

Notice of Funding Opportunity
Application due Wednesday, July 29, 2026



Administration for Community Living








National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)

Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems Centers

Opportunity number: HHS-2026-ACL-NIDILRR-SIMS-0217



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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 Wednesday, July 29, 2026.



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



Step 1:

Review the Opportunity

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Basic information

Administration for Community Living

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)

Summary

Research to generate new knowledge that can be used to improve health and function, employment, or community living and participation outcomes of people with spinal cord injury.

Funding details

Type: Grant

Expected funding: \$8,446,263

Expected awards: 14

Funding range: \$640,000 to \$540,000 per budget period

We plan to fund 14 awards in five 12-month budget periods for a total five-year period of performance of September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2031.

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

SCIMS Centers will be funded at varying amounts up to the maximum award based on the numbers of database participants from whom SCIMS Centers must collect follow-up data. Existing centers with significantly larger numbers of database participants will receive more funding within the specified range, as determined by NIDILRR after the applicant is selected for funding. Funding will be determined individually for each successful applicant, up to the maximum allowed, based upon the documented workload associated with the follow-up data collection, the other costs of the grant, and the overall budgetary limits of the program.



Have questions?

See [Contacts and Support](#).

Key facts

Opportunity name:

Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems Centers

Opportunity number:

HHS-2026-ACL-NIDILRR-SIMS-0217

Federal assistance listing:

93.433

Statutory authority:

Title II of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
29 U.S.C. § 764(b)(4)

Key dates

Application deadline:

July 29, 2026

Optional notice of intent deadline:

July 13, 2026

Expected start date:

September 1, 2026

Expected award date:

September 1, 2026

Informational conference call:

July 6, 2026

Eligibility

Who can apply

Eligible applicants

Only these types of organizations may apply:

- States.
- Public or private agencies, including for-profit agencies.
- Public or private organizations, including for-profit organizations.
- Institutions of higher education.
- Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

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

Other eligibility requirements

To be eligible for a SCIMS Center grant an applicant institution must provide a multidisciplinary continuum of care for people with SCI, including emergency medical services, acute care services, acute medical rehabilitation services, and post-acute services.

You must propose to run a SCI Model Systems Center grant that is responsive to each of the requirements in the [Program Description section](#) of this notice.

Disqualifying factors

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

We won't consider an application that:

- Is submitted after the [deadline](#).
- Is not responsive to each of the requirements in the [Program Description section](#) of this notice.
- Is submitted by an organization that does not provide a multidisciplinary continuum of care for people with SCI, including emergency medical services, acute care services, acute medical rehabilitation services, and post-acute services.
- 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 ACL.

- Proposes a budget that exceeds \$640,000 in any single budget year.
- Proposes a project period that exceeds 60 months.

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 has no cost-sharing requirement, meaning you do not need to contribute to the costs of this project.

If you choose to include cost-sharing funds, we won't consider it during review.

Cost sharing commitments

If awarded, you must provide the amount of cost-sharing funds you promised. 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 II of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. 29 U.S.C. § 764(b)(4).

Program description

Background

The Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems (SCIMS) program began in 1970 to provide a multidisciplinary system of rehabilitation care specifically to meet the needs of individuals with SCI.

The system of rehabilitation care that was developed through this program encompasses a continuum of services that include emergency medical services, acute care services, acute medical rehabilitation services, and post-acute services. Since its origin, the program has evolved into a national network of SCI clinical centers that collaborate on multi-site research efforts and longitudinally track the experiences and outcomes of people with SCI. A clinical center's comprehensive SCI service delivery system is now a prerequisite for receiving a SCIMS Center grant to conduct high-quality research that can be used to improve services and outcomes for people with spinal cord injury. For purposes of this program, SCI is defined as a clinically discernible degree of neurologic impairment of the spinal cord.

The SCIMS program is the largest network of research centers devoted to SCI in the world. This network creates opportunities for critical collaboration between SCI clinicians and researchers from around the U.S. and allows investigators to generate sample sizes that are adequate for the development and testing of a wide variety of interventions. The SCIMS Centers conduct research that explores outcomes of people with SCI under at least one of the domains outlined in NIDILRR's [Long-Range Plan \[PDF\]](#). These domains are: (1) health and function, (2) community living and participation, and (3) employment.

There is an ongoing need for research that can be used to improve services and outcomes for people with SCI in each of these interrelated domains. There are approximately 309,000 people living with SCI in the United States. While SCI remains a low-incidence condition (estimates are that more than 18,000 people acquire new SCIs in the U.S. each year) ([NSCISC, 2025 \[PDF\]](#)), the number of people surviving SCI continues to grow as a result of improved emergency and acute care. Increased survival rates and aging of people with SCI have created the need for new research-based information that can be used to improve clinical services, community supports, and a wide variety of health, employment, and community living outcomes for this population.

SCIMS Centers collect and contribute information on common data elements for a centralized SCI database, referred to as the SCIMS database. This database is maintained through a NIDILRR-funded grant for a National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center (NSCISC). More than 54,000 people with SCI have been enrolled in the SCIMS database, of whom more than 31,000 had one or more follow-up records. The data that these

database participants have contributed provides invaluable information about the life course of people with spinal cord injury and about ongoing trends in their experiences and outcomes. The database now includes information from people who have been living with SCI and contributing data about their lives for 50 years. Further information about the SCIMS database, including inclusion criteria, [can be found at the National SCIMS Database](#).

Purpose

This priority is in alignment with:

- Executive Order 14212, on Establishing the [President’s Make America Healthy Again Commission](#).
- The following [ACL strategic priorities](#):
 - Whole-person health.
 - Employment.
 - Connecting people to services.

ACL’s Administrator establishes this priority for the funding of Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems (SCIMS) Centers. These Centers conduct research to improve outcomes of people with spinal cord injury. The SCIMS Centers must provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary services to people with spinal cord injury (SCI) as a prerequisite and basis for conducting research that contributes to evidence-based rehabilitation interventions and clinical and practice guidelines. For purposes of this program, SCI is defined as a clinically discernible degree of neurologic impairment of the spinal cord.

You are required to address the following requirements in your proposal:

The SCIMS program is designed to generate new knowledge that can be used to improve outcomes of people with SCI in one or more domains identified in NIDILRR’s Long Range Plan: health and function, community living and participation, and employment.

Each SCIMS Center must contribute to these outcomes by:

- Continuing the assessment of long-term outcomes of people with SCI by enrolling 30 participants per year into the SCIMS longitudinal database.
 - Centers must enroll 30 database participants per year.
 - Applicant rehabilitation organizations with an annual census of more than 30 SCI patients must randomly select 30 of these patients for enrollment, following methods to be established by the National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center.
 - All grantees must follow established protocols for the enrollment of and ongoing collection of data from database participants (this can be found at the [National SCIMS Database](#)).

- Proposing and conducting one site-specific research project to test innovative approaches for improving outcomes of people with SCI or for assessing outcomes of people with SCI in one or more domains identified in NIDILRR's [Long-Range Plan \[PDF\]](#). These outcome domains are: health and function, community living and participation, and employment. The proposed site-specific research project may contribute to the advancement of the science at any [stage of research](#). The stage(s) of research of the proposed work should be appropriate to the state of the science for the topic under study.
 - **Note: Applicants who propose more than one site-specific research project will be disqualified.**
- Proposing one module research project on SCI rehabilitation and participating in at least one module research project. Module projects are research collaborations between two or more SCIMS Centers on topics of mutual interest and expertise. The proposed module project may contribute to the advancement of the science at any [stage of research](#). The stage(s) of research of the proposed work should be appropriate to the state of the science for the topic under study. At the first SCIMS Project Directors' meeting following the announcement of new awards under this priority, SCIMS Project Directors will review, discuss, and choose module projects to be implemented during the 2026-2031 SCIMS Centers grant cycle, from among the module projects that were proposed by the successful applicants. NIDILRR staff will facilitate this post-award discussion and negotiation among new SCIMS Centers grantees. Each SCIMS Center must participate in at least one of the module projects that are selected for implementation.
 - **Note: Applicants who propose more than one module research project will be disqualified.**
- Coordinating with the NIDILRR-funded [Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center \(MSKTC\)](#) to provide scientific results and information for dissemination to stakeholders. Stakeholders include but are not limited to people with SCI and their families, researchers, clinicians, policymakers, and the ACL-funded [National Paralysis Resource Center](#). Grantees may use a variety of dissemination mechanisms that could include state-of-the-science meetings, webinars, websites, and other approaches; and
 - Ensuring that the input of people with SCI is used to shape SCIMS research.

Each applicant under this priority must:

- Demonstrate, in its application, its capacity to successfully engage in multi-site collaborative research. This capacity includes access to research participants, the ability to maintain data quality, and the ability to adhere to research protocols.
- Propose spending at least 15 percent of its annual budget on module project participation, as described in paragraph (c) of this priority.

- Ensure that its Project Director participates in two annual face-to-face SCIMS Project Directors' meetings in the greater Washington, D.C. area.
- Identify and justify the stage or [stages of research](#) of the projects that they are proposing as site-specific and module research projects. If the applicant proposes to conduct research that can be categorized under more than one stage, including research that progresses from one stage to another, those stages must be clearly specified.

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.

Policies

All activities proposed in your application and budget narrative must align with applicable law, including but not limited to statutes, executive orders, federal regulations, and applicable judicial holdings. Accordingly, discretionary awards shall not be used to fund, promote, encourage, subsidize, or facilitate: racial preferences or other forms of racial discrimination by the recipient, including activities where race or intentional proxies for race will be used as a selection criterion for employment or program participation; denial by the recipient of the sex binary in humans, or the belief that sex is a chosen or mutable characteristic; illegal immigration; or any other initiatives that compromise public safety. If an application does not align, the application will not receive funding to the extent permitted by law and applicable court orders.

- 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.
- 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 based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or other protected traits.
- Under this NOFO, you can't continue existing projects without expansion or new and innovative approaches.
- Meals are allowed only in limited circumstances linked to program activities, like during travel or when approved in advance by ACL. See Allowable Costs and Activities, Exhibit 4: Selected Items of Cost, Meals in the [HHS Grants Policy Statement](#).
- There are restrictions on certain telecommunications and video surveillance equipment. See [2 CFR 200.216](#) to make sure this does not apply to any proposed equipment in your application.

Unallowable costs

- Construction or major rehabilitation of buildings.
- 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 200.420](#).

Indirect costs

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

Method 1 – Approved rate. You currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency.

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

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

Subawards

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

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

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

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

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

Salary rate limitation

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

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

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

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

Program income

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



Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

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Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can search for it at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) using opportunity number [HHS-2026-ACL-NIDILRR-SIMS-0217](https://www.grants.gov/award/HHS-2026-ACL-NIDILRR-SIMS-0217). 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.

You can also find materials at [Applying for Grants on ACL's website](#).

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

Get registered

SAM.gov

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

To register:

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

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

Once you register:

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

Grants.gov

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

Join the informational call

We will provide general information about this funding opportunity at an informational conference call. It will be held on:

- **Date:** July 6, 2026
- **Time:** 1 to 3 p.m. ET

You must register for this call in advance. Contact Megan.Alvarado@acl.hhs.gov to register for this call.



Step 3:

Build Your Application

In this step

Application contents and format

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Application contents and format

Applications include five main components. This section includes guidance on each.

Make sure you include each of these:

Component	Submission format
Project abstract	Use the Project Abstract Summary form.
Project narrative	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form
Budget narrative justification	Use the Budget Narrative Attachment form
Attachments	Insert each in the Other Attachments form.
Other required forms	Upload using each required form.

Required format

Required format for application contents.

Font: Times New Roman or Arial

Format: PDF

Size: 12-point font

Footnotes and text in graphics must be 12-point.

Spacing for project narrative main content: Double-spaced

Spacing for budget narrative: As needed

Spacing for project summary, tables, footnotes: Single-spaced.

Please note: Applicants who unnecessarily place project narrative text in tables or figures to avoid the double-spacing requirement run the risk of exceeding the page limit.

Margins: 1-inch

Include page numbers.

Project abstract

Page limit: 1 page

Provide a detailed yet concise description of your proposed project, activities, and intended outcomes. The abstract can be single- or double-spaced.

Project narrative

Page limit: 75 pages

The project narrative is the most important part of the application. We use it as the primary basis to decide whether your project addresses the requirements described in the [Program Description section](#) of this NOFO. We also use the content narrative to review the merit of your project. The project narrative should give a clear and concise description of your project.

You should address these [merit review criteria](#) as you write your project narrative.

- Importance of the problem.
- Alignment with ACL Strategic Priorities.
- Design of research activities.
- Design of dissemination activities.
- Plan of operation.
- Collaboration.
- Plan of evaluation.
- Project staff.
- Adequacy and accessibility of resources.

Include all critical information in the project narrative and not in appendices.

Cite all of your sources in the project narrative.

We will instruct reviewers to disregard all content on the pages beyond the 75th page of your project narrative.

Work plan

You must provide a work plan for your project within your Project Narrative. The work plan connects your goals, anticipated outcomes, and the major tasks you are proposing.

The work plan must cover all years of the project period.

To complete your work plan, see the [project work plan sample template](#) on our website.

Budget justification narrative

Page limit: None

The budget narrative supports the information you provide in Standard Form 424-A. See [other required forms](#).

It includes added detail and justifies the costs you ask for. As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are reasonable and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See [funding limitations](#).

Justify all the costs, including showing how you calculated them. To create your budget narrative, see the [sample format \[PDF\]](#) on our website.

You must submit a budget for each year of grant funding requested.

Attachments

You will upload attachments in [Grants.gov](#) using the Other Attachments Form.

Table of contents

Page limit: None

The table of contents should show where and how the important sections of your proposal are organized. While you will submit your proposal electronically, the reviewers may use printed copies during the review process. The table of contents will assist reviewers as they evaluate your proposal.

References

Page limit: None

You must provide references for works cited in the project narrative. You may provide references in any format (i.e., APA, AMA, MLA). The format must be consistent throughout the project narrative.

Vitae/biosketches of key personnel

Page limit: None

You must provide vitae or biosketches of key personnel for the project. The vitae or biosketches should include information that is relevant to your proposed project. You are encouraged to use the [NIH's biographical sketch format](#). This format gives reviewers a concise description of your training, expertise, and productivity that is related to the proposed project.

Data management plan

Page limit: None

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

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

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

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

Commitment letters

Page limit: None

You must include commitment letters from key individuals and organizations that will have a significant role in carrying out your project. A letter should explain their role and commitment to your project.

Summary of key individuals and organizations

Page limit: None

You must submit a list of key individuals and their organizations that will have a significant role in your project. This includes consultants and contractors.

We will use this information to screen for conflicts of interest with potential peer reviewers for your application.

Indirect cost rate agreement

Page limit: None

Please attach a copy of your current indirect cost rate agreement approved by the Department of Health and Human Services or another Federal agency.

Other required forms

You will need to complete some standard forms. Upload the standard forms listed below at Grants.gov. You can find them in the NOFO [application package](#) or review them and their instructions at [Grants.gov forms](#).

Forms	Submission Requirement
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With application.
Supplemental Information for the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance [PDF]	With application.
Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	With application.
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With application.
Project Narrative Attachment Form	With application.
Attachments	With application.
Project/Performance Site Location(s)	With application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form(Certification Regarding Lobbying)	With application.
Project Abstract Summary	With application.

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 their 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 review each application to make sure 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.

If your application exceeds the page limit for the project narrative, we will instruct reviewers to not review the pages that exceed the page limit. See the [required format](#) section.

Merit review

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The members use the criteria and subcriteria below. Review criteria come primarily from NIDILRR's program regulations ([45 CFR 1330.24](#))

Criterion	Total number of points = 100
1. Importance of the problem	15 points
2. Alignment with ACL Strategic Priorities	5 points
3. Design of research activities	45 points
4. Design of dissemination activities	5 points
5. Plan of operation	5 points
6. Collaboration	5 points
7. Plan of evaluation	5 points
8. Project staff	10 points
9. Adequacy and accessibility of resources	5 points

Criteria

Importance of the problem (Maximum points: 15)

- The extent to which the applicant clearly describes the need and target population.
- The extent to which the proposed project will have beneficial impact on the target population.

Alignment with ACL Strategic priorities (Maximum points: 5)

- The extent to which the proposed project aligns with [ACL's strategic priorities](#) of Whole-person health, Employment, and Connecting people to services.

Design of research (Maximum points: 45)

- The extent to which the proposed design includes a comprehensive and informed review of the current literature, demonstrating knowledge of the state-of-the-art.
- The extent to which each research hypothesis or research question, as appropriate, is theoretically sound and based on current knowledge.
- The extent to which each sample is drawn from an appropriate, specified population and is of sufficient size to address the proposed hypotheses or research questions, as appropriate, and to support the proposed data analysis methods.
- The extent to which the source or sources of the data and the data collection methods are appropriate to address the proposed hypotheses or research questions and to support the proposed data analysis methods.
- The extent to which the data analysis methods are appropriate.
- The extent to which input of individuals with disabilities and other key stakeholders is used to shape the proposed research activities.
- The extent to which implementation of the proposed research design is feasible, given the current state of the science and the time and resources available.
- The extent to which the applicant identifies and justifies the stage of research being proposed and the research methods associated with the stage.

Design of dissemination activities (Maximum points: 5)

- The extent to which the methods for dissemination are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration.
- The extent to which the materials and information to be disseminated and the methods for dissemination are appropriate to the target population, including consideration of the familiarity of the target population with the subject matter, format of the information, and subject matter.

- The extent to which the information to be disseminated will be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Plan of operation (Maximum points: 5)

- The adequacy of the plan of operation to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, and timelines for accomplishing project tasks.
- The adequacy of the plan of operation to provide for using resources, equipment, and personnel to achieve each objective.

Collaboration (Maximum points: 5)

- The extent to which the applicant's proposed collaboration with one or more agencies, organizations, or institutions is likely to be effective in achieving the relevant proposed activities of the project.
- The extent to which agencies, organizations, or institutions demonstrate a commitment to collaborate with the applicant.

Plan of evaluation (Maximum points: 5)

- The extent to which the plan of evaluation provides for periodic assessment of progress toward implementing the plan of operation.
- The extent to which the plan of evaluation provides for periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the project's intended outcomes and expected impacts.
- The extent to which the plan of evaluation will be used to improve the performance of the project through the feedback generated by its periodic assessments.

Project staff (Maximum points: 10)

- The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from people with disabilities, who may include but are not limited to people with disabilities who have the greatest support needs.
- The extent to which the key personnel and other key staff have appropriate training and experience in disciplines required to conduct all proposed activities.

Adequacy and accessibility of resources (Maximum points: 5)

- The extent to which the applicant is committed to provide adequate facilities, equipment, other resources, including administrative support, and laboratories, if appropriate.
- The extent to which the facilities, equipment, and other resources are appropriately accessible to individuals with disabilities who may use the facilities, equipment, and other resources of the project.

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](https://www.sam.gov) Responsibility/Qualification to check this history for all awards likely to be over \$250,000. We also check Exclusions.

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

You can see more details about risk review at [2 CFR 200.206](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-200/subpart-200.206).

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review results. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects, including project type and geographic distribution.
- The past performance of the applicant. We may choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems.
- Reasonableness of proposed costs to the expected results and the likelihood you will achieve those results.
- Available funding.

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.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.

The ACL Administrator makes all final award decisions.

Before we make final funding decisions, ACL leadership will review all potential awards.

They will check for:

- Adherence to applicable laws.
- Alignment to agency priorities (see [Administration for Community Living's \(ACL\) Mission, Vision & Strategic Priorities](#)).
- To the extent allowed by law and court orders, we will give a funding preference to applications that align with agency priorities. Your application may receive this

preference if it aligns with one or more of the following ACL strategic priorities:
Whole person health, Employment, or Connecting people to services.

Award notices

If you are successful, we will email a Notice of Award (NoA) to your authorized official.
We will email you or write you a letter 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 don't have permission to start work.

To see what is in a NoA, see an example on our [website \[PDF\]](#).



Step 5: Submit Your Application

In this step

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Application submission and deadlines

See [find the application package](#) to make sure you have everything you need.

Make sure you are current with SAM.gov and UEI requirements. See [get registered](#). You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

Deadlines

Optional notice of intent

Due on Monday, July 13, 2026.

We ask that you let us know if you plan to apply for this opportunity. We do this to plan for the number of expert reviewers we will need to evaluate applications. You do not have to submit a notice of intent to apply.

Please email the notice to Megan.Alvarado@acl.hhs.gov.

In your email, include:

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

Application

Due on Wednesday, Wednesday, July 29, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

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 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 [Grants.gov](#) service.

If you can't submit your application because of problems with Grants.gov, you will need verification for us to consider accepting your application. Call the [federal service desk](#) before the application due time and record your tracking number. Save your tracking number and any error messages you receive.

Submission methods

Grants.gov

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. See [get registered](#).

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the [quick start guide for applicants](#).

Make sure that your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks or we may not get it. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files. The link above will also help you learn how to create PDFs.

If you can't submit your application because of problems with Grants.gov, you will need verification for us to consider accepting your application. Call the [Federal Service Desk](#) before the application due time and record your tracking number. Save your tracking number and any error messages you receive.

See [contacts and support](#) if you need help.

Intergovernmental review

This NOFO is not subject to executive order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. No action is needed.

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

Component	How to Upload	Included in page limit?
<input type="checkbox"/> Project abstract	Use the Project Abstract Summary Form.	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Project narrative , including Work Plan	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget justification narrative	Use the Budget Narrative Attachment form.	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Attachments	Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Table of contents		
<input type="checkbox"/> References		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Vitae/biosketches of key personnel		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Data management plan		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment letters		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Summary of key individuals and organizations		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Indirect cost agreement		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Other required forms	Upload using each required form.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental Information for the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Narrative Attachment Form		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Attachments		No

Component	How to Upload	Included in page limit?
<input type="checkbox"/> Project/Performance Site Location(s)		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Grants.gov Lobbying form (Certification Regarding Lobbying)		No
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Abstract Summary		No



Step 6: Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration 35

Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

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

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award. You can find information at [managing a grant](#) on our website. 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.
- All anti-discrimination laws: By applying for or accepting federal funds from HHS, recipients certify compliance with all federal antidiscrimination laws and these requirements and that complying with those laws is a material condition of receiving federal funding streams. Recipients are responsible for ensuring subrecipients, contractors, and partners also comply.
- The [ACL Public Access Policy \[PDF\]](#).
- All [regulations](#) for the protection of the rights, welfare, and wellbeing of human subjects involved in research conducted or supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The HHS Office for Human Research Protections](#) has information and resources related to these important requirements.

Compliance and oversight

Recipients must demonstrate ongoing compliance with the [Administration for Community Living's \(ACL\) Mission, Vision & Strategic Priorities](#) through program design, implementation, performance reporting, fiscal management, and evaluation.

Failure to meaningfully align funded activities with applicable statutory authorities and agency priorities may result in corrective action, additional reporting requirements, enforcement actions, or other remedies consistent with 2 CFR Part 200 and the terms and conditions of the award.

Through alignment with these priorities, funded projects will help ensure that older adults and people with disabilities can live with dignity, independence, and full participation in the communities they call home.

Managing award changes

After award, either you or ACL may request changes. We manage these using the rules at 2 CFR 200 and 300, including [2 CFR 200.308](#) and [2 CFR 300.308](#).

Reporting

If your application is successful, you will have to submit financial and performance reports. To learn more about reporting, see [Managing a Grant, Funding Requirements on our website](#).

Financial and performance reports

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

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

FFATA and FSRS reporting

The Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires:

- Data entry at the FFATA Subaward Reporting System for all sub-awards and sub-contracts you issue for \$30,000 or more.



Contacts and support

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Agency contacts

Program and eligibility

Brian Bard

Brian.Bard@acl.hhs.gov

Telephone: 202-795-7298

Financial and budget

Nicole Dunning

Nicole.Dunning1@acl.hhs.gov

Review process and application status

Brian Bard

Brian.Bard@acl.hhs.gov

Telephone: 202-795-7298

Help with systems

Grants.gov

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

- Telephone 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 \(HHS\)](#)
- [HHS Office For Human Research Protections](#)
- [Home Page | ACL Administration for Community Living](#)
- [Applying for Grants | ACL Administration for Community Living](#)
- [Application Tips | ACL Administration for Community Living](#)
- [How to Apply for a Competitive Grant | ACL Administration for Community Living](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#)
- [United States Code \(U.S.C.\)](#)