



**Administration for Children and Families**

**Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation**

**Access to Infant and Toddler Care and Education: Research and Evaluation**

**HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-YE-1212**

**Application Due Date: 07/08/2024**

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**Funding Opportunity Title:**

Access to Infant and Toddler Care and Education: Research and Evaluation

**Announcement Type:**

Initial

**Funding Opportunity Number:**

HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-YE-1212

**Assistance Listing Number:**

93.575

**Due Date for Applications:**

07/08/2024

## 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 an award, please visit "Applying for an ACF Award" at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant>.**

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is soliciting applications for Access to Infant and Toddler Care and Education: Research and Evaluation awards. The early care and education (ECE) landscape has shifted in recent years due to a number of factors, including, but not limited to, increasing state and local investments in public pre-kindergarten, a declining supply of home-based ECE settings, changing ECE workforce qualification or educational requirements, and ECE workforce shortages and provider instability exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This shifting landscape has implications, including unintended consequences, for access to infant and toddler care and education (i.e., the extent to which families can identify and secure care with reasonable effort, the affordability of care, care that meets parents’ needs, care that supports children’s development).

This opportunity will provide funding to address key research and evaluation questions related to care and education access for infants and toddlers at the national, state, or local level.

Specifically, these awards will support either:

1. descriptive research studies to document current access, shifts in access over time, or the characteristics of specific policies, practices, or other efforts that may be affecting access; or
2. evaluations to explore the implementation or effects of specific policies, practices, or other efforts that may be affecting access.

Proposed projects can include primary data collection and/or leverage secondary data sources. Proposed projects can use quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods data at the national, state or territory, or local level.

For further information about ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE), see <http://acf.hhs.gov/opre>.

## 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**

#### **Background**

As described in [\*Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education \(ECE\): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers\*](#), access can be conceptualized as:

- *the extent to which families can identify and secure care with reasonable effort* (including the interaction between the supply of ECE programs and the demand and use of ECE programs by families, the extent to which information about ECE programs is readily available to parents, and disparities in access);
- *the affordability of care* (including the cost to parents and the cost to ECE programs of providing early care and education services);
- *care that meets parents' needs* (including the type of ECE program, the availability of transportation to the program, and the program's hours of operation); and
- *care that supports children's development* (including quality of care, coordination of services within and across ECE settings, practices that support children's stability in ECE arrangements, and program practices that meet children's unique needs, including those children who may be particularly vulnerable).

The first three years of life are critical for supporting child growth and development. Yet, access to high-quality care and education for infants and toddlers has long been limited. This is in part due to higher operational costs of serving infants and toddlers than children of other ages.

The ECE landscape has shifted in recent years due to a number of factors, including, but not limited to, increasing state and local investments in public pre-kindergarten, a declining supply of home-based ECE settings, changing ECE workforce qualification or educational requirements, and ECE workforce shortages and provider instability exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This shifting landscape may have implications, including unintended consequences, for further limiting access to infant and toddler care and education.

### **Project Goals and Requirements**

This opportunity will provide funding for projects that address key research and evaluation questions related to care and education access for infants and toddlers at the national, state, or local level and to disseminate findings from those projects.

The goals of these awards are to:

- Answer key questions to inform policy, program administration, and future research related to infant and toddler care and education access.
- Encourage active communication, networking, and collaboration among those studying access to infant and toddler care and education.

Specifically, these awards will support either:

1. descriptive research studies to document current access, shifts in access over time, or the characteristics of specific policies, practices, or other efforts that may be affecting access; or
2. evaluations to explore the implementation or effects of specific policies, practices, or other efforts that may be affecting access.

Potential research and evaluation projects may examine topics at the national, state, or local level, as they are relevant to access to infant and toddler care and education, including, but not limited to:

- Publicly funded pre-kindergarten policies or practices (e.g., eligibility requirements; delivery system; ages served);
- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) policies and practices (e.g., eligibility requirements; consumer education activities; strategies for increasing the supply and quality of infant and toddler services including uses of infant and toddler quality set-aside funds, infant and toddler copayment/reimbursement rates to meet demand);
- Shifts in minimum preservice qualification or educational requirements for the infant and toddler care and education workforce or shifts for the care and education workforce serving preschool-aged children that may have implications for infant and toddler access;
- Efforts to improve the supply of home-based providers serving infants and toddlers to meet demand;
- Incentives or initiatives to keep existing or expand their infant and toddler slots (e.g., set-asides or funds to support infant and toddler slots);
- Provisions of the 2024 CCDF Final Rule, *Improving Child Care Access, Affordability, and Stability in the Child Care and Development Fund* (e.g., implementation of provisions related to eligibility and enrollment processes, family co-payment policies, or use of grants and contracts for direct services for infants and toddlers);
- Disparities or inequities in access for infants and toddlers from underserved or marginalized communities and/or “equal access” provisions of CCDF that aim to ensure eligible children have access to child care services that are comparable to services for children whose parents are not eligible; or
- Other uses of federal, state, and/or local funds to improve access to infant and toddler care and education.

Recipients must align their proposed measurement of access with at least one of the dimensions of access presented above (i.e., the extent to which families are able to secure care with reasonable effort, the affordability of care, care that meets parents’ needs, or care that supports children’s development).

Recipients will conduct primary data collection and/or leverage secondary data sources. Potential secondary data sources may include, but are not limited to:

- State or local administrative data (e.g., licensing, Child Care Resource & Referral, Quality Rating and Improvement System, workforce registry, child care subsidy system, pre-kindergarten program);
- National administrative data (e.g., ACF-801);
- State or local survey data (e.g., CCDF Lead Agency market rate survey)
- National survey data (e.g., National Survey of Early Care and Education, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Early Head Start Child-Care Partnerships National Descriptive Study and Sustainability Study);

Recipients will analyze quantitative, qualitative, or mixed- methods data. Recipients will analyze a singular data source or link multiple data sources.

### **Attendance at Meetings.**

The Project Director or Principal Investigator must participate in a consortium of recipients. The Project Director or Principal Investigator will meet and communicate regularly with federal staff and the consortium to:

- share lessons learned;
- identify opportunities for collaboration;
- plan for dissemination; and
- develop collective expertise and resources to be shared with the field at large.

The Project Director or Principal Investigator must attend:

- quarterly virtual calls with other recipients.
- meetings of the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC) in 2025 and 2027. CCEEPRC is typically held in spring/summer in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and lasts approximately 2 days.
- ACF’s National Research Conference on Early Childhood (NRCEC) in 2026. NRCEC is typically held in spring/summer in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and lasts approximately 3 days.
- Two meetings of all recipients. Each meeting will last approximately 1 day and be held in conjunction with CCEEPRC 2025 and 2027.

### **Acknowledgment of Federal Funding**

Please refer to the Stevens Amendment on the ACF website, [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#) for guidance requiring all HHS grant and cooperative agreement recipients to acknowledge federal funding when publicly communicating projects or programs funded through the HHS annual appropriation.

### **Subawards**

Recipients under this 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 Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) 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.

## II. Federal Award Information

**Funding Instrument Type:**

CA (Cooperative Agreement)

**Estimated Total Funding:**

\$2,400,000

**Expected Number of Awards:**

8

**Award Ceiling:**

\$450,000

Per Budget Period

**Award Floor:**

\$75,000

Per Budget Period

**Average Projected Award Amount:**

\$300,000

Per Budget Period

**Anticipated Project Start Date:**

09/30/2024

**Length of Project Periods:**

Other

**Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'**

36-month project period with two 18-month budget periods

**Definitions**

*Budget Period:* The period of time for which funds are made available to a particular recipient. Projects will have two budget periods, each 18 months in length. The first budget period will start on September 30, 2024, and end March 29, 2026. The second budget period will start on March 30, 2026, and end September 29, 2027.

*Project Period:* The total length of the proposed project. The project period is 36 months in length starting on September 30, 2024, and ending September 29, 2027.

**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 the merit review and funding under this funding opportunity. Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

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

Under this cooperative agreement, substantial involvement is anticipated between ACF and the recipient throughout the duration of the funded project.

- ACF will collaboratively negotiate with the recipient regarding the roles and responsibilities outlined in this funding opportunity, prior to finalizing the cooperative agreement. This will include discussions regarding whether there are gaps or weaknesses identified by the review panel that need to be addressed to address significant gaps or weaknesses.
- ACF will monitor the recipient, providing guidance and feedback when necessary to facilitate accomplishment of project goals.
- ACF will facilitate collaboration and coordination with other ACF-sponsored recipients and projects (e.g., research projects, the training and technical assistance system) and ACF program offices (e.g., Office of Child Care).

## III. Eligibility Information

### III.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is unrestricted.

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from the merit review and 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.



## III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:

No

See *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification, Commitment of Non-Federal Resources* for more information.

## III.3. Other

Applicant organizations/entities may submit more than one application on behalf of more than one researcher, if the applications are distinct in scope.

### Application Disqualification Factors

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from the merit review and 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, as stated in *Section II. Federal Award Information*, will be disqualified from the merit review and 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 Grants.gov. **Paper applications received that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from the merit review and funding under this funding opportunity.**

If you do not have an internet connection or sufficient capacity to upload large documents to the internet you may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow you to submit your application 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 Grants.gov after 11:59 pm ET on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from Grants.gov, will be disqualified from the merit review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Applications submitted to Grants.gov which fail their validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by ACF. If you submit an application for the same NOFO more than once, only the last on-time submission will be acknowledged.

**Paper applications with an approved exemption from the electronic submission requirement must be received by 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 the merit review and 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  
Access to Infant and Toddler Care and Education  
c/o ICF  
1902 Reston Metro Plaza  
Reston  
VA  
20190  
877-350-5913  
703-934-3740  
ITAccess@icf.com

#### **Application Packages**

#### **Electronic Application Submission:**

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

### **IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

#### **FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS**

#### **Notice of Two-File Requirement**

Applicants applying via Grants.gov must upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms (SFs) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved forms. Additional files will be removed prior to the merit review.

#### **FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:**

#### **Signature of Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)**

Each applicant must designate an authorized organization representative (AOR) with authority to act on the organization's behalf on matters related to the application submission and

administration of awards. The AOR signature must appear on all forms in which a signature is required. By signing, the AOR agrees the organization will abide by all applicable Federal statutes, regulations and terms and conditions of the award.

### **Accepted Font Style and Size**

Applications must be in Times New Roman 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be 10-point font. Pages that contain blurred or illegible text will be removed.

If documents must be scanned, the font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. You may not scan more than one page of a documents onto a single page. Pages with blurred text will be removed from the application.

### **English Language**

Applications must be submitted in the English language and must be in the terms of United States (U.S.) dollars. See 45 CFR §75.111 for more information.

### **Page Limitations**

You must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS" later in this section. **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 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:

- Table of Contents
- One-page Project Summary
- Required Assurances and Certifications
- SFs and OMB-approved forms
- Resumes, Logic Models, Proof of Legal Status/Non-Profit Status, Third-Party Agreements, Letters of Support, footnotes and tables
- 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 merit review 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 revise a previously submitted application, ACF will accept only the last on-time application for pre-review under the Application Disqualification Factors. 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 must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at Grants.gov.

### **Accepted Application Format**

With the exception of the required 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.

### **PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:**

With the exception of SFs and OMB-approved forms, the application submission is **limited to 75 pages** in its entirety.

Applicants must number the pages of their application beginning with the Table of Contents.

Applicants must include the following materials according to the format for their application package and in the order presented below:

1. **Project Description. (File 1)**
  - **Table of Contents.**
  - **Project Summary.**
  - **Project Description** (*Approach, Expected Outcomes, Timeline and Milestones*).
  - **Staffing and Management Plan.**
  - **Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information.**
  - **Dissemination Plan.**
  - **Budget and Budget Justification.**
2. **Appendices. (File 2)**
  - **Legal Status of Applicant Entity.**
  - **Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities.**
  - **Third-Party Agreements.**
  - **Resumes and/or Curricula Vitae and/or other evidence of Organizational Capacity.**
  - **Letters of Support.**

## **ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

You are required to submit applications electronically unless you have 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 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.

### **Formatting Submission Files**

ACF strongly recommends that File One and File Two be uploaded as Portable Document Files (PDFs).

To adhere to the two-file requirement, you may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Applicants using 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.

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.”

### **Naming Application Submission Files**

**Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by Grants.gov.** Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Please also see

<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters>.

### **Use only file formats supported by ACF**

While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two files (Project Description and Appendices) are uploaded as PDFs in order to comply with the two-file upload limitation.**

### **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)

**Documents in file formats not listed here will be removed from the application and will not be used in the merit review. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.**

**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 not be reviewed. This may make the application incomplete, and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:**

You must receive an exemption in order for a paper application to be accepted for review. For more information on the exemption, see "[ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.](#)"

Applicants with an approved exemption for paper application submission should download the forms package associated with the NOFO's Synopsis on Grants.gov under the Package tab.

All copies of mailed 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 submission must be packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled with the NOFO title and Funding Opportunity Number.

Applicants must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all SFs and OMB-approved forms. The original copy must have original signatures. Copies of the application, 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.**

**Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications**

**Applicants seeking an award under this funding opportunity must submit the listed SFs, assurances, and certifications with the application.** All required SFs, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this NOFO at 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 date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> . If	Form is available at <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html</a> .  General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/</a> . Applicants may also

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	contact OHRP by email ( <a href="mailto:OHRP@HHS.gov">OHRP@HHS.gov</a> ) 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 (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	<p>Required of all applicants.</p> <p>Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application and project award period.</p> <p>Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at: <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a>.</p>	See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) 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 submitted prior to award.	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.

<b>Forms/Assurances/Certifications</b>	<b>Submission Requirement</b>	<b>Notes/Description</b>
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	<p>Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. SFs must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.</p> <p>By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.</p>	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 award.	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 accordance with its instructions.



## Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

### **Mandatory Grant Disclosures**

All applicants and recipients are required to submit, in writing, to ACF and the HHS Office of the Inspector General, 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:** [grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov](mailto:grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov)

### **SF-424 Key Contact Form**

The contact form should include information for the Principal Investigator or Project Director and the AOR.

### **Proprietary Information and Personally Identifiable Information (PII)**

ACF will be using non-federal reviewers in the review process. You 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 requests the 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.I. 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 NOFO. **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 applicant from the merit review.** Letter of intent information will be used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to evaluate applications.

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.

Letters of intent should be submitted via e-mail to [ITaccess@icf.com](mailto:ITaccess@icf.com) or mailed to the following address:

OPRE Review Team: Access to Infant and Toddler Care and Education  
c/o ICF  
1902 Reston Metro Plaza  
Reston, VA 20190

### **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 project description. The summary must include a brief description of the applicant's proposed project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed activities or services, and if applicable, the population group(s) to be served. The summary must be clear, accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. 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).

### **Expected Outcomes**

Identify the outcomes to be achieved from the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall program as described in *Section I. Program Description*. If research is part of the proposed work, outcomes must include hypothesized results and implications of the proposed research.

### **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.

The approach should be carefully developed in accordance with the goals of the awards as described in *Section I. Program Description* of this announcement. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the detailed *Evaluation Criteria* found in *Section V.1.* to inform the development of their approach. The following information must be included:

A. *Background, Significance, and Objectives.* Applicants must demonstrate:

- understanding of the relevant literature on critical issues;
- the objective and the overall significance of the proposal;
- how the proposal will address issues of relevance to infant and toddler care and education access;
- how the proposal is related to the goals of the award (articulated in *Section I. Project Description*); and
- how project findings will inform CCDF policy, CCDF Lead Agencies, and/or CCDF providers.

Applicants must incorporate the following information:

- A thorough and rigorous literature review that:
  - draws on the most recent literature available;
  - discusses previous studies related to the proposed research or evaluation project;
  - identifies gaps in the literature; and
  - justifies the proposed research or evaluation project and the outcomes of interest.
- A theoretical or conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or evaluation project and a description of how it relates to the project goals and research questions.

B. *Research Design and Methodology.* Applicants must demonstrate:

- A strong research or evaluation design;
- A clear methodology; and
- A clear connection between the research questions proposed and the methodology that will be used, illustrating that the methodology is appropriate to address the research questions of interest.

Applicants must incorporate the following information:

- Specific research questions of interest and discussion of how they relate to access to infant and toddler care and education and related critical issues in the field;
- Hypothesized results justified by findings from the current literature;
- Identification and description of the data sources that will be used;
  - i. *For Secondary Data Sources:* Provide evidence of access to any secondary data sources, to the extent that such documentation can be generated at the time of application submission; for example, include copies of written agreements between the applicant and the individuals/entities authorized to provide access to specific administrative data sources or copies of licenses or approvals for restricted-use data sources. If secondary data sources are not yet accessible at the time of application, describe the expected timeline and activities necessary to obtain data source access prior to award. If applicable, describe how communications with data owners or archivers have informed the expected timeline and activities. Describe the original research or other purpose of the data, describe the original sample, and explain how the data source is appropriate for the proposed project.

- ii. *For Primary Data Sources*: Describe the data that will be collected and the methods that will be used to collect the data.
- Description of the proposed study sample, including:
  - how it will be constructed or selected/recruited;
  - how it relates to the population of interest; and
  - demonstration that the analytic sample size will be sufficient to conduct the proposed analytic strategy.
- Description of how the proposed project will provide for adequate protection of human subjects and the process by which Human Subjects Certification/Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval has or will be obtained prior to award or, if applicable, exemption has already been obtained.
- Description of the measures that will be used including, as applicable:
  - how they will be constructed;
  - the psychometric properties of each measure;
  - demonstration that the measures are appropriate to answer the proposed research questions;
  - how access to infant and toddler care and education access will be measured in alignment with the definition articulated in *Section I., Project Description*.
  - primary and secondary outcome measures (for evaluations).
- A detailed analytic plan describing, as applicable:
  - the analytic approach, including statistical techniques, and methods of inference that will be used to analyze and interpret the data;
  - how missing data will be handled;
  - how weights will be used;
  - procedures that will be used to link data sources; and
  - procedures that will be used to clean and process data.

*C. Dissemination Plan.* Applicants must demonstrate:

- how findings will be disseminated to a range of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, researchers, CCDF Administrators, policymakers, and/or child care and early education program staff;
- dissemination vehicles that will be used to achieve the greatest reach, including the intended distribution channels;
- how the dissemination plan encompasses both research and policy/program-oriented products (e.g., briefs targeted to policymakers or practitioners, journal articles highlighting methodological or empirical findings for research audiences, etc.).
- an approach to disseminate to national audiences (e.g., presentations at professional meetings with diverse and relevant audiences);
- an approach to archive final dissemination products, including the study data (if appropriate); and
- a rigorous approach to pre-register the project with an appropriate public registry highlighting what will be included in the pre-registration as well as a plan to update the pre-registration over the course of the project, as needed.

*D. Staffing and Management Plan.* Applicants must demonstrate:

- they have or will have staff who will oversee the proposed project, including who the proposed staff are and the number of hours staff will devote to the current research project;
- they have or will have staff with the necessary expertise (e.g., skills, training, analytic experience/education, and expertise) to execute their proposed approach;
- sufficient management to ensure high-quality final products;
- a clear plan for achieving the objectives of the project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing the project;
- experience gaining Human Subjects Certification/IRB approval with an established, reputable IRB/research institution; and
- history of research and budget oversight.

### **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:

- Resumes.
- Curricula Vitae (CV).
- 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.

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).

### **Current and Pending Funding Support**

Applicants must submit a list of their current and pending funded support for ongoing projects and proposals from all sources including federal, state and local governments, public or private foundations, for-profit organizations, etc. All projects and proposals requiring a committed

portion of time for the Project Director, Principal Investigator, or key personnel must be included. Indicate the total award amount, awarding entity, and amount of time staff will devote to each project.

### **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 Management
- Procurement
- Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting
- Subrecipient Monitoring and Management
- Record Retention and Access
- Remedies for Noncompliance
- Prior Written Approval

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 PII 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. See 45 CFR § 75.303(e) for more information.

### **Dissemination Plan**

Applicants must propose a plan to disseminate reports, products, and/or project outputs so that information is provided to key target audiences. Dissemination plans must include:

- Dissemination goals and objectives;
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences;
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes;
- A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received project information and have used it as intended, and
- The timeline for dissemination.

### **Third-Party Agreements**

Third-party agreements include Letters of Commitment, Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

and Memoranda of Agreement (MOA). Letters of Commitment, MOUs and MOAs must 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. Letters of Commitment, MOUs, and MOAs 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 third-party agreements.

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment, MOUs, or MOAs between recipients and third-parties (i.e., subrecipients, contractors, or other cooperating entities).

Collaboration/consortia applicants must provide Letters of Commitment, MOUs, or MOAs identifying the primary applicant and all collaborators that are responsible for project activities.

## 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 SF, either SF- 424A or SF-424C. Applicants are encouraged to review the form instructions in addition to the guidance in this section. The project budget consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information SF. 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:** *Annual appropriations legislation for the Department of Health and Human Services 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 salary limitation reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits, indirect costs 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.

Awards will have two 18-month budget periods. Applicants must provide a budget using the SF-424A and an associated budget justification for each 18-month budget period.



The proposed budget must include funds for the Project Director or Principal Investigator to attend all required meetings (see *Travel* later in this section for more information). Budget period 1 will include CCEEPRC 2025 and an attached recipient meeting. Budget period 2 will include NRCEC 2026 and CCEEPRC 2027 and an attached recipient meeting.

## **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; project 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 because those costs should be listed under the "Contractual" category as part of the total value of the contract or agreement.

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 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 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:** Tangible personal property other than those included under the Equipment category. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of \$5,000, or the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, regardless of the length of its useful life. See 45 CFR § 75.2, 75.321, and 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 those that should be placed under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, procurement contracts, and subawards. 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. Costs related to professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees, must be listed in the Other category. (Typically, these arrangements will take the form of a consultant agreement directly with an individual as opposed to a contract with a company that employs the consultant. The latter case must still be listed under Contractual line item.)

**If applicable and charged as a direct cost, include** cost of third-party renting or leasing agreements for equipment; and third-party renting or leasing agreements for real property by

address for each building, facility, administrative office, space, structure, land, and other real property.

**Justification:** 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.

For contracts, demonstrate that 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.

**If applicable and charged as a direct cost,** for each real property proposed or claimed for rent or lease include: the rent amount with calculation; terms of lease; maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost; minor A&R with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost; show the computation and provide other information that supports the amount requested. Only when allowable and with prior approval, describe the financing costs (including interest) including terms for the real property address. For applicable ACF programs with real property authority, see [ACF Property Guidance](#). **Do not include** real property owned by the recipient or arrangements considered “less-than-arms-length,” “sale and lease back,” “finance lease” per Financial Accounting Standards Board, “financed purchase” per Government Accounting Standards Board standards because these costs (e.g., depreciation costs) if charged as 1) a direct cost, should be listed under the “Other” category or 2) an indirect cost as with any indirect costs, as part of their indirect cost pool that is used to calculate an indirect cost rate). These costs must be treated as either direct or indirect costs, not both. For more information, see 45 CFR §75.2, 75.414, 75.430-75.431, 75.434, 75.436, 75.439, and 75.452.

## **Other**

**Description:** Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to: individual consultant costs; local travel; insurance (when not included under the Fringe category); food (when allowable); medical and dental costs (non-personnel); professional service costs (e.g., audit charges); depreciation of real property and equipment (when not treated as an indirect cost), printing and publications, training costs (such as tuition and stipends), staff development costs, and administrative costs (when not treated as an indirect cost). 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.

**If applicable and charged as a direct cost, include** depreciation by real property address for each building, facility, administrative office, structure, land, and other real property proposed for use and depreciation of equipment proposed for use. For each real property owned by the

recipient or less-than-arms-length lease intended to be proposed or claimed for use provide, if applicable, and in accordance with 45 CFR §§75.436 and 75.465: the allocable percentage and total dollar amount; the depreciation amount with type of method and calculation used; tax amount; insurance amount and what it covers; maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost; minor A&R with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost; the ownership type (e.g., owned, leased, or intent to lease); show the computation and provide other information that supports the amount requested. For more information, please see [ACF Property Guidance](#). **Do not include** costs of third-party renting or leasing real property and equipment because those costs should be under the “Contractual” category.

## Indirect Charges

**Description:** Indirect or Facilities & Administration (F&A) (F&A means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. F&A costs are generally used by institutions of higher education). Typical examples of indirect or F&A costs include but are not limited to depreciation on buildings and equipment, equipment and capital improvements, operation and maintenance expenses, and general administration and expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of personnel administration and accounting. For more information, see 45 CFR §75.2, 75.414, 75.430-75.431, 75.434, 75.436, and 75.439. Enter the 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 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 merit 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 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 award.

## **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 by statute, recipients must meet the required level of cost sharing. Recipients that have voluntarily decided to contribute cost sharing when it is not required, or at a higher level than required, will be held accountable for the proposed cost-sharing, if accepted by ACF and included in the Notice of Award (NoA). **A recipient's failure to provide cost sharing that has been accepted by ACF may result in the disallowance of federal funds.**

**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 the merit review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity.

## **Program Income**

**Description:** The estimated amount of gross income, if any, expected to be directly generated by or earned from this project. Program income includes but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed, the use or rental of real or personal property acquired under federally-funded projects, the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award, license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights, and interest on loans made with award funds. See 45 CFR §75.307 for more information.

**Justification:** Describe the nature, source and anticipated use of program income in the budget or refer to the pages in the application that contain this information.

## **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 03/31/2026. 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

Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

### Electronic Delivery

ACF applicants are required to submit their applications online through Grants.gov.

### How to Register through Grants.gov

Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process.

Organizations must have an active System for Award (SAM) registration which provides a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and Grants.gov account to apply for awards under funding opportunities.

Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but SAM registration may take several weeks. Therefore, an organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact the entities ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

**Register with SAM:** All organizations (entities) applying online through Grants.gov must register with SAM. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. For detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: <https://grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

**Create a Grants.gov Account:** The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Follow the on-screen instructions provided on the registration page.

**Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account:** For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

**EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles:** After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC is then expected to log into Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

For questions related to this funding opportunity, please contact the number listed in the application package.

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 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. 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.

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

### **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](#)" 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](#)" for complete guidance.

### **Paper Application Submission**

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* of this funding opportunity for address information for paper application submissions.

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

All applicants must have a UEI and an active registration with SAM (<https://www.sam.gov>) prior to applying to a funding opportunity.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal funds from any HHS Agency to:

- Be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application or plan;
- Maintain an active SAM registration with current information until the process is complete. If you receive an award, your SAM registration must be active throughout the life of the award. It must be renewed every 365 days to keep it active;
- Provide its UEI in each application or plan it submits; and

- Ensure any proposed subrecipient(s) have obtained and provided to the recipient their UEI(s) prior to making any subawards (**Note:** Subrecipients are not required to complete full SAM registration.).

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

06/08/2024

Number of Days from Publication 60

### Due Date for Applications

07/08/2024

## Explanation of Due Dates

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* and in this section.

### Electronic Applications

The deadline for submission of electronic applications via Grants.gov is 11:59 pm ET on the due date.

Applications submitted to 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 Applications

The deadline for receipt of mailed paper applications is 4:30 pm ET on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. Applications should be mailed to the address provided in *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

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

- Applications submitted electronically via 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 applications received by mail after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Paper 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**. 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**.

### **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 application:**

ACF will provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail.

## **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**

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 award.

## **IV.7. Other Submission Requirements**

Submit paper applications to the following address.

### **Submission by Mail**

OPRE Review Team  
Access to Infant and Toddler Care and Education  
c/o ICF  
1902 Reston Metro Plaza  
Reston  
VA  
20190

## 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. 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 merit review.

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated using the criteria described in this section. 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 merit 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**

The extent to which the applicant:

- proposes to conduct a research or evaluation project of relevance to the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity as articulated in *Section I. Program Description*.
- demonstrates a solid understanding of the relevant operational and policy context.
- demonstrates why and how the project is expected to inform CCDF policy, CCDF Lead Agencies, and/or CCDF providers.
- demonstrates how the project will significantly contribute to the field's understanding of access to infant and toddler care and education.

#### APPROACH

**Maximum Points: 40**

The extent to which the applicant:

- presents a literature review that is current, concise, and supports the project rationale.
- proposes research questions that are appropriately linked to clearly defined hypotheses.
- proposes a data collection approach and/or data source that is appropriate to address the project's research questions and produce findings that are of current relevance and interest to ACF.
- articulates a clear and feasible approach and associated timeline to access proposed data source(s) and/or collect proposed data.

- identifies potential challenges related to accessing, collecting, and/or analyzing data and proposes clear and feasible strategies to mitigate those challenges and continue the proposed work.
- proposes a research or evaluation design and data analytic plan that lists the key measures intended for use in analyses, appropriately describes how measures were selected, and as applicable, how measures will be constructed.
- describes how the proposed measurement of access to infant and toddler care and education access aligns with the multi-dimensional definition articulated in *Section I. Program Description*.
- proposes a research or evaluation design and data analytic plan that is clearly described and is appropriate to address the goals, objectives, hypotheses, and/or questions addressed in the project.
- proposes a research or evaluation design and data analytic plan that appropriately and rigorously links research issues, questions, measures, data sources, and analyses.
- proposes analyses that reflect knowledge and expertise in use of state-of-the-art analytic techniques and are appropriate for the questions under consideration.
- demonstrates the proposed sample size is sufficient for the analyses, including the size of any subgroups of interest.
- demonstrates an understanding of confidentiality issues and proposes a design and data analytic plan that provides for adequate protection of human subjects, confidentiality of data, and consent issues related to the use of datasets.
- proposes a research or evaluation design and data analytic plan that addresses technical, logistical, and ethical issues that may arise.

**STAFF, MANAGEMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

**Maximum Points: 15**

The extent to which the applicant:

- provides information on the necessary skills, experience, and capabilities of the Project Director, Principal Investigator, and other key project staff.
- demonstrates that the research team and other noted staff, including partners (if any), possess the research expertise, experience, and commitment necessary to conduct the project, including relevant background, experience, and training on related research or similar projects.
- demonstrates the knowledge, experience, and expertise necessary to conduct the proposed analyses.
- demonstrates knowledge, experience, and expertise to successfully execute the dissemination plan.
- demonstrates evidence of effective organizational structure and collaborative relationships, if appropriate.
- demonstrates that the proposed staff have an understanding of, and sensitivity to, the issues of working with data sources that include confidential information and identifiers.
- demonstrates that the proposed staff have access to appropriate facilities to execute the proposed approach.

- describes an adequate management plan for achieving the objectives of the project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality.
- describes an adequate plan to archive final dissemination products, including the study data (if appropriate).
- provides sufficient protection of human subjects and confidentiality of data including as evidenced by the Protection of Human Subjects: Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption form.

## **DISSEMINATION**

**Maximum Points: 15**

The extent to which the applicant:

- includes a detailed approach to pre-register proposed analyses in an appropriate study registry and update the pre-registration as appropriate.
- identifies multiple appropriate distribution channels to reach the intended audience(s).
- includes an effective plan for the dissemination and utilization of information by researchers, CCDF administrators, policymakers, and/or practitioners in the field.
- proposes a dissemination plan that encompasses multiple research-, policymaker-, and practitioner-oriented products, as well as other dissemination approaches.
- articulates an approach to disseminate findings to national audiences (e.g., presentations at professional meetings targeting diverse and relevant audiences).

## **BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION**

**Maximum Points: 15**

The extent to which the applicant:

- proposes project costs that are reasonable, appropriately allocated, and sufficient to carry out the approach and accomplish the proposed objectives.
- proposes project costs that include funds for the Project Director or Principal Investigator to participate in CCEEPRC 2025 and 2027 as well as two attached meetings of recipients and ACF's NRCEC 2026.
- proposes project costs appropriate to carry out the activities articulated in the staff, management, and organizational capacity plan.
- proposes project costs appropriate to carry out the activities articulated in the dissemination plan.

## **V.2. Review and Selection Process**

No award will be made under this funding opportunity on the basis of an incomplete application.

### **Initial ACF Screening**

Disqualified applications are considered “non-responsive” and are excluded from the merit 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.

### **Merit Review and Results**

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by 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 merit review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, merit review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process. 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.

OPRE will conduct an administrative review of the applications and results of the competitive review panels and will make recommendations for funding to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Planning, Research, and Evaluation, taking into account the goals of the awards as listed in *Section I. Program Description*. Applications may be funded in whole or in part depending on (1) the ranked order of applicants resulting from the competitive review, (2) staff review and consultations, (3) the availability of funding, (4) the combination of projects that best meet the needs of ACF such as prioritizing applications that complement or fill gaps in ACF's current research portfolio or that address programmatic priorities, and (5) the best interests of the federal government.

Government agencies generally define plagiarism as the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. It is prohibited by federal regulations. Any suspected plagiarism will be reported to the applicant university and HHS/OIG for investigation.

### **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), <https://sam.gov/reports/ei/static>, 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](#).

### **Approved but Unfunded Applications**

Applications recommended for approval in the merit 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 NoA that sets forth the amount of funds awarded, the terms and conditions, the effective date, 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.

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](http://www.ecfr.gov). Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary awards are available at: [www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements).

An application funded with the release of federal funds through an 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.

## **HHS Grants Policy Statement**

ACF awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS), which covers basic award processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. The HHS GPS is available at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/grants/grants/policies-regulations/hhsgps107.pdf>.

## **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).

## **VI.3. Reporting**

Performance Progress Reports:

Semi-Annually

### **Reporting Requirements**

Recipients 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 <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/manage-grant/reporting>.

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**

Jenessa

Malin

Administration for Children and Families  
c/o ICF  
1902 Reston Metro Plaza  
Reston  
VA  
20190  
877-350-5913  
jenessa.malin@acf.hhs.gov

**Office of Grants Management Contact**

Bridget  
Shea Westfall  
Administration for Children and Families  
330 C St. SW  
Washington  
DC  
20201  
202-401-5542  
bridget.sheawestfall@acf.hhs.gov

## VIII. Other Information

### Reference Websites

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

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) [www.acf.hhs.gov/](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/).

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs [www.grants.gov/](http://www.grants.gov/).

ACF "Applying for an ACF Award" <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 <https://www.grants.gov/accessibility-compliance>

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

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

ACF/OPRE <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre>

ACF/OCC <https://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)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. See <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html</a> for additional information.</p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a></p>	<p>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.</p>
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> in the Mandatory section.</p>	<p>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>.</p>
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the funding opportunity.</p> <p>To obtain a UEI and SAM registration, go to <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a>.</p>	<p>A UEI and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants.</p> <p>Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p>
SF-424 Key Contact Form	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a>.</p>	<p>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>.</p>
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a>.</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package or prior to award.</p>

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>These forms are available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> in the Mandatory section. They are required for applications that include only non-construction activities.</p>	<p>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></p>
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a>.</p>	<p>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></p>
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	<p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a>.</p>	<p>If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application.</p> <p>If not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to award.</p>
Letter of Intent	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description.</i></p>	<p>Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4.</i></p>
Table of Contents	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></p>	<p>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></p>
Project Summary	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></p> <p>The Project Summary is limited to one single-spaced page.</p>	<p>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></p>

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
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 in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i>
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>

## Appendix

### About CCDF:

CCDF is a partnership between the federal government and states, territories, and tribes, administered by the Office of Child Care (OCC) within ACF. CCDF is the primary federal funding source for child care subsidies to help eligible working families with low incomes access child care that meets health and safety requirements and supports child development, and to improve the quality of child care for all children. CCDF aims to support child development and family well-being, help parents secure and maintain employment, facilitate training, and education, and improve the economic well-being of participating families. As a block grant, CCDF gives funding to states, territories, and tribes to provide child care subsidies as vouchers or certificates to families with low incomes or through grants and contracts with providers. CCDF promotes improvement in the quality of care 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 (licensed and legally operating but license exempt) 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/>.

### Relevant Resources:

[\*Selected State Approaches to Support Infant and Toddler Care and Education\*](#)

[\*State and Territory Approaches to Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers \(2022–2024 CCDF Plans\)\*](#)

[\*A Review of the Literature on Access to High-Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers\*](#)

[\*Insights on Access to Quality Child Care for Infants and Toddlers\*](#)

*Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education (ECE): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers*

*State Strategies to Strengthen Infant-Toddler Care as Public Pre-k Expands*

*Infant/Toddler-Focused Strategies*