges (calculation of indirect rate and direct charges).
**Line 23:** Enter any pertinent remarks related to the budget.

**Separate Budget Narrative/Justification Requirement**

**Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grant programs are REQUIRED to provide a combined multi-year Budget Narrative/Justification, as well as a detailed Budget Narrative/Justification for each year of potential grant funding. A separate Budget Narrative/Justification is also REQUIRED for each potential year of grant funding requested.**

For your use in developing and presenting your Budget Narrative/Justification, a sample format with examples and a blank sample template have been included in these Attachments. In your Budget Narrative/Justification, you should include a breakdown of the budgetary costs for all of the object class categories noted in Section B, across three columns: Federal; non-Federal cash; and non-Federal in-kind. Cost breakdowns, or justifications, are required for any cost of $1,000 or for the thresholds as established in the examples. The Budget Narratives/Justifications should fully explain and justify the costs in each of the major budget items for each of the object class categories, as described below. Non-Federal cash as well as, sub-contractor or sub-grantee (third party) in-kind contributions designated as match must be clearly identified and explained in the Budget Narrative/Justification The full Budget Narrative/Justification should be included in the application immediately following the SF 424 forms.

Line 6a: **Personnel**: Enter total costs of salaries and wages of applicant/grantee staff. Do not include the costs of consultants, which should be included under 6h Other.
**In the Justification**: Identify the project director, if known. Specify the key staff, their titles, and time commitments in the budget justification.
Line 6b: **Fringe Benefits**: Enter the total costs of fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate.
**In the Justification**: If the total fringe benefit rate exceeds 35% of Personnel costs, provide a breakdown of amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs, such as health insurance, FICA, retirement, etc. A percentage of 35% or less does not require a breakdown but you must show the percentage charged for each full/part time employee.
Line 6c: **Travel**: Enter total costs of all travel (local and non-local) for staff on the project. NEW: Local travel is considered under this cost item not under Other. Local transportation (all travel which does not require per diem is considered local travel). Do not enter costs for consultant's travel - this should be included in line 6h.
**In the Justification**: Include the total number of trips, number of travelers, destinations, purpose (e.g., attend conference), length of stay, subsistence allowances (per diem), and transportation costs (including mileage rates).
Line 6d: **Equipment**: Enter the total costs of all equipment to be acquired by the project. For all grantees, "equipment" is nonexpendable tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more per unit. If the item does not meet the $5,000 threshold, include it in your budget under Supplies, line 6e.
**In the Justification**: Equipment to be purchased with federal funds must be justified as necessary for the conduct of the project. The equipment must be used for project-related functions. Further, the purchase of specific items of equipment should not be included in the submitted budget if those items of equipment, or a reasonable facsimile, are otherwise available to the applicant or its subrecipient.
Line 6e: **Supplies**: Enter the total costs of all tangible expendable personal property (supplies) other than those included on line 6d.
**In the Justification**: For any grant award that has supply costs in excess of 5% of total direct costs (Federal or Non-Federal), you must provide a detailed break down of the supply items (e.g., 6% of $100,000 = $6,000 – breakdown of supplies needed). If the 5% is applied against $1 million total direct costs (5% x $1,000,000 = $50,000) a detailed breakdown of supplies is not needed. Please note: any supply costs of $10,000 or less regardless of total direct costs does not require a detailed budget breakdown (e.g., 5% x $200,000 = $10,000 – no breakdown needed).
Line 6f: **Contractual**: Regardless of the dollar value of any contract, you must follow your established policies and procedures for procurements and meet the minimum standards established in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR's) mentioned below. Enter the total costs of all contracts, including (1) procurement contracts (except those which belong on other lines such as equipment, supplies, etc.). Note: The 33% provision has been removed and line item budget detail is not required as long as you meet the established procurement standards. Also include any awards to organizations for the provision of technical assistance. Do not include payments to individuals on this line. Please be advised: A subrecipient is involved in financial assistance activities by receiving a sub-award and a subcontractor is involved in procurement activities by receiving a sub-contract. Through the recipient, a subrecipient performs work to accomplish the public purpose authorized by law. Generally speaking, a sub-contractor does not seek to accomplish a public benefit and does not perform substantive work on the project. It is

merely a vendor providing goods or services to directly benefit the recipient, for example procuring landscaping or janitorial services. In either case, you are encouraged to clearly describe the type of work that will be accomplished and type of relationship with the lower tiered entity whether it be labeled as a subaward or subcontract.

**In the Justification**: Provide the following three items – 1) Attach a list of contractors indicating the name of the organization; 2) the purpose of the contract; and 3) the estimated dollar amount. If the name of the contractor and estimated costs are not available or have not been negotiated, indicate when this information will be available. The Federal government reserves the right to request the final executed contracts at any time. If an individual contractual item is over the small purchase threshold, currently set at $100K in the CFR, you must certify that your procurement standards are in accordance with the policies and procedures as stated in 45 CFR Part 75 for states, in lieu of providing separate detailed budgets. This certification should be referenced in the justification and attached to the budget narrative.

Line 6g: **Construction**: Leave blank since construction is not an allowable costs for this program.

Line 6h: **Other**: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable, may include, but are not limited to: insurance, medical and dental costs (i.e. for project volunteers this is different from personnel fringe benefits), non-contractual fees and travel paid directly to individual consultants, postage, space and equipment rentals/lease, printing and publication, computer use, training and staff development costs (i.e. registration fees). If a cost does not clearly fit under another category, and it qualifies as an allowable cost, then rest assured this is where it belongs.

Note: A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report number 11-43, has raised considerable concerns about grantees and contractors charging the Federal government for additional meals outside of the standard allowance for travel subsistence known as per diem expenses. If meals are to be charged towards the grant they must meet the following criteria outlined in the Grants Policy Statement:

*Meals are generally unallowable except for the following:*

*For subjects and patients under study(usually a research program);*

*Where specifically approved as part of the project or program activity, e.g., in programs providing children's services (e.g., Headstart);*

*When an organization customarily provides meals to employees working beyond the normal workday, as a part of a formal compensation arrangement;*

*As part of a per diem or subsistence allowance provided in conjunction with allowable travel; and*

*Under a conference grant, when meals are a necessary and integral part of a conference, provided that meal costs are not duplicated in participants' per diem or subsistence allowances (Note: the sole purpose of the grant award is to hold a conference).*

**In the Justification**: Provide a reasonable explanation for items in this category. For example, individual consultants explain the nature of services provided and the relation to activities in the work plan or indicate where it is described in the work plan. Describe the types of activities for staff development costs.

Line 6i: **Total Direct Charges**: Show the totals of Lines 6a through 6h.

Line 6j: **Indirect Charges**: Enter the total amount of indirect charges (costs), if any. If no indirect costs are requested, enter "none." Indirect charges may be requested if: (1) the applicant has a current indirect cost rate agreement approved by the Department of Health and Human Services or another federal agency; or (2) the applicant is a state or local government agency.

**State governments should enter the amount of indirect costs determined in accordance with DHHS requirements.** An applicant that will charge indirect costs to the grant must enclose a copy of the current rate agreement. Indirect Costs can only be claimed on Federal funds, more specifically, they are to only be claimed on the Federal share of your direct costs. Any unused portion of the grantee's eligible Indirect Cost amount that are not claimed on the Federal share of direct charges can be claimed as un-reimbursed indirect charges, and that portion can be used towards meeting the recipient match.

Line 6k: **Total**: Enter the total amounts of Lines 6i and 6j.

Line 7: **Program Income**: As appropriate, include the estimated amount of income, if any, you expect to be generated from this project that you wish to designate as match (equal to the amount shown for Item 15(f) on Form 424). **Note:** Any program income indicated at the bottom of Section B and for item 15(f) on the face sheet of Form 424 will be included as part of non-Federal match and will be subject to the rules for documenting completion of this pledge. If program income is expected, but is not needed to achieve matching funds, **do not** include that portion here or on Item 15(f) of the Form 424 face sheet. Any anticipated program income that will not be applied as grantee match should be described in the Level of Effort section of the Program Narrative.

**c. Standard Form 424B – Assurances (required)**

This form contains assurances required of applicants under the discretionary funds programs administered by the Administration for Community Living. Please note that a duly authorized representative of the applicant organization must certify that the organization is in compliance with these assurances.

**d. Certification Regarding Lobbying (required)**

This form contains certifications that are required of the applicant organization regarding lobbying. Please note that a duly authorized representative of the applicant organization must attest to the applicant's compliance with these certifications.

**Proof of Nonprofit Status (as applicable)**

Non-profit applicants must submit proof of non-profit status. Any of the following constitutes acceptable proof of such status:

- 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 a 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.

**Indirect Cost Agreement**

Applicants that have included indirect costs in their budgets must include a copy of the current indirect cost rate agreement approved by the Department of Health and Human Services or another federal agency. This is optional for applicants that have not included indirect costs in their budgets.

## Budget Narrative/Justification- Sample Format

NOTE: Applicants requesting funding for a multi-year grant program are REQUIRED to provide a detailed Budget Narrative/Justification for EACH potential year of grant funding requested.

| Object Class Category | Federal Funds | Non-Federal Cash | Non-Federal In-Kind | TOTAL | Justification |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | $47,700 | $23,554 | $0 | $71,254 | **Federal**<br>Project Director (name) = .5 FTE @ $95,401/yr = $47,700<br><br>**Non-Fed Cash**<br>Officer Manager (name) = .5FTE @ $47,108/yr = $23,554<br>**Total**<br>71,254 |
| Fringe Benefits | $17,482 | $8,632 | $0 | $26,114 | **Federal**<br>Fringe on Project Director at 36.65% = $17,482<br>FICA (7.65%)<br>Health (25%)<br>Dental (2%)<br>Life (1%)<br>Unemployment (1%)<br>**Non-Fed Cash**<br>Fringe on Office Manager at 36.65% = $8,632<br>FICA (7.65%)<br>Health (25%)<br>Dental (2%)<br>Life (1%)<br>Unemployment (1%) |
| Travel | $4,707 | $2,940 | $0 | $7,647 | **Federal**<br>Local travel: 6 TA site visits for 1 person<br>Mileage: 6RT @ .585 x 700 miles<br>$2,457<br>Lodging: 15 days @ $110/day<br>$1,650<br>Per Diem: 15 days @ $40/day<br>$600<br>Total<br>$4,707<br>**Non-Fed Cash**<br>Travel to National Conference in (Destination) for 3 people<br>Airfare 1 RT x 3 staff @ $500<br>$1,500 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lodging: 3 days x 3 staff @ $120/day<br>$1,080<br>Per Diem: 3 days x 3 staff @ $40/day<br>$360<br>Total<br>$2,940 |
| Equipment | $10,000 | $0 | $0 | $10,000 | No Equipment requested OR:<br>Call Center Equipment<br>Installation =<br>$5,000<br>Phones =<br>$5,000<br>Total<br>$10,000 |
| Supplies | $3,700 | $5,670 | $0 | $9,460 | **Federal**<br>2 desks @ $1,500<br>$3,000<br>2 chairs @ $300<br>$600<br>2 cabinets @ $200<br>$400<br>**Non-Fed Cash**<br>2 Laptop computers<br>$3,000<br>Printer cartridges @ $50/month<br>$300<br>Consumable supplies (pens, paper, clips etc…) @ $180/month<br>$2,160<br>Total<br>$9,460 |
| Contractual | $30,171 | $0 | $0 | $30,171 | (organization name, purpose of contract and estimated dollar amount)<br>Contract with AAA to provide respite services:<br>11 care givers @ $1,682 =<br>$18,502<br>Volunteer Coordinator =<br>$11,669<br>Total<br>$30,171<br>*If contract details are unknown due to contract yet to be made provide same information listed above and:* |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | A detailed evaluation plan and budget will be submitted by (date), when contract is made. |
| Other | $5,600 | $0 | $5,880 | $11,480 | **Federal**<br>2 consultants @ $100/hr for 24.5 hours each = $4,900<br>Printing 10,000 Brochures @ $.05 = $500<br>Local conference registration fee (name conference) = $200<br>Total<br>$5,600<br>**In-Kind**<br>**Volunteers**<br>15 volunteers @ $8/hr for 49 hours = $5,880 |
| Indirect Charges | $20,934 | $0 | $0 | $20,934 | 21.5% of salaries and fringe = $20,934<br>IDC rate is attached. |
| TOTAL | $140,294 | $40,866 | $5,880 | $187,060 | |

Budget Narrative/Justification - Sample Template

NOTE: Applicants requesting funding for a multi-year grant program are REQUIRED to provide a detailed Budget Narrative/Justification for EACH potential year of grant funding requested.

| **Object Class Category** | **Federal Funds** | **Non-Federal Cash** | **Non-Federal In-Kind** | **TOTAL** | **Justification** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | | | | | |
| Fringe Benefits | | | | | |
| Travel | | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | | |
| Supplies | | | | | |
| Contractual | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | |
| Indirect Charges | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

Project Work Plan - Sample Template

NOTE : Applicants requesting funding for a multi-year grant program are REQUIRED to provide a Project Work Plan for EACH potential year of grant funding requested.

Goal:

Measurable Outcome(s):

* Time Frame (Start/End Dates by Month in Project Cycle)

| Major Objectives | Key Tasks | Lead Person | 1* | 2* | 3* | 4* | 5* | 6* | 7* | 8* | 9* | 10* | 11* | 12* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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NOTE: Please do note infer from this sample format that your work plan must have 6 major objectives. If you need more pages, simply repeat this format on additional pages.

## Instructions for Completing the Project Summary/ Abstract

- All applications for grant funding must include a Summary/Abstract that concisely describes the proposed project. It should be written for the general public.
- To ensure uniformity, limit the length to 265 words or less, on a single page with a font size of not less than 11, doubled-spaced.
- The abstract must include the project's goal(s), objectives, overall approach (including target population and significant partnerships), anticipated outcomes, products, and duration. The following are very simple descriptions of these terms, and a sample Compendium abstract.

**Goal(s) -** broad, overall purpose, usually in a mission statement, i.e. what you want to do, where you want to be.

**Objective(s)** - narrow, more specific, identifiable or measurable steps toward a goal. Part of the planning process or sequence (the "how") to attain the goal(s).

**Outcomes** - measurable results of a project. Positive benefits or negative changes, or measurable characteristics among those served through this funding (e.g., clients, consumers, systems, organizations, communities) that occur as a result of an organization's or program's activities. These should tie directly back to the stated goals of the funding as outlined in the funding opportunity announcement. (Outcomes are the end-point)

**Products** - materials, deliverables.

- A model abstract/summary is provided below:

The Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD), in **partnership** with the Delaware Lifespan Respite Care Network (DLRCN) and key stakeholders will, in the course of this two-year project, expand and maintain a statewide coordinated lifespan respite system that builds on the infrastructure currently in place. The **goal** of this project is to improve the delivery and quality of respite services available to families across age and disability spectrums by expanding and coordinating existing respite systems in Delaware. The **objectives** are: 1) to improve lifespan respite infrastructure; 2) to improve the provision of information and awareness about respite service; 3) to streamline access to respite services through the Delaware ADRC; 4) to increase availability of respite services. Anticipated **outcomes** include: 1) families and caregivers of all ages and disabilities will have greater options for choosing a respite provider; 2) providers will demonstrate increased ability to provide specialized respite care; 3) families will have streamlined access to information and satisfaction with respite services; 4) respite care will be provided using a variety of existing funding sources and 5) a sustainability plan will be developed to support the project in the future. The expected **products** are marketing and outreach materials, caregiver training, respite worker training, a Respite Online searchable database, two new Caregiver Resource Centers (CRC), an annual Respite Summit, a respite voucher program and 24/7 telephone information and referral services.

**Instructions for Completing the "Supplemental Information for the SF-424" Form**

**1. Project Director.**

Name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the person to be contacted on matters involving this application. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

**2. Novice Applicant.**Select "Not Applicable To This Program."

**3a. Human Subjects Research**. Check **No** if research activities involving human subjects are not planned at any time during the proposed project period. The remaining parts of Item 3 are then not applicable. Check **Yes** if research activities involving human subjects are planned at any time during the proposed project period, either at the applicant organization or at any other performance site or collaborating institution. Check **Yes** even if the research is exempt from the regulations for the protection of human subjects.

**3b. Human Subjects Research**. **Yes** if all the research activities proposed are designated to be exempt from the regulations. Check the exemption number(s) corresponding to one or more of the six exemption categories listed in I. B. Exemptions. In addition, follow the instructions in II. A. Exempt Research Narrative below.

Check **No** if some or all of the planned research activities are covered (not exempt). In addition, follow the instructions in II. B. Nonexempt Research Narrative in the attached page entitled Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424.

**3b. Human Subjects Assurance Number.** If the applicant has an approved Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, that covers the specific activity, insert the number in the space provided. (A list of current FWAs is available at: http://ohrp.cit.nih.gov/search/search.aspx?styp=bsc) If the applicant does not have an approved assurance on file with OHRP, enter None. In this case, the applicant, by signature on the SF-424, is declaring that it will proceed to obtain the human subjects assurance upon request by the designated NIDILRR official. If the application is recommended/selected for funding, the designated NIDILRR official will request that the applicant obtain the assurance within 30 days after the specific formal request.

**3c. Human Subjects Narratives.** If applicable, please attach your Exempt Research or Nonexempt Research narrative to your submission of the Supplemental Information for the SF-424 form as instructed in item II, Instructions for Exempt and Nonexempt Human Subjects Research Narratives," below.

Note about Institutional Review Board Approval. NIDILRR does not require certification of Institutional Review Board approval with the application. However, if an application that involves non-exempt human subjects research is recommended/selected for funding, the designated NIDILRR official will request that the applicant obtain and send the certification to NIDILRR within 30 days after the formal request. **No covered human subjects research can be conducted until the study has NIDILRR clearance for protection of human subjects in research.**

**I. Definitions and Exemptions**

**A. Definitions.**

**Research**

a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge." Activities which meet this definition constitute research whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program that is considered research for other purposes. For example, some demonstration and service programs may include research activities.

**Human Subject**

"a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research information. (1) If an activity involves obtaining information about a living person by manipulating that person or that persons environment, or by communicating or interacting with the individual, as occurs with surveys and interviews, the definition of human subject is met. (2) If an activity involves obtaining private information about a living person in such a way that the information can be directly or indirectly linked to that individual), the definition of human subject is met.

**B. Exemptions.**

Research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following six categories of exemptions are not covered by the regulations:

(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (a) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (b) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. ***If an educational practice is being introduced to the site and is not widely used for similar populations, it is not covered by this exemption.***

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects financial standing, employability, or reputation. ***If the subjects are children, exemption 2 applies only to research involving*** **educational tests and observations of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed. Exemption 2 does not apply if children are surveyed or interviewed or if the research involves observation of public behavior and the investigator(s) participate in the activities being observed.** [Children are defined as persons who have not attained the legal age for consent to treatments or procedures involved in the research, under the applicable law or jurisdiction in which the research will be conducted.]

(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under section (2) above, if the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. [***This exemption applies only to retrospective studies using data collected before the initiation of*** the research.]

(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (a) public benefit or service programs; (b) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (c) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (d) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs. ***[The standards of this exemption are rarely met because it was*** designed to apply only to specific research conducted by the Social Security Administration and some Federal welfare benefits programs.]

(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (a) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (b) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental

contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**II. Instructions for Exempt and Nonexempt Human Subjects Research Narratives**

If the applicant marked Yes for Item 3.b. of the Supplemental Information for the SF 424, the applicant must attach a human subjects exempt research or nonexempt research narrative to the Supplemental Information for the SF-424 form. If you have multiple projects and need to provide more than one narrative, be sure to label each set of responses as to the project they address.

**A. Exempt Research Narrative.**

If you marked Yes for item 3.b. and designated exemption numbers(s), attach the exempt research narrative to the Supplemental Information for the SF-424. The narrative must contain sufficient information about the involvement of human subjects in the proposed research to allow a determination by NIDILRR that the designated exemption(s) are appropriate. The narrative must be succinct.

**B. Nonexempt Research Narrative.**

If you marked No for item 3.b. you must attach the nonexempt research narrative to the Supplemental Information for the SF-424. The narrative must address the following seven points. Although no specific page limitation applies to this section of the application, be succinct.

(1) **Human Subjects Involvement and Characteristics**: Provide a detailed description of the proposed involvement of human subjects. Describe the characteristics of the subject population, including their anticipated number, age range, and health status. Identify the criteria for including or excluding any subpopulations. Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of subjects, such as children, subpopulation. Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of subjects, such as children, children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, persons with mental disabilities, pregnant women, prisoners, institutionalized individuals, or others who are likely to be vulnerable.

(2) **Sources of Materials**: Identify the sources of research material obtained from individually identifiable living human subjects in the form of specimens, records, or data. Indicate whether the material or data will be obtained specifically for research purposes or whether use will be made of existing specimens, records, or data.

(3) **Recruitment and Informed Consent**: Describe plans for the recruitment of subjects and the consent procedures to be followed. Include the circumstances under which consent will be sought and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of the information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent. State if the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has authorized a modification or waiver of the elements of consent or the requirement for documentation of consent.

(4) **Potential Risks**: Describe potential risks (physical, psychological, social, legal, or other) and assess their likelihood and seriousness. Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures that might be advantageous to the subjects.

(5) **Protection Against Risk**: Describe the procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks, including risks to confidentiality, and assess their likely effectiveness. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the subjects. Also, where appropriate, describe the provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.

(6) **Importance of the Knowledge to be Gained**: Discuss the importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained as a result of the proposed research. Discuss why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to subjects and in relation to the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.

(7) **Collaborating Site**(s): If research involving human subjects will take place at collaborating site(s) or other performance site(s), name the sites and briefly describe their involvement or role in the research.