



Health Resources & Services Administration

Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)

Notice of Funding Opportunity

**Application due April 23, 2025**

# Autism Research Consortium (Autism RC)








Opportunity number: HRSA-25-021



Modified on 1/28/25  
Updated TA Webinar  
information



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# Before you begin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 23, 2025.



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



# Step 1:

# Review the Opportunity

## In this step

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# Basic information

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)

Office of Epidemiology and Research, Division of Research (OER/DoR)

*Supporting research to improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents with autism.*

## Summary

The HRSA Maternal and Child Health Bureau Research Consortium Program (MCHB RCP) will support a national group of researchers to study maternal and child health (MCH) and improve MCH outcomes. This program will ensure that resources are available to conduct research and share findings broadly to inform policy and practice.

The MCHB RCP contains three different investments (see [Appendix A](#)):

- Autism Research Consortium (Autism RC) (this competition)
- Maternal and Child Health Research Consortium (MCH RC) (under a separate Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO); HRSA-25-020)
- Research Coordinating Center (RCC) (under a separate mechanism)

The Autism RC will fund up to five research centers that will conduct research on MCHB priorities. The Autism RC supports both research infrastructure and research studies that will create, adapt, and share evidence-based strategies and interventions to increase the impact and efficiency of MCHB's research investments. We anticipate that the studies will promote health and reduce health disparities.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Autism RC will align research priorities with MCHB program needs and address critical evidence gaps. A coordinating center will support collaborations across MCHB's research portfolio.

## Funding details

**Application types:** New

**Expected total available funding in FY 2025 (FY25):** \$5,000,000

**Total number and type of awards:** Up to 5 [cooperative agreements](#)

**Funding range per award:** Up to \$1,000,000 each year



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

## Key facts

**Opportunity name:** Autism Research Consortium (Autism RC)

**Opportunity number:** HRSA-25-021

**Announcement version:** New

**Federal assistance listing:** 93.877

**Statutory authority number:** 42 U.S.C. § 280i-1(f) (Title III, § 399BB(f) of the Public Health Service Act)

## Key dates

**NOFO issue date:** January 17, 2025

**Informational webinar:** [See Webinar Section](#)

**Application deadline:** April 23, 2025

**Expected award date is by:** August 1, 2025

**Expected start date:** September 1, 2025

See [other submissions](#) for other time frames that may apply to this NOFO.

We plan to fund awards in 12-month budget periods for a total of three-year period of performance from September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2028.

The program and awards depend on the appropriation of funds and are subject to change based on the availability and amount of appropriations.

# Eligibility

## Who can apply

You can apply if you are a public or private entity, including research centers or networks.

- Foreign entities are not eligible to apply.
- Individuals are not eligible applicants under this NOFO.

## Types of eligible organizations

These types of domestic organizations may apply. “Domestic” means the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

- Public institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits with or without 501(c)(3) IRS status
- For-profit organizations, including small businesses
- State, county, city, township, and special district governments, including the District of Columbia, domestic territories, and freely associated states
- Independent school districts
- Native American tribal governments
- Native American tribal organizations

## Qualifications for principal investigator or project director

- Only one PD/PI (Project Director/Principal Investigator) can be named on the SF-424 R&R application. They will be the key point of contact. You can include co-investigators as key personnel on the project.
- Generally, a PD/PI cannot have two active HRSA/MCHB/OER/DoR awards at the same time.
  - If you have an award that is in a no-cost extension year, it is considered active and the PD/PI is not allowed to receive another award unless the PD/PI decides to step down from their role in the previously funded award.
  - However, if you are a current grantee of OER/DoR Autism CARES funding and your period of performance ends by 2026, you can apply for this opportunity.

- If you receive this award, we may ask you to relinquish the final year of your current award under certain circumstances.
- We expect the PD/PI to dedicate a minimum of 20% full-time equivalent (FTE) to the project.
- If you are selected, you will need to verify that percent effort across all federally-funded awards does not exceed 100%.

## Completeness and responsiveness criteria

We will review your application to make sure it meets these basic requirements to move forward in the competition.

We will not consider an application that:

- Is from an organization that does not meet all [eligibility criteria](#).
- Requests funding above the award ceiling shown in the [funding range](#).
- Is submitted after the [deadline](#).
- Is incomplete or non-responsive to the NOFO guidance.

## Application limits

You may submit more than one application under the same Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) if each application proposes a distinct project. This means that different investigators (or research teams) from the same institution can apply for the same funding opportunity.

We will only review your last [validated](#) application for each project.

## Cost sharing

This program has no cost-sharing requirement. If you choose to share in the costs of the project, we will not consider it during [merit review](#). We will hold you accountable for any funds you add, including through [reporting](#).

# Program description

## Purpose

The purpose of the Autism RC is to advance the evidence base on effective interventions, services, supports, and systems for children and adolescents with autism<sup>[2]</sup> and other developmental disabilities (DD) across the lifespan.

## Program goals and objectives

The program goals are to research MCHB priority areas and emerging issues that affect children and adolescents with autism, and to translate<sup>[3]</sup> research into practice. The overall goal is to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities at the population level.

Research centers funded through the Autism RC will conduct multiple research studies and build research infrastructure to facilitate the coordination and implementation of research activities.

Research infrastructure includes providing resources, logistical support, and coordinating partnerships, to support research and translate research into practice.

Research centers will conduct single-site or multi-site research studies that address the priorities listed.

In FY25, MCHB will fund five research centers related to priority autism research topics. We anticipate funding up to two awards in each category.

To support program goals, each research center is expected to accomplish the following program objectives during the period of performance:

- Work with strategic partners, including people and families with lived experience, to inform research design, implementation, dissemination, and evaluation.
- Conduct studies related to priority research topics, focusing on reducing health disparities.
- Share research findings, including at least two peer-reviewed publications per year, and other dissemination products for non-academic stakeholders and partners.
- Mentor early career investigators, especially those from underserved communities.<sup>[4]</sup>

## About MCHB and its strategic plan

The HRSA Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) administers programs with focus areas in maternal and women's health, adolescent and young adult health, perinatal and infant health, child health, and children with special health care needs.

To learn more about MCHB and the Bureau's Strategic Plan, visit [Mission, Vision, and Work | MCHB](#).

## Background

The Maternal and Child Health Bureau Research Consortium Program (MCHB RCP) creates a national group of researchers to study maternal and child health (MCH).

In the past, MCHB funded research networks, single investigator innovation studies, and field-initiated research studies. The MCHB RCP merges these programs into one. In FY25, this NOFO replaces the Research Network program, including the Autism Intervention Research Network on Behavioral Health (AIR-B) and the Autism Intervention Research Network on Physical Health (AIR-P).

Parent-reported data from the 2022 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) documented that 3.6% of children ages 3-17 years had a current diagnosis of autism, representing nearly 2.2 million children and adolescents.<sup>[5]</sup> Autistic children have higher rates of co-occurring mental and behavioral health conditions compared to children without autism, and access to adequate health care is a significant challenge for children with autism.<sup>[6]</sup>

Of particular concern are the disparities in timing of diagnosis, access to services, and quality of care.<sup>[7]</sup> Research about effective and scalable interventions and services is needed to address the diverse and complex needs of autistic children and their families, with a focus on underserved and vulnerable populations.

Autism RC recipients will develop research-practice partnerships<sup>[8]</sup> with community organizations, people and families with lived experience,<sup>[9]</sup> and MCHB programs. Through these partnerships, you will identify best practices for maximizing the impact of research. Research Centers will improve systems of care by translating and implementing evidence-based interventions to improve physical and behavioral health of children with autism and other DD across the lifespan.

The Autism RC will advance the evidence base on effective interventions, services, supports, and systems for children and adolescents with autism and other DD. Priority areas for the Autism RC were selected based on alignment with MCHB's strategic priorities including the [Blueprint for Change](#),<sup>[10]</sup> and the 2021-2023 IACC Strategic Plan.<sup>[11]</sup>

Each application under this NOFO will focus on one of the following categories.

We anticipate funding up to 2 awards in each category. You are expected to focus on one or more of the priority topics listed **within** your chosen category (if applicable). To respond to this NOFO, you must focus on children or adolescents with autism and other DD.

## Category 1: Interventions related to physical health

- Healthy lifestyle factors such as nutrition, physical activity, or sleep, with the aim of reducing preventable morbidity and premature mortality.
- Physical health conditions that disproportionately impact children and adolescents with autism, such as obesity and oral health.
- Unmet physical health service needs for children and adolescents with autism.

## Category 2: Interventions related to behavioral health

- Behavioral health<sup>[12]</sup> concerns that disproportionately impact children and adolescents with autism, such as anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- Unmet behavioral health service needs for children and adolescents with autism.

## Category 3: Systems of care

Accelerate the implementation of effective evidence-based interventions at the systems level. Interventions should aim to improve timely screening and diagnosis, and access to appropriate care, services, and support to improve physical and/or behavioral health outcomes and reduce disparities at the population level. Proposals should focus on one or more of these systems:

- Health care systems
- School systems
- Community settings
- Other systems that support children and adolescents with autism

## Category 4: Clinical innovations for developmental-behavioral pediatrics (DBP)

Advance the evidence base in the developmental, behavioral, and psychosocial aspects of pediatric care. Develop, evaluate, and incorporate effective interventions into clinical services to improve physical and behavioral health for children and adolescents with autism and other DD across the lifespan.

## Category 5: Interventions related to communication needs

Advance the evidence base for novel interventions and support strategies to address communication challenges of children and adolescents with autism and other DD across the lifespan. Approaches can incorporate use of new technologies and should address the various communication needs across the autism spectrum.

## Program requirements and expectations

We expect each Autism RC award recipient to complete the following major activities:

### Research

- Carry out single-site or multi-site research studies focusing on priorities identified in this NOFO. At least one of the studies should be an intervention study.<sup>[13]</sup> For the purpose of this NOFO, intervention studies can be efficacy, effectiveness, or implementation research.
- Ensure all research studies address the needs of underserved communities, are culturally and linguistically appropriate, and incorporate a community-based approach as appropriate.
- Ensure all research studies focus on translation and implementation of effective interventions, evidence-based practices, or guidelines as appropriate.

### Research program infrastructure

- Develop and maintain a national, interdisciplinary network of partners that will build and strengthen the evidence for effective interventions, services, supports, and systems.
- HRSA intends to award a Research Coordinating Center (RCC). If awarded, the Research Centers will participate in activities led by the RCC, such as committees and workgroups, attending an annual meeting, and sharing publications and research findings with the RCC for broader dissemination.

### Strategic partnerships

- Establish an interdisciplinary governance body (e.g., advisory board or steering committee) that meets biannually to:
  - Inform research studies and their design, dissemination, implementation, translation, and evaluation.

- Ensure that research activities are aligned with the priorities and needs of children and adolescents with autism and their families and are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- The governance body should have representation from each of the following groups:
  - MCHB [public health](#) and [research](#) programs that support children and youth with special health care needs.
  - People and families with lived experience, including those from underserved populations.
  - Community-based organizations that can engage and support underserved communities.
  - Experts in implementation science.
  - Key partners needed for translation and implementation of interventions, such as providers, state/local programs, policy makers, and community organizations.
- Collaborate with HRSA to modify the research plan to address emerging priorities based on input from stakeholders.

## Dissemination, evaluation, and sustainability

- Develop a plan to disseminate research findings and evidence-based guidelines to multiple audiences in the form of policy briefs, journal manuscripts, presentations to policy makers, and professional conferences.
- Publish at least two peer-reviewed publications per year, as well as other dissemination products for non-academic audiences.
- Submit at least one grant application each year to funders outside of MCHB's research program to sustain and expand the research studies.

## Mentorship

- Identify mentorship needs to build the autism research workforce, with a specific focus on studies of interventions, services, supports and systems for children and adolescents with autism and other DD.
- Mentor emerging and early career investigators, especially those from underserved communities and diverse backgrounds, to build the autism research workforce.

## Performance measurement, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement (CQI)

We expect you to measure your performance, evaluate your program, and conduct continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities. See the accompanying section titled [performance reporting and evaluation](#). Actions include:

- **Measuring performance on key activities and program objectives.**
  - This includes Discretionary Grants Information System (DGIS) measures on Research, Products and Publications, Health Equity and Partnerships and Collaboration.
  - For more information on these measures, please see the [Reporting](#) section.
- **Evaluating your program.**
  - In the event HRSA funds the RCC, you are expected to participate in evaluation activities led by the RCC, as well as HRSA's autism program evaluation activities.
  - You are expected to develop a preliminary program-specific evaluation plan that includes progress towards long-term goals, including expansion of the evidence base in priority areas, systems-level implementation of interventions, and policy and program impact. If awarded, you can update your plan to align with the other evaluation activities.
  - Evaluation plans should include the measures listed in the performance measurement expectations section.
- **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):**
  - You are expected to engage in CQI for your internal use to make sure you meet your goals.
    - For example, use findings from evaluation work to inform and improve your processes and outcomes.

# Award information

## Cooperative agreement terms

### Our responsibilities

Aside from monitoring and technical assistance, we also get involved in these ways:

- Helping you to prioritize, plan, and develop all project activities.
- Meeting and communicating with you regularly.
- Participating in project activities, such as webinars, presentations, or meetings on study results and activities.
- Holding you accountable to your project's goals and objectives.
- Helping you to create and maintain federal contacts both within and outside HRSA/MCHB that are needed to carry out your project.
- Reviewing all products including the methodology, analysis, results, policy implications, format, and tone prior to public dissemination.

### Your responsibilities

You must follow all relevant laws and policies. Your other responsibilities will include:

- Developing an organizational structure to carry out all award activities.
- Collaborating with MCHB project officer(s) and engaging them as part of your leadership team.
- Ensuring that HRSA is identified as the funder on all products and presentations developed with award funds, including appropriate disclaimers.
- Submitting to MCHB project officer(s) a pre-publication draft of manuscripts and other materials produced under this cooperative agreement before publishing and sharing with the greater public.
- Providing HRSA access to each product, including presentations and manuals, electronically or otherwise.
- Informing project officer(s) when hiring new project staff, planning new activities, and forming new partnerships.
- Responding in a timely manner to your project officer's comments, questions, and requests, including modifying your research plan and/or carrying out limited qualitative or quantitative analyses to address emerging issues.

# Funding policies and limitations

## Policies

- We will only make awards if this program receives funding. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
- Support beyond the first budget year will depend on:
  - Appropriation of funds
  - Your satisfactory progress in meeting the project's objectives
  - A decision that continued funding is in the government's best interest

If we receive more funding for this program, we may:

- Fund more applicants from the rank order list
- Extend the period of performance
- Award supplemental funding
  - Recipients may request supplemental funding during their period of performance to address needs within their scope of work. HRSA may support supplemental projects in accordance with HRSA grants policy if:
    - Funding is available and able to be allocated.
    - The request is reasonable and allowed.
    - Enough time remains in the budget period to approve the request.
    - The activities are in line with HRSA priorities and are different from other HRSA funded work.

## General limitations

- For guidance on some types of costs we do not allow or restrict, see Project Budget Information in Section 3.1.4 of the [R&R Application Guide](#). You can also see 45 CFR part 75, [General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost](#).
- You cannot earn profit from the federal award. See [45 CFR 75.400\(g\)](#).
- Congress's current appropriations act includes a salary limitation, which applies to this program. As of January 2025, the salary rate limitation is \$225,700. This limitation may be updated.

See [Manage Your Grant](#) for other information on costs and financial management.

## Indirect costs

Indirect costs are costs you charge across more than one project and that cannot be easily separated by project. For example, this could include utilities for a building that supports multiple projects.

Indirect costs are determined using one of two methods:

**Method 1 – Approved rate.** You currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency at time of application.

**Method 2 – *De minimis* rate.** Per [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#), if you have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate. This rate is 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See [2 CFR 200.1](#) for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely or until you negotiate a rate. If you use the *de minimis* rate, you must use it for all federal awards unless you negotiate a rate.

This award funds research activities and research infrastructure development; as such this is not a traditional research project. Many of the research activities may be conducted in communities or other off-site locations other than your institution. Therefore the “Other Sponsored Program/Activities” or “Off-Site” indirect costs rates may be most appropriate for the activities described.

## Program income

Program income is money earned as a result of your award-supported project activities. You must use any program income you generate from awarded funds for approved project-related activities. Find more about program income at [45 CFR 75.307](#).



# Step 2:

# Get Ready to Apply

## In this step

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# Get registered

## SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov to apply. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. Begin that process today.

To register, go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and select Get Started. From the same page, you can also select the Entity Registration Checklist to find out what you'll need to register.

When you register or update your SAM.gov registration, you must agree to the [financial assistance general certifications and representations](#). You must agree to those for grants specifically, as opposed to contracts, because the two sets of agreements are different. You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

## Grants.gov

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

# Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to [Grants Search at Grants.gov](#) and search for opportunity number HRSA-25-021.

After you select the opportunity, we recommend that you click the Subscribe button to get updates.

# Application writing help

Visit [HHS Tips for Preparing Grant Proposals](#).

Visit [HRSA's How to Prepare Your Application](#) page for more guidance.

See [Apply for a Grant](#) for other help and resources.

## Join the webinar

More information on this NOFO's webinar will be posted at a later date to the related documents tab [here](#).

We recommend you “Subscribe” to the NOFO on Grants.gov to receive updates when documents are posted.

The Webinar will be recorded.

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



# Step 3:

# Prepare Your Application

## In this step

Application contents and format

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# Application contents and format

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

**Application page limit:** 60 pages.

Submit your information in English and express whole number budget figures using U.S. dollars.

**Make sure you include each of these:**

Components	Submission format
<a href="#">Project abstract</a>	Use the Project Abstract Summary form
<a href="#">Project narrative</a>	Use the Research & Related Other Project Information form
<a href="#">Budget narrative</a>	Use the Research & Related Budget form
<a href="#">Attachments</a>	Enter each in the Attachments Form
<a href="#">Other required forms</a>	Upload using each required form

## Required format

You must format your narratives and attachments using our required formats for fonts, size, color, format, and margins. See the formatting guidelines in Section 3.2 of the [R&R Application Guide](#).

## Project abstract

Complete the information in the Project Abstract Summary form.

Make sure to:

- Include a short description of your proposed project.
- Include the needs you plan to address, the proposed research projects, and the target populations you plan to serve.

For more information, see Section 3.1.2 of the [R&R Application Guide](#).

# Project narrative

Use the Research & Related Other Project Information form to attach the project narrative. In the project narrative, you will describe all aspects of your project. Project activities must comply with the [nondiscrimination requirements](#).

Use the section headers and the order as listed.

## Introduction

See merit review criterion 1: [Need](#)

- Specify which research category you are applying for, as described in the [Background](#) section:
  1. Interventions related to physical health
  2. Interventions related to behavioral health
  3. Systems of care
  4. Clinical innovations for developmental-behavioral pediatrics
  5. Interventions related to communication needs
- Briefly describe the purpose of your project. The purpose of this section is to provide a compelling explanation of your project for the reviewers to easily understand the scientific value of the proposed studies.

## Need

See merit review criterion 1: [Need](#)

- Describe the need for the project and its public health significance.
- Summarize the existing literature to show why your project objectives are important, and how they will address a critical barrier or gap in the field.
- Briefly outline how the project aligns with core priorities of the [Blueprint for Change](#) and the [IACC Strategic Plan](#). Proposed activities should focus on the translation and implementation of evidence-based interventions, improving systems of care, addressing social determinants of health, and addressing the needs and priorities of autistic children and their families across the life course.

## Methodology and approach

See merit review criterion 2: [Response](#)

We recommend no more than 12 pages for this section.

- Describe the proposed research infrastructure that will support your collaborative research.
- Define overall project goals and objectives.

- The project objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable.
- Describe how the project objectives link to the goals and objectives described in the [Purpose](#) section of this NOFO.
- Describe how you will address health disparities in your project's goals and objectives.
- Describe the approaches or strategies to achieve each goal and objective.
  - Provide sufficient technical details to show the necessary steps to accomplish each objective.
  - Give reviewers enough information to assess if your methodology is effective and appropriate.
- Describe how you will address your stated needs and meet the program [purpose, requirements and expectations](#) described in this NOFO.
- Describe how you plan to establish a governance structure of the key stakeholders and partners listed in the [program requirements and expectations](#), and how this will inform all stages of the research process, including planning, design, implementation, and evaluation of research activities. Include plans for recruiting members and processes for shared decision-making.
- Describe the research studies that you intend to implement during the period of performance. Include scientific rationale, specific aims, study design, and target populations. At least one study should be an intervention study.
- Provide enough detail for reviewers to evaluate the proposed research studies. If you receive the award, the research plan will be refined in collaboration with HRSA and other partners.
- Describe the anticipated impact of your proposed research, including how the collection and analysis of data by demographic characteristics, including but not limited to, race/ethnicity or socioeconomic status will have an impact on reducing health disparities.
- Describe your plans to disseminate findings widely with diverse stakeholders, including health professionals, policymakers, family members, and the greater public.
  - Specifically include plans for:
    - Peer-reviewed publications: You are expected to publish at least two peer-reviewed publications per year.
    - Dissemination strategies aiming to accelerate the translation of evidence to inform practice and policy at the national, state, and local levels.

- Other forms of communication, such as presentations to policy makers, clinicians, and other stakeholders, webinars, trainings, tools and toolkits.
- Your collaboration with partners including the RCC, to share and translate research findings to a variety of audiences.

## High-level work plan

See merit review criteria 2 and 4: [Response](#) and [Impact](#)

- Provide a work plan and a timeline that describes the activities or steps that you will take to achieve your project's proposed objectives. Ensure that the program requirements and expectations are included, and that the work plan covers the entire period of performance.
- Describe how you will ensure that all activities will be completed during the period of performance.
- Describe your management plan.
  - Include personnel, resources, and activities.
  - If you will make subawards or spend funds on contracts, describe how you will communicate with subrecipients to make sure the work is consistent, timely, and of high-quality.
  - Describe how your organization will ensure proper documentation of funds for subrecipients.
- Identify meaningful support and collaboration with key stakeholders to plan, design, and carry out all activities.
- Describe how you will collaborate with HRSA to change the research plan to address emerging priorities.
- Describe how you will comply with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations for protection of human subjects ([45 CFR part 46](#)).
  - Refer to instructions provided in [HRSA's SF-424 R&R Application Guide](#) for specific instructions on preparing the human subjects section of the application.
  - Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not required when you submit your application but must be received before starting any activities involving human subjects.
  - All institutions that are engaged in nonexempt human subjects research as part of the project must be covered by a Federalwide Assurance (FWA) approved by the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP).

## Resolving challenges

See merit review criterion 2: [Response](#)

- Discuss challenges that you are likely to encounter while designing and carrying out the activities in the work plan. Explain approaches that you'll use to resolve these challenges.
  - Examples include but are not limited to challenges related to data collection, collaboration with stakeholders, engaging priority populations, synthesizing and translating findings.

## Performance reporting and evaluation

See merit review criteria 3 and 5: [Performance reporting and evaluation](#) and [Resources and capabilities](#)

- **Monitoring.** Describe how you will track project-related processes, activities, and milestones, and use data to identify actual or potential challenges to carrying out your plan. Provide an initial list of measures (indicators, metrics) you will use to monitor progress.
- **Performance Measurement.** Provide your plan for measuring and tracking program goals and objectives outlined in the [Purpose](#) section. The plan should include required and proposed measures outlined in the [Program requirements and expectations](#) section, and plans for your timely collection and reporting of all measures. See [Reporting](#) for more information.
- **Program Evaluation.** Describe your program evaluation plans and methods for completing the activities outlined in the Program requirements and expectations section.
  - Evaluations should follow the [HHS Evaluation Policy](#), as well as the standards and best practices described in OMB Memorandum M-20-12.
  - Include your timeline for carrying out your evaluation activities, your anticipated evaluation barriers, and your plan to address them.
  - The evaluation plan will be revised after you are award in order to align with the other planned evaluation activities led by the RCC (under a separate mechanism) as well as HRSA's autism program evaluation activities.
- **Continuous Quality Improvement.** Describe your plans for using and incorporating information from performance measurement and evaluation to inform and improve processes and outcomes.
  - Describe your capacity to collect and manage data in a way that allows for accurate and timely monitoring, performance measurement, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement

- Include a description of the available resources (for example, organizational profile, collaborative partners, staff skills and expertise, budget), systems, and key processes you will use for monitoring, (for example, data sources, data collection methods, frequency of collection, data management software).

## Sustainability

### See merit review criterion 4: [Impact](#)

We expect you to continue key project elements that improve practices and outcomes for the target population beyond the award period. Propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends.

Describe the actions you will take to:

- Identify key elements of your projects that are critical to project sustainability.
- Obtain additional sources of funding.
  - We expect you to submit at least one application for external funding each year to sustain the research infrastructure and expand the scientific knowledge created from the research supported by this award.
- Discuss challenges that you will likely encounter in continuing the research. Include how you expect to solve these challenges.

## Organizational information

### See merit review criterion 5: [Resources and capabilities](#)

- Briefly describe your mission, structure, and the scope of your current activities. Explain how they will help you carry out the program requirements. Include a project organizational chart as [Attachment 3](#).
- Discuss how you will follow the approved project, keep track of all federal funds, and record all costs to avoid issues during the project audit.
- Include a staffing plan and job descriptions for key faculty and staff in [Attachment 1](#).
- Describe the organizations you will partner with to fulfill the program goals and meet the project's objectives. Include key agreements and letters of support in [Attachment 2](#).
- You will also include biographical sketches for key staff using the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile form. See [other required forms](#).
- If research will be conducted at more than one site, describe each site's resources.

# Budget and budget narrative

See merit review criterion 6: [Support requested](#)

Complete the information in the Research & Related Budget form. Your **budget** should follow the instructions in Section 3.1.4. Project Budget Information of the [R&R Application Guide](#) and any specific instructions listed in this section. Your budget should show a well-organized plan.

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

The total project or program costs are all allowable (direct and indirect) costs used for the HRSA activity or project. This includes costs charged to the award and non-federal funds used to satisfy a matching or cost-sharing requirement (which may include maintenance of effort, if applicable).

The **budget narrative** supports the information you provide in the Research and Related Budget Form. See [other required forms](#). It includes an itemized breakdown and a clear justification of the costs you request. The merit review committee reviews both.

As you develop your budget, consider:

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

You are expected to budget for in-person attendance at the annual HRSA Research Grantee meeting in the Washington, D.C. area for up to two people (the PI and one other attendee) for 2 days. Meeting attendance is an award requirement. The meeting is expected to alternate between in-person or virtual each year.

Additionally, the PI or designated representative is expected to attend the annual Autism CARES Grantee Meeting. This meeting is held in-person and virtually on alternate years, and sufficient funds should be budgeted to allow for travel to this meeting one time during the award period. We recommend including the travel costs in the budget for Year 3, with rebudgeting allowed based on the meeting schedule.

To create your budget justification narrative, see detailed instructions in Section 3.1.5 of the [R&R Application Guide](#).

## Attachments

Place your PDF attachments in order in the Attachments form. See [application checklist](#) to determine if they count toward the page limit.

## Attachment 1: Staffing plan

See Section 3.1.7 of the [R&R Application Guide](#).

Include a staffing plan that shows the staff positions that will support the project and key information about each. Justify your staffing choices, including education and experience qualifications and your reasons for the amount of time you request for each staff position.

## Attachment 2: Agreements with other entities

Provide any documents that describe working relationships between your organization and others you refer to in the proposal. Documents that confirm actual or pending contracts or agreements should clearly describe the roles of subrecipients and contractors, as well as any deliverables. Make sure you sign and date any letters of agreement.

## Attachment 3: Project organizational chart

Provide a one-page diagram that shows the full project's organizational structure.

## Attachment 4: Explanation on delinquent federal debt

Only attach this if you have delinquent federal debt that you will explain.

## Other required forms

You will need to complete some other forms. Upload the following listed forms at Grants.gov. You can find them in the NOFO [application package](#) or review them and any available instructions at [Grants.gov Forms](#).

Forms	Submission Requirement
Research & Related Other Project Information	With application
SF-424 (R&R)	With application
R & R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form	With application
Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)	With application
Project/Performance Site Location(s)	With application
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable, with the application or before award.

## Form instructions

In addition to the requirements for the [project abstract](#), [budget narrative](#), [project narrative](#), and [attachments](#), following are instructions for each of the other forms required by this NOFO. See the [application checklist](#) for a full list of all application requirements.

### SF 424 (R&R) Application for Federal Assistance

This is your application for federal assistance. Follow the instructions in Section 3.1.1 of the [R&R Application Guide](#).

### Research & Related Other Project Information

In addition to the requirements in the [project narrative](#) section, you will provide some additional information in this form.

- Complete sections 1 through 6.
- Upload a blank document in item 7: Project Summary/Abstract to avoid a cross-form error with your Project Abstract Summary Form.
- Upload your project narrative in item 8.
- Leave items 9, 10, and 11 blank.

### Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

- Include [biographical sketches](#) for people who will hold the key positions.
- For this NOFO only, biographical sketches do not count toward the page limit.
- Try to use no more than 5 pages per person.
- Do not include non-public, [personally identifiable information](#).
- If you include someone you have not hired yet, include a letter of commitment from that person with their biographical sketch.
- Upload biographical sketches in the Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile form.
- Include:
  - Name and title.
  - Education and Training. For each entry include Institution and location, degree and date earned, if any, and field of study.
  - Section A, Personal Statement. Briefly describe why the individual's experience and qualifications make them well-suited for their role.

- Section B, Positions and Honors. List in chronological order previous and current positions. List any honors. Include present membership on any federal government public advisory committee.
- Section C, Contribution to Science. List selected ongoing and completed projects during the last three years. Begin with any projects relevant to the proposed project. Briefly indicate the overall goals of the projects and responsibilities of the person.

## R&R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form

You will also complete the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment Form for each subaward you propose. These include subcontracts. You will do this using the R & R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form.

To complete the budget forms, follow the instructions.

- Once you open this form, you can select “Click here to extract the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment.”
- Save the file and then open it to complete it.
- Once you save the file you can upload it within the form.
- Repeat the steps for each subaward.

If you have more than 10 subawards, you may upload the extra budget forms in the Research and Related Other Project Information form in Block 12 “Other Attachments.”

## Project/Performance Site Locations(s)

Follow the form instructions in [Grants.gov Forms](#). Use the “Next Site” option rather than “Additional Location(s)” to add more than one project/performance site location.

## Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) Form

Follow the form instructions in [Grants.gov Forms](#).



# Step 4:

# Learn About Review and Award

## In this step

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Selection process	<a href="#">38</a>
Award notices	<a href="#">38</a>

# Application review

## Initial review

We will review your application to make sure that it meets [eligibility](#) criteria, including the [completeness and responsiveness criteria](#). If your application does not meet these criteria, it will not be funded.

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

## Merit review

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The members use these criteria.

Criterion	Total number of points = 100
1. Need	15 points
2. Response	35 points
3. Performance reporting and evaluation	10 points
4. Impact	20 points
5. Resources and capabilities	10 points
6. Support requested	10 points

## Criterion 1: Need (15 points)

See Project Narrative [Introduction](#) and [Need](#) sections.

The panel will review your application for how well it:

- Provides a compelling introduction and overview of the proposed research.
- Demonstrates that your proposed project addresses critical problems or barriers in the specified categories:
  - Interventions related to physical health.
  - Interventions related to behavioral health.
  - Systems of care.
  - Clinical innovations for developmental-behavioral pediatrics.
  - Interventions related to communication needs.

- Uses scientific literature to highlight challenges related to the research topic and specify the gaps the research will address.
- Aligns with core priorities of the [Blueprint for Change](#) and the [IACC Strategic Plan](#), and focuses on translation and implementation of evidence-based interventions, improving systems of care, addressing social determinants of health, and addressing the needs and priorities of autistic children and their families across the life course.

## Criterion 2: Response (35 points)

See Project Narrative [Methodology and approach](#), [High-level work plan](#), and [Resolving challenges](#) sections.

The panel will review your application for:

### Sub-criterion 1: Methodology (15 points)

- How well your proposed project addresses the NOFO's [purpose, goals, and objectives](#).
- The extent to which your proposed goals and objectives are feasible and supported by the proposed project activities.
- How well the activities described will help reduce health disparities and meet project objectives.
- The extent to which the proposed infrastructure will support research to build the evidence base on interventions, services, support and systems for children and adolescents with autism and other developmental disabilities (DD).
- The extent to which the proposed studies are scientifically rigorous.

### Sub-criterion 2: Partnerships/Collaborations (10 points)

- The strength of your plan to establish a governance structure for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating all proposed research activities, including detailed steps to recruit members from each stakeholder group listed in the [Program Requirements and Expectations](#) and processes for shared decision-making.
- The strength of the plan to collaborate with HRSA to modify the research plan to address emerging priorities.

### Sub-criterion 3: Work Plan (10 points)

- The extent to which the timeline and activities described are feasible, and your work plan clearly describes the roles and responsibilities of personnel and subrecipients and available resources.

- The extent to which you describe adequate human subjects protections in compliance with the HHS regulations for protection of human subjects (45 CFR part 46) and plans to obtain IRB approval prior to initiation of any activities involving human subjects.
- You include a strong dissemination plan that clearly describes how you will publish peer-reviewed publications and develop other materials and strategies to disseminate findings to diverse stakeholders.
- How well you describe potential obstacles and challenges you may face during the project and plans to overcome these challenges.

## Criterion 3: Performance reporting and evaluation (10 points)

See Project Narrative [Performance reporting and evaluation](#) section.

The panel will review your application for:

- How well you describe how evaluation and performance measurement will be incorporated into planning, implementation, and reporting of project activities.
- The appropriateness of your plan to conduct project-specific evaluation and to participate in the other evaluations described above.
- The strength of your plan to engage partners/collaborators in evaluation and performance measurement activities.
- Your capacity to collect, track, manage, verify, and report proposed and required data over time, including available resources, systems, and processes.

## Criterion 4: Impact (20 points)

See Project Narrative [High-level work plan](#) and [Sustainability](#) sections.

The panel will review your application for:

- The potential for your proposed project to add to the evidence base in the priority topic area(s).
- How strong of a public health impact your project may have, with a focus on population-level programs, policies, or clinical practice.
- How strong your plan is for translating and disseminating findings broadly, with the potential for expanding to other settings or populations.
- The potential for your program to continue beyond the federal funding, with a concrete plan to sustain the research infrastructure and expand the scientific knowledge generated from this award.

## Criterion 5: Resources and capabilities (10 points)

See Project Narrative [Organizational information](#) and [Performance reporting and evaluation](#) sections.

The panel will review your application to determine the extent to which:

- Project staff have the training or experience to carry out the project.
- Your organization has capabilities to fulfill the needs of the proposed project.
- Collaborators have the resources and capabilities to support the proposed project, including planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating all activities.
- You describe plans for working with partners to translate research findings into practice.

## Criterion 6: Support requested (10 points)

See [Budget and budget narrative](#) section.

The panel will review your application to determine:

- How reasonable your proposed budget is for each year of the period of performance.
- Whether costs, as outlined in the budget and required resources sections, are reasonable and align with the project's scope and proposed research studies.
- Whether key staff have adequate time devoted to the project to achieve project objectives.
- Budget includes costs to allow for meaningful collaboration with stakeholders for mutual benefit.

## Risk review

Before making an award, we review your award history to assess risk. We need to ensure all prior awards were managed well and demonstrated sound business practices. We:

- Review any applicable past performance
- Review audit reports and findings
- Analyze the budget
- Assess your management systems
- Ensure you continue to be eligible
- Make sure you comply with any public policies

We may ask you to submit additional information.

As part of this review, we use SAM.gov Entity Information [Responsibility/Qualification](#) to check your history for all awards likely to be more than \$250,000 over the period of performance. You can comment on your organization's information in SAM.gov. We'll consider your comments before making a decision about your level of risk.

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

For more details, see [45 CFR 75.205](#).

## Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- The available funds.
- Assessed risk.
- Merit review results. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects, including the diversity of project types and geographic distribution.
- HRSA intends to fund up to 2 awards in each of the five categories described in the [Background](#) section of this NOFO.

We may:

- Fund out of rank order.
- Fund applications in whole or in part.
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested.
- Decide not to allow a recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly.
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO.
- Consider potential overlap in topics proposed by applicants.

## Award notices

We issue notices of award on or around the [start date](#) listed in the NOFO. See Section 4 of the [R&R Application Guide](#) for more information. By drawing down funds, you accept the terms and conditions of the award.



# Step 5: Submit Your Application

## In this step

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Application checklist	<a href="#">41</a>

# Application submission and deadlines

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application. See the section on [finding the application package](#) to make sure you have everything you need.

Make sure you are current with SAM.gov and UEI requirements. When you register or update your SAM.gov registration, you must agree to the [financial assistance general certifications and representations](#), and specifically with regard to grants.

Make sure that your SAM.gov registration is accurate for both contracts and grants, as these registrations differ. [See information on getting registered](#). You will have to maintain your registration throughout the life of any award.

## Deadlines

**You must submit your application by April 23, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. ET.**

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives applications.

## Submission method

### Grants.gov

You must submit your application through Grants.gov. You may do so using Grants.gov Workspace. This is the preferred method. For alternative online methods, see [Applicant System-to-System](#).

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Make sure that your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks, or we may not get it. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.

**Have questions?** Go to [Contacts and Support](#).

## Other submissions

### Intergovernmental review

This NOFO is not subject to [Executive Order 12372](#), Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. No action is needed.

# Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

Form	See instructions	Included in page limit?*
<input type="checkbox"/> Project Abstract Summary	<a href="#">Project abstract</a>	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Research & Related Other Project Information	<a href="#">Project narrative</a> and <a href="#">Form instructions</a>	Only the project narrative counts toward the page limit
<input type="checkbox"/> Research & Related Budget	<a href="#">Budget and budget narrative</a>	Only the budget narrative counts toward the page limit
<b><a href="#">Attachments Form</a></b>	<b><a href="#">Attachments</a></b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Staffing plan		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Agreements with other entities		No
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Project organizational chart		Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Explanation of Delinquent Federal debt, if applicable		Yes
<b>Other required forms</b>	<b><a href="#">Other required forms</a></b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> SF-424 (R&R)	<a href="#">Form instructions</a>	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Research and Related Other Project Information	<a href="#">Form instructions</a>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Biographical Sketches)	<a href="#">Form instructions</a>	No
<input type="checkbox"/> R & R Subaward Budget Attachment(s)	<a href="#">Form instructions</a>	Yes*
<input type="checkbox"/> Project/Performance Site Locations(s)	<a href="#">Form instructions</a>	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	<a href="#">Grants.gov Forms</a>	No

\*Unless otherwise indicated, only what you attach to a form counts toward the page limit. The form itself does not count.



# Step 6: Learn What Happens After Award

## In this step

Post-award requirements and administration [44](#)

# Post-award requirements and administration

## Administrative and national policy requirements

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

- All terms and conditions in the notice of award. We incorporate this NOFO by reference.
- The regulations at [45 CFR part 75](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards, or any superseding regulations. Effective October 1, 2024, HHS adopted the following superseding provisions:
  - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Modified Total Direct Cost.
  - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Equipment.
  - [2 CFR 200.1](#), Definitions, Supply.
  - [2 CFR 200.313\(e\)](#), Equipment, Disposition.
  - [2 CFR 200.314\(a\)](#), Supplies.
  - [2 CFR 200.320](#), Methods of procurement to be followed.
  - [2 CFR 200.333](#), Fixed amount subawards.
  - [2 CFR 200.344](#), Closeout.
  - [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#), Indirect (F&A) costs.
  - [2 CFR 200.501](#), Audit requirements.
- The HHS [Grants Policy Statement](#) (GPS). Your notice of award will reference this document. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your notice of award.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in [HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).
- The requirements for performance management in [2 CFR 200.301](#).
- **Human Subjects Protection:** All research that was commenced or ongoing on or after December 13, 2016, and is within the scope of subsection 301(d) of the Public Health Service Act is deemed to be issued a Certificate of Confidentiality (Certificate) and awardees are therefore required to protect the privacy of individuals who are subjects of such research. As of March 31, 2022, HRSA will no

longer issue Certificates as separate documents. More information about HRSA's policy about Certificates can be found via this link to HRSA's website.

- **Subaward Requirements:** If you receive an award, you must follow the terms and conditions in the notice of award. You'll also be responsible for how the project, program, or activity performs; how you and others spend award funds; and all other duties.
  - In general, subrecipients must comply with the award requirements (including public policy requirements) that apply to you. You must make sure your subrecipients comply with these requirements. 45 CFR § 75.101 Applicability gives details.
- **Data Rights:** All publications you develop or purchase with award funds must meet program requirements. You may copyright any work that's subject to copyright and was developed, or for which ownership was acquired, under an award.
  - However, we reserve a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to your copyright-protected work. We can reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for federal purposes and allow others to do so. We can obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use any data you produce under the award and allow others to do so for federal purposes. These rights also apply to works that a subrecipient develops.
  - If it applies, the notice of award will address HRSA's rights regarding your award.

## Health information technology interoperability

If you receive an award, you must agree to the following conditions when implementing, acquiring, or upgrading health IT. These conditions also apply to all subrecipients.

- Compliance with [45 CFR part 170, subpart B](#). Make sure your activities meet these standards if they support the activity.
- Certified Health IT for Eligible Clinicians and Hospitals. Use only health IT certified by the [ONC Health IT Certification Program](#) for activities related to Sections 4101, 4102, and 4201 of the HITECH Act.

If 45 CFR part 170, subpart B standards do not support the activity, we encourage you to:

- Use health IT that meets non-proprietary standards.

- Follow specifications from consensus-based standards development organizations.
- Consider standards identified in the [ONC Interoperability Standards Advisory](#).

## Non-discrimination legal requirements

If you receive an award, you must follow all applicable nondiscrimination laws. You agree to this when you register in SAM.gov. You must also submit an Assurance of Compliance ([HHS-690](#)). To learn more, see the [Laws and Regulations Enforced by the HHS Office for Civil Rights](#).

Contact the [HHS Office for Civil Rights](#) for more information about obligations and prohibitions under federal civil rights laws or call 1-800-368-1019 or TDD 1-800-537-7697.

The HRSA Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion (OCRDI) offers technical assistance, individual consultations, trainings, and plain language materials to supplement OCR guidance. Visit [OCRDI's website](#) to learn more about how federal civil rights laws and accessibility requirements apply to your programs, or contact OCRDI directly at [HRSACivilRights@hrsa.gov](mailto:HRSACivilRights@hrsa.gov).

## Executive order on worker organizing and empowerment

[Executive Order on Worker Organizing and Empowerment \(E.O. 14025\)](#) encourages worker organizing and collective bargaining to promote equality of bargaining power between employers and employees.

You can support these goals by developing policies and practices that you could use to promote worker power.

## Cybersecurity

You must create a cybersecurity plan if your project involves both of the following conditions:

- You have ongoing access to HHS information or technology systems.
- You handle personal identifiable information (PII) or personal health information (PHI) from HHS.

You must base the plan on the [NIST Cybersecurity Framework](#). Your plan should include the following steps:

**Identify:**

- List all assets and accounts with access to HHS systems or PII/PHI.

**Protect:**

- Limit access to only those who need it for award activities.
- Ensure all staff complete annual cybersecurity and privacy training. Free training is available at 405(d): [Knowledge on Demand \(hhs.gov\)](#).
- Use multi-factor authentication for all users accessing HHS systems.
- Regularly backup and test sensitive data.

**Detect:**

- Install antivirus or anti-malware software on all devices connected to HHS systems.

**Respond:**

- Create an incident response plan. See [Incident-Response-Plan-Basics\\_508c.pdf \(cisa.gov\)](#) for guidance.
- Have procedures to report cybersecurity incidents to HHS within 48 hours. A cybersecurity incident is:
  - Any unplanned interruption or reduction of quality, or
  - An event that could actually or potentially jeopardize confidentiality, integrity, or availability of the system and its information.

**Recover:**

- Investigate and fix security gaps after any incident.

## Reporting

If you are funded, you will have to follow the reporting requirements in Section 4 of the [R&R Application Guide](#).

You must also follow these program-specific reporting requirements:

- Progress reports required each year.
  - The recipient must submit a progress report each budget year via the Non-Competing Continuation (NCC) Renewal in the EHBs, which should address progress against program outcomes (e.g., accomplishments, barriers, significant changes, plans for the upcoming budget year), and include annual data on performance measures identified in the Project Narrative, if not captured by DGIS.
- **Federal Financial Report:** The Federal Financial Report (SF-425) is required annually. The report is an accounting of expenditures under the project that year.

Financial reports must be submitted electronically. Visit [Reporting Requirements | HRSA](#). More specific information will be included in the notice of award.

- **End-of-Year Progress Report:** The recipient must submit a report at the end of the calendar year with updates to select performance measures.
- **DGIS Performance Reports:** Available through the Electronic Handbooks (EHBs), the Discretionary Grant Information System (DGIS) is where you will report annual performance data to us. You will submit a DGIS Performance Report annually, by the specified deadline.
- You can find the listing of administrative forms and performance measures and requirements for this program on [HRSA.gov](#). The type of report required is determined by the project year of the award's period of performance. You can see the full OMB-approved reporting package at [Discretionary Grants Information System](#) on our website (OMB Number: 0915-0298 | Expiration Date: 12/31/2026).

Type of Report	Reporting Period	Available Date	Report Due Date
a) New Competing Performance Report	9/1/2025 – 8/31/2028 <i>(administrative data and performance measure projections, as applicable)</i>	Period of performance start date	120 days from the available date
b) Non-Competing Performance Report	9/1/2025 - 8/31/2026 9/1/2026 - 8/31/2027	Beginning of each budget period (Years 2–3, as applicable)	120 days from the available date
c) Project Period End Performance Report	9/1/2027 - 8/31/2028	Period of performance end date	90 days from the available date

- **Comprehensive final report:** The recipient must submit a comprehensive final report narrative after the conclusion of the project. In this narrative, the recipient will discuss their project, challenges and resolutions, findings, and the impact their study has on public health. This report will be made publicly available on the HRSA/MCHB webpage.
- **Integrity and Performance Reporting:** The notice of award will contain a provision for integrity and performance reporting in FAPIIS, as required in 45 CFR part 75 Appendix XII.



# Contacts and Support

## In this step

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# Agency contacts

## Program and eligibility

**Deborah Quint Shelef and Emmie Perchak**

Office of Epidemiology and Research, Division of Research

Attn: Autism Research Consortium

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Health Resources and Services Administration

Email your questions to: [autism\\_rc@hrsa.gov](mailto:autism_rc@hrsa.gov)

Call: 240-460-5221

## Financial and budget

**Carla Lloyd**

Grants Management Specialist

Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAAM

Health Resources and Services Administration

Email your questions to: [clloyd@hrsa.gov](mailto:clloyd@hrsa.gov)

Call: 301-443-0164

## HRSA Contact Center

Open Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET, except for federal holidays.

Call: 877-464-4772 / 877-Go4-HRSA

TTY: 877-897-9910

[Electronic Handbooks Contact Center](#)

## Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. You can call 800-518-4726, search the [Grants.gov Knowledge Base](#), or [email Grants.gov for support](#). Hold on to your ticket number.

## SAM.gov

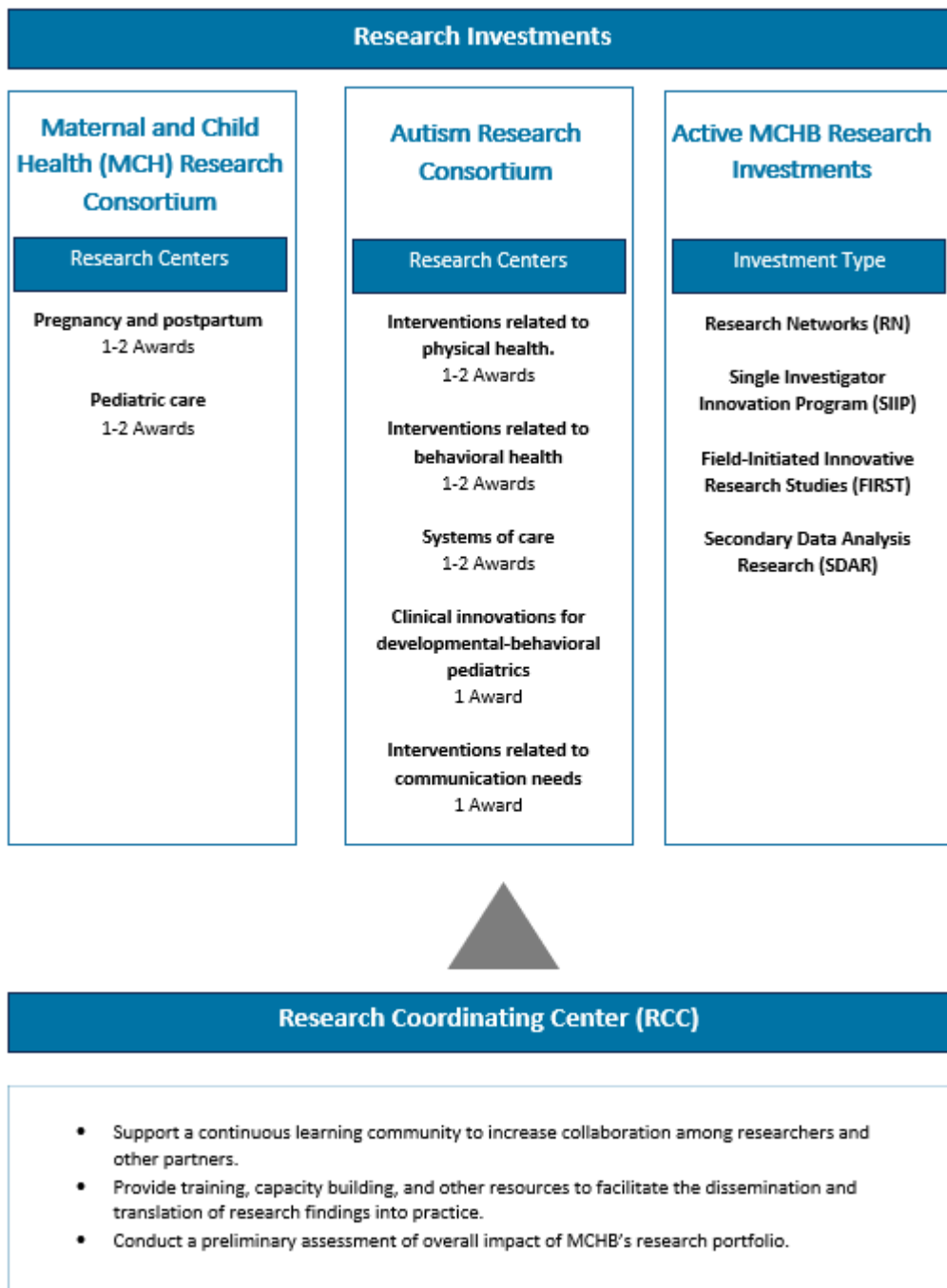
If you need help, you can call 866-606-8220 or live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

# Helpful websites

- [HRSA Grants page](#)
- [HHS Tips for Preparing Grant Proposals](#)

# Appendix A: MCHB Research Program Organizational Structure

Table: MCHB Research Program Organizational Structure



# Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## How to Apply – The Basics

### Where do I find application materials for the Autism Research Consortium?

All application materials are available through Workspace on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

### What is Grants.gov?

[Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) is the web site that the U.S. Government uses to inform citizens of grant opportunities and provide a portal for submitting applications to government agencies. More information can be found on the Grants.gov website.

### Is there anything that we need to do immediately to better prepare for our new grant application?

- Yes, make sure that the Authorized Organization Representative at your organization has registered the organization and himself/herself in Grants.gov.
- In order to submit your application, your university and your Authorized Organization Representative MUST be registered in Grants.gov.
- When your Authorized Organization Representative registers in Grants.gov, they will receive a Credential Username and Password, which will allow that individual to submit application forms in Grants.gov.

### What are the key things to know about Grants.gov?

- Make sure that the Authorized Organization Representative from your university/ organization is registered in Grants.gov NOW. This process can take up to 1 month and it is better to complete it and have it out of the way before starting any grant application.

- Read the instructions on Grants.gov carefully and allow time for corrections. Enter information in fields even if it is 0 or the form will remain incomplete.
- Required fields are highlighted in yellow.
- There are resources available on the Grants.gov web site to help you navigate this new system. Please visit Grants.gov to access these resources.
- Some business practices will change with the introduction of the new SF-424 R&R Form:
  - With the HRSA SF-424 R&R, you will be reporting faculty and staff time in calendar month equivalents.

## We are trying to apply for the announced grants, but our organization does not have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. What should we do?

Per [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#), if you have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate. This rate is 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). The [R&R Application Guide](#) also contains information on [how to negotiate the indirect cost rate](#).

## How do I know what my institution's indirect cost rate is?

Your institution's indirect cost rate is negotiated by the institution with the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Your sponsored programs office will be able to provide further information about the indirect cost rate.

## Does HRSA offer extensions for submitting applications?

If you experience system glitches or a qualified emergency, you can request an exemption/waiver for your application which is subject to HRSA's discretion. Please submit your exemption request in writing to [ApplicationWaivers@hrsa.gov](mailto:ApplicationWaivers@hrsa.gov). For details, see [Section 2.6. Requesting a waiver](#) in the R&R Application Guide.

# Eligibility for Organizations and Principal Investigators

## What types of institutions can apply?

Eligibility is described in detail in the [Eligibility](#) section of the NOFO.

## We are a foreign organization interested in applying. Are foreign entities eligible to apply?

No, the Autism Research Consortium program (HRSA-25-021) is not open to foreign entities.

## We have more than one investigator in our institution planning to apply to this NOFO. Is more than one application per institution allowable?

Yes, more than one application per institution is allowable.

## Does this competition allow for multiple principal investigators (PIs), also known as project directors (PDs)?

HRSA allows one PD/PI to be named on the face page of the SF-424 R&R application, who will serve as the key point of contact. The application can include co-investigators as key personnel on the project.

## Is there a requirement regarding minimum or maximum effort for the PI?

We expect the PD/PI to dedicate a minimum of 20% FTE to the project.

## Can someone who is currently a PI on a grant funded by another agency be a PI on this application?

Yes, a PI on another (non-HRSA/MCHB) agency's grant can be a PI on this application; however, if selected for funding, the new recipient will need to verify that percent time across all federally funded grants does not exceed 100%.

## Application Format

### Are there page limits for the submitted application?

Yes, the total size of all uploaded files included in the page limit may not exceed 60 pages when printed by HRSA. Any pages that go over the limit will be deleted, and the modified application will be sent to the review committee. For a summary of what counts towards the page limits, see the [Application Checklist](#).

### Are there any page limitations to the narrative?

We recommend no more than 12 pages for the methodology and approach section.

### Which format should we follow for the biographical sketch?

Please use the following [biographical sketch](#) form.

### Are there font/margin requirements?

Follow HRSA guidelines, which call for 1" margins and 12-point font. More information on specification regarding fonts and margins can be found in the [R&R Application Guide](#).

# MCHB Research Programs

## Where can I learn more about the MCHB Research Consortium Program?

The MCHB Research Consortium Program is a new program funded through MCHB's Office of Epidemiology and Research, Division of Research (OER/DoR). The figure in [Appendix A](#) shows how the overall program will be structured.

## Where can I find information on previous awards for the MCH Research Program?

Information on current and past funded projects can be found the HRSA/MCHB [website](#).

## What are MCHB's Research Priorities?

MCHB's overall research priorities are highlighted in the [Strategic Research Issues](#). The research priorities for this specific competition are described in the [Background](#) section of this NOFO.

## Further Assistance

### Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

Please contact:

- For programmatic questions, the [Project Officers](#) listed in the NOFO via email.
- For budget questions, the [Grants Management Specialist](#) listed in the NOFO via email.

In addition, questions about this opportunity will be discussed on a [technical assistance webinar](#). HRSA will record the webinar and make it available approximately 2 weeks after the webinar.

## Can I ask the program officer listed in the NOFO to read my abstract/proposal for their comments and suggestions?

No, the project officer has no authority to determine the validity or success of your proposal. The project officer cannot provide feedback or guidance on your draft proposal. Your proposal will be reviewed by an independent review panel comprised of experts in the field.

## When will you announce your other research NOFOs?

Please [join our listserv to receive an alert whenever our NOFOs are released](#). Forecasted funding opportunities are also posted on [Grants.gov](#).

# Endnotes

1. Healthy People 2030 defines a **health disparity** as “a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.” ↑
2. The word ‘disorder’ is not used in this NOFO when referring to persons with autism or other developmental disabilities. HRSA MCHB intends for the abbreviated terminology of ‘autism’ used herein to refer to the population of individuals which meet the diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder and autistic disorder, as formally recognized by the American Psychological Association (APA) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-V-TR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in the International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11), respectively. ↑
3. Please reference CDC’s Knowledge to Action Framework which defines the translation phase as “processes needed to ensure widespread implementation of evidence-based programs, practices, and policies. These processes include making the decision to translate, transforming scientific knowledge into actionable products, developing appropriate supporting structures, and disseminating evidence-based programs, practices, or policies to potential adopters.” Wilson KM, Brady TJ, Lesesne C, on behalf of the NCCDPHP Work Group on Translation. An organizing framework for translation in public health: the Knowledge to Action Framework. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2011;8(2):A46. [https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2011/mar/10\\_0012.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2011/mar/10_0012.htm), Accessed on September 28, 2022. ↑
4. For the purpose of this NOFO, underserved communities are defined as populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. Underserved communities may include Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. See Executive Order 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, 86 FR 7009, at § 2 (Jan. 20, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-01-25/pdf/2021-01753.pdf> ↑
5. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2022 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) data query. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Retrieved 10/3/2023 from [NSCH 2022: NOM 17.3: Percent of children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, Nationwide \(childhealthdata.org\)](https://www.childhealthdata.org/). ↑
6. Cummings JR, et al.. (2016). Health Services Utilization Among Children With and Without Autism Spectrum Disorders. *J Autism Dev Disord*. 46(3):910-20 ↑
7. Brasher S, Stapel-Wax JL, Muirhead L. Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Autism Spectrum Disorder: Implications for Care. *Nurs Clin North Am* . 2022;57(3):489-499. doi:10.1016/j.cnur.2022.04.014 ↑
8. For the purpose of this NOFO, we use the following definition of a research-practice partnership: “A research-practice partnership approach is intended to promote efficacious and relevant interventions given that both researchers’ perspectives and practitioners’ experiences shape implementation. These partnerships emphasize research with communities, agencies, and systems,

rather than research “on” these systems, as a way to make interventions relevant and build capacity.” Sheridan SM, Fernandez V, Knoche L, Stacks AM, Van Horne BS, Bouza, Johayra; Niño S, Greenfield, DB, Montroy, JJ; Dwyer K, and The EHS Parent Teacher Intervention Consortium. *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*. Building a Real-World Evidence Base for Improving Child and Family Outcomes. Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 11. Available at <https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/childrenatrisk/vol11/iss1/11>. ↑

9. Lived experience refers to “representation and understanding of an individual’s human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one’s perception of knowledge” based on one’s own life. People with lived experience are those directly affected by social, health, public health, or other issues and the strategies that aim to address those issues. This gives them insights that can inform and improve systems, research, policies, practices, and programs. Source: Engaging People with Lived Experience to Improve Federal Research, Policy, and Practice. (n.d.). ASPE. Retrieved June 6, 2024, from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/lived-experience>

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10. MCHB’s Blueprint for Change is a national framework for a system of services for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) where they enjoy a full life and thrive in their community from childhood through adulthood. More information is available at: <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs-impact/focus-areas/children-youth-special-health-care-needs-cyshcn/blueprint-change>

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11. Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC). 2021-2023 IACC Strategic Plan for Autism Research, Services, and Policy. September 2023. Retrieved from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee website: <https://iacc.hhs.gov/publications/strategic-plan/2023/>
12. Behavioral health is an umbrella term that includes mental health and well-being. Information about MCHB’s approach to mental and behavioral health is available at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs-impact/focus-areas/mental-behavioral-health>. ↑
13. An intervention is defined as a manipulation of the subject or the subject’s environment for the purpose of modifying one or more health-related biomedical or behavioral processes and/or endpoints. Examples include drugs/small molecules/compounds, biologics, devices, procedures (e.g., surgical techniques), delivery systems (e.g., telemedicine, face-to-face interviews), strategies to change health-related behavior (e.g., diet, cognitive therapy, exercise, development of new habits), treatment strategies, prevention strategies, and diagnostic strategies. National Institutes of Health. Office of Research on Women’s Health. NIH inclusion Outreach Toolkit: How to Engage, Recruit, and Retain Women in Clinical Research. Available at: [NIH Definitions](#). Accessed on August 28, 2024. ↑