



Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Child Care Policy Research Partnership Grants

HHS-2022-ACF-OPRE-YE-0106

Application Due Date: 06/10/2022

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Funding Opportunity Title:

Child Care Policy Research Partnership Grants

Announcement Type:

Initial

Funding Opportunity Number:

HHS-2022-ACF-OPRE-YE-0106

Primary CFDA Number:

93.575

Due Date for Applications:

06/10/2022

Executive Summary

Notice:

- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) carefully and observe the application formatting requirements listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. For more information on applying for grants, please visit "How to Apply for a Grant" on the ACF Grants & Funding Page at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant>.**

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) invites applications for Child Care Policy Research Partnerships (CCPRP) grants to support new research and evaluation activities developed and conducted through partnerships between Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agencies in states, territories, and tribes and researchers from institutions of higher education, research organizations, and other eligible organizations. This opportunity will fund up to eight cooperative agreements to pursue research questions of current relevance to local, state, and national child care policy. These projects will be expected to add to our knowledge about the efficacy of child care subsidy policies and quality improvement initiatives in promoting family economic self-sufficiency, children's healthy

development and learning, and support for child care providers.

Projects are also expected to inform the field at large. As such, grant recipients will be expected to participate in a consortium of CCPRP grant recipients that will meet monthly and communicate regularly to share lessons learned, identify opportunities for collaborative analyses, and develop collective expertise and resources.

The CCPRP Grant Program will be funded through the cooperative agreement mechanism. See *Section II. Federal Award Information* for a description of the substantial involvement of the Federal Project Officer (PO) in the performance of these cooperative agreements.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

Section 658O(a)(5) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9858m(a)(5)).

Description

A. Background

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal block grant program administered by the Office of Child Care (OCC) within ACF dedicated to supporting the employment and economic self-sufficiency of low-income working parents by providing access to affordable, high-quality child care that meets health and safety requirements and supports child development. CCDF is authorized by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-186, codified at 42 U.S.C. §9857 *et seq.*). CCDF is the primary federal funding source for child-care subsidies to help eligible working families with low incomes access child care and to improve the quality of child care for all children. As a block grant, CCDF gives funding to states, territories, and tribes to provide child care subsidies through grants and contracts with providers, as well as vouchers or certificates to families. CCDF promotes children's healthy development and learning by supporting child care licensing and quality improvement systems and by supporting child care professionals to attain more training and education. CCDF funds providers in a range of settings, including family child care homes and centers that may be operated by a public, private, or non-profit entity, or a public-private partnership. To learn more about the goals and initiatives of the CCDF and OCC, please visit the OCC website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/>.

To facilitate CCDF services, OCC establishes and oversees the implementation of child care policies and provides guidance and technical assistance to states, territories, and tribal governments as they administer CCDF programs. OCC has also taken a lead role in supporting state early care and education systems to help ensure that children receive quality care in order to support their healthy development and school success. OCC has created strategic partnerships with states to improve early childhood programs through a significant infusion of guidance, training, and technical assistance to promote the development of early learning guidelines, professional development plans, development and implementation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), and coordination across early childhood programs.

The CCDF funding reserved for research is intended to help child care decision-makers in

crafting policies and initiatives that support positive outcomes for families and children; to increase the capacity for child care research at the national, state, and local levels; and, to promote linkages among research, policy, and practice. To date, these funds have supported research efforts that have increased our knowledge about the efficacy of child care subsidy policies and programs in enhancing employment and economic self-sufficiency of families with low incomes and in improving quality in child care and early education settings to support learning and development of children. Descriptions of current and past research projects funded with these research set aside funds can be found at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/topic/overview/child-care>.

B. Program Goals and Requirements

The overall purpose of the Child Care Policy Research Partnership (CCPRP) Grant Program is to support active collaborations between CCDF Lead Agencies and researchers to build capacity for evidence-informed child care policymaking. The CCDF Lead Agency and their research partners (Project Team) are expected to work collaboratively throughout all phases of the project to investigate questions of immediate relevance to local, state, and national child care policies and practices. Project Teams are also encouraged to engage other interested parties to promote the relevance of the funded work. Additionally, Project Teams are expected to work collaboratively with OPRE, the cohort of FY22 CCPRP grant recipients, and other federally-funded projects to optimize the generalizability and dissemination of findings from this federal investment. These projects are intended to add to our knowledge about the CCDF program and quality improvement initiatives that are intended to support employment and self-sufficiency outcomes for parents, increase families' access to high quality child care programs, and promote positive learning and school readiness outcomes for children.

The specific goals and requirements of the CCPRP grant program are to:

1. Promote evidence-based policymaking through mutually beneficial research partnerships between child care researchers and CCDF Lead Agencies.

Project Teams must include a state, territory, or tribal CCDF Lead Agency and a research partner from an institution of higher education, a research organization, or an organization with demonstrated capacity to conduct rigorous policy research. If the policies of interest are determined at the county level or other jurisdiction/area in the state, applications from partnerships with the lead agency at that level will be entertained. Partnerships may involve multiple lead agencies or sites to support comparison. In fact, collaborative projects that would explore common questions across states are encouraged. Partnerships must be formalized through memoranda of understanding, contracts, or subaward agreements during the course of the grant. For state and territory CCDF Lead Agency contact information, please visit: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/contact-information/state-and-territory-child-care-and-development-fund-administrators>. For tribal CCDF Lead Agency contact information, please visit: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/contact-information/tribal-ccdf-contacts-state>.

Partnerships between lead agencies and research organizations are expected to increase the long-term capacity of the field to produce, access, and use rigorous and relevant research to inform child care policies. Specifically, research organizations are expected to develop greater capacity for producing and communicating policy-relevant research and CCDF Lead Agencies are

expected to develop greater capacity for internal research and data use.

To this end, all aspects of the planning and execution of the work supported by this grant program are expected to be conducted through collaborative efforts between the state, territory, or tribal CCDF Lead Agency and their research partner. Together, the partners are expected to develop the research questions, agree on the research design and its implementation, establish procedures to access and use existing data or collect new data, establish a mechanism to discuss the results as they are obtained and direct further research, consider the practice and policy implications of the results, disseminate the results to multiple audiences, and plan for future research. Ongoing collaboration between partners helps ensure that the research will be of direct use to the lead agency, as well as to the field at large.

CCPRP grant recipients are also encouraged to engage other interested parties, especially organizations that are critical to the implementation of child care policies or initiatives central to the proposed research objectives. For example, the following entities may also be included as part of a research partnership project, in addition to the CCDF Lead Agency and research partner: (1) partnerships across state and/or local agencies; (2) departments and agencies that administer child care programs, including public or private child care centers, Head Start, or public pre-K; (3) resource and referral organizations; (4) state agencies or organizations that oversee Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) or licensing initiatives; (5) planning councils, commissions, advisory groups, and other organizations that participate in child care planning and policy making; (6) non-academic research organizations; (7) tribal, county, or local agencies that administer child care subsidy programs; (8) family child care providers or networks of family child care homes; (9) professional organizations and associations; (10) providers of supportive services such as provider training, technical assistance, or consumer education; (11) programs and services that provide comprehensive services to young children and their families, including, but not limited to, home visiting and behavioral and mental health supports; (12) civic groups and community organizations; (13) foundations and charitable organizations; (14) parents or parent advocacy groups; and (15) community-based research agencies and organizations.

Subawards. Recipients under this grant program may opt to transfer a portion of substantive programmatic work to other organizations through subaward(s). The prime recipient must maintain a substantive role in the project. ACF defines a substantive role as conducting activities and/or providing services funded under the award that are necessary and integral to the completion of the project. Subrecipient monitoring activities alone as specified in 45 CFR § 75.352 do not constitute a substantive role. Furthermore, ACF does not fund awards where the role of the applicant is primarily to serve as a conduit for passing funds to other organizations unless that arrangement is authorized by statute.

Subrecipient(s) must meet the eligibility requirements identified in the NOFO, Section III.1. Eligible Applicants. Additionally, all subrecipient(s) must obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, or after government-wide implementation, a Unique Entity Identifier assigned by the System for Award Management (SAM), if they do not already have one. Prime recipients are required to check the SAM to verify that the subrecipient(s) is/are not debarred, suspended, or ineligible.

Please reference the [Award Term and Condition on Subawards](#) on the [ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#) website for further requirements involving subawards.

2. Conduct research that addresses issues of current relevance to CCDF decision-makers at the local, state, and national levels.

Research and evaluation are critical to understanding child care policy issues. Projects will contribute to the broader knowledge base by conducting new research that is relevant to state and local CCDF administrators with clear links to questions of significance for national policies and initiatives and their implications for children, parents, and providers. All proposed projects are expected to build on existing literature to address gaps in current knowledge. All projects must be informed by an empirically-based conceptual framework or theory of change (e.g., mediational pathways) submitted at the time of application. Proposed projects must include new data collections or analysis of administrative data and should employ the best available research design and methods to address the questions of interest. Proposed projects may use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches but must address applied research questions of value to the CCDF Lead Agency and the social policy and early care and education fields.

Research topics that are of major interest for this year's grants include, but are not limited to:

- Evidence-informed approaches to meaningfully measure quality in child care programs, with special consideration of equitable standards for various provider types (e.g., family child care providers, providers serving different age groups, and providers offering non-traditional hours of care)
- Building the supply of high-quality child care through targeted investments in the early childhood workforce (e.g., livable wages and benefits that are commensurate with qualifications, education, and professional development).

Project Teams should collaboratively develop innovative projects that draw on the resources and opportunities available to rigorously examine the proposed research questions. Rigor is not restricted to impact evaluations, but is also necessary in implementation or process evaluations, descriptive studies, outcome evaluations, and formative evaluations; and in both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Rigor requires ensuring that inferences about cause and effect are well founded (internal validity); requires clarity about the populations, settings, or circumstances to which results can be generalized (external validity); and requires the use of measures that accurately capture the intended information (measurement reliability and validity) (ACF Evaluation Policy, 2021). Rigorous research incorporates the following criteria:

- **Credibility:** Ensuring what is intended to be evaluated is actually what is being evaluated; making sure that descriptions of the phenomena or experience being studied are accurate and recognizable to others; ensuring that the method used is the most definitive and compelling approach that is available and feasible for the question being addressed. If conclusions about program efficacy are being examined, the study design should include a comparison group (i.e., randomized control trial or quasi-experimental design).
- **Applicability:** Generalizability of findings beyond current project (i.e., when findings "fit" into contexts outside the study situation). Ensuring the sample being studied represents one or more of the populations being served by the program.

- Consistency: When processes and methods are consistently followed and clearly described, someone else could replicate the approach, and other studies can confirm what is found.
- Neutrality: Producing results that are as objective as possible and acknowledge the bias brought to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the results.

Please see ACF's Evaluation Policy for a more detailed definition of rigor: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/acf-evaluation-policy-november-9-2021.pdf>

Past project descriptions and products can be found at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/project/child-care-policy-research-partnerships-1995-2023>

3. Produce policy-relevant findings and information throughout the duration of the grant.

Well-planned research studies sometimes take years to complete, but policymakers often need more immediate information to make evidence-based policy decisions. Project Teams must consider how their proposed topics and chosen design can produce relevant findings/information that could be shared throughout the project. In order to provide timely information to policymakers, both locally and nationally, Project Teams must complete policy-relevant preliminary analyses in the first year. For example, Project Teams may leverage existing data sources, field a short survey, or collect new data to be analyzed and reported in the first year. Preliminary analyses are intended to inform the broader goals of the proposed research while providing important information to policymakers along the way.

The CCDF and child care policy landscape is rapidly changing. Project Teams are expected to remain flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the CCDF Lead Agency partner and other interested parties throughout the duration of the project period. This may require revising the research questions or approach to planned data collections and analyses. Any changes must be fully justified and approved by ACF before implementation.

4. Support collaborative research projects across lead agencies that explore common research questions to maximize the value and generalizability of these federal investments.

Cross-project collaboration will strengthen individual projects and result in data that informs the field more broadly. Project Teams will participate in a consortium of FY22 CCPRP grant recipients. The Consortium will convene virtually at least monthly to: (a) share lessons learned; (b) identify opportunities for collaboration, including, in the case of similar research questions, implementing similar study designs and analyses, and use of common measures to collect new data; (c) identify commonalities and develop collective expertise; and (d) participate in dissemination activities and develop resources to be shared with the field at large.

The FY22 CCPRP Consortium will be supported by an OPRE-sponsored federal research center ("Center"). The Center will facilitate collaborative research and dissemination efforts and answer common research questions across states. Grant recipients must communicate regularly and engage with the Center's activities, as requested. For example, this may involve sharing common data elements with the Center for analysis, participating in the development of cross-project publications and presentations, or engaging in collaborative activities or communities of learning

with other federally-sponsored child care grants.

Project Teams will work with other Consortium members, the Center, and the federal project officer(s) to identify opportunities for use of common constructs and measures, data collection protocols, tools, data management protocols, analyses, and dissemination. It is not the intention for every project to be the same. Each project should be designed to meet the research and policy needs of the CCDF Lead Agency partner. However, research plans should be designed with sufficient flexibility to incorporate changes that will enhance learning across sites.

Project proposals **must** reserve effort to participate in these collaborative activities throughout the project period. Project Teams must reserve sufficient effort to participate in the FY22 CCPRP Consortium, including, but not limited to, attending at monthly web meetings, participating in regular discussions, revising research plans, conducting appropriate cross-site analyses, participating in Center-sponsored activities, and coordinating cross-site dissemination activities. Grant recipients are expected to reserve approximately 20% of their effort for participation in these activities during Year 1.

5. Foster the exchange of current research, ideas, and information among research, policy, and practice communities.

Project Teams must attend, and should budget for, the following required meetings and conferences:

- **FY22 CCPRP Consortium Kick-Off Meeting:** Key project personnel (e.g., Principal Investigator(s), CCDF Lead Agency partners, and task leads, as appropriate) are expected to attend the two-day, in-person kick-off meeting. This meeting will be held in Washington, DC within the first 3 months of the project period. This will be an opportunity to meet other Project Teams in-person, discuss research plans, and identify plans for the monthly web meetings. Upon award, the date of the meeting will be shared with grant recipients. This meeting will only occur during the first year.
- **Monthly FY22 CCPRP Consortium Meeting:** Key project personnel must participate in a monthly virtual convening of the Consortium. These meetings will be scheduled after award and are expected to be about 1-hour in length. These meetings will serve as the primary venue for cross-project collaboration and shared learning. Project Teams are expected to participate each year of the project. More frequent or longer meetings may be necessary to accomplish the cross-project collaboration goals for the first year.
- **Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) Annual Meeting:** It is expected that key project personnel will attend the annual meeting in Washington, DC, for two full days. The meeting brings together grant recipients, contracted researchers funded by ACF, and federal and state CCDF administrators to discuss child care policy research. This meeting is an excellent opportunity for Project Teams to build relationships with key stakeholders and to discuss implications of research developments and the work of the research partnerships. Project Teams are expected to attend each year of the project.
- **Annual FY22 CCPRP Consortium Meeting:** It is expected that key project personnel will attend the annual in-person grant recipient meeting to discuss project developments,

identify research questions or issues of common interest, and identify potential collaborative products and resources. This meeting is typically held one day prior to or following the CCEEPRC meeting in Washington, DC. Project Teams are expected to attend each year of the project.

Additionally, Project Teams are encouraged, but not required to attend:

- **State and Territories CCDF Administrators Meeting (STAM).** STAM is hosted annually in Washington, DC, typically in August.
- **National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC).** NRCEC is hosted bi-annually in Washington, DC, typically in June. The next meeting will be held in summer 2024.

If there are health and safety concerns with in-person convenings, the federal project officer and the FY22 CCPRP Consortium will confer regarding acceptable alternatives to these meeting requirements.

6. Disseminate findings to relevant audiences at local, state, and national levels.

Results of the studies funded through this opportunity, including the implications of results for decision-makers at the local, state, and national levels, will be made widely accessible. Project Teams are expected to identify and/or develop opportunities, products, activities, or resources to communicate about the implications and innovations of the research project to both research and policy audiences at the local, state, and national levels. Project Teams must consider how to disseminate both interim and final project findings and results. Project descriptions, briefs, publications, and any other products or resources developed with funds from this award are expected to be made publicly available, to the extent feasible and appropriate. Project Teams should confer with ACF to determine whether specific products are appropriate to be archived with Child Care and Early Education Research Connections (<https://www.researchconnections.org/>).

During the first year of the award, Project Teams must confer with their federal project officer to establish connections with the Child and Family Data Archive (CFData). The CFData team will provide guidance for archiving (e.g., guidelines for codebooks, user guides, and datasets). Early discussions will reduce obstacles for archiving at the end of the project.

Project Teams, the federal project officer, and the CFData team will jointly select the datasets that are most appropriate for archiving and decide among the options for dissemination that best address all concerns related to privacy, intellectual property rights, data ownership, and other issues. For more information about CFData, see www.childandfamilydataarchive.org.

When issuing statements, press releases, publications, requests for proposal, bid solicitations and other documents --such as tool-kits, resource guides, websites, and presentations (hereafter “statements”) -- describing the projects or programs funded in whole or in part with HHS federal funds, the recipient must clearly state:

1. the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program or project funded with federal money; and,

2. the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program funded by non-governmental sources.

When issuing statements resulting from activities supported by HHS financial assistance, the recipient entity must include an acknowledgement of federal assistance using the following or a similar statement.

"This [project/publication/program/website, etc.] [is/was] supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$XX with 100 percent funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#)."

The federal award total must reflect total costs (direct and indirect) for all authorized funds (including supplements and carryover) for the total competitive segment up to the time of the public statement. Any amendments by the recipient to the acknowledgement statement must be coordinated with the HHS Awarding Agency. If the recipient plans to issue a press release concerning the outcome of activities supported by HHS financial assistance, it should notify the HHS Awarding Agency in advance to allow for coordination. For examples of applicability for the Stevens Amendment, please review [Examples of Stevens Amendment Documents or Other Publications](#). (PDF)

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:

CA (Cooperative Agreement)

Estimated Total Funding:

\$3,200,000

Expected Number of Awards:

8

Award Ceiling:

\$400,000

Per Budget Period

Award Floor:

\$100,000

Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:

\$400,000

Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:

09/30/2022

Length of Project Periods:

48-month project period with four 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'

Additional Information on Awards:

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

Applications requesting an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period, or per project period, as stated in this section, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period. Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A recipient's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** For more information on these requirements, see *Section III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching*.

Description of ACF's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement Award

Under the cooperative agreements, substantial involvement is anticipated by ACF throughout the duration of the funded projects. ACF will monitor the project and provide technical assistance and feedback when necessary, including joint decision-making on research design, approach, and dissemination. ACF will provide leadership to maximize cooperation and collaboration among recipients, including organizing periodic consultations and teleconferences to review research activities, to share information and to promote coordination of the project. ACF will schedule and host annual FY22 CCPRP Consortium meetings, set the agenda, and coordinate activities. ACF will work collaboratively with recipients to facilitate accomplishment of project goals. ACF will facilitate collaboration and coordination with other recipients, a child care policy research partnerships support center, ACF program offices (e.g., Office of Child Care) and their technical assistance providers, and other contractors.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

The Child Care Policy Research Partnership grant program is intended to fund collaborative research projects between a Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency and their research partner(s) (e.g., institutions of higher education, research organizations). Therefore, eligible applicants may be either the CCDF Lead Agency or research partner organizations.

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity. Faith-based organizations may apply for this award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at and, subject to the protections and requirements of 45 CFR Part 87 and 42 U.S.C. § 2000bb *et seq.*, ACF will not, in the

selection of recipients, discriminate against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, affiliation, or exercise.

Reference to Legal Status

See *Section IV.2. Legal Status of Applicant Entity* for documentation required to support eligibility.

Funding Restrictions Reference

Please see *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions* for any limitations on the use of federal funds that could affect the eligibility of an applicant or project.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:

No

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where "cost sharing" refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by a recipient or subrecipient and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the recipient will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NoA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

III.3. Other

CCDF Lead Agencies can partner on multiple applications for funding under this grant program; however, it is unlikely that a lead agency would be awarded more than one grant as the grant recipient or as the partner. This also applies to research institutions, such that organizations may submit multiple applications as the research partner, but an organization would not receive more than one grant as the grant recipient or as the partner.

Application Disqualification Factors

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding

opportunity.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

Applications that request an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period or per project period ("per project period" refers only to fully funded awards), as stated in *Section II. Federal Award Information*, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity. This disqualification applies only to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the first 12-month budget period for projects with multiple budget periods. If the project and budget period are the same, the disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for the project period.

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at www.Grants.gov. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity.**

Applicants that do not have an internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "[ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission](#)."

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 pm ET on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times. Electronic applications submitted to www.Grants.gov after 11:59 pm ET on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from www.Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity. That is, applications submitted to www.Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 am ET on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity.

Applications submitted to www.Grants.gov at any time during the open application period, and prior to the due date and time, which fail the www.Grants.gov validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by ACF.

Each time an application is submitted via www.Grants.gov, the submission will generate a new date and time-stamp email notification. Only those applications with on-time date and time stamps that result in a validated application, which is transmitted to ACF will be acknowledged.

The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times. Paper applications received

after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity.**

Notification of Application Disqualification

Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this NOFO.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

OPRE Review Team
Child Care Policy Research Partnerships
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax
VA
22031
887-350-5913
703-934-3740
CCRP2@icfi.com

Application Packages

Electronic Application Submission:

The electronic application submission package is available in the NOFO's listing at www.Grants.gov.

Applications in Paper Format:

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" available in the NOFO's Grants.gov Synopsis under the Package tab at www.Grants.gov. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* if applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to www.Grants.gov.

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) for assistance at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

Each applicant applying electronically via www.Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)

AOR is the designated representative of the applicant/recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the award and administration of grants. In signing a grant application, this individual agrees that the organization will assume the obligations imposed by applicable Federal statutes and regulations and other terms and conditions of the award, including any assurances, if a grant is awarded.

Point of Contact

In addition to the AOR, a point of contact on matters involving the application must also be identified. The point of contact, known as the Project Director or Principal Investigator, should not be identical to the person identified as the AOR. The point of contact must be available to answer any questions pertaining to the application.

Application Checklist

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials.

Accepted Font Style

Applications must be in Times New Roman (TNR), 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be TNR 10-point font. Pages that contain blurred text, or text that is too small to read comfortably, will be removed.

English Language

Applications must be submitted in the English language and must be in the terms of United States (U.S.) dollars. If applications are submitted using another currency, ACF will convert the foreign currency to U.S. currency using the date of receipt of the application to determine the rate of exchange.

Page Limitations

Applicants must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:". Page limitation(s) do not include SFs and OMB-approved forms.

All applications must be double-spaced. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the Project Description file or the Appendices file will have extra pages removed, and those pages will not be reviewed.

Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced: the table of contents, the one-page Project Summary, required Assurances and Certifications, required SFs, required OMB-approved forms, resumes,

logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, third-party agreements, letters of support, footnotes, tables, the line-item budget and/or the budget justification.

Adherence to NOFO Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements

Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the application. Pages will be removed before the objective review. The removed page(s) will not be made available to reviewers.

Applications that have more than one scanned page of a document on a single page will have the page(s) removed from the review.

For applicants that submit paper applications, double-sided pages will be counted as two pages. When the maximum allowed number of pages is reached, excess pages will be removed and will not be made available to reviewers.

NOTE: Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended. The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

Corrections/Updates to Submitted Applications

When applicants make revisions to a previously submitted application, ACF will accept only the last on-time application for pre-review under the Application Disqualification Factors. The Application Disqualification Factors determine the application's acceptance for competitive review. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors* and *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options*.

Copies Required

Applicants must submit one complete copy of the application package electronically. Applicants submitting electronic applications need not provide additional copies of their application package.

Applicants submitting applications in paper format must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. The original copy must have original signatures.

Signatures

Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at www.Grants.gov.

The original of a paper format application must include original signatures of the authorized representatives.

Accepted Application Format

With the exception of the required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, all

application materials must be formatted so that they are 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins all around.

If possible, applicants are encouraged to include page numbers for each page within the application.

ACF generally does not encourage submission of scanned documents as they tend to have reduced clarity and readability. If documents must be scanned, the font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. Documents must be scanned page-for-page, meaning that applicants may not scan more than one page of a document onto a single page. Pages with blurred text will be removed from the application.

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

Page Limits and Numbering. Applicants must limit their *entire application to 105 pages*. This page limit applies to the combined length of the Project Description File and the Appendices File. Each page of the application must be numbered, beginning with the Table of Contents. ACF recommends limiting the Project Description File to 65 pages and the Appendices File to 40 pages.

The required Standard Forms (SF), assurances, and certifications are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files, therefore, they are not included in the 105-page limit or page numbering requirement.

Organization of Application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use headings and subheadings that correspond to the required application sections outlined below. Sections should be carefully labeled to ease reviewers' identification of information relevant to the application review criteria. Additional headers and subheaders may also be used to organize the content of each section.

The **Project Description File** should be carefully developed in accordance with ACF's research goals and agenda as described in *Section I. Program Description*. See additional instructions later in this section (under "*The Project Description*") for details on preparing the full project description. The Project Description File includes the following sections:

1. Table of Contents
2. Project Summary/Abstract (single-spaced, one page maximum)
3. Approach
 - Objectives and Significance
 - Research Design and Methodology
 - Plan for Cross-Project Coordination and Collaboration
 - Description of the Research Partnership
 - Management Plan
 - Dissemination Plan
 - Staff Roles and Qualifications
 - References
 - Project Timeline and Milestones
 - (optional) Subawards

- (optional) Organizational Capacity Supplemental Narrative
4. Budget and Budget Justification

The **Appendices File** includes the following sections:

1. Proof of Legal Status of Applicant Entity, if applicable
2. Supporting Documentation of Organizational Capacity
3. Supporting Documentation of Staff Qualifications
 - Resumes/Curriculum Vitae
4. Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
5. Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds
6. Letters of Support, Memoranda of Understanding and/or Third Party Agreements
7. Other Materials in Support of the Proposal

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically unless they have requested and received an exemption that will allow submission in paper format. See *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options* for information about requesting an exemption.

Electronic applications will only be accepted via www.Grants.gov. **ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.**

Each applicant is required to upload ONLY two electronic files, excluding SFs and OMB-approved forms.

File One: Must contain the entire Project Description, and the Budget and Budget Justification (including a line-item budget and a budget narrative).

File Two: Must contain all documents required in the Appendices.

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement

No more than two files will be accepted for the review. Applications with additional files will be amended and files will be removed from the review. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

Application Upload Requirements

ACF strongly recommends that electronic applications be uploaded as Portable Document Files (PDFs). One file must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification; the other file must contain all documents required in the Appendices. Details on the content of each of the two files, as well as page limitations, are listed earlier in this section.

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants

using the Adobe Acrobat Reader software will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Acrobat Reader they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on “Applicants” at the top bar menu and select “Adobe Software Compatibility”, which is listed under "Applicant Resources." The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their version of the software by opening a test Workspace PDF form. Grants.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions for use, if an applicant is unable to open the test form.

The Adobe Software Compatibility page located on Grants.gov also provides guidance for applicants on filling out a Workspace PDF form. In addition, it addresses local network and/or computer security settings and the impact this has on use of Adobe software.

Required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms

Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, such as the SF-424 application and budget forms and the SF-P/PSL (Project/Performance Site Location), are uploaded separately at Grants.gov. These forms are submitted separately from the Project Description and Appendices files. See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* for the listing of required Standard Forms, OMB-approved forms, and required assurances and certifications.

Naming Application Submission Files

Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Please also see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

Use only file formats supported by ACF

It is critical that applicants submit applications using only the supported file formats listed here. While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two application submission files (Project Description and Appendices) are uploaded as PDF documents in order to comply with the two-file upload limitation.** Documents in file formats that are not supported by ACF will be removed from the application and will not be used in the competitive review. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make any awards based on an incomplete application.

ACF supports the following file formats:

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

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the affected file will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This removal may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be accepted for review. For more information on the exemption, see "*ACF Policy on Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*" at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single NOFO, or multiple applications under separate NOFOs, each application submission must be packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled with the NOFO title and Funding Opportunity Number (FON).

Applicants using paper format should download the application forms package associated with the NOFO's Synopsis on www.Grants.gov under the Package tab.

Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the federal government for review. **All application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes. All pages in the application submission must be sequentially numbered.**

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking grant or cooperative agreement awards under this funding opportunity must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications with the application. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this NOFO at www.Grants.gov.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due	Form is available at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html . General information about the HHS Protection of Human

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> . If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Subjects regulations can be obtained at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/ . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email (OHRP@HHS.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900).
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform . Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov .	See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> for more information.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	submitted prior to the award of a grant.	
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project.
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants must cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
		accordance with its instructions.

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

Mandatory Grant Disclosure

All applicants and recipients are required to submit, in writing, to the awarding agency and to the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG), all information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. (Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR § 75.113)

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Grants Management, ATTN: Grants Management Specialist, 330 C Street, SW., Switzer Building, Corridor 3200, Washington, DC 20201

And to:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, ATTN: Mandatory Grant Disclosures, Intake Coordinator, 330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen Building, Room 5527, Washington, DC 20201

Fax: (202) 205-0604 (Include “Mandatory Grant Disclosures” in subject line) or

Email: MandatoryGranteeDisclosures@oig.hhs.gov

Non-Federal Reviewers

Since ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (not the original) specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget as well as Social Security Numbers, if otherwise required for individuals. The copies may include summary salary information. If applications are submitted electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review process.

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions

The Project Description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for financial assistance. It must address all activities for which federal funds are being requested and all application requirements as stated in this section. The Project Description must explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in *Section I. Program Description*. As a reminder, reviewers will be evaluating this section in accordance with *Section V.1. Criteria*.

The Project Description must be clear, concise, and complete. ACF is particularly interested in Project Descriptions that convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project Descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length.

Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting documents designated as required must be included in the Appendix of the application.

Letter of Intent

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this funding opportunity. Please submit a letter of intent by the deadline date listed in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. The letter of intent should include the following information: number and title of this funding opportunity; the name and address of the applicant organization; and the name, phone number, fax number and email address of a contact person.

Letter of intent information will be used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to evaluate applications. **The letter of intent is optional.** Failure to submit a letter of intent **will not** impact eligibility to submit an application and **will not** disqualify an application from competitive review.

The letter of intent should be submitted via email to CCRP2@icfi.com.

Table of Contents

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers. The table of contents may be single spaced.

Project Summary

Provide a summary of the application project description. It must be clear, accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. The summary must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.

Please place the following at the top of the Project Summary:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax, Cell)
- Email Address
- Website Address, if applicable

The Project Summary must be single-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, and limited to one page in length. Additional pages will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Non-Profit Organizations

Proof of Non-Profit Status Options:

Option 1: 501(c)(3) and non-501(c)(3) non-profit organizations are eligible

Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate.
- A statement from a state taxing body, state attorney general, or other appropriate state official certifying that the applicant organization has non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholders or individuals.
- A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes non-profit status.
- Any of the items in the subparagraphs immediately above for a state or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant organization is a local non-profit affiliate.

Unless directed otherwise, applicants must include proof of non-profit status in the *Appendices* file of the application submission.

For-Profits and Small Businesses

For-profit organizations (including small businesses) applying for funding must submit the following to provide proof of their legal status: Documentation establishing the power granted to the entity to enter into contractual relationships and/or accept awards (i.e. articles of incorporation, bylaws).

Approach

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must account for all functions or activities identified in the application.

Cite potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies that will be used to address these challenges.

Objectives and Significance

Applicants must clearly outline and justify the objectives of the proposed research project and summarize how the expected outcomes will inform CCDF policy. Applicants must demonstrate the significance of their proposal in the context of the existing knowledge base and current research and policy fields.

Applicants must:

- Describe the key research questions and initial hypotheses. The hypotheses must be justified given current theory and the extant empirical evidence, citing relevant literature.
- Explain how the proposed project will improve current knowledge of an important issue or problem in child care policy and/or practice; tackle issues that are significant to the partnership's CCDF Lead Agency; and/or address issues relevant to CCDF policy and OCC more broadly.

- Describe how the project will inform specific programmatic and/or policy decisions of the CCDF Lead Agency and contribute to future policy, practice, and research more broadly, suggesting practical applications as well as longer-term benefits that might be derived from the project's activities or findings.

Research Design and Methodology

Applicants must fully describe the technical approach for addressing the key issues and achieving the project objectives and research questions laid out in the *Objectives and Significance* section. Applicants must clearly articulate the link between the research questions, design, methods, analyses, and expected outcomes. It may be helpful to include diagrams or tables that portray the associations between the proposed research issues, questions, variables, and data elements.

Applicants must describe, in detail, the research design and methods that will be used to address the proposed research questions and explain how the methods are appropriate and sufficient to address the objectives and research questions. Projects can use quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. Research designs must be rigorous as defined by the ACF Evaluation Policy described in *Section I. Program Description*. Applicants must discuss the strengths and limitations of each aspect of the design including any technical or logistical challenges that may arise and propose solutions for them. Research designs must demonstrate consideration of the cultural and ethical issues that may arise.

The methodological discussion must include technical details of the proposed research design, including a clear description of the following elements, at a minimum:

Conceptual Framework or Theory of Change

- Describe the conceptual framework or theory of change that details the relations between the variables of interest and expected outcomes. Include theoretical justifications and empirical evidence.
- Describe the component(s) of child care policy that are hypothesized to lead to anticipated changes. A more complete conceptual framework or theory of change could include further details such as the sample representing the target population, key moderators, and the specific measures used for the outcomes.

Data Sources, Sample, and Methods

If the project involves the collection of new data:

- Describe how the sample will be chosen and recruited. Describe the strengths and limitations of the proposed approach, with consideration of relevant cultural or ethical issues.
- Describe all of the activities and procedures for the proposed research.

- Identify and define the key constructs. Describe how the constructs will be measured, including psychometric properties of instruments, as applicable.
- Describe the data that will be collected and the methods that will be used to collect the data.
- If the proposed research will link the data collected to administrative data, describe how they will be linked to address the research questions.

If the project involves the use of administrative data:

- Describe the nature of the data and how it would be accessed.
- Describe the characteristics of the sample and how it would be constructed.
- Describe the characteristics of the data (including data quality) and variables or data elements to be used and how these fit within the research plan.
- Describe how confidentiality of individual records would be maintained.
- Provide clear proof that the research team has the authority to access the data, including written permissions and/or agreements from the offices or agencies that authorize access.

If the project involves the secondary analysis of existing data sets:

- Describe the objectives of the original research and its appropriateness and limitations for this study.
- Describe how the data would be accessed.
- Describe the characteristics of the data (including data quality) and variables or data elements to be used and how these fit within the research plan.
- If applicable, include information on measures that were used including psychometric properties.
- Applicants who propose to analyze nationally or regionally representative data sets, such as the National Survey of Early Care and Education, CCDF Policies Database, licensing data, workforce registry data or data from the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, or National Center for Education Statistics, should discuss how their analyses could address national, regional, or state-level child care market or policy parameters and/or trends.

Linking to ongoing research projects:

The CCDF Lead Agency may be conducting other studies that relate to the topic selected for the research proposal, and the project under the CCPRP grant may expand, complement, or build on the project. If the applicant intends to link to other research projects, please include the following information:

- Explain how linking the studies would meet the goals of this grant program.

- Describe how the proposed research would make a distinct contribution while building on the ongoing research.
- Describe the design and timeline of the ongoing research study.
- Describe how the Project Team will get access to the data.
- Describe how the technical aspects of linking data from both/all projects would be structured and carried out. In addition, include a timeline for linking the projects.
- Describe the status of the ongoing study, including the status of the data collection and other phases of the study, and the implications for the proposed project (e.g., if proposed project would rely on analyses of data from an ongoing study, what the status/timeline is for data cleaning and how any delays would affect the proposed project).
- If applicable, the application should include a letter of agreement or support as evidence of cooperation from individual(s)/organization(s) conducting the other research project.

Analytic Plan

- Describe the analytical approach, statistical techniques, and methods of inference that will be used to analyze the data.
- Describe the results of power analyses that demonstrate that the sample size will be sufficient to detect effects using the proposed analytic techniques (if necessary).

Preliminary Results during the First Year

- Develop and describe a plan to analyze and report data within the first budget period. This may include analysis of newly collected data or analysis of existing data, such as administrative data.
- Discuss how these early findings will inform and contribute to subsequent stages of the proposed research project.

Security

- Describe the procedures that will be used to ensure data quality and security.
- Describe how the proposed project will provide for adequate protection of human subjects. This includes the plan to protect confidentiality of all the data used and/or collected and the consent procedures.

Equity and Inclusion

- Discuss whether and how the proposed project will address or consider equity and inclusion. For example, as applicable, applicants should discuss:
 - Whether the project will focus on equitable access to programs or services for any sub-groups of interest and the implications of the proposed work for those groups.
 - How consideration of equity and inclusion informed the proposed research design and approach.

- How individuals from populations of interest and/or with lived experiences will be engaged in the research process to inform the research questions, measures, or design.
- If the proposed project is not expected to address equity and inclusion, provide a justification for why. For example, discuss why it is not appropriate or feasible for the planned research questions, data sources, or methods to incorporate an equity and inclusion lens.

Plan for Cross-Project Coordination and Collaboration

Applicants must propose a plan for how the Project Team will participate in cross-project coordination and collaboration. While many of the specific activities will be defined during the first year of the award, after all funded projects have been identified, applicants must:

- Discuss and justify which Project Team members will participate in the FY22 CCPRP Consortium activities, including attendance at monthly and annual meetings, development of coordinated datasets or products, and participation in other activities planned by the Center.
- Discuss how the proposed research questions, approach, and workplan were intentionally designed to facilitate cross-project collaboration. The applicant should describe opportunities within the proposed research plan that may be appropriate for cross-project data collection or analysis and articulate any flexibilities built into the proposed approach that could be leveraged to enhance cross-project learning.
- Describe how the proposed budget reflects the team's commitment to participating in cross-project coordination and collaboration. This could include discussion of staff level of effort across project years and/or other assumptions reflected in the proposed budget (e.g., collaboration on joint dissemination products).

Description of Research Partnership

Applicants must discuss the composition, stage, and goals of their research partnership. Specifically, applicants must:

- Describe all organizations that will form the Project Team and provide evidence that each partner is willing to participate in the partnership (e.g., formal letters of specific commitment or support from each partner).
- Describe the stage of the partnership (i.e., a new partnership or a mature one). Partnerships at any stage are acceptable, but it is important to show that the partnership is prepared to carry out the proposed project. Explain how the partnership's stage will affect the type of work proposed under the grant, the roles of the partners, and the expectations for the results of the project including both the research produced and the future of the partnership. Include a description of past or current partnerships among Project Team members, if applicable, that demonstrate the ability to carry out collaborative research.
- Describe how the partnering organizations decided to propose a project and how they collaboratively identified the research questions and designed the project.

- Discuss how all partners will be engaged in the work throughout the entire project period.
- Describe how the work funded under this opportunity will advance each partner's capacity to conduct and use research for evidence-informed child care policy making.

Management Plan

Applicants must provide a management plan that describes a sound and feasible plan of action for how the proposed project will be carried out. This section must describe, in detail, how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. Applicants should discuss their management of the project as a whole and the management and coordinating roles of any partners.

As appropriate, the plan must:

- Describe how the project will be managed by the grant recipient/lead organization to ensure that members of the partnership operate as a cohesive team and that the goals of the project are carried out efficiently and cost-effectively. This should include discussion of the responsibilities and expected contributions of each partner organization, reporting relationships, and lines of authority. Applicants should include an organizational chart portraying the management, supervision, and administration of the project across all subcontracts, subawards, and other formal relationships within the partnership.
- Discuss the partnership's decision-making process, including how it will determine research direction, release of research results, and future research plans. Applicants should discuss potential challenges and include a plan for how they will be resolved by participating partnership organizations.
- Discuss an approach to communication among team members, partnership organizations, other CCPRP grant recipients, the Center, and ACF. Applicants may consider including planned discussions and milestones to refine the research plan, monitor progress, troubleshoot difficulties encountered, develop products, and communicate project results.
- Discuss the partnership's agreement and strategy for sharing and housing data. This should include the main sources of data that will be shared, where the data will be housed, how the data will be managed, who will develop the documentation necessary for their use, and the availability of the data to partners and other interested parties. Partners who will provide access to data or records must provide a letter stipulating the terms of their agreement with the Project Team.

Dissemination Plan

Applicants must provide a comprehensive communication or dissemination plan that outlines how the Project Team will communicate about the project with researchers, policymakers, CCDF Lead Agencies, and other interested parties. The dissemination plan must identify target audiences and appropriate dissemination products and/or activities for each. In developing a dissemination plan, applicants are encouraged to consult OPRE resources addressing dissemination of human services research, and particularly the report titled *The Value-Added*

Research Dissemination Framework. The Framework is available on ACF's website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/opre-research-dissemination-project-2010-2012>.

The proposed dissemination plan must discuss:

- Plans to consult and/or collaborate with partner agencies to review and interpret the project's findings and its implications for CCDF and/or early care and education policies and agencies. Plans should describe potential contributions from partner agencies and other relevant interested parties in developing products and/or disseminating findings.
- Plans for communicating findings from the proposed research to relevant target audiences, including (but not limited to):
 - Research community;
 - Policymakers, technical assistance providers, and practitioners in the fields of child care and early care and education (as appropriate); and
 - State, territory, or tribal CCDF Lead Agencies or local government agencies or non governmental agencies that administer CCDF programs on behalf of CCDF Lead Agencies and other project partners, if applicable.
- Specific products and/or activities that are intended for specific, key target audiences. Applicants must identify both research- and policy-oriented products to communicate project developments and findings. In addition to traditional written research products and dissemination channels (e.g., conference presentations, technical papers or reports, peer-reviewed scholarly publications), plans should identify activities to communicate and/or facilitate use of the sponsored research by policymakers, CCDF administrators and agencies, and/or other interested parties. As examples, products may include presentations or research briefs tailored for state policymakers, software, or web-based tools, if applicable. Dissemination plans and products may differ substantially depending on the target audiences.
- A plan for making data and products developed under this award publicly available.
- Preliminary proposal for coordinated, cross-project dissemination.

Staff Roles and Qualifications

Applicants must demonstrate that the Project Team has the experience and expertise to carry out the proposed project on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality.

More specifically, applicants must:

- Identify staff responsible for managing all key project activities, including management of the budget, and describe their roles and responsibilities, their professional and/or technical qualifications to execute proposed activities, the proportion of time they will be committed to the project in relation to their other duties, the period of time they will be employed, and whether their continued employment will be dependent solely on the funds to be awarded under this opportunity.
- If staff positions for key project activities are currently vacant, include a position description outlining the qualifications necessary to carry out the duties and

responsibilities of each position. If applicable, include letters of commitment from any individuals who have been selected but not yet hired. If a data collection team must be assembled, describe the expected composition of the team, what expertise will be represented, and how individuals will be selected.

- Provide evidence that the proposed staff have adequate knowledge of CCDF policies, early care and education and school-age care, and/or other areas of expertise relevant to the focal topic selected to be addressed by the project, as well as related initiatives, to successfully carry out their assigned roles.
- Identify all proposed consultants or advisors, document their expertise, and describe their roles and responsibilities or how their services will be utilized. Include letters of commitment or intent, if possible.
- Identify the authors of the proposal and describe their continuing role in the project if funded.

References

Applicants must include a list of references for any resources that are cited within the application.

Subawards (optional)

If applicable, applicants must state their intention to subaward and describe how they plan to meet the requirements and expectations outlined in *Section I. Program Description, Subawards*. Applicants must describe their plan to monitor all subrecipients in accordance with 45 CFR 75.352.

Project Timeline and Milestones

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections (for the entire project period) of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity, in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. Data may be organized and presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

Organizational Capacity

Provide the following information on the applicant organization and, if applicable, on any cooperating partners:

- Organizational charts;
- Resumes;
- Curricula Vitae (CV);
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- Information on compliance with federal/state/local government standards;
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description);

- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this funding opportunity;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.
- Child care licenses and other documentation of professional accreditation;

The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed recipient organization and partners have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time, within budget, and to a high standard of quality. Applicants must demonstrate each organization's ability to efficiently carry out its assigned roles and functions for a project with the proposed project's size, complexity, and scope, including evidence of successful management of federal funds. Organizational capacity can be demonstrated with the documentation listed above. The applicant may also choose to provide an Organizational Capacity Supplementary Narrative as part of the File One (Project Description) submission.

If known at the time of application submission, the applicant must disclose their intent to enter into subaward arrangements in their application. For each proposed subaward, the applicant must include a description of the work to be performed by the subrecipient(s).

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

Recipients are required to ensure proper oversight in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D.

These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

- Financial and Program Management
- Property (if applicable by program legislation)
- Procurement
- Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting
- Subrecipient Monitoring and Management
- Record Retention and Access
- Remedies for Noncompliance

Describe the framework (e.g. governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) in place to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 45 CFR

Part 75 Subpart D. The description must include: system(s) for record-keeping and financial management; procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues (e.g., audit findings, continuous program performance assessment findings, program monitoring); and those key staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff, and, if applicable, partner(s) and/or subrecipient(s).

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

Provide a description of how protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive, consistent with applicable federal, state, local and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, will be collected and safeguarded. The

applicant must provide the methods and/or systems that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and if applicable, address the process for subrecipient(s) and/or contractors. Also, provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period.

Third-Party Agreements

Third-party agreements include Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Letters of Commitment. Letters of Commitment and MOUs must both clearly describe the roles and responsibilities for project activities and the support and/or resources that the third-party (i.e., subrecipient, contractor, or other cooperating entity) is committing. The Letters of Commitment and MOUs must be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments on behalf of their organization. General letters of support are **not** considered to be third-party agreements.

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment or MOUs between recipients and third-parties (i.e., subrecipients, contractors, or other cooperating entities). In addition to clearly describing the roles and responsibilities for project activities and support and/or resources that the third-party is committing, these agreements must detail work schedules and estimated remuneration with an understanding that a finalized agreement will be negotiated once the successful applicant is awarded the grant.

Letters of Support

Provide statements from community, public, and/or commercial leaders that support the project proposed for funding. All submissions must be included in the application package. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the individual writing the letter, the organization they represent, the date, and reason(s) for supporting the project.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is entered on the Budget Information Standard Form, either SF-424A or SF-424C. Applicants are encouraged to review the form instructions in addition to the guidance in this section. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form. Applicants must indicate the method they are selecting for their indirect cost rate. See Indirect Charges for further information.

Project budget calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If cost sharing or matching is a requirement, applicants must include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance). See the table in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* listing the appropriate budget forms to use in this application.

Special Note: *The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2021 and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this funding*

opportunity may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. For the Executive Level II salary, please see "Executive & Senior Level Employee Pay Tables" under <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>. The Executive Level II salary reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

Provide a budget using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable, for each year of the proposed project.

Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for each year of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

The application's budget and budget justification (i.e., narrative) should reflect the full project period, with each budget period presented separately. For a 48-month project, include a detailed budget table and narrative budget justification clearly describing estimated costs for completion of the project, consistent with the budget categories and amounts reported in *Standard Form 424-A*. This section should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate how the budget supports the level of effort and resources to manage and execute the proposed research and dissemination activities. The discussion should include the appropriateness of the level and distribution of funds to the successful completion of ACF's goals for the grant program and all project requirements, including costs related to travel for mandatory meetings and consortium activities (as described in *Section I. Program Description*) over the course of the project period. Indirect costs are counted towards the award ceiling.

For applicants proposing to use subaward(s), if the total amount budgeted for subawards exceeds 50 percent of total direct costs for the budget period, the applicant must provide a justification for subawarding the portion of the project and must explain how the prime recipient plans to maintain a substantive role in the project. Applicants must explain why the participation of the subrecipient is necessary, and why the applicant cannot achieve the objectives without the subrecipient(s)' participation.

General

Use the following guidelines for preparing the project budget and budget justification. The budget justification includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail. Applications should only include allowable costs in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages. See 45 CFR § 75.430 for more information on allowable personnel costs. Do not include the personnel costs of consultants, contractors and subrecipients under this category.

Justification: For each position, provide: the name of the individual (if known), their title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Identify the project director or

principal investigator, if known at the time of application.

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees in addition to regular salaries and wages. For more information on Fringe Benefits please refer to 45 CFR § 75.431. Do not include the fringe benefits of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients.

Typically, fringe benefit amounts are determined by applying a calculated rate for a particular class of employee (full-time or part-time) to the salary and wages requested. Fringe rates are often specified in the approved indirect cost rate agreement. Fringe benefits may be treated as a direct cost or indirect cost in accordance with the applicant's accounting practices. Only fringe benefits as a direct cost should be entered under this category.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, retirement, taxes, etc.

Travel

Description: Costs of project-related travel (i.e., transportation, lodging, subsistence) by employees of the applicant organization who are in travel status on official business. Travel by non-employees such as consultants, contractors or subrecipients should be included under the Contractual line item. Local travel for employees in non-travel status should be listed on the Other line. Travel costs should be developed in accordance with the applicant's travel policies and 45 CFR § 75.474.

Justification: For each trip show: the total number of travelers; travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used to travel out of town; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key project staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops/conferences/recipient orientations should be detailed in the budget justification.

Equipment

Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in, or excluded from, acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.) See 45 CFR §75.439 for more information.

Justification: For each type of equipment requested provide: a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use on the project; as well as use and/or disposition of the equipment after the project ends.

Supplies

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property, other than included under the Equipment category. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than \$5,000. See 45 CFR § 75.453 for more information.

Justification: Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

Contractual

Description: Cost of all contracts and subawards except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contract or subawards with secondary recipient organizations (with budget detail), including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. Costs related to individual consultants should be listed on the Other line. Recipients are required to use 45 CFR §§ 75.326-.340 procurement procedures, and subawards are subject to the requirements at 45 CFR §§ 75.351-.353.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Applicants must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold stated in 48 CFR § 2.101(b). Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

Indicate whether the proposed agreement qualifies as a subaward or contract in accordance with 45 CFR § 75.351. Provide the name of the contractor/subrecipient (if known), a description of anticipated services, a justification for why they are necessary, a breakdown of estimated costs, and an explanation of the selection process. In addition, for subawards, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each subaward, by entity name, along with the same justifications referred to in these budget and budget justification instructions.

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel, insurance, food (when allowable), medical and dental costs (non-personnel), professional service costs (including audit charges), space and equipment rentals, printing and publications, computer use, training costs (such as tuition and stipends), staff development costs, and administrative costs. Please note costs must be allowable per 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of costs, computations, a narrative description, and a justification for each cost under this category.

Indirect Charges

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category has one of two methods that an applicant can select. An applicant may only select one.

1. The applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant federal agency.

Justification: An applicant must enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. If the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed. Choosing to charge a lower rate will not be considered during the objective review or award selection process.

2. Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f) Indirect (F&A) costs, "any non-Federal entity [i.e., applicant] that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, ... may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in Section 75.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as the non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time."

Justification: This method only applies to applicants that have never received an approved negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposal may request the 10 percent *de minimis* rate. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424. This line should be used to indicate required and/or voluntary committed cost sharing or matching, if applicable.

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching or cost sharing by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources (at or above the statutory requirement) in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching or cost sharing amount (and any voluntary committed amount in excess) may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, recipients are not expected to provide cost sharing or matching. However, recipients are allowed to voluntarily propose a commitment of non-federal resources. If an applicant decides to voluntarily contribute non-federal resources towards project costs and the costs are accepted by ACF, the non-federal resources will be included in the approved project budget. The applicant will be held accountable for all proposed non-federal resources as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to meet the voluntary amount of non-federal resources that was accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that was identified in the approved budget in the NoA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

Justification: If an applicant is relying on cost share or match from a third-party, then a firm commitment of these resources (letter(s) or other documentation) is required to be submitted with the application. Detailed budget information must be provided for every funding source identified in Item 18. "Estimated Funding (\$)" on the SF-424.

Applicants are required to fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions they propose in order to meet a matching requirement. Applicants are also required to provide documentation in their applications on the sources of funding or contribution(s). In-kind contributions must be accompanied by a justification of how the stated valuation was determined. Matching or cost sharing must be documented by budget period (or by project period for fully funded awards).

Applications that lack the required supporting documentation will not be disqualified from competitive review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity.

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 is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 02/28/2022. 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.

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via Grants.gov

This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for ACF program applications. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic Delivery

ACF is participating in the Grants.gov initiative to provide the grant community with a single site to find and apply for grant funding opportunities. ACF applicants are required to submit their applications online through Grants.gov.

How to Register and Apply through Grants.gov

Read the following instructions about registering to apply for ACF funds. Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

Obtain a DUNS Number: All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizations DUNS" on the SF-424 form.

For more detailed instructions for obtaining a DUNS number, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtainsduns-number.html>

Register with SAM: In addition to having a DUNS number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the System for Award Management (SAM). All organizations must register with SAM in order to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer

to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

Create a Grants.gov Account: The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the AOR role.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>

Authorize Grants.gov Roles: After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying them of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of your organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>

Track Role Status: To track your role request, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>

When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitment on behalf of the organization as an AOR; this step is often missed, and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.

How to Submit an Application to ACF via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each NOFO, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

The following is an overview of applying via Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete an application online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.

Adobe Reader: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or ACF forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drive(s), then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>

Mandatory Fields in Forms: In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

Complete SF-424 Fields First: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

Submit a Workspace: An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

Track a Workspace: After successfully submitting a workspace package, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the package. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist ACF with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

All applications must be received by 11:59 pm ET on the due date established for each program. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgment of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ACF successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submission, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by ACF.

Applicants with slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

Issues with Federal Systems

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "[Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues](#)" document for complete guidance.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

To request an exemption from required electronic submission, please refer to ACF's "[Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission](#)" document for complete guidance.

Paper Format Application Submission

An exemption is required for the submission of paper applications. See the preceding section on "*Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.*"

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* of this funding opportunity for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 pm ET on the due date.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times* in this funding opportunity.

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

All applicants must have a DUNS Number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov/SAM, <https://www.sam.gov>).

Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, registration at SAM must be active throughout the life of the award.

Plan ahead. Allow at least 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM and at least an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems, i.e. Grants.gov.

This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application through Grants.gov or prevent the award of a grant. Applicants should maintain documentation (with dates) of their efforts to register for, or renew a registration, at SAM. User Guides are available under the "Help" tab at <https://www.sam.gov>.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal grant funds from any HHS Agency, or receive subawards directly from recipients of those grant funds to:

- Be registered in the SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration by an OPDIV; and
- Provide its active DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV.

ACF is prohibited from making an award until an applicant has complied with these requirements. At the time an award is ready to be made, if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements, ACF:

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and
- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Letter of Intent

Number of Days from Publication 30

03/31/2022

Due Dates for Applications

Due Date for Applications 06/10/2022

06/10/2022

Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* section and in this section. See *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Electronic Applications

The deadline for submission of electronic applications via www.Grants.gov is 11:59 pm ET on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 am ET on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity.

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically via www.Grants.gov unless they received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

ACF does not accommodate transmission of applications by email or facsimile.

Instructions for electronic submission via www.Grants.gov are available at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

Applications submitted to www.Grants.gov at any time during the open application period prior to the due date and time that fail the Grants.gov validation check will not be received at ACF. These applications will not be acknowledged.

Mailed Paper Format Applications

The deadline for receipt of mailed, paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date. Mailed paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity.

Paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

Hand-delivered applications must be received on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 am ET and 4:30 pm ET Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays).

Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

Hand-delivered paper applications received after the due date and deadline time will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this funding opportunity.

Hand-delivered paper format application submissions will be disqualified if the applicant organization has not received an exemption through the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

No appeals will be considered for applications classified as late under the following circumstances:

- Applications submitted electronically via www.Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 pm ET on the due date.
- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Paper format applications received from applicant organizations that were not approved for an exemption from required electronic application submission under the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Submission* will be disqualified.

Emergency Extensions

ACF may extend an application due date when circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit their applications on time. Only events such as documented natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc.), or a verifiable widespread disruption of electrical service, or mail service, will be considered. The determination to extend or waive the due date, and/or receipt time, requirements in an emergency situation rests with the Grants Management Officer listed as the Office of Grants Management Contact in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)*.

Acknowledgement of Received Application

Acknowledgement from Grants.gov

Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to Grants.gov. This email will provide a **Grants.gov Tracking Number**. Applicants should refer to this tracking number in all communication with Grants.gov. The email will also provide a **date and time stamp**, which serves as the official record of the application's submission. Receipt of this email does not indicate that the application is accepted or that it has passed the validation check.

Applicants will also receive an email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process**, after which a third email is sent with the information that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, the series of checks and validations.

Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged by ACF.

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

Applicants will be sent additional email(s) from ACF acknowledging that the application has been retrieved from Grants.gov by ACF. Receipt of these emails is not an indication that the application is accepted for competition.

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:

ACF will not provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

This program is not subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," or 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." No action is required of applicants under this funding opportunity with regard to E.O. 12372.

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable. Fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting the Federal program objectives are allowable with prior written approval from the Federal awarding agency. (45 CFR § 75.442)

Proposal costs are the costs of preparing bids, proposals, or applications on potential Federal and non-Federal awards or projects, including the development of data necessary to support the non-Federal entity's bids or proposals. Proposal costs of the current accounting period of both successful and unsuccessful bids and proposals normally should be treated as indirect (F&A) costs and allocated currently to all activities of the non-Federal entity. No proposal costs of past accounting periods will be allocable to the current period. (45 CFR § 75.460)

Pre-award costs are not allowable.

Construction is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.

Purchase of real property is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this award.

Major renovation is not an allowable activity or expenditure under this grant program.

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. Also see *ACF Policy on Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6.

Submission by Mail

OPRE Review Team
Child Care Policy Research Partnerships
c/o ICF
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax
VA
22031-6050

Hand Delivery

Same as Above

Electronic Submission

See *Section IV.2.* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via www.Grants.gov.

For all submissions, see *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: With the exception of the notice of funding opportunity and relevant statutes and regulations, reviewers must not access, or review, any materials that are not part of the application documents. This includes information accessible on websites via hyperlinks that are referenced, or embedded, in the application. Though an application may include web links, or embedded hyperlinks, reviewers must not review this information as it is not considered to be part of the application documents. Nor will the information on websites be taken into consideration in scoring of evaluation criteria presented in this section. Reviewers must evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and must not refer to, or access, external links during the objective review.

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. The corresponding point values indicate the relative importance placed on each review criterion. Points will be allocated based on the extent to which the application proposal addresses each of the criteria listed. Applicants should address these criteria in their application materials, particularly in the project description and budget justification, as they are the basis upon which competing applications will be judged during the objective review. The required elements of the project description and budget justification may be found in *Section IV.2. The Project Description* of this funding opportunity.

Relevance

Maximum Points: 15

1. The proposed project addresses at least one of the priority research topics identified in *Section I. Program Description*. **(0 or 4 points)**
2. The proposed project addresses critical gaps in our current knowledge and will advance our understanding of CCDF and/or early care and education policies and practices. **(up to 4 points)**
3. The proposed project has clear and specific implications for current or future programmatic and/or policy decisions of the CCDF Lead Agency partner. **(up to 4 points)**
4. The proposed project has the potential to inform future early care and education policy, practice, and research at the federal level as well as in other states, territories, tribes, and/or localities. **(up to 3 points)**

Rigor

Maximum Points: 30

1. Conceptual Framework/Theory of Change. The applicant proposes a conceptual framework or theory of change that is theoretically justified and appropriate for the proposed work and appropriately links the research questions, research design, key constructs, methods, analyses, and expected outcomes. **(up to 3 points)**
2. Data Sources and Methods. The applicant's proposed approach employs technically sound, rigorous, and appropriate design, methods, and procedures to meet the project's research objectives. This should include consideration of the relevant factors of different research approaches described in *Section IV. The Project Description*. **(up to 10 points)**

3. Sample. The applicant has outlined a feasible approach to identifying and recruiting (if applicable) an appropriate sample for the proposed work. The proposed sample size is sufficient to detect effects using the proposed analytic techniques. **(up to 5 points)**
4. Analytic Plan. The applicant's proposed analytic plan and statistical techniques are rigorous and appropriate for the proposed data and research questions. **(up to 5 points)**
5. Preliminary Findings. The applicant includes a feasible plan to produce policy relevant findings in the first budget period that clearly informs and/or complements the broader research objectives. **(up to 3 points)**
6. Human Protections & Data Security. The applicant includes appropriate informed consent procedures and sufficiently protects human subjects as well as the confidentiality and security of all the data. **(up to 1 point)**
7. Equity and Inclusion. The applicant provides a thoughtful discussion of how the proposed project has or will incorporate an equity and inclusion lens or why this is not appropriate for the proposed research questions, data sources, or methods. **(up to 3 points)**

Cross-Project Coordination

Maximum Points: 10

1. The proposed project is well-suited for cross-project collaboration, as described in *Section I. Program Description*. The applicant has identified specific and feasible opportunities in the planned approach for collaboration and makes a convincing argument about how these opportunities can be feasibly leveraged to enhance cross-project learning. **(up to 8 points)**
2. The applicant has identified specific and appropriate team members to participate in collaborative activities, including attendance at monthly web meetings. **(up to 2 points)**

Research Partnership

Maximum Points: 10

1. The applicant proposes an appropriate Project Team to guide the proposed work. The Project Team includes, at a minimum, a CCDF Lead Agency and an organization with demonstrated research capacity. There is evidence that all proposed partners, including any consultants, are willing to participate in the project. **(up to 3 points)**
2. The applicant provides sufficient evidence that all partners are prepared to collaborate effectively to complete the proposed activities. There is evidence that all partners were involved in the development of the proposed research project. The applicant provides a specific and feasible plan for how partners will continue to be involved in meaningful and appropriate ways throughout all phases of the work. The planned activities, roles of the partners, and expectations for the results are appropriate for the maturity of the research partnership. **(up to 4 points)**
3. The applicant clearly demonstrates how the proposed work will enhance each partner's capacity to conduct and/or use research for evidence-informed child care policy making. **(up to 3 points)**

Management Plan

Maximum Points: 10

1. The applicant outlines a detailed and feasible management structure and procedures that will ensure all members of the project will operate as a cohesive team to efficiently complete the proposed work on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. This includes clearly defined functional relationships among all members of the Project

Team and any consultants, advisors, steering or management committees, technical workgroups, and/or coordinating bodies. **(up to 3 points)**

2. The applicant outlines a thoughtful, detailed, and realistic approach to communication, decision-making, and identification and resolution of challenges that will minimize risks to unsuccessful completion of the proposed activities. **(up to 3 points)**
3. The applicant describes an appropriate strategy to share and house the data among the members of the partnership. If applicable, the applicant provides evidence of current data sharing agreements. **(up to 1 point)**
4. The applicant includes a detailed project timeline with feasible target completion dates for all major activities and products. The timeline demonstrates that the proposed project will be completed on time. The applicant has sufficiently integrated cross-project coordination and collaboration into the project timeline. This should include, at a minimum, time to participate in discussions, revise the research plan, conduct cross-site analyses, and participate in cross-site dissemination activities. The timeline includes a feasible plan to produce and disseminate policy relevant findings and information throughout the project period. **(up to 3 points)**

Dissemination Plan

Maximum Points: 5

1. The applicant proposes a specific and comprehensive dissemination plan that will maximize the relevance and utilization of the sponsored research and meets the dissemination goals outlined in *Section I. Program Description* and *Section IV. The Project Description*. The applicant demonstrates sufficient knowledge of relevant policy, practice, and research audiences and proposes specific dissemination products, activities, and distribution channels that are appropriate for each audience. The applicant describes an appropriate plan for making products and/or resources developed under this award publicly available. **(up to 3 points)**
2. The applicant describes a reasonable, appropriate, and specific plan for working with partners, other grant recipients, and other interested parties to review and interpret the project's findings, determine the implications for CCDF and/or early care and education policies and programs, and develop plans and products for dissemination. **(up to 2 points)**

Staff Qualifications

Maximum Points: 10

1. Members of the Project Team have the academic, professional, and technical expertise to successfully execute their assigned roles and responsibilities. The authors of the technical proposal are identified and will have key roles in managing and/or executing the proposed activities. If key positions are currently vacant, the applicant includes a detailed description of the position, necessary qualifications, and plan for how individuals will be selected. **(up to 4 points)**
2. The proposed Project Team has extensive knowledge of relevant CCDF and early care and education policies, programs, and practices. **(up to 4 points)**
3. The composition of staff, their level of commitment, and the period of time they will be employed are sufficient to complete all components of the proposed project on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. **(up to 2 points)**

Budget

Maximum Points: 5

1. The proposed project costs and the requested period of support are fully justified, reasonable, and sufficient to complete all proposed activities and research objectives. The applicant includes a detailed budget with the itemized expenses for the project and a detailed narrative budget justification that clearly explains all calculations. **(up to 2 points)**
2. The applicant has budgeted sufficient staff time to participate in cross-project coordination and collaboration with the Center, ACF, and the FY22 CCPRP Consortium. This includes approximately 20 percent of effort reserved for these activities in Year 1. **(up to 2 points)**
3. The budget and budget justification includes sufficient support for key project personnel to travel to and participate in CCEEPRC and the annual FY22 CCPRP Consortium meetings in Washington, DC for each year of the grant and the kick-off meeting during the first year of the grant. **(up to 1 point)**

Organizational Capacity

Maximum Points: 5

1. The partnership organizations have the capacity, resources, and facilities to successfully carry out all functions, roles, and tasks of the proposed project on time, within budget, and to a high standard of quality. This includes evidence of successful administration of a project of similar size, scope, and complexity; compliance with the terms and conditions of a federal grant; and oversight of federal funds. **(up to 5 points)**

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this funding opportunity on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant that does not have a DUNS number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration at SAM (www.sam.gov). See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)*.

Initial ACF Screening

Each application will be screened to determine whether it meets any of the disqualification factors described in *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Disqualified applications are considered to be “non-responsive” and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this NOFO.

Objective Review and Results

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include three reviewers and one chairperson.

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process. If identified in *Section I. Program Description*, ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those

populations located in pockets of poverty. In addition, ACF reserves the right to evaluate applications in the larger context of the overall portfolio by considering geographic distribution of federal funds (e.g., ensuring coverage of states, counties, or service areas) in its pre-award decisions.

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. In addition, ACF may elect to not allow a prime recipient to subaward if there is any indication that they are unable to properly monitor and manage subrecipients.

Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested.

Applications may be funded in whole or in part depending on (1) the combination of projects that best meet the needs of ACF and the CCDF program such as prioritizing applications that complement or fill gaps in ACF's current research portfolio; (2) the federal funds available; (3) the geographic diversity of grant recipients; and (4) the number of applications received from a single state or organization.

Post-Award Requests Involving Real Property

All real property costs, including supporting documentation, are subject to ACF administrative review. Recipients, and if applicable, subrecipient(s), will be required to provide detailed listings of all real property addresses and their associated costs (45 CFR §75.436, §75.439, §75.462, and §75.465) used and claimed under this federal award. This includes all real property owned or leased by the recipient, and if applicable, subrecipients. Information on facilities, administrative buildings and offices must be provided. Information for any and all real property costs claimed under the award must be provided. For more information, see [ACF Property Guidance](#) pages, including Rent/Lease Arrangement Guidance, Real Property Documentation, and Unallowable Property Costs.

After the initial award, if there are any modifications, budget revisions, and/or additional requests for funding, and they impact any of the original approved real property or real property-related costs, the real property listing and related costs documentation requested must be updated.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), www.fapiis.gov/, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in [45 CFR § 75.205\(a\)\(2\) Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants](#).

Non-Federal Reviewers Reference

Please refer to *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* of this funding opportunity for information on non-federal reviewers in the review process.

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval in the objective review process, but not selected for award may receive funding if additional funds become available in the current Fiscal Year. For those applications determined as “approved but unfunded,” notice will be given of the determination by email.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Announcement of awards and the disposition of applications will be provided to applicants at a later date. ACF staff cannot respond to requests for information regarding funding decisions prior to the official applicant notification.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Notice of Award (NoA) that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The NoA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via email or by GrantSolutions, or the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), whichever is relevant.

Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

Information on allowable pre-award costs and the time period under which they may be incurred is available in *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions*, if applicable. Project costs that are incurred prior to the receipt of the NoA are at the recipient's risk.

Recipients may translate the Federal award and other documents into another language. In the event of inconsistency between any terms and conditions of the Federal award and any translation into another language, the English language meaning will control. Where a significant portion of the recipient's employees who are working on the Federal award are not fluent in English, the recipient must provide the Federal award in English and in the language(s) with which employees are more familiar.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Awards issued under this funding opportunity are subject to 45 CFR Part 75 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards currently in effect or implemented during the period of award, other Department regulations and policies in effect at the time of award, and applicable statutory provisions. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is available at www.ecfr.gov. Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are

available at: www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements.

An application funded with the release of federal funds through a grant award does not constitute, or imply compliance with federal regulations. Funded organizations are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations.

Please review all HHS regulatory provisions for Termination at 45 CFR § 75.372.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services' single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. ACF grant awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS GPS, which covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. The general terms and conditions in the HHS GPS will apply as indicated unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary that are specified in the NoA. The HHS GPS is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-awardrequirements#chapter-1>.

Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations

A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the federal government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom, nondiscrimination, and conscience protections in federal law, including the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (42 U.S.C. § 2000bb *et seq.*), the Coats-Snowe Amendment (42 U.S.C. § 238n), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e–1(a) and 2000e–2(e)), Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12113(d)(2), section 1553 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. § 18113), the Weldon Amendment (e.g., Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, Public Law 116–94, 133 Stat. 2534, 2607, div. A, sec. 507(d) (Dec. 20, 2019)), or any related or similar federal laws or regulations. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

Consistent with 45 CFR § 87.3(b), a faith-based organization that receives direct financial assistance from HHS may not engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the HHS awarding agency. Such an organization, whether faith-based or not, also shall not, in providing services funded by HHS, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice, as provided in 45 CFR § 87.3(d).

Projects funded under this announcement are expected to provide adequate protections of human subjects, including approval by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), as applicable.

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports:

Semi-Annually

Reporting Requirements

Recipients under this funding opportunity will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting requirements is available on the ACF website at www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-2.

For planning purposes, the frequency of required reporting for awards made under this funding opportunity are as follows:

Financial Reports:

Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Sarah

Blankenship

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Division of Child and Family Development

330 C St SW

Washington

DC

20416

(887) 350-5913

(703) 934-3740

CCRP2@icfi.com

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget

Shea Westfall

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Grants Management

ICF International

9300 Lee Highway

Fairfax

VA

22031-6050

877-350-5913

CCRP2@icfi.com

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) www.hhs.gov/.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) www.acf.hhs.gov/.

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs www.grants.gov/.

ACF "How To Apply For A Grant" <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant>.

ACF Property Guidance <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/real-property-and-tangible-personal-property>

Grants.gov Accessibility Information [www.grants.gov/ web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html](http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html).

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) <http://www.ecfr.gov/>.

United States Code (U.S.C.) <http://uscode.house.gov/>.

The Office of Child Care www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/

Application Checklist

Applicants may use this checklist as a guide when preparing an application package.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . See http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html for additional information. This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> . If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the funding opportunity. To obtain a DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier), go	A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform . To register at SAM, go to http://www.sam.gov .	
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . These forms are available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. They are required for applications that include only non-construction activities.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> .	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If not available at the time of application, it may also be

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov .	submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Letter of Intent	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4</i> .
Table of Contents	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submit with the application by the due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Project Summary	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . The Project Summary is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity</i> .	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the application due date and time listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4</i> of the NOFO. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications</i> .	If applicable, concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i> .	Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C. Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
		in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDR)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i>.</p> <p>The IDR must be submitted with the application package.</p>	<p>If the IDR is available by the application due date, it must be submitted with the application package.</p> <p>If it is not available by the application due date, listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>, it may be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Eligibility Documentation by For-Profit Organizations	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity</i> .	Submission is required with the application by the Application Due Date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .