

Notice of Funding Opportunity
Application due Monday, August 17, 2026



Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)
Runaway and Homeless Youth Program

Basic Center Program

Opportunity number: HHS-2026-ACF-ACYF-CY-0016



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Before you begin

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

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

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

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

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

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

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

Apply by the application due date

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, August 17, 2026.



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



Step 1:

Review the Opportunity

In this step

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Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)

Runaway and Homeless Youth Program

The goal of the Basic Center Program is to establish and strengthen short-term shelter and supportive services that meet the immediate needs of youth under age 18 who have left home due to family conflict or other crisis and youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Summary

The Basic Center Program (BCP) provides up to 21 days of emergency shelter, supportive services, and counseling services to youth under age 18 who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Have run away or left home without permission from their parents or guardians
- Have been forced to leave their home
- Cannot live safely with a parent, legal guardian, or relative
- Have no other safe alternative living arrangement

May end up in contact with law enforcement, or the child welfare, mental health, or juvenile justice systems

We encourage family reunification when it is possible and in the best interest of the youth.

For more information about eligibility of participating youth, see [34 U.S.C. 11279\(3-4\)](#).



Have questions?

See [Contacts and Support](#).

Key facts

Opportunity name:
Basic Center Program

Opportunity number:
HHS-2026-ACF-ACYF-CY-0016

Federal assistance listing:
93.623

NOFO version:
Original

Key dates

Application submission deadline:
August 17, 2026

Expected project start date:
September 30, 2026

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

Funding details

Type: Grant

Expected total program funding: \$27,000,000

Total expected awards: 77

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): \$100,000

Maximum award amount for the first budget period (award ceiling): \$350,000

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

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

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants are public and nonprofit private agencies (34 U.S.C. 11261).

Other eligibility criteria

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

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

- Public and nonprofit entities are eligible to apply unless you are part of the juvenile justice system.
- For-profit organizations are not eligible. Private institutions of higher education must be nonprofit entities.

Disqualifying factors

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

We won't consider an application that:

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

Application limits

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

Cost sharing

This program requires you to contribute 10% of the project's total cost, as stated in section 383 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Act (34 U.S.C. 11274). You can calculate this cost-sharing requirement in one of two ways:

Method 1: Start with the federal share

Calculation: Multiply the federal share (in dollars) by 10 and divide that product by 90.

For example: Multiply \$350,000 by 10 and divide that product by 90. This equals a match of \$38,888.

Method 2: Start with the total project cost

Calculation: Multiply total project costs by 10%.

For example: Multiply \$388,888 by 10%. This equals a match of \$38,888.

Types of cost sharing

You can meet your match requirement through any combination of:

- Cash contributed by your organization, partners, or other third parties.
- In-kind (non-cash) contributions from partners or other third parties.

Cost-sharing commitments

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

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

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

Post-award requirements

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

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

Statutory authority

Title III, Part A, Section 311 of the RHY Act (34 U.S.C. 11211)

Agency priorities

A Home for Every Child

ACF's **A Home for Every Child** initiative advances the goal that every young person has a safe, stable, and nurturing home. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center Program provides critical short-term shelter, crisis intervention, and family reunification to stabilize youth in acute need. Without these supports, youth face heightened risks of exploitation, violence, and long-term instability. With our service provision requirements and comprehensive youth service model, youth who can safely return to a more permanent home, whether through the foster care system, kinship care, or family of origins, will be assisted to do so.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. **Family Stability and Child Well-Being:** Strengthen families, promote safe and stable home environments, and improve outcomes for children and youth through prevention-focused and developmentally appropriate services.
5. **Work, Self-Sufficiency, and Economic Mobility:** Support pathways to employment, job retention, and economic independence for individuals and families, including through workforce development, education, and supportive services.
6. **High-Quality Early Care and Learning:** Where applicable, invest in high-quality early childhood programs that support school readiness, healthy development, and long-term success.

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

Program description

Project overview

The primary purpose of the Basic Center Program (BCP) is to provide temporary emergency shelter, supportive services, and counseling services to youth under age 18. We award community-based organizations funding to operate short-term shelters (including group home care and host family homes) and provide counseling services to youth who:

- Have run away.
- Are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

Who are not already receiving services from the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

Our goal is to establish and strengthen community-based projects that meet the immediate needs of youth who have left home due to family conflict or other crisis and youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

This project addresses the following ACF priority: Promoting Work and Self-Sufficiency because it assists with moving individuals from dependency to independence.

Project requirements

BCP projects must meet the following requirements. Please show that your project meets these requirements in the [project narrative](#) section of your application.

Shelter and counseling services

You must provide youth under age 18 with both of the following services:

- Temporary emergency shelter for up to 21 days.
- Counseling services, as appropriate (individual, family, and group).

General requirements

- If a youth needs to stay in your shelter longer than 21 days, you can continue providing shelter to them, but you cannot use RHY funds to do so.
- If a youth needs transportation to your shelter, you must ensure it is available and easily accessible.
- Services must be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with the lowest possible barriers to access. You must have a publicly available shelter telephone number that staff will answer 24 hours a day.

- You must contact the parents, legal guardians, or other relatives of a youth as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so. You must initiate contact no later than 72 hours after a youth enters your program.
- Your shelter must be licensed as a youth-serving facility and any shelter where you refer youth must also be licensed, when state or local law requires such a license.
- You cannot use our funds for respite care. Respite care provides parents or legal guardians with short-term, temporary relief from providing care. A parent or legal guardian cannot bring a youth to your shelter so you can provide care for them. If a youth is forced to leave home or has no safe alternative place to live, they are considered homeless and eligible for shelter funded by this program.
- Your program must be in an area where youth under the age of 18 who have run away or who are experiencing homelessness can easily access your services. This can include rural or tribal communities and areas outside of metropolitan areas.
- Youth leaving your shelter must go somewhere safe and appropriate.

Shelter capacity requirements

- Per RHY regulations at [45 CFR 1351.18 \(c\)](#), the facilities of your BCP project must have a minimum residential capacity of four individuals and a maximum residential capacity of 20 individuals in a single structure.
- The maximum capacity may be higher only in the following circumstances:
- If local laws or regulations require a higher maximum to comply with licensure requirements for child and youth-serving facilities.
- If your facility is located within a single floor of an apartment building. In that case, it is the floor of the structure where you provide services that must have a minimum residential capacity of four individuals and a maximum residential capacity of 20 individuals. The entire building may have a larger capacity of up to 20 youth per floor.
- You may shelter youth over 18 years of age if there is a state or local law (including a regulation) that allows a higher maximum age in compliance with licensure requirements for child and youth-serving facilities.
 - If you provide shelter to youth age 18 and older in the same shelter facility as youth age 17 and younger, your shelter must have separate sleeping rooms for the two age groups.
 - You must also have a detailed plan to ensure that minors are safe and secure when:
 - Using bathrooms and showers.

- Participating in shelter programming (such as counseling and life skills groups).
 - Participating in recreational activities with youth age 18 or older in your shelter.
- You must maintain safety protocols, procedures, and policies to ensure the safety and security of youth under the age of 18.
- If your shelters are host family homes, you are exempt from the minimum number of four youth per structure requirement. However, you are required to have the capacity to shelter at least four youth at any given time across multiple homes.

Service provision requirements

You must provide youth and their families with an opportunity to engage in intensive counseling and case management services to support family stability, which helps prevent youth running away and youth homelessness.

- You must coordinate your shelter and services with the following entities:
 - Law enforcement.
 - Health care and behavioral health services.
 - Substance abuse services.
 - Social services, including child welfare personnel, where relevant.
 - The public school system.
 - Anti-human trafficking service providers.
- You cannot use RHY funds to pay the shelter costs of youth in child welfare, foster care, or juvenile justice custody. If you provide shelter to youth from these systems, you need a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between your program and the applicable system to clarify who is responsible for payment.
- You must develop a plan to work directly with foster care and correctional agencies to return youth who have run away from the custody of those systems. Your plan must include processes for returning youth to the facility they ran away from.
- You may only use funds to provide prevention services if your program includes optional home-based services designed to:
 - Prevent running away or homelessness among young people.
 - Reduce youth drug use.
- These funds may not be used for any other type of prevention services.
- Your staff must be trained and ready to provide services to youth who have left home without permission or who are:
 - Experiencing housing instability or homelessness.

- Living on the street.
 - In crisis.
 - Experiencing or at risk of experiencing human trafficking (such as sex or labor trafficking) or victimization (such as sexual assault, sexual abuse, or physical abuse). Your staff must identify shelter services and other referrals for trafficked youth.
- Your shelters must be safe and accessible for all youth.

Applicants must also demonstrate formal partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, including police departments and through signed MOUs or formal agreements. These partnerships should:

- Identify high-concentration areas where homeless youth gather.
- Establish protocols for coordinated outreach in these identified areas.
- Create referral mechanisms for law enforcement to connect youth to your program.
- Develop joint training opportunities to improve interactions between law enforcement and homeless youth.
- Outline data sharing agreements (within legal boundaries) to better target services. Data sharing agreements must adhere to the confidentiality requirements in the RHY Act at 34 U.S.C. 11275 stating, “Restrictions on disclosure and transfer of records containing the identity of individual youths pursuant to this chapter may under no circumstances be disclosed or transferred to any individual or to any public or private agency.”

Comprehensive youth-centered services model

The comprehensive youth-centered services model includes required approaches, frameworks, and services that are in addition to shelter and counseling.

Positive Youth Development

You must also use a [positive youth development \(PYD\) framework](#), an approach to service that ensures a young person develops a sense of:

- Safety and structure.
- Belonging and membership.
- Self-worth and social contribution.
- Independence and control over one’s life.
- Closeness in interpersonal relationships.

Any PYD approach utilized, including in any project curricula, products, or resources, must not be used in a way that conflicts with ACF Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, or Guiding Principles unless authorized by law, including any relevant court orders.

Trauma-informed care

BCP programs should consider the trauma and mental health needs of young people who have experienced physical or sexual maltreatment, abuse, or violence.

Programs should include trauma-informed approaches. Program staff should be trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in youth, including survival mechanisms or coping behaviors stemming from past experience with childhood sexual abuse or current trauma (from abusive or predatory relationships). Programs should build organizational and staff capacity to fully include knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices to be able to refer to appropriate treatment or services and to avoid re-traumatizing youth. Effective service models should support mental health, develop coping strategies, and increase protective factors in a youth's life to minimize negative risk-taking behaviors and increase their chance of achieving a more stable home placement.

Outreach implementation strategy

You must have an outreach strategy that includes the following:

- **Direct outreach:** You must seek out youth from your target populations who might not be aware of your program. You must provide information about your services and their benefits.
- **Education and awareness:** You must create and share materials to inform the community about your program. You can also raise awareness of your program by working with other family- and youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, health care providers, legal services, and other stakeholders.
- **Coordination:** You must coordinate with the National Communication System for Runaway and Homeless Youth ([National Runaway Safeline](#)) to provide information on the resources available.
- **Youth engagement and collaboration:** You must engage youth who have experienced homelessness who can help you reach other youth in a similar situation, and design individualized approaches to meet their needs. Youth involvement ensures your education and awareness strategies reflect youth voices and collaboration.

- **Gateway services:** When necessary, you must provide youth with the following:
 - Food.
 - Drink.
 - Clothing.
Personal safety information (for example, national youth hotlines and local hotlines).
 - Transportation.
 - Hygiene products.

These items help prevent malnutrition and ill health and support their participation in your program.

Crisis stabilization and safety planning

You must be prepared to provide emergency services and link youth to appropriate crisis resources to de-escalate emergencies and assist with urgent care for substance use or mental health conditions. Referrals can include resources such as:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline (1-800-662-HELP).
- SAMHSA 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.
- Local crisis hotlines.

You must establish safety plans with participating youth and educate them on reducing the risk of violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, sexual assault, unplanned pregnancy, substance use, and other harms associated with street life. The National Human Trafficking Hotline and the National Domestic Violence Hotline include information on supporting youth who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing trafficking or domestic violence.

Human trafficking prevention and intervention

You must be able to identify and support youth who are victims of or at risk of trafficking, exploitation, or abuse, including labor trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, sex abuse, and other forms of victimization. To support these youth, you must:

- Train staff on identification and response.
- Integrate trafficking prevention and intervention strategies into outreach plans, screening and assessment tools, staff training and development, and program approaches.
- Provide information and referrals to resources such as the National Suicide Hotline, the National Runaway Safeline, the National Human Trafficking Hotline, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Human Trafficking of Children and Youth

Human trafficking is a crime involving the exploitation of a person to perform labor or a commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Per 22 U.S.C. 7102(11), the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPPA), as amended, human trafficking (severe forms of trafficking in persons) means:

- Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.
- The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Youth who are missing from foster care, are experiencing homelessness, or have unstable housing are at a higher risk of experiencing human trafficking, particularly at times when they are struggling to access resources to meet basic needs. Individuals who exploit children often fulfill these needs to build trust and create dependency as a precursor to trafficking. These children may be coerced into engaging in sex acts or compelled labor for shelter, food, clothing, and other basic needs.

Screening for Trafficking Concerns

The recipient must adapt from and utilize standardized screening tools that are validated and evidence- and trauma-informed to identify trafficking concerns and evaluate client needs throughout the service relationship. The recipient may elect to use one or multiple tools, but the tools must be able to identify youth who have experienced labor and/or sex trafficking and assess for common indicators and risks for human trafficking.

It is best practice to screen for trafficking concerns during the youth's initial intake into the program, any time a youth returns from a missing episode, and any time trafficking is suspected. Even in situations when a youth may not exhibit obvious indicators for trafficking, the recipient should utilize a validated universal screening approach and incorporate screening protocols at various stages, in addition to identifying trafficking concerns. This practice will also help mitigate early signs of risk and prevent trafficking before it occurs or re-occurs.

While screening is an initial step in identifying trafficking concerns, it can elicit unintended trauma responses. Therefore, it is imperative for the recipient to first address the youth's basic needs (food, sleep, safety and safety planning, comfort, etc.) before any screening occurs. It is also important for the recipient to consider each individual youth's experience, cognition, mental health, and the effects of trauma when assessing their responses prior to and during screening and intake.

Services for Victims of Trafficking

As disclosures may happen during screening, at any point during time of service, or both, the recipient must develop protocols for response to disclosures. The protocols must include but not be limited to assessment for trafficking-specific case management, safety planning, clinical and therapeutic support, mentorships, and medical services. Youth who have experienced human trafficking have unique needs that must be considered when screening and assessing for service needs, interventions, and community referrals. All interventions by the recipient must be centered around the youth's voice to ensure the youth is an active participant in their care and decision-making for services, and safety planning must be at the center of all support. Further, if it is determined to be in the youth's best interest, the youth's caregiver or relevant family members may be brought in for parts of the service planning efforts. However, this should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Trafficking-Specific Education and Outreach

Recipients are required to integrate human trafficking content throughout program education and outreach activities. All approaches and materials must be trauma-informed, person-centered, developmentally appropriate, and responsive to age, developmental and cognitive abilities, and other relevant factors.

Outreach

Recipients must include information on human trafficking in all outreach activities. Outreach materials must provide audience-appropriate information about human trafficking, including how to identify potential trafficking schemes, how to seek help, and how to access available services and resources. Recipients must ensure that outreach activities include information on referral options, including the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#).

Universal Education

Recipients must provide universal education on human trafficking to all clients. Universal education provides information, safety messages, and resource connections to all individuals, regardless of disclosure or identified risk, to mitigate risk across the population served. This approach normalizes access to support, reduces stigma, and promotes early connection to services. Universal education must be delivered in a private setting, when possible, by staff trained in the approach. Staff must offer resources regardless of whether a client discloses trafficking, and universal education should not be used to require or elicit disclosure. Where a private conversation is not possible or it is not safe to talk, recipients must provide a discrete offer of resources and referral information. This approach may use or adapt existing tools and materials, with emphasis on the quality of the interaction and the provision of resources. Prevention education must support youth in recognizing trafficking risks, identifying

potential trafficking schemes, and building skills related to safety, decision-making, help-seeking, and access to resources and support.

Education and Outreach Resources

- [Look Beneath the Surface Campaign](#): Downloadable and printable outreach materials that help individuals who are at risk of or experiencing human trafficking recognize trafficking schemes and access support.
- [SOAR Online](#): Free, self-paced online training courses that can be completed on demand.
- [Office on Trafficking in Persons Resource Library](#): A searchable collection of anti-trafficking resources and materials, including outreach materials, toolkits, fact sheets, policy and guidance documents, and training tools that support prevention, awareness, identification, and access to services.

Mandatory Reporting

Human trafficking of children (labor and sex trafficking) is now defined under “child abuse and neglect” in the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Public Law (Pub. L.) 93-247. Therefore, if a recipient identifies potential concerns of human trafficking, the recipient is required to comply with all federal, state, tribal, and local mandated reporting requirements in the same way the recipient reports abuse and neglect within that jurisdiction (child welfare, law enforcement, etc.)

Appendix I: Validated screening tools for human trafficking of children and youth^[1]

Tool Identifier	In-Depth	Short/Rapid	Demographic	Environment
Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool		X	Ages 10+; sex trafficking only	Multiple settings, including child welfare and juvenile justice systems, schools, homeless youth shelters, health care and mental health settings
Human Trafficking Screening Tool [PDF]	X	X	Ages 18–24; sex trafficking only	Runaway and Homeless Youth system settings
Quick Youth Indicators for Trafficking		X	Youth who are homeless; sex trafficking and labor trafficking	Service provider setting
Rapid Appraisal for Trafficking		X	Ages 18+; sex trafficking and labor trafficking	Health care setting
Short Screen for Child Sex Trafficking		X	Ages 12–18; sex trafficking only	Health care setting

Screening and assessment

You must have a standard way to determine a youth's eligibility for your program and to assess their needs to make sure services are appropriate. Your screening and assessment tools should also help you determine whether the youth's participation in your program poses any risks to the health and safety of others in the program.

You must use screening and assessment tools that will identify youth and families with complex or high-level needs (e.g., behavioral health, trauma, substance use, family conflict issues).

Your screening and assessment tools should evaluate, at a minimum, the following high levels of need for each youth:

- Physical health.
- Potential for victimization.
- Behavioral health.
- Connection to family.
- Family conflict.
- Safety.
- Substance use.
- Trauma.
- Access to resources.
- Issues of neglect or abuse.
- Other risk and protective factors that impact their well-being and potential for sustainable living.

If you offer optional street-based services, the screening and assessment process must start when you engage a young person on the street, during intake, or at the drop-in center.

You should work with your local Continuum of Care (CoC) to ensure referrals are coordinated and that youth are aware of community resources available to them, including permanent housing resources and family resources, if applicable.

Case management

You must provide youth in your program with the following case management services:

- **Individualized services or treatment:** You must provide services or treatment strategies based on both your screening and assessment tools, and input from the youth receiving services.
- **Reduce the risk of harm:** You should discuss safety planning with youth to reduce their risk of exploitation, human trafficking, sexual assault, substance use and misuse, and any other harm associated with street life.
- **Service coordination:** You must have an appropriate and accessible service referral strategy based on the youth's entry screening and assessment results. You should coordinate services with entities including:
 - Social services.
 - Law enforcement.
 - Educational services.
 - Vocational and employment training services.
 - Public benefits, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
 - Legal services.
 - Organizations that provide support to those who have experienced trafficking or are at risk of experiencing trafficking.
 - Behavioral health services.
 - Health care programs including health insurance options.
 - Affordable child care and child education programs, including Head Start.
 - **Educational service:** You must coordinate with McKinney-Vento school district liaisons, designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)), to ensure youth receive information about educational services available to them.

Aftercare

You must continue to provide services for three months after the youth has left your shelter. You must develop an aftercare strategy with each youth within three days of beginning shelter and services. The strategy must include a plan for permanent placement as well as the youth's input about the support and services they need to achieve their personal goals.

Optional services

You may decide to provide one or more kinds of optional services as part of your funded program. Optional services are in addition to the basic program requirements detailed above.

Street-based services

Street-based services are provided to youth who have run away or are experiencing homelessness in areas where they congregate. Street-based services help youth make healthy personal choices about where they live and how they behave. If you plan to provide street-based services, you must do the following:

- Describe your strategy for conducting face-to-face outreach during scheduled hours at locations where youth congregate.
- Specify the number of full-time equivalent outreach workers you need and the frequency of their outreach.
- Explain how you communicate with youth about services you can provide.
- Supply basic need packs for youth.
- Have safety protocols for youth and outreach staff.

Home-based services

Home-based services prevent youth from running away or otherwise experiencing homelessness. These services may be offered in a youth's home and may include intensive individual and family counseling, as well as training in life skills and parenting.

If you provide home-based services, you must explain your services, who delivers them, and their duration. You must also describe your individual and family counseling methods and your life skills training. See 34 U.S.C. 11212(d) for detailed description of requirements.

Drug abuse education and prevention services

These services may include the following:

- Individual, family, group, and peer counseling.
- Drop-in services.
- Assistance in rural areas including community support groups.
- Information and training related to the illicit use of drugs and prescription drug abuse.
- Activities to make local drug abuse prevention services more available.

You must have criteria to determine eligibility for these services and detail what services you will provide, where, by whom, and for how long. Your services must use evidence-based or evidence-informed models, curricula, and practices.

Testing for sexually transmitted diseases

If you offer testing for sexually transmitted diseases and infections (STDs and STIs), you must provide that testing upon request and based on established eligibility criteria.

If you plan to offer STD and STI testing, you should name the individuals or entities responsible for coordinating and providing the testing services.

Performance standards

You must collect data showing your ability to meet program performance standards. Your program should improve the following four outcome areas for youth who receive your services:

- **Social and emotional well-being:** Youth will connect to trauma-informed providers for help with issues related to physical health, substance abuse, mental health, personal safety (such as potential trafficking situations), and sexual risk behaviors.
- **Permanent connections:** Youth will experience positive, ongoing attachments to their families, communities, schools, and other social networks.
- **Education or employment:** Youth will connect to school or vocational training programs, improve job search skills, or obtain employment.
- **Safe and stable housing:** After leaving your program, youth will transition to safe and stable housing that appropriately matches their level of need. Housing options may include moving in with family, other permanent housing, residential treatment centers, or substance abuse treatment facilities.

You will collect and enter data quarterly through the Runaway and Homeless Youth-Homeless Management Information System (RHY-HMIS), and you will work with a local CoC HMIS lead for access to the RHY-HMIS. The [Family and Youth Services Bureau \(FYSB\)](#) provides more detailed information about [data standards and reporting requirements](#).

Training and technical assistance

If you accept an award, you must agree to work cooperatively with the technical assistance provider. Training and technical assistance is available free from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training, Technical Assistance, and Capacity Building Center (RHYTTAC). Services include:

- Regionally based technical assistance.
- Individual Grant Recipient Training.

- Program-specific training sessions.
- E-learning.
- Webinars.
- National grantee training.

You must send at least one person to the annual, in-person or virtual RHY National Grantee Training, as well as to other federally designated regional- and program-specific trainings. You will also participate in learning collaboratives and cohort-based peer engagement activities. More information is available from the [RHYTTAC](#).

Funding policies and limitations

Changes in HHS regulations

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

General policies

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

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

Program-specific limitations and policies

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

- Construction.
- Purchase of real property.
- Major renovation.
- Costs for renovation of existing structures may not normally exceed 15% of the federal award. Costs for acquisition are not allowable by statute.
- Fundraising (including campaigns, endowments, gifts, and similar expenses).
- Proposal and pre-award costs.
- Distribution of sterile needles or syringes.
- **NOTE*** Include a statement attesting that your program, if selected for funding, will not support or facilitate any harm reduction activities that relate to drug use or facilitate any illegal drug use, to include, but is not limited to:
 - Hosting or making available drug consumption sites.
 - Distribution of drug paraphernalia inconsistent with Federal law.
 - Safe smoking kits, safe sniff kits, or other harm reduction kits.
 - Pipes, straws, or other devices used to inhale or ingest illegal drugs.
 - Sterile needles or syringes for the hypodermic injection of any illegal drug.
 - Drug testing kits.
 - Sterile water, saline, ascorbic acid (vitamin C), or other supplies intended to facilitate the preparation or use of illegal drugs.
 - Other actions that would support the use of controlled substances.
 - Any other item or action intended to promote or facilitate illegal drug use.
 - Abortions. (See [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Pub. L. 117-328, div. H, tit. V, 506-507 \[PDF\]](#) for exceptions.)
 - Any treatment or referral to treatment that aims to change someone's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Indirect costs

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

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

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

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

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

Subawards

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

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

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

If they do not have one, all subrecipients must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

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

Salary rate limitation

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

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

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

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

Program income

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



Step 2:

Get Ready to Apply

In this step

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Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to Grants Search at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and search for opportunity number HHS-2026-ACF-ACYF-CY-0016. Then select the Package tab.

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

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

Get registered

SAM.gov

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

To register:

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

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

Once you register:

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

Grants.gov

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

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

Learn more

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



Step 3:

Build Your Application

In this step

Application checklist	<u>32</u>
Application contents and format	<u>34</u>

Application checklist

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

File one: Narratives

Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.

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

File two: Attachments

Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.

Component	Included in page limit?
☐ ACF priorities alignment attestation	No
☐ Indirect cost agreement	Yes
☐ Legal proof of nonprofit status	Yes
☐ Organizational capacity supporting information (including organization chart)	Yes
☐ Third-party agreements	Yes
☐ Letters of support	Yes

Standard forms

Use each required form in Grants.gov.

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

Application contents and format

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

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application.

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

Required Format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 85 pages

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

Accepted file formats

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

Document formats

Paper size: 8 ½ inches x 11 inches

Margins: 1 inch all around

Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

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

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

Color: Black

Size: 12-point font

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

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced

Project summary: Must be single-spaced

Project narrative: Must be double-spaced

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

Attachments: Can be single-spaced

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

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

File one: Narratives

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

This file includes:

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

Table of contents

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

Project summary

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

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

Project narrative

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

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

In it, you must:

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

Purpose and need

Geographic location

Provide the precise physical location of your project and boundaries of the area you will serve. If you will include any subrecipients in your project that will serve specific geographic areas, include their locations as well. We will consider the geographic distribution in your state for your proposed services and which areas in your state have the greatest need for these services. See [34 U.S.C. 11213\(a\)](#).

Need for assistance

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

- Demonstrate the need, including the nature and scope of the problem.
- Provide, as appropriate, supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials, in your attachments.
- Include any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments. You may refer to them in the endnotes or footnotes of your application.
- Use demographic data and participant or beneficiary information where you can.

Response

Approach

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

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

You must explain how your project will meet all of the requirements in the [project requirements](#) section. Include all of the subsections listed here in your explanation.

Shelter and counseling services

Describe the shelter model you will use and explain how it will meet all the requirements in the [shelter and counseling services](#) section of the program requirements.

Your description must include:

- The number of youth under the age of 18 that your project will serve in a single structure, or within a single floor of an apartment building, for no more than 21 days.
- Details on how you will provide and maintain separate sleeping rooms and protect minors' safety and security in areas such as use of bathrooms, showers, and shelter programming, if you shelter youth age 18 and over in the same facility as youth age 17 and under.
- Evidence all operating shelters, including host family homes (if proposing a host home model, provide a description of your work with faith-based organizations) and any shelters where you regularly refer clients, have current licensure in states or localities with licensure requirements.
- Confirmation that project funding will not be used for respite care.
- Procedures for providing services 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, with the lowest possible barriers to access.
- 24-hour staffing coverage for a publicly available shelter telephone number.
- Transportation availability and accessibility for youth.
- Procedures for contacting parents, legal guardians, or other relatives of each youth as soon as it is feasible and safe, unless it is not in the youth's best interest.
- An MOU between your program and child welfare, if your project is serving youth who have run away from foster care or child welfare.
- Counseling services for youth and their families.
- Any [optional services](#) you plan to provide. If you will not provide optional services, state that clearly in this section of your application.
- Staff training protocols for working with youth who have run away, are experiencing homelessness, are living on the streets, are in crisis, or are at risk of experiencing human trafficking.
- Your partners, including partnerships with CoCs that also support youth. Explain how you work with those partners to ensure youth have access to all of the community's resources.

Comprehensive youth-centered service model

Address all the requirements in the [comprehensive youth-centered services model](#) section of the program requirements, including how you will:

- Incorporate a trauma-informed approach for youth services.
- Grantees shall utilize and integrate into the operation of their projects the principles of positive youth development, such as promoting a sense of self-worth, belonging and human connection, safe and structured places, adult role models, skill development, and opportunities to serve others.

- **Outreach implementation strategy**

Address all the requirements in the [outreach implementation strategy](#) section of the program requirements, including:

- How you will seek out youth from the target population and provide information about your available services and their benefits.
- How you will inform the community about your program, including developing and distributing materials about your services.
- How you will coordinate with the national communication system (National Runaway Safeline) to provide resources to youth at risk of experiencing homelessness.
- How you will engage with youth who have experienced homelessness in designing and conducting outreach activities.
- How you will provide youth with the following:
 - Food.
 - Drink.
 - Clothing.
 - Transportation.
 - Personal safety information, such as national youth hotlines and local hotlines.
 - Resource guides.
 - Hygiene products.
- How you will identify youth who are at risk of or who are victims of trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, sex abuse, and other forms of victimization, and provide those youth with resources such as national hotline numbers.

- **Screening and assessment**

Address all the requirements in the [screening and assessment](#) section of the program requirements, including:

- How you will determine a youth's eligibility for your program and assess their needs to make sure services are appropriate.
- How you will use screening and assessment tools to determine if a youth's participation in your program poses any risks to the health and safety of other youth in the program.
- How your screening and assessment process identifies youth and families with complex or high-level needs (e.g., behavioral health, trauma, substance use, or family conflict issues).
- A description of your assessment tools and what factors they evaluate.

- **Case management**

Address all the requirements in the [case management](#) section of the program requirements, including how your program will:

- Work with youth to plan for individualized services and treatment strategies.
- Reduce a youth's risk of harm.
- Connect youth to appropriate and accessible services based on screening and assessments.
- Ensure youth are connected to school, life skills training, job attainment skills, or work activities while in the program.

- **Aftercare**

You must explain how your project will prepare youth to transition out of the project and how you will provide aftercare services for a period of three months. At a minimum, you must describe how your project will:

- Develop a written transition plan with each youth that meets their needs and supports safe and stable living.
- Ensure youth have access to important documents and paperwork as needed, such as birth certificates, Social security cards, driver's licenses or state identification cards, medical records, and credit reports.
- Conduct aftercare services for each youth who exits your program for at least three months:
 - Provide an aftercare strategy to maintain contact, ensure each youth's ongoing safety, and document services, referrals, and counseling offered related to health care and insurance coverage.
 - Document youth's housing status, educational services, and rates of participation in and completion of services.
 - Maintain regular contact for three months, record all contact attempts, and, if applicable, document services beyond three months.

- Assist youth in obtaining appropriate educational, vocational, training, or employment services, including coordination with McKinney-Vento school district liaisons, as designated under the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Support improvements in social and emotional well-being and the development of permanent connections.

Project timeline and milestones

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

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

Logic model

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

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

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

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

Impact

Project performance evaluation plan

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

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

Resources and capabilities

Organizational capacity

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

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

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

Current and pending funding support

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

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

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

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

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

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

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

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

Project sustainability plan

You must propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. We expect you to sustain key elements of your project. These elements can

include strategies or services and interventions that have improved practices and outcomes.

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

Describe:

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

Protection of sensitive or confidential information

Describe how you will collect and safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive. Make sure your approach is consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality. Records containing the identity of individual youths under this grant may under no circumstances be disclosed or transferred to any individual or to any public or private agency. Provide:

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

For more information see 34 U.S.C. 11275, 45 CFR 75.303(e) (effective on or after October 1, 2025: 2 CFR 200.303) and 45 CFR 1351.21. Or visit the FYSB website for more information about [RHY Program and Administrative requirements](#).

Line-item budget and budget narrative

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

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

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

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.

- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See the [funding policies and limitations](#).
- You must include the cost of sending at least one key staff person to attend the yearly in-person RHY national grantee training, regional trainings, program-specific trainings, and other required trainings, as appropriate.
- If you do not have computer equipment and the required HMIS software, you must include the estimated cost for such equipment, software, and training in your proposed budget. You must coordinate with your CoC HMIS lead to determine those estimated costs.
 - If you already have the necessary HMIS equipment, software, and training, clearly state that in this section of your application.
- In addition to outlining the organization's complete annual operating budget, you must list all non-federal funding sources that will support the program.

If there are no additional non-federal funding sources beyond the required match, clearly state that in this section of your application.

Please also review the Standard Form instructions.

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

In general, you must:

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

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

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

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

File two: Attachments

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

This file includes all attachments.

ACF priorities alignment attestation

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

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

I hereby attest and certify that:

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

Insert Date of Signature:

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

Signature of AOR:

Indirect cost agreement

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

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

Legal proof of nonprofit status

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

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

Organizational capacity supporting information

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

- Organizational charts, including all partners.
- Resumes, biographical sketches, or curricula vitae for all key personnel.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- List of your board of directors.
- Child care licenses and other documentation of professional accreditation.
- Information on compliance with federal, state, and local government standards.

Third-party agreements

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

Applicants must also include at least one signed MOU or formal agreement with local law enforcement agencies (city police, county sheriff, transit police, etc.) that details:

- Specific roles and responsibilities of each party.
- Communication protocols and points of contact.
- Procedures for identifying and referring homeless youth to your program.
- Strategies for joint outreach in high-concentration areas.
- Safety protocols for both staff and youth during outreach activities.

Any such agreement must:

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

Letters of support

Attach statements from community, public, or commercial leaders that support your project. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the person writing the letter, the organization they represent, the date, and their reasons for supporting the project.

Standard forms

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

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

Important: Public information

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

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

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

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



Step 4:

Learn About Review and Award

In this step

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Application review

Initial review

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Merit review process

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

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

Criteria summary

Criterion	Total number of points = 110
1. Purpose and need (Need for assistance)	5 points
2. Response (Approach)	50 points
3. Resources and capabilities (Organizational capacity)	15 points
4. Impact (Performance evaluation plan and logic model)	10 points
5. Resources and capabilities (Sustainability plan)	5 points
6. Support requested (Budget, budget justification, and plan for oversight)	15 points
7. ACF priority alignment	10 points

Scoring criteria

1. Purpose and need (Need for assistance)

Maximum points: 5

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- 1.1 Explain why you need assistance and describe the problem of youth homelessness in your community. **(0 to 3 points)**
- 1.2 Explain who will receive services, including demographic information about the target population and how many youths you expect to serve. **(0 to 2 points)**

2. Response (Approach)

Maximum points: 50

The reviewer will assess how well you:

2.1 Safe, stable, and appropriate shelter (0 to 15 points)

- 2.1.1 Describe the proposed outreach, shelter, and counseling services you will provide. **(0 to 5 points)**
- 2.1.2 Describe a licensed shelter whose physical structure meets the requirements in the program description. **(0 to 10 points)**

2.2 Comprehensive youth-centered services model (0 to 5 points)

- 2.2.1 Explain how you will effectively integrate PYD and an understanding of the impact of trauma into your program. (0 to 5 points)

2.3 Outreach implementation strategy (0 to 10 points)

- 2.3.1 Detail an outreach implementation strategy that includes outreach, education and awareness, and youth engagement. (0 to 5 points)
- 2.3.2 Detail your plan for coordination, providing basic needs, crisis stabilization, and safety planning. (0 to 5 points)

2.4 Screening and assessment (0 to 5 points)

- 2.4.1 Detail your program's screening and assessment process to determine eligibility for shelter and services. (0 to 3 points)
- 2.4.2 Describe your tools, your planned assessment process, and how information from the assessment will inform service delivery, including identifying youth victims of trafficking. (0 to 2 points)

2.5 Case management (0 to 5 points)

- 2.5.1 Describe how you will conduct case management, including providing services, treatment, and service coordination with partners. (0 to 5 points)

2.6 Aftercare and optional services (0 to 10 points)

- 2.6.1 Describe an aftercare strategy that provides support after program exit for a period of 3 months. (0 to 5 points)
- 2.6.2 Describe optional services you will provide, such as street-based services, home-based services, drug abuse education and prevention services, and testing for sexually transmitted diseases. If optional services are not provided, a statement clearly stating no-optional services will be provided. (0 to 5 points)

3. Resources and Capabilities (Organizational capacity)

Maximum points: 15

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- 3.1 Provide extensive detail about your experience and expertise running a runaway and homeless youth program. (0 to 10 points)
- 3.2 Describe your plan to ensure data accuracy and the timely upload of all appropriate data into RHY-HMIS. (0 to 3 points)
- 3.3 Explain how you will make sure that subaward recipients complete their work and contribute to the success of the project. If there are no proposed subawards and you do not have any agreements with third parties, state specifically that these agreements do not exist. (0 to 2 points)

4. Impact (Performance evaluation plan and logic model)

Maximum points: 10

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- 4.1 Explain how you will evaluate your program, including how you will use RHY-HMIS and its data to define success and improve program performance, and discuss any challenges you expect in implementing the project. **(0 to 5 points)**
- 4.2 Present a logic model that explains how the proposed activities, inputs, and outputs link to outcomes that will prevent youth from experiencing homelessness. **(0 to 5 points)**

5. Resources and Capabilities (Sustainability plan)

Maximum points: 5

The reviewer will assess how well your:

- 5.1 Sustainability plan identifies other sources that will support the program if federal funds are not available and explains how you will retain staff and maintain partnerships if the program loses funding. **(0 to 5 points)**

6. Support Requested

(Budget, budget justification, and plan for oversight)

Maximum points: 15

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- 6.1 Include a clear line-item budget and narrative budget for the federal and non-federal funds, clearly explain how the requested funds are necessary for the program, and include the costs of sending a staff member to attend required trainings and meetings. **(0 to 5 points)**
- 6.2 Detail the total cost of the project, explain the amount of funding, beyond federal funds, and describe how all funds will follow federal and programmatic regulations. **(0 to 5 points)**
- 6.3 Ensure proper oversight of federal funds and funded activities. **(0 to 5 points)**

We do not consider voluntary cost sharing during merit review.

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

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

Applicants must demonstrate alignment by describing how the proposed project advances relevant ACF priorities through program design and evaluation. Applicants

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

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

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

Scoring Considerations for the next three criteria:

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

7.1 Demonstrated Review and Understanding (up to 2 Points)

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

Reviewers will look for:

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

7.2 Operationalization in Program Design and Implementation (up to 3 Points)

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

Reviewers will assess if the applicant:

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

7.3 Integration into Performance and Continuous Improvement (up to 5 Points)

The extent to which the following one or more ACF priorities are reflected in measurable outcomes and ongoing program improvement: Promoting Work and Self-Sufficiency. Reviewers will assess the extent to which the application:

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

Risk review

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

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

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

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

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review and scoring results including the ten points for Alignment with ACF Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles to the extent permitted by law. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution.
- The past performance of the applicant.
- Eligible applicants who have demonstrated experience in providing services to runaway and homeless youth and eligible applicants that request grants of less than \$200,000. See [34 U.S.C. 11213\(b\)](#).
- The application's compliance with this NOFO's prohibition on using funds awarded under this NOFO to support [DEI and DEIA activities](#), to the extent permitted by law including any relevant court orders.

- Funding Preference for Alignment with Agency Priorities. Before final funding decisions are made, division leadership will review awards for consistency with applicable laws and alignment with agency priorities.

We may:

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

We will not fund:

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

Award notices

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

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

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

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



Step 5:

Submit Your Application

In this step

Application submission and deadlines

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Application submission and deadlines

Application

Deadline

Due on Monday, August 17, 2026.

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

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

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

Grants.gov submission

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

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

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

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

Issues with federal systems

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

Exemptions for paper submissions

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

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

To submit your application, mail it to:

FYSB Operations Center

c/o F2 Solutions

Attn: Basic Center Program

NOFO FON: HHS-2025-ACF-ACYF-CY-0016

1401 Mercantile Lane

Suite 401

Largo, MD 20744

1-855-792-6551

Follow these requirements when you submit your paper application:

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

Intergovernmental review

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



Step 6:

Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration [61](#)

Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

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

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award, including the [ACF Standard Terms and Conditions](#) and, if applicable, any program-specific terms and conditions. We incorporate this NOFO by reference.
- The rules listed in [2 CFR 200](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, effective October 1, 2025. These replace those in 45 CFR 75, with some exceptions in [2 CFR 300](#).
- The HHS [Grants Policy Statement \(GPS\)](#). This document has terms and conditions tied to your award. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your Notice of Award.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in the [HHS Grants Policy Statement](#), Appendix D: HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements and the [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).
- [45 CFR Part 87 Appendix B, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations](#). This appendix explains the obligations of and protections for faith-based organizations applying for grants.
- Applicable program statute and regulations at RHY Act, 34 U.S.C. 11201-11281, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Final Rule, 45 CFR Part 1351 to improve performance standards and program requirements for runaway and homeless youth programs, and RHY's Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

Reporting

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

- Performance report form: **ACF-OGM-PPR**
 - Performance report frequency: Semiannually
- Financial report form: **SF-425 FFR**
 - Financial report frequency: Semiannually
- **RHY-HMIS** (OMB #: 0970-0573; current expiration date: May 31, 2027)
 - Report frequency: Quarterly



Contacts and Support

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Agency contacts

Program

Gloria Watkins

Gloria.Watkins@acf.hhs.gov

202-205-9546

Grants management

Sarah Viola

Sarah.Viola@acf.hhs.gov

202-401-4832

Help with systems

Grants.gov

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

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

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can:

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

Reference websites

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\).](#)
- [Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\).](#)
- [Grants.gov.](#)
- [Applying for an ACF Grant Award.](#)
- [Grants.gov Accessibility Information.](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\).](#)
- [United States Code \(U.S.C.\).](#)
- [Award Terms and Conditions](#) (see also the [ACF Standard Terms and Conditions \[PDF\]](#)).
- [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements.](#)
- [ACF Property Guidance.](#)
- [Family and Youth Services Bureau.](#)
- [RHY Program Administrative and Program Requirements.](#)
- [Runaway and Homeless Youth Training, Technical Assistance, and Capacity Building Center.](#)
- [National Runaway Safeline.](#)

Paperwork Reduction Act disclaimer

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

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

Modifications

Modification description	Updated date

Endnotes

1. [1] National Advisory Committee on the Sex Trafficking of Children and Youth in the United States, Best Practices and Recommendations for States, (2020), www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/otip/nac_report_2020.pdf ↑