

Notice of Funding Opportunity  
**Application due Friday, August 7, 2026**

ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**








Administration on Children, Youth, and Families  
Children's Bureau

# Regional Partnership Grants (RPG) Program

Opportunity number: HHS-2026-ACF-ACYF-CU-0021



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# Before you begin

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

## **SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)**

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

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

## **Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)**

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

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

## **Apply by the application due date**

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



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



# Step 1: Review the Opportunity

## In this step

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# Basic information

## Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Administration on Children, Youth, and Families

Children's Bureau

Supporting regional partnerships to improve outcomes for children and families affected by substance use.

## Summary

The Regional Partnership Grants (RPG) Program supports regional partnerships between child welfare agencies, substance abuse treatment agencies, and juvenile or state courts. The goal is to support family-centered treatment programs and services for families whose children are in an out-of-home placement or are at risk of being placed in an out-of-home placement due to a caregiver's substance abuse. This program will also expand the scope of evidence-based services for families affected by substance use disorders.

RPG funds may support:

- Family-based, comprehensive treatment for long-term substance use disorder, including medication-assisted treatment and in-home treatment and recovery.
- Early intervention and prevention services.
- Child and family counseling.
- Mental health services.
- Parenting skills training.
- Replication of successful models for providing family-based, comprehensive substance abuse treatment services.
- Grant recipients will be required to work with the Children's Bureau (CB) on data collection and reporting of the services provided and progress made in achieving the goals of the program.



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

## Key facts

**Opportunity name:**  
Regional Partnership Grants (RPG) Program

**Opportunity number:**  
HHS-2026-ACF-ACYF-CU-0021

**Federal assistance listing:**  
93.087

**NOFO version:** Original

## Key dates

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

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

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

## Funding details

**Type:** Cooperative agreement

**Expected total program funding:** \$8,000,000

**Total expected awards:** 8

**Minimum award amount for each budget period (award floor):** \$250,000

**Maximum award amount for each budget period (award ceiling):** \$1,000,000

Projects will be funded for five years with five 12-month budget periods.

Non-competing continuation awards will be issued to RPG projects. Grant recipients must demonstrate progress on meeting the goals of grants and coordination within the partnership.

Applicants may apply for and be awarded up to \$1,000,000 in each of the five 12-month budget periods.

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

# Eligibility

## Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants are **regional partnerships** established by agencies within or across states. They consist of mandatory and optional partners. The mandatory partners are:

- The state child welfare agency that is responsible for administering the state plan under title IV-B or title IV-E of the Social Security Act.
- The state agency responsible for administering the substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant provided under the Public Health Service Act (title XIX, part B, subpart II).
- The most appropriate administrative office of the juvenile or state court overseeing court proceedings involving families who come to the attention of the court due to child abuse or neglect.

**Optional** partners are:

- Additional state agencies.
- Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal consortia.
- Public or private agencies, including for-profit organizations.

There must be a lead applicant responsible for administering the grant. Any member of the partnership can be the lead applicant, as long as they can monitor program activities or services, funding, and reporting requirements.

If an Indian tribe or tribal consortium is the lead applicant for a regional partnership, the Indian tribe may (but is not required to) include the state child welfare agency as a partner in the collaborative agreement. If the regional partnership is an Indian tribe or tribal consortium, they may not enter into a collaborative agreement only with tribal child welfare agencies (or a consortium of such agencies).

## Other eligibility criteria

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

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

## Disqualifying factors

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

We won't consider an application that:

- Requests funding above the [award ceiling](#).
- Is submitted after the [deadline](#).
- Is from an individual (including a sole proprietorship), federal entity or a foreign entity.
- Is received in paper format that didn't have a previously approved exemption from ACF.
- Requests funding below the funding floor of \$250,000.
- Fails to provide documentation demonstrating that the required regional partnership includes the mandatory partners specified in the authorizing legislation.

## 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 an increasing percentage of the project's total cost in each budget period (project year). In the first budget period, September 30, 2026, to September 29, 2027, you are required to contribute 15% of the project's total cost. You can calculate this cost-sharing requirement in two ways:

**Method 1:** Start with the federal share.

Calculation: Multiply the federal share by 15 and divide that product by 85.

For example:  $(\$850,000 \times 15) / 85 = \$150,000$ .

**Method 2:** Start with the total project cost.

Calculation: Multiply the total project cost by 15%.

For example:  $\$1,000,000 \times 15\% = \$150,000$ .

The cost-sharing requirements, outlined in legislation, for each period of the project are:

- **Budget period 1:** September 2026 to September 2027: 15%
- **Budget period 2:** September 2027 to September 2028: 15%
- **Budget period 3:** September 2028 to September 2029: 20%

- **Budget period 4:** September 2029 to September 2030: 20%
- **Budget period 5:** September 2030 to September 2031: 25%

The increase match over the life of the grant emphasizes the focus on project sustainability within the regional partnership area and is outlined in legislation.

## 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](#).

## Cost-sharing waiver

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

### Post-award requirements

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

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

## Statutory authority

Title IV, part B, subpart 2—Promoting Safe and Stable Families, section 437(f) of the Social Security Act ([42 U.S.C. 629g\(f\)](#))

# Agency priorities

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

The recipient of this award must implement any funds awarded under this NOFO to effectuate program goals or agency priorities in accordance with [ACF's vision, mission, values, priorities, & guiding principles](#) 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 C.F.R. Part 200 and the terms and conditions of this award.

# Program description

## Background

The RPG Program began in 2007 to address the complexity of coordination between child welfare, substance use, and judicial systems to support families. Services to these families have been fragmented and difficult to navigate. RPG supports the collaboration and coordination of systems to support families, focusing on child safety, permanency, well-being, and adult recovery. The RPG Program has supported 127 projects in 40 states and 11 projects focused on American Indian or Alaska Native families.

RPG projects served over 50,000 children and 36,000 families. After RPG Program participation, improvements have been seen in:

- Child safety, child maltreatment rates, and decreases in removals from the home.
- Child well-being measures.
- Enrollment in and completion of substance use disorder treatment.
- Decreased high-severity substance use, trauma, and depression symptoms.

## Program focus

RPG projects are focused on increasing the well-being of, improving permanency for, and enhancing the safety of children who are at risk of an out-of-home placement resulting from a parent's or caregiver's substance use. Projects also focus on adult recovery and family functioning outcomes. Award recipients will use their collaborative infrastructure to build the region's capacity to meet a broad range of needs for families involved with child welfare systems, substance use disorder treatment, courts, and other related service organizations.

Projects will focus on improving outcomes for families affected by substance use and expanding the scope of evidence-based services.

Recipients will monitor ongoing activities and evaluate the progress made toward achieving the goals of the project. Applicants should carefully review this funding opportunity and consider the level of effort required to meet the data collection, evaluation, and reporting requirements.

This program supports the ACF Priority Area of Gold-Standard Research. Grants funded under this NOFO will adhere to the principles outlined in [HHS's Gold Standard Science report](#). With a focus on reproducibility and transparency, Regional Partnership Grants

will determine if the activities have been implemented effectively and resulted in improvements for children and families.

## Program requirements

### Target population

As a recipient, you will focus on families and children in the partnership region whose children are in, or are at risk of, out-of-home placements due to substance abuse by parents or caretakers.

### Regional partnership

This program includes mandatory partners. See the [eligibility section of this NOFO](#) for details on partnership requirements. Applicants should detail the need for collaboration of partners within the target area as well as plans for collaboration throughout the project. Applicants should show a strong, established partnership with the capacity to carry out the project.

### Program services and activities

Projects must carry out services and activities that increase child and family well-being, improve treatment outcomes for parents, and expand evidence-based programs and services to serve the target population.

Examples of services and activities may include:

- Services to support children:
  - Services and activities for children and youth that address child well-being and trauma.
  - Screening and assessing child well-being.
  - Identification of, referrals for, and services to substance-exposed newborns.
  - Mental and behavioral health services.
  - Early intervention and preventive services.
- Services to support parents and caregivers:
  - Quality treatment for substance use disorder.
  - Access to comprehensive substance use disorder treatment programs where children can live on-site with parents.
  - Access to medication-assisted treatment.
  - In-home treatment for substance use disorder, trauma-specific services, and continuing care and recovery support.
  - Services to address violence- and trauma-related symptoms and reactions.

- Services to support family functioning:
  - Services for parents and children that improve parenting capacity and family functioning.
  - Services to build or enhance parental protective factors.
  - Training programs on parenting skills.
  - Training for foster or relative care providers.
  - Services and interventions to improve family functioning and help with reunification.
  - Additional services for families to secure other needs, including housing, transportation, and childcare.

We encourage you to implement and evaluate programs and services found within the [Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#) and other evidence-based and evidence-supported programs and services.

You should include information on program performance that supports continuous quality improvement (CQI). This may include information on how your will:

- Monitor ongoing activities and progress toward project goals and objectives.
- Define key components, including inputs (e.g., organizational capacity, partners, staff, budget, resources), activities, and expected outcomes.
- Explain how inputs, activities, and outcomes will be measured and tracked.
- Describe how data will be used to inform ongoing program improvements (CQI).
- Include processes to ensure data quality and reliability of performance results.

## Expanding evidence

The RPG Program provides an opportunity to expand evidence. If funded, you will:

- Participate in evaluation efforts as required by the legislation. These include data collection and semi-annual reporting on:
  - Services and activities.
  - Progress made to achieve program goals.
  - Number of children, adults, and families receiving services.
- Select performance indicators as established in the Planning Phase.
- Conduct a local evaluation that is appropriately rigorous to the proposed intervention and project. The type of evaluation will vary by project but may include:
  - Intervention development and manualization.
  - Feasibility studies.
  - Outcome studies.

- Process evaluations.
- Quasi-experimental designs.
- Randomized controlled trials.

You will work with CB in the Planning Phase to ensure evaluation efforts align with CB's interest in answering the following questions for the RPG projects:

- Who is involved in each RPG project and how do the partners work together?
- Who are the target populations of the RPG project? Do the RPG projects reach their intended target populations?
- Which well-supported, supported, promising, and/or emerging (evidence-informed) practices are selected as the primary focus of the RPG project? How well did they align with the RPG project's target populations and goals?
- What procedures, infrastructure, and supports were in place to facilitate implementation of the evidence-supported and/or emerging (evidence-informed) practices?
- How are the evidence-supported and/or emerging (evidence-informed) practices going to be implemented? What services are provided?
- What are the well-being, permanency, and safety outcomes of children, and the recovery outcomes of adults who received services from the RPG project?

To meet legislative requirements, projects must collect and report on data from child welfare data systems as well as information from substance abuse services. CB will work with you to report on performance indicators and your project's impact on addressing the needs of families impacted by substance use in or at risk of out-of-home placement.

Evaluation efforts will include collaboration with CB to develop, select, and report on performance indicators related to child safety, child permanency, reunification, re-entry into care, family well-being, adult recovery, parenting capacity, and family functioning as appropriate for your project.

You must plan to utilize an evaluator and evaluation team to assist the project in meeting these requirements.

If appropriate, you may submit your program's evaluation to [the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#) for review. The Clearinghouse conducts objective, transparent reviews of research on programs and services to support children and families and prevent foster care placements. We encourage you to review the Clearinghouse for information on programs and services and the review process.

## Planning and Implementation Phases

RPG projects must include Planning and Implementation phases. The Planning Phase should last no longer than 18 months.

In the **Planning Phase** activities will focus on:

- Implementation planning.
- Evaluation planning.
- Finalizing partnership agreements.
- Piloting or providing services (if possible/desired).

Before the Planning Phase ends, you will have to submit documentation to CB showing that you have completed this phase. This documentation could include:

- Final updates or additions to partnership agreements, such as additional updates, memoranda of agreement (MOAs), memoranda of understanding (MOUs), or letters of agreements from all subrecipients and implementation sites.
- The final target population and target number of people to serve, as well as referral and recruitment plans to ensure the project meets goals for targeting underserved communities.
- Confirmation of the appropriateness and fit of the selected programs, models, interventions, and/or services.
- Refined or revised intervention and training materials that are accurate, age appropriate, and trauma informed.
- A final evaluation plan that demonstrates the capability to participate in rigorous evaluation activities and meet the data collection and semiannual reporting requirements. The plan will include documentation of the work with CB on the selected RPG performance indicators and outcome measures.
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and data-sharing agreements.

CB will review and approve your Planning Phase documentation before you begin your Implementation Phase.

The **Implementation Phase** will focus on delivering program services and evaluating the program.

These activities may include:

- Recruiting, enrolling, and retaining children and families in services.
- Recruiting, training, and retaining program staff.
- Working with partners to further collaboration and build service capacity.
- Monitoring service delivery for program fidelity.
- Conducting rigorous evaluation and CQI activities.

- Semiannual reporting to CB on the services provided; the number of children, adults, and families receiving services; and the progress made in achieving program goals related to child safety, child permanency, reunification, re-entry into care, parental recovery, parenting capacity, and family well-being, as appropriate to the project.
- Collecting and reporting performance indicator data.
- Developing and finalizing a sustainability plan.
- Submitting grant monitoring reports to CB.

## Performance indicators

You are required to report on performance indicators to assess your performance in terms of child safety, child permanency, reunification, reentry into care, parental recovery, parenting capacity, and family well-being.

In the Planning Phase you will work with CB to review, update, and select performance indicators. In the Implementation Phase, you will collect information related to the selected performance indicators.

You must indicate your agreement to collect the performance measures and submit the data to ACF. This may include data gathered from standardized instruments as well as administrative data.

In cases where CB is directly involved in the creation of data collection activities under this NOFO, data collection will be conducted consistent with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, (44 U.S.C. 3501-3521) and display a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. OMB-related efforts pertaining to required data collection will be conducted by a CB-supported contractor. CB will not conduct or sponsor — and a person is not required to respond to — a collection of information covered by the PRA, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

## Cooperative agreement—Description of ACF’s involvement

A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding federal assistance that involves substantial federal involvement. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the responsibilities of you and ACF before the award.

For this project, ACF CB’s involvement and collaboration will include:

- Conducting a Kick-Off meeting post-award and annual convenings for four key staff to articulate the expectations and requirements of the award.
- Reviewing and approving the completion of the Planning Phase before the Implementation Phase may begin.
- Coordinating efforts to develop, refine, select, and report on performance indicators.
- Supporting training and technical assistance.
- Supporting implementation in general.
- Helping you participate in appropriately rigorous evaluation activities.
- Monitoring project requirements.

## Funding policies and limitations

### Changes in HHS regulations

As of October 1, 2025, HHS adopted [2 CFR Part 200](#), with some exceptions included in [2 CFR Part 300](#). These regulations replace those in 45 CFR Part 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.
- Cost restriction for the program. The project must include a budget, which includes allocating 20% of the project budget for evaluation efforts detailed in the [expanding evidence section](#).

## 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 Part 200.332](#) is not a substantive role.

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

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

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

## Salary rate limitation

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

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

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

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

## Program income

If you earn any money from your award-supported project activities (known as program income), you must use it for the purposes and under the conditions of the award. Find more about program income at [2 CFR Part 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 at this NOFO's Grants.gov opportunity page. Then select the Package tab.

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

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

## Get registered

### SAM.gov

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

To register:

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

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

Once you register:

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

## Grants.gov

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

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

## Learn more

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



# Step 3:

# Build Your Application

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# Application checklist

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

## File one: Narratives

Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.

Component	Included in page limit?
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Table of contents</a>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Project summary</a>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Project narrative</a>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Line-item budget and budget narrative</a>	Yes

## File two: Attachments

Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.

Component	Included in page limit?
<input type="checkbox"/> ACF priorities alignment attestation	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Indirect cost agreement	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal proof of nonprofit status	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional eligibility documentation for required partnership (MOU or MOA)	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational capacity supporting information (including organization chart)	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Letters of support (if applicable)	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Third-party agreements (include as the additional eligibility documentation)	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Protection of human subjects certification	No

## Standard forms

Use each required form in Grants.gov.

Component	Included in page limit?
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Abstract Summary	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	No
<input type="checkbox"/> (SF-424B) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Key Contacts	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Grants.gov Lobbying form	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	No
<input type="checkbox"/> 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: 75 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

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

As much as possible, tie to the program description and merit review sections and headers.

The project narrative is where you explain 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.
- Cross-reference between parts of the application rather than repeating information.
- Include any required supporting documents noted. You generally provide these in your [attachments](#).
- Use the headings and order of the sections that follow.

Applicants should clearly describe how their proposed project and activities align with ACF priorities through program design, partnerships, and expected outcomes.

## Purpose and need

### Objectives

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

- Describe your understanding of the need for support of a regional partnership for the families whose children are in an out-of-home placement or are at risk of being placed in an out-of-home placement due to a caregiver's substance abuse within the project's target area.
- Outline your vision to establish and strengthen a regional partnership to deliver family-centered services, improve outcomes for children and families affected by substance use, and expand the availability and use of evidence-based services.

## Expected outcomes

Describe your goals, objectives and expected outcomes.

This may include:

- Improving the well-being of children, parents, and families served.
- Strengthening safe and stable caregiving relationships.
- Improving substance use disorder treatment outcomes for parents (e.g., engagement and completion of treatment).
- Reducing out-of-home placements for children.
- Increasing reunification rates or prevent children from entering out-of-home care.
- Expanding the evidence base of services and programming to serve the target population.

## 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.

- Define and justify your target area and population. You must demonstrate how parental or caregiver substance use has affected out-of-home placements or risk of placement, define the target population (e.g., children already in care, at risk of entering care, or both), gaps in available services, limited access to comprehensive family treatment services, and explain how participants will be identified, recruited, and how many you expect to serve.
- Provide a clear and reasonable plan for program referrals and enrollment, including the partners involved and outreach strategies.
- Detail the need for collaboration of partners within the target area as well as plans for collaboration throughout the project. Show a strong, established partnership with the capacity to carry out the project and include the mandatory partners. Explain how all required partners will participate in the project.

## Project timeline and milestones

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

- Organize the information by task and subtask, showing related milestones. Provide monthly or quarterly quantitative projections for tasks you plan to complete and by when. For example, provide the number of people you plan to serve or the number of a certain activity you plan to complete by a specific date.
- Provide target dates for activities you can't quantify.
- Cover the full period of performance in your timeline.
- Outline a clear timeline with key milestones for both the Planning (no longer than 18 months) and Implementation phases as well as a clear, logic model showing how activities will lead to short- and long-term outcomes.

## Impact

### Project performance evaluation plan

Describe how you will evaluate your project's performance and how it will contribute to CQI. 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 indicator outcomes.
- How your organization will collect and manage data in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. This might include assigned skilled staff, data management software, and data integrity.
- Any potential obstacles to implementing the project performance evaluation and how you will address them.
- A timeline for how you will review information from the performance evaluation and apply it to your ongoing project.
- A budget, which includes allocating 20% of the project budget for evaluation efforts detailed in the [expanding evidence section](#).
- How you will meet Planning Phase requirements and goals as detailed in the Project Description, including working with an evaluator to refine the evaluation

design. Provide detail on the Implementation Phase activities as outlined in the Project Description.

### Activities evaluation plan

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

- Assess activities and progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.
- Assess whether the project is having the expected impacts.
- Specify expected outcomes and any research questions, as well as how the evaluation results will help you understand and improve the funded activities.
- Include a valid and reliable measurement plan, detailed timeline, and sound methodological design.
- Outline a sound plan for securing informed consent and implementing an IRB review.
- Describe the details of the proposed data collection activities, participants, data management, data integrity, and analysis plans, as they relate to the requirements described in the program description section.
- Describe any potential obstacles in implementing the evaluation and how you will address them.

## Resources and capabilities

### Organizational capacity narrative

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 with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.
- Provide evidence that your team 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.
- Show the established partnership along with the collaborative infrastructure needed to implement the proposed project.
- Provide a management plan describing how staff will manage and coordinate activities carried out by staff and any partners, subcontractors, and consultants.
- Provide some supporting information in the organizational capacity supporting information section of your [attachments](#).

- Note: In your [additional eligibility documentation attachment](#), you will include MOUs/MOAs and details to demonstrate the level of collaboration required for this NOFO.

### Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

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

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

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

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

### Project sustainability plan

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

- Provide an approach to project sustainability that is effective and feasible. Describe:
  - The key people and organizations whose support you will require.
  - The types of alternative support you will require to maintain the project.
- If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how you will maintain their cooperation or collaboration after the federal funding ends.

### Protection of sensitive or confidential information

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

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

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

### Dissemination plan

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

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

## Line-item budget and budget narrative

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

HHS now uses the definitions for [equipment](#) and [supplies](#) in [2 CFR Part 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 include detail, including calculations for the “object class categories” in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for each year of the period of performance. See information on [funding periods](#).

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See the [funding policies and limitations](#).
- Twenty percent of grant funds are required for evaluation work.

- Required match that increases over the life of the grant award.
- Funds to support required travel for the project director, evaluator, and two other key staff to attend a kick-off meeting in year 1 and an annual convening each year of the grant recipients in Washington, DC.

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.
- Submit a budget for each of the 12-month budget periods.

## Proprietary or personally identifiable information

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

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

## File two: Attachments

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

This file includes all attachments.

### ACF priorities alignment attestation

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

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

I hereby attest and certify that:

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

Insert Date of Signature:

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

Signature of AOR:

### Indirect cost agreement

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

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

## Legal proof of nonprofit status

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

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

## Additional eligibility documentation

You must include documentation showing collaborations between the [required partners](#). This documentation should include signed and completed memoranda of agreement/understanding (MOA/MOU). Documentation should reflect signed agreements clearly reflecting the agencies' commitment to the partnership.

Include details to demonstrate the level of collaboration required for this NOFO.

See the [eligibility section for full information on mandatory partners](#).

## 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 or curricula vitae for all key personnel.
- Biographical sketches for all key personnel.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- Copy or description of your organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.
- Child-care licenses and other documentation of professional accreditation.
- Information on compliance with federal, state, and local government standards.
- Appropriate documentation of the partnership with roles, responsibilities, timelines, and commitment to the project.

## 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, MOUs, and MOAs. We do not consider general letters of support to be third-party agreements.

Any such agreement must:

- Describe each party's roles and responsibilities for project activities.
- Describe the support and resources that the third party is committing to the proposed project.
- Be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments.
- 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.

## Protection of human subjects certification

Not included in the page limit.

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

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

## Standard forms

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

Forms	Submission requirement
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Abstract Summary	With the application.
<input type="checkbox"/> Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With the application.
<input type="checkbox"/> Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With the application.
<input type="checkbox"/> Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	With the application.
<input type="checkbox"/> Key Contacts	With the application.
<input type="checkbox"/> Grants.gov Lobbying form	With the application or before award.
<input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable based on instructions, with the application or before award.
<input type="checkbox"/> 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. <a href="#">Objectives</a>	10 points
2. <a href="#">Approach</a>	40 points
3. <a href="#">Evaluation</a>	25 points
4. <a href="#">Organizational capacity</a>	20 points
5. <a href="#">Budget</a>	5 points
6. <a href="#">ACF Priority Alignment</a>	10 points

## Scoring criteria

### Objectives

**Maximum points: 10**

The reviewer will assess how well you do the following:

1.1 State your main objectives and any sub-objectives, including all details requested in the [OBJECTIVES](#) section.

1.2 Describe your understanding of the need for support of a regional partnership to support family-centered services within the project's target area.

1.3 Outline your vision to establish or strengthen a regional partnership to deliver family-centered services, improve outcomes for children and families affected by substance use, and expand the availability and use of evidence-based services.

### Approach

**Maximum points: 40**

The reviewer will assess how well you do the following:

#### Target population and participants

2.1 Demonstrate that substance use by parents or caretakers has had a substantial impact on the number of out-of-home placements for children, or the number of children who are at risk of being placed in an out-of-home placement, in the partnership region.

2.2 Provide a detailed description of the target population including relevant child welfare and substance use and treatment data.

2.3 Demonstrate the need for services and programming and the current gaps in service for the target population.

2.4 Outline a reasonable plan for the project's referral process and participant enrollment criteria. Include additional plans to boost referrals and enrollment if needed during the project period.

### **Regional partnership**

2.5 Demonstrate the need for collaboration between mandatory partners (and optional partners, if applicable) to support your project vision.

2.6 Describe how each mandatory partner will participate in the regional partnership, including the lead partner's role in ensuring communication, shared accountability and outcomes, and cost sharing throughout the project.

2.7 Describe the partners' agreement and processes to share data for program evaluation and/or research, and for prior RPG sites, demonstrate successful efforts in securing administrative data.

### **Planning and Implementation phases**

2.8 Provide a clear and concise vision for the overall project.

2.9 Describe how you will conduct the work in both the Planning and Implementation phases.

2.10 Detail how the selected activities, programs, and services are consistent with research or evaluations demonstrating that the approach is effective for the target population.

2.11 Clearly outline program and service delivery, including information on recruitment, referrals, enrollment, service provision, monitoring, and aftercare.

2.12 Describe the factors that could speed or hinder project implementation and explain how you will manage these factors.

### **Timeline and logic model**

2.13 Include a reasonable and appropriate timeline for implementing the proposed project, including major milestones and target dates for the Planning and Implementation phases of the project. Include the proposed length of the Planning Phase, which should be no longer than 18 months.

2.14 Provide a well-defined logic model to guide the proposed project, demonstrating strong links between proposed inputs and activities and intended short- and long-term outcomes.

### **Dissemination and sustainability**

2.15 Present a detailed and sound plan for strategically and effectively disseminating project information and findings.

2.16 Detail a sound sustainability plan for continuing this project beyond the period of federal funding. This includes integrating services into ongoing practices, continuing collaborative partnerships, increasing access to services statewide, and expanding the scope of evidence.

## Evaluation

### Maximum points: 25

The reviewer will assess how well you:

3.1 Describe a plan to monitor ongoing activities and progress toward project goals and objectives.

3.2 Define inputs, key activities, and expected outcomes (e.g., partners, staff, budget, resources).

3.3 Measure and track performance and use data to drive continuous quality improvement (CQI) and ensure data quality.

3.4 Identify an evaluator or evaluation team with experience with research and evaluation in working with the proposed target population as well as plans to collaborate with programmatic staff.

3.5 Describe the project's ability to collect and report required data as well as how the evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the proposed project and address proposed research questions.

3.6 Describe a clear, rigorous evaluation plan and methods that are feasible, comprehensive, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and context of the proposed project.

3.7 Outline an appropriate, timely, and feasible plan to ensure that you can access administrative data from child welfare data systems as well as information from substance abuse services.

3.8 Provide an appropriate plan to work with an evaluator to secure informed consent and implement an IRB review and tribal review, if applicable.

3.9 Include plans and resources to work with CB on the performance indicators and the capacity to collect and submit information related to the performance indicators.

## Organizational capacity

### Maximum points: 20

The reviewer will assess how well you:

4.1 Demonstrate relevant experience and expertise administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects.

4.2 Show that you have an established partnership with the collaborative infrastructure to support the implementation of the proposed project.

4.3 Provide documentation of required partners through signed MOAs/MOUs. This may also include additional letters of support.

4.4 Provide information for each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) showing the organizational capability to fulfill assigned roles and functions effectively.

4.5 Describe the relevant expertise and knowledge of the proposed project director, evaluator, and key project staff. Demonstrate their ability to effectively implement and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity.

4.6 Include a sound management plan that clearly describes how you will manage and coordinate activities carried out by staff and any partners, subcontractors, and consultants.

## Budget

**Maximum points: 5**

The reviewer will assess how well you:

5.1 Detail a line-item budget and narrative budget justification between \$250,000 and \$1,000,000 for each year of the project.

5.2 Include in your budget the costs for traveling to attend the grantee meetings (one kick-off meeting and one in each subsequent year) in Washington, DC, for up to four key staff, which may include the project director, evaluator, and other key partners and staff.

5.3 Allocate 20% of the project budget for the required evaluation elements of this funding opportunity and detail the use of these funds. This includes evaluation efforts detailed in the [expanding evidence section](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Scoring considerations for the next three criteria:**

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

#### **6.1 Demonstrated review and understanding (Up to 2 Points)**

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

Reviewers will look for:

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

#### **6.2 Operationalization in program design and implementation (Up to 3 Points)**

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

- Gold-standard research.

Reviewers will assess if the applicant:

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

### 6.3 Integration into performance and continuous improvement (Up to 5 Points)

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

- Gold-standard research.

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the application:

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

We do not consider voluntary cost sharing during merit review.

## Risk review

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

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

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

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

## Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

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

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

We may:

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

We will not fund:

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

## Award notices

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

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

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

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



# Step 5: Submit Your Application

## In this step

Application submission and deadlines

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# Application submission and deadlines

## Application

### Deadline

Due on Friday, August 7, 2026.

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

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

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

### Grants.gov submission

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

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

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

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

### Issues with federal systems

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

## Exemptions for paper submissions

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

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

To submit your application, mail it to:

**Children's Bureau Operations Center**

c/o LCG, Inc.

6000 Executive Boulevard, Suite 410

Rockville, MD, 20852

Follow these requirements when you submit your paper application:

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

## Intergovernmental review

You will need to submit application information for intergovernmental review under [Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs](#).

Under this order, states may design their own processes for commenting on some applications. Some states have this process and others don't.

To find out your state's approach, see the [list of state single points of contact \[PDF\]](#). If you find a contact on the list for your state, contact them as soon as you can to learn their process. If you do not find a contact for your state, you don't need to do anything further.

This requirement never applies to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations.



# Step 6:

# Learn What Happens After Award

## In this step

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# 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 Part 200](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, effective October 1, 2025. These replace those in 45 CFR Part 75, with some exceptions in [2 CFR Part 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 (42 U.S.C. 629g(f)).

## 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
- **Regional Partnership Grant Program Semiannual ACF Performance Progress Report** (0970-0490, expires March 31, 2029)
  - Report frequency: Semiannually



# Contacts and Support

## In this step

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# Agency contacts

## Program

Catherine Luby

[Cb@grantreview.org](mailto:Cb@grantreview.org)

888-203-6161

## Grants management

Sarah Viola

[cb@grantreview.org](mailto:cb@grantreview.org)

888-203-6161

# Help with systems

## Grants.gov

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

- Phone: 1-800-518-4726
- Email: [support@Grants.gov](mailto: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](#)
- [National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare](#)
- [Regional Partnership Grants National Cross-Site Evaluation](#)
- [Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#)

# Paperwork Reduction Act disclaimer

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

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

# Modifications

Modification Description	Updated Date