Notice of Funding Opportunity

Application due Tuesday, December 29, 2026

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Department of Health & Human Services
Office of Refugee Resettlement

Residential Services for Unaccompanied Alien Children

Opportunity number: HHS-2027-ACF-ORR-ZU-0045

Contents

Before you begin 3

Step 1: Review the Opportunity 4

Basic information 5

Eligibility 7

Agency priorities 8

Program description 10

Step 2: Get Ready to Apply 33

Find the application package 34

Get registered 34

Learn more 35

Watch the webinar 35

Step 3: Build Your Application 36

Application checklist 37

Application contents and format 38

Step 4: Learn About Review and Award 52

Application review 53

Award notices 60

Step 5: Submit Your Application 61

Application submission and deadlines 62

Step 6: Learn What Happens After Award 64

Post-award requirements and administration 65

Contacts and Support 67

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 Tuesday, December 29, 2026.

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

Step 1: Review the Opportunity

In this step

Basic information	5
Eligibility	7
Agency priorities	8
Program description	10

Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Department of Health & Human Services

Office of Refugee Resettlement

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is seeking residential care providers that specialize in the high-quality care of children in a group home, shelter, or transitional foster home setting.

Summary

Program purpose: This funding supports group home, shelter, and transitional foster care (TFC) providers that specialize in the high-quality care of children. We are most interested in proposals that provide shelter, group home, or TFC care in states and localities near the U.S. southern border with Mexico, where the majority of unaccompanied alien children (UAC) are apprehended by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Population served: An unaccompanied alien child is defined by law (6 U.S.C. 279(g)(2)) as a child who:

- Does not have lawful immigration status in the United States.
- Is not yet 18 years old.
- Does not have a parent or legal guardian in the United States, or no parent or legal guardian in the United States is available to provide care and physical custody.

Required services: Care providers must offer comprehensive, on-site services for children, such as education, case management, counseling, recreational activities, and access to health care services.

Have questions? See Contacts and Support.

Key facts

Opportunity name: Residential Services for Unaccompanied Alien Children

Opportunity number: HHS-2027-ACF-ORR-ZU-0045

Federal assistance listing: 93.676

NOFO version: Original

Key dates

Application submission deadline:
FY27: December 29, 2026
FY28: December 29, 2027

Optional informational webinar:
Tuesday, November 17, 2026, 1:00pm EST.

Expected project start date:
04/01/2027

See intergovernmental review for other submission processes that may apply to this NOFO.

Funding details

Type: Cooperative agreement

Expected total program funding: $280,000,000

Total expected awards: 50

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): $2,000,000

Maximum award amount for the first budget period (award ceiling): $5,600,000

We plan to fund a 3-year project period. Each project period has three 1-year budget periods.

Funding for years 2 and year 3 depends on submission and approval of a non-competing continuation application.

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

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

Eligibility for this opportunity is unrestricted.

Other eligibility criteria

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

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

Disqualifying factors

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

We won't consider an application that:

- Requests funding above the award ceiling.
- Is submitted after the deadline.
- Is from an individual (including a sole proprietorship), a federal entity, or a foreign entity.
- Is received in paper format that didn't have a previously approved exemption from ACF.
- Does not include an active license (child placement license and/or any other required license according to state regulations) to provide group home, shelter, or transitional foster care services (TFC) for children.

Application limits

If you submit the same application more than once under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO), we will only acknowledge the last on-time submission.

Cost sharing

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

If you choose to include cost-sharing funds, we won't consider it during review. If you receive an award, we will include your voluntary commitment in the award, and you must report on the funds. If you don't provide your promised amount, we may have to decrease your award amount or use other enforcement actions.

Post-award requirements

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

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

Statutory authority

ORR services for unaccompanied alien children is authorized under Section 462 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HSA), 6 U.S.C. 279.

Agency priorities

Required alignment with ACF Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles

The recipient of this award must implement any funds awarded under this NOFO to effectuate program goals or agency priorities in accordance with ACF's vision, mission, values, priorities, & guiding principles when authorized. Funded activities must advance ACF's vision of resilient, safe, healthy, and economically secure children, youth, families, and communities, and support ACF's mission to foster health and well-being through effective, accountable, and compassionate human services when awarded in any programs that authorize these priorities.

Consistent with ACF's values, in carrying out any project that is funded under this NOFO, the recipient is required to adhere to the following principle:

1. **Program integrity and fiscal stewardship:** Administer funds in accordance with all applicable federal statutes, regulations, and award conditions; maintain strong internal controls; and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

The recipient is also required to adhere to the following principles when consistent with the authority and scope of the award and its activities:

2. **Evidence-based and outcome-focused practices:** Design and deliver services using evidence-based or evidence-informed approaches, establish measurable performance goals, and use data to monitor outcomes and drive continuous improvement.
3. **Partnership and local leadership:** Coordinate with state, tribal, territorial, local, and community partners, as appropriate, and tailor services to meet community-identified needs while respecting local decision-making authority.

In addition, in keeping with ACF's priorities, the recipient must administer any project that is awarded under this NOFO in accordance with the following objectives when consistent with the scope of the award and its activities in programs that are authorized to advance them:

4. **Family stability and child well-being:** Strengthen families, promote safe and stable home environments, and improve outcomes for children and youth through prevention-focused and developmentally appropriate services.
5. **Work, self-sufficiency, and economic mobility:** Support pathways to employment, job retention, and economic independence for individuals and families, including through workforce development, education, and supportive services.
6. **High-quality early care and learning:** Where applicable, invest in high-quality early childhood programs that support school readiness, healthy development, and long-term success.

The recipient must demonstrate ongoing compliance with these values and priorities, in all programs that are authorized to advance them, through program design, implementation, reporting, and evaluation. Failure to meaningfully align funded activities with the applicable requirements may result in corrective action, additional reporting requirements, or other enforcement actions consistent with federal grant regulations found at 2 CFR Part 200 and the terms and conditions of this award.

Program description

Program purpose

ORR is seeking group home, shelter, and/or transitional foster care (TFC) providers that specialize in the high-quality care of children. While children remain under ORR custody, care providers are responsible for children's physical care and safety and must:

- provide services that are available 24/7, and
- be able to accept children at any time (if it aligns with state licensing requirements and it is safe to do so).

This funding opportunity addresses Agency Priority 3.

Ensuring Value Alignment in Funding

To support this commitment, ORR will use a systematic approach to assess how grant programs align with agency priorities, including responsible stewardship of federal funds and overall program goals.

This funding supports three service models:

Group home

- Specializes in caring for specific populations (such as parenting children).
- Run by 24-hour staff or house parents, typically housing 4 to 12 unaccompanied alien children.

Shelter

- Shelters are considered the least restrictive environment.
- All program activities are administered on-site.
- Run by 24-hour staff.

Transitional Foster Care (TFC)

- Specializes in caring for children:
  - Under 13 years of age.
  - Sibling groups or related children with at least one sibling under 13.
  - Pregnant or parenting children.
  - Children with specific individualized needs.
- Children in TFC are placed in a family or group home and must receive required services at a central location.

Facility structure requirements

Care provider facilities must:

- Be readily available to visitors, staff, and people with disabilities.
- Have sufficient space to accommodate
- designated common areas,
- space for recreation,
- education, and
- case management.
- Have available confidential space for:
- individual and group counseling,
- health care services, and
- meetings with attorneys.
- Have a separate bedroom for communicable disease isolation/quarantine purposes, with a minimum of 28 days.
- Ideally, there should be at least one isolation-capable bedroom, for every 25 children, equipped with a door that closes while allowing line-of-sight through a small window.
- Isolation plans should account for the fact that children in the program may require separate bedrooms for distinct illnesses at the same time (e.g., one child with varicella, one child with influenza).
- An attached private bathroom is preferred.
- Comply with local, state, and federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Comply with state child welfare laws, regulations, and local building, zoning, fire, health, and safety codes.
- Make automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and first aid kits available in key areas, as required by state licensing.
- Make personal protective equipment (PPE) available for staff and children.
- Be conveniently located with access to immigration courts, pro bono legal services, national airports, and community health care providers, including specialty services.

Security and monitoring

Group homes and shelters (not individual foster care homes) must provide a security system, including alarm systems and video monitoring. Care providers must comply

with state licensing standards and ensure the safety of children in case of attempted escape.

Minimum safety and security requirements include:

- Controlled entry and exit.
- Video monitoring in common areas.
- A communications and alarm system.
- Exterior video monitoring.
- Resident counting system.
- Daily log of residents' movements.
- Mirrored or small windows for one-on-one meetings.
- Facility inspection checklist.
- Quarterly safety assessments.
- Spot inspections.

Care providers must follow 2 CFR 200.216 when selecting and purchasing video monitoring and telecommunication systems.

Hiring considerations

Care providers must put in place effective policies and procedures to prevent, detect, and respond to instances of sexual abuse and harassment.

This includes:

- Conducting thorough background checks.
- Providing comprehensive training on appropriate conduct and reporting protocols.
- Establishing accountability and transparency.

Care providers hiring and employment practices must comply with the requirement in 45 CFR Part 411, Standards to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment Involving Unaccompanied Children.

Staffing requirements

Care providers must submit the name of each potential staff member to ORR for final approval before hiring.

All staff must be at least 21 years of age and have the required qualifications, training, and vaccinations.

Staff who work directly with children must show proof of documented immunization or demonstrated immunity to vaccine-preventable diseases transmitted through the respiratory route.

Table: Position description and qualifications

Position Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience	Additional Requirements
Program Director	• Overall management of programmatic, administrative, financial, and operational systems • Provide regular and timely reports to ORR. • Establish respectful and supportive workplace environment • Elevate issues or concerns to ORR	Master's degree (MSW or equivalent in education, psychology, sociology, or other relevant behavioral science) from an accredited institution. **OR** Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution plus 5 years' experience.	• 2 years in program management **OR** • 2 years as director of licensed child care program Must possess the administrator's license for the care provider's facility, if required by state licensing.	• Must possess administrator's license for facility (if required by state licensing) • Must comply with state licensing standards (if applicable)
Assistant Program Director (Depending on the size of the program)	• Support Program Director • Serve as secondary liaison with ORR	Bachelor's degree in education, psychology, sociology, or other relevant behavioral science from an accredited institution.	5 years of progressive employment experience with social services or child care agency/ organization.	
Lead Clinician	• Oversee clinical services • Train and supervise clinical staff • Ensure behavioral health specialists complete training on	Master's or doctorate degree in psychology, social work, counseling, marriage and family counseling, or another relevant behavioral health discipline from an accredited	2 years of post-graduate direct service delivery experience	• Supervisory experience required • Must be licensed to provide clinical services in state where facility is located

Position Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience	Additional Requirements
	evidence-based practices • Ensures child-facing services are provided on-site	program where clinical experience is required.		
Clinician	• Conduct mental health assessments • Provide ongoing individual and group counseling • Screen for human trafficking concerns • Provide crisis intervention services	Master's or doctorate degree in psychology, social work, counseling, marriage and family counseling, or other behavioral disciplines where clinical experience is required from an accredited institution.	Clinical experience through degree program	• Must be licensed or eligible for licensure • Non-licensed staff must actively work towards licensure • Must attain licensure within 3 years of employment date • Services must be provided on-site
Lead Case Manager	• Coordinate case management and safe/timely release services • Supervise and train case managers • Ensure case managers complete training on child welfare topics	Master's degree in behavioral sciences, human services, or social services from an accredited institution. **OR** Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution plus experience	If education is a bachelor's degree, at least 3 years of progressive employment experience showing supervisory and case management experience.	None specified
Case Manager	• Coordinate case management	Bachelor's degree in behavioral	Child welfare or case management	

Position Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience	Additional Requirements
	services under Lead Case Manager direction • Coordinate timely referrals to external care providers • Ensure care coordination communication between medical and behavioral health staff • Coordinate referrals to child advocate services • Ensure appropriate health interpretation/ translation services • Coordinate post-release services and continuity of health care	sciences, human services, or social services fields is required from an accredited institution.	experience strongly encouraged	
Lead Medical Coordinator	• Oversee health services • Coordinate timely, appropriate health services • Supervise other Medical Coordinators	Any of the following: • Licensed Registered Nurse (RN) with a Bachelor's; **OR** • Higher health-related	Minimum of 1 year of employment in public health or a health care setting with demonstrated experience in care coordination, health administration, or direct clinical care.	

Position Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience	Additional Requirements
	• Provide staff training on medical, dental, and public health topics • Develop/ maintain policies for health record management, triage, medical emergency response, environmental health/safety, post-release health care planning	qualification (e.g., Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner) from an accredited program or accredited institution.		
Medical Coordinator	• Arrange and coordinate appropriate health services (urgent, emergent, preventative) • Maintain complete, confidential medical records • Communicate health needs to case managers and clinicians • Schedule health care appointments • Coordinate transportation to appointments	Any of the following: • Licensed practical or vocational nurse (LPN/ LVN) or higher health-related qualification (e.g., licensed registered nurse (RN) with a bachelor's degree), **OR** • Bachelor's degree in a relevant field from an accredited institution.	Minimum of 1 year of employment in public health or a health care setting with demonstrated experience in care coordination, health administration, or direct clinical care	

Position Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience	Additional Requirements
	• Ensure qualified interpretation/ translation services • Serve as liaison for community health care providers			
Background Check Specialist	• Assist with background check investigation process • Coordinate and document required background check requests and results • Conduct quality assurance reviews • Ensure background checks submitted completely, accurately, and within required timeframes	High school diploma or equivalent	Minimum 3 years employment experience	• Basic technical skills in Microsoft applications (Excel, Word, Smartsheet) • Good communication and project management skills
Prevention of Sexual Abuse (PSA) Compliance Manager	• Manage implementation and ongoing compliance with Standards to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to	Bachelor's degree in behavioral sciences, human services, or social services from an accredited institution.	At least 1 year experience working with child welfare standards, best practices, or quality assurance/ compliance	

Position Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience	Additional Requirements
	Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (45 CFR Part 411) • Ensure compliance with ORR policies/ procedures related to sexual abuse and harassment	**OR** Bachelor's degree in business administration or management from an accredited institution.		
Teacher	• Provides high-quality educational services and assessments • Designs and implements standards-aligned curriculum that meets all requirements of the Foundational Rule (45 CFR Part 410). • Provides consistent, direct, child-facing services in an on-site setting, ensuring a structured, engaging and compliant learning environment.	Bachelor's degree is required from an accredited institution.	Teaching experience	• Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), or English as a Second Language (ESL) certification **OR** • A valid U.S. state or territory teaching license standard, provisional, temporary, or emergency), including completion of a

Position Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience	Additional Requirements
				teacher preparation program and any required licensure exams (e.g., Praxis or state-specific equivalents). Teaching certification may be in any grade level or subject area, including but not limited to: Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Grades, Secondary Education, Math, Science, English/ Language Arts, Social Studies, Physical Education, Art, Music, Special Education, Reading Specialist, Gifted and Talented, or Career & Technical Education (CTE).
Trainer	• Conduct training • Select or develop training materials • Maintain records on training program	Bachelor's degree is required from an accredited institution.	None specified	• Position does not have to be full-time • Responsibilities may be combined with another position

Position Title	Primary Responsibilities	Minimum Education	Minimum Experience	Additional Requirements
	attendance, training offered, and evaluation measures			
Youth Care Worker	• Provide direct supervision of children in care • Maintain line-of-sight at all times	High school diploma or equivalent	Minimum 1 year employment experience in child welfare field working with children and/or adolescents	

Staffing ratio requirements

Care providers must meet ORR staffing ratio requirements as outlined in ORR's UAC Bureau Policy Guide, Section 4.4.1 and state licensing requirements. If state licensing requirements differ, the stricter (i.e., higher staffed) ratio should be followed:

- One (1) on-duty Youth Care Worker for every eight children during waking hours.
- One (1) on-duty Youth Care Worker for every 16 children during sleeping hours.
- One (1) on-duty Case Manager for every eight children.
- One (1) on-duty Clinician for every 12 children.
- One (1) Medical Coordinator for every 35 children.
- One (1) PSA Compliance Manager for every 50 children.
- Sufficient staff to cover one-on-one safety plans, when necessary.

Required background checks

Background checks must follow ORR's policies and state licensing requirements. At a minimum, a background check must be updated every 5 years. See ORR's UAC Bureau Policy Guide, Section 4.3.1.

Recipients and/or Contractors are required to use E-Verify or another form of verification to confirm that all direct recipients are legally eligible to work in the U.S.

Foster parent requirements

Foster parents must be at least 21 years old and have the state required qualifications, training, and vaccinations. In addition, foster parents must meet the following requirements:

- Be able to meet the family's current financial obligations.
- Reside in a home that passes health and fire inspections.
- Obtain background check clearance (including fingerprint background checks, child abuse and neglect checks, and other required checks) in accordance with state law and ORR policy. This includes background checks of household members, which must be available to ORR.
- Only provide foster care for unaccompanied alien children. Unaccompanied alien children cannot live with children from the U.S. domestic foster care system.
- Meet the care provider and state regulatory requirements before accepting any children for placement.
- Attend a foster parent certification training and become licensed before accepting any unaccompanied alien children for placement.

Training requirements

Newly hired employees, contractors, interns, and volunteers must complete training before having contact with children.

Staff must also complete annual training. Please refer to ORR's UAC Bureau Policy Guide, Section 4.3.6 for additional information on ORR's training policies.

Required training topics include, but are not limited to:

- The right of unaccompanied alien children and staff to be free from sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Recognition of physical, behavioral, and emotional signs of sexual abuse and methods of preventing and responding to such occurrences.
- Procedures for reporting knowledge or suspicion of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or inappropriate behavior as well as how to comply with relevant laws related to mandatory reporting.
- Other trauma informed training for all staff, including youth care workers, as identified by ORR on a rolling basis.

Required Services

Children in ORR custody must receive care that meets ORR minimum standards regardless of their length of stay. Children placed in medical isolation or quarantine

must still receive ORR services (e.g., legal, educational, case management). The delivery of these services can be adapted to video calls to ensure the health and safety of staff and visitors.

Providers must offer programs that support children during long stays in custody. When a child's needs exceed the provider's skills or resources, the provider must arrange outside services.

Care provider services

Activities

Provide children with daily recreation and leisure activities. (The activities do not replace physical education classes):

- 1+ hour outdoors for physical activity (when weather allows)
- 1+ hour of structured leisure activities (does not include TV)
- 3+ hours total on weekends and non-school days

Provide age-appropriate reading materials in the child's native language for leisure time.

Legal Services

Provide children with ORR-supplied information about free legal assistance, right to counsel, removal/bond hearings, legal relief options, voluntary departure, and trafficking victim rights under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA). Ensure children can meet with ORR-funded legal service providers, both one-on-one and in groups.

Ensure sufficient scheduled private time in quiet spaces for legal consultations and transport of children to all hearings or proceedings to which the child is a party.

Academic educational services

Required daily for a minimum of 6 hours, Monday through Friday year-round. Use a structured classroom setting that is appropriate to each child's developmental level. Focus primarily on basic academic skills and secondarily on English language learning.

The educational program must include instruction and materials in:

- Science.
- Social Studies.
- Mathematics.
- Reading.
- Writing.
- Physical Education.

Nutritional services

Provide meals that meet U.S. Department of Agriculture and HHS nutrition guidelines and state licensing requirements. Have procedures in place to accommodate each child's dietary needs, including food allergies, health conditions, and religious or spiritual requirements.

Religious activity

Whenever possible, provide or arrange for access to religious services and counseling of the child's choice.

Right to privacy

Ensure children have reasonable privacy rights. Children may wear their own clothes, have private storage space for personal belongings, make private phone calls, meet privately with visitors, and send and receive uncensored mail. Phone calls and visits must follow the facility's rules. You may review mail only if you reasonably believe it contains contraband.

Behavior management

Create program rules and discipline standards that fit the ages and developmental stages of children in your program.

Use evidence-based and strength-based approaches that include trauma-informed care principles, such as conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques. These approaches should teach children accountability and self-regulation.

Staff training on an evidence-based behavior management plan grounded in child welfare best practices.

Staff must address behavioral issues in a therapeutic, non-punitive way that helps children develop pro-social skills. See 45 CFR 410.1304.

Rules

Post basic rules in shelters at children's eye level in large, easy-to-read text.

Display rules in English and in the languages children in your program speak.

Provide all ORR-required documents in these languages and include visuals when possible. ORR will verify translations.

Review the rules with each child when they arrive at your facility. Create a way for children to give feedback on the rules.

Visitation

Care providers must encourage visitation between children and approved family members, sponsors, and visitors.

Calls

Children are allowed to call family members and sponsors living in the United States and other countries.

Provide children at least 10 minutes of phone time daily, or at least 50 minutes throughout the weekdays (Monday through Friday) as the child and the care provider determine appropriate. This is based on the child's unique situation, or the child and their family's preference. The minimum time starts when the call connects, not when dialing begins.

Refer to ORR's UAC Bureau Policy Guide, Section 3.3.10 for additional guidance on Visitation and Calls.

Vocational Educational Services

Care providers are encouraged to create or provide access to vocational training opportunities.

These opportunities should teach practical and competitive job skills and help prepare children for adulthood. Vocational programs cannot replace academic education.

Case management

The following table provides the required timeframes for the completion of various tasks:

Task	Timeframe
Orientation	Within 48 hours of admission.
Initial Intake Assessment	Within 24 hours of admission.
Assessment for Risk	Within 72 hours of admission and updated every 30 days.
Unaccompanied Alien Child Assessment	Within 5 days of admission.
Individual Service Plan	Within 5 days of admission and updated every 30 days.
Unaccompanied Alien Child Case Review	Must be completed at least every 30 days.

Orientation

Children must receive a comprehensive program orientation that covers:

- The program's services.

- Rules (written and verbal).
- Expectations.
- Zero tolerance policy towards sexual abuse and sexual harassment.
- Available medical services and appointments.
- The availability of free legal assistance.

The orientation must be provided in formats that are:

- Age-appropriate.
- Available to children who are limited English proficient, deaf, visually impaired, or otherwise disabled.
- Available to children who have limited reading skills.

Individualized needs assessment

Care providers are required to provide an individualized ongoing assessment for each child, which includes:

- **Initial Intake Assessment:**
  - To obtain information about family members, immediate medical or mental health concerns, current medications, and any concerns about a child's personal safety.
- **Assessment for Risk:**
  - To identify risk factors for potential sexual victimization or sexual abuser tendencies so early intervention can take place to mitigate any potential risks or safety concerns.
- **Unaccompanied Alien Child Assessment:**
  - To gather initial information relating to:
    - The child's journey.
    - Current medical concerns and health history.
    - The child and family's psychosocial assessment, trauma, and substance abuse history.
    - Information about a child's work history or concerns about working to pay off debt.
    - Exploitation or trafficking concerns.
    - Other essential data relating to the identification and history of the child and their family.
- **Unaccompanied Alien Child Case Review:**
- To assess the child's:

- Educational assessment and plan.
- Ongoing behavioral issues and any previous juvenile justice or criminal involvement.
- Statement of religious preference and practice.
- Identifying information.

- **Individual Service Plan (ISP)**:
  - ISPs are implemented and closely coordinated through a clinician's assessment and intervention plan and supported by the case management team.
  - Care providers must document and report trafficking-related concerns to ORR and ensure the child has access to all services guaranteed by the TVPRA of 2008. Same-sex supervision must be provided when indicated by individual treatment needs.
- **Case Management Services**:
  - Care providers are required to implement and administer a case management system that tracks and monitors a child's progress on a regular basis to ensure that each child receives the full range of program services in an integrated and comprehensive manner. At a minimum, Case Managers must meet with children once a week, in person.
- **Maintenance of Case Files**:
  - Care providers must maintain comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date case files and electronic records (including network drives and ORR's databases) that are kept confidential and secure, with written policies for organizing active and closed files, recognizing all records are ORR property and must be provided upon request. Care providers must ensure compliance with 2 CFR 200.303(e) to safeguard protected personally identifiable information including children's names, dates of birth, and A-numbers.
  - All requests for records or information from external entities, such as the Department of Homeland Security, must be forwarded to ORR for review and further instruction. Care provider records are the property of ORR; therefore, recipients and/or contractors may not respond directly to these requests without prior ORR authorization.
- **Safe and Timely Release Services**:
  - Care providers must follow ORR policies ensuring children's safe and timely release to qualified sponsors (parents, guardians, relatives, or other adults).

    - Timely release to qualified sponsors must be in a setting that promotes public safety and ensure sponsors can provide for each child's physical and mental well-being.
    - Children must be protected from smugglers, traffickers, or others who might exploit them.
    - The release process includes:
        - Identifying sponsors.
        - Reviewing applications and documentation.
        - Evaluating sponsor suitability through identity verification.
        - Relationship confirmation.
        - Background checks.
        - In some cases, home studies and post-release planning.
- **Safety Planning**:
    - Develop a written safety and security plan that includes policies and procedures for all children and program staff. The safety plan must address emergency situations including:
        - Runaways.
        - Shelter-in-place (e.g., due to weather events).
        - Evacuation (e.g., due to a hurricane, fire, or other emergencies).
        - Medical and mental health emergencies.
        - Disease outbreaks.
        - These plans must be exercised at least once per year in accordance with the minimum state licensing requirements.

Transportation and escort

Based on children's needs, transfer to a residential facility within the ORR network may be necessary.

In addition, temporary placement outside the ORR network in an acute psychiatric hospital or psychiatric residential setting may become necessary. This would require transportation of children for placement and discharge once treatment has been completed.

Care providers are also required to provide children with transportation services to local airports. If necessary, care providers must provide an escort for the children according to ORR policies and provide transportation to local services and appointments.

Acculturation and adaptation services

Care providers must offer appropriate services that help children build social, interpersonal, and essential life skills.

Health care services

The following table provides the required timeframes for the completion of various tasks:

Task	Timeframe
Initial Medical Exams	Initial ORR Admission: Required within 2 business days (48 hours, excluding weekends and federal holidays) of admission. Transfer from ORR Program: Not required. State law or licensing may mandate a new medical evaluation to establish care.
Routine and Follow-Up Care	Schedule routine well-child exams at recommended intervals and complete all follow-up care as directed by the health care provider.
Individual Counseling Sessions	Once per week, unless child opts out.
Group Counseling Sessions	Twice per week, unless child opts out.
Dental Exam	Required within 60-90 days of admission to ORR care, or earlier if required by state licensing. Prophylactic care every 6 months, or as recommended by dental provider.

Medical

Programs must establish relationships with primary and back-up licensed health care providers (MD, DO, NP or PA) for the program who can perform:

- Comprehensive initial and routine medical exams, as appropriate, including:
- Routine childhood vaccinations in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Immunization Schedule, on all children including pregnant youth,
- Screenings for infectious diseases,
- Pregnancy tests.
- Timely non-emergent sick and follow-up care services.

- Medical services requiring heightened ORR involvement.
- Comprehensive information about and access to medical reproductive health services, emergency contraception, and emergency health care services.
- Referrals for specialty care, as needed.

Health care providers may be employed or contracted by the program or based in the community. Providers must be enrolled in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program and be willing and able to provide additional routine childhood immunizations.

Mental health

Programs are required to provide the following mental health services on-site:

- Individual counseling session with certified counseling staff at least once per week for each child, unless the child opts out.
- Group counseling sessions at least twice a week, unless the child opts out.
  - At least one group counseling session must be provided according to a psycho-educational curriculum that may be adjusted according to the needs of the population.
- Referral of children with advanced clinical needs to community mental health services.

Dental

Programs must establish primary and back-up licensed dental providers for the following services:

- Perform an initial dental exam (IDE).
- Provide preventative dental care visits every 6 months, or as recommended by dental provider.
- Timely urgent dental care.
- Dental services requiring heightened ORR involvement.
- Referrals for specialty care, as needed.

Licensing and accreditation

Standard ORR care providers must be licensed by an appropriate state agency or meet the state's licensing requirements if located in a state that does not allow state licensing of programs providing or proposing to provide care and services to unaccompanied children. See 45 CFR 410.1302(a).

Licensing citations

Care providers must report any allegations and/or concerns of abuse and/or neglect; and any denials, suspension, and/or revocation of their and, if applicable, any subrecipient(s) licensing to provide child welfare related services. The reporting period covers the past 5 years.

Accreditation requirement

After the initial award, recipients must be accredited, or become accredited, by a nationally recognized accreditation organization.

Bonus Points

We are most interested in projects that propose residential shelters and group homes with a capacity of 24 beds or fewer, as smaller congregate care settings are generally better positioned to provide individualized attention, closer supervision, and a more stable, child-centered environment than larger facilities. Smaller settings can also improve responsiveness to each child's needs and help promote safety, consistency, and quality of care.

We are most interested in projects that propose shelters, group homes, or TFC in states near the U.S. southern border with Mexico, where a large number of UAC are apprehended.

Cooperative agreement—Description of ACF's involvement

ORR's Unaccompanied Alien Children Bureau (UACB) is actively involved in the programs after awards are made. Examples of UACB's involvement include:

- Timely review of required documentation and requests for approval.
- Budget reviews and program oversight to ensure program is in the best interest of the federal government.
- Training on ORR processes and procedures, as needed.
- Regular communication and oversight of program activities.
- Informing recipients of substantive changes that impact the program.

ACF can ask for and review any documents or records related to the federal award. See HHS Grants Policy Statement and 2 CFR 200.337.

Funding policies and limitations

Changes in HHS regulations

As of October 1, 2025, HHS adopted 2 CFR 200, with some exceptions included in 2 CFR 300. These regulations replace those in 45 CFR 75.

General policies

- We will only make awards if this program receives funding. If Congress appropriates funds for this purpose, we will move forward with the review and award process.
- Support beyond the first budget period will depend on:
- Appropriation of funds.
- Satisfactory progress in meeting your project's objectives.
- A decision that continued funding is in the government's best interest.
- If we receive more funding for this program, we will consider:
- Funding more applicants.
- Extending the period of performance.
- Awarding supplemental funding.
- To the extent permitted by law, including any relevant court orders, you may not use funds from this NOFO for any diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEI and DEIA) activities. This includes:
- DEI- or DEIA-related research.
- Activities that discriminate or show preference based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or other protected traits.
- Any efforts that promote a "discriminatory equity ideology.".
- To the extent permitted by law, including any relevant court orders, ACF will also not allow funds awarded under this NOFO to support any services or activities that inculcate or promote gender ideology.

For guidance on other types of costs that we restrict or do not allow, see General Provisions for Selected Items of Costs of the Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR part 200.

Program-specific limitations and policies

We do not allow the following costs under this notice of funding opportunity (NOFO):

- Construction.
- Purchase of real property.
- Major renovation.
- Pre-award.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those shared across multiple projects and not easily separated.

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

Method 1 — Approved rate. If you currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency, you may use that rate.

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

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

Subawards

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

Monitoring your subrecipient's activities alone as described in 2 CFR 200.332 is not a substantive role.

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

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

Subrecipients must meet the eligibility requirements of this NOFO.

Salary rate limitation

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

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

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

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



Step 2:
Get Ready to Apply

In this step

Find the application package	34
Get registered	34
Learn more	35
Watch the webinar	35

Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it at this NOFO's Grants.gov opportunity page. Then select the Package tab.

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

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

Get registered

SAM.gov

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

To register:

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

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

Once you register:

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

Grants.gov

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

Need help? See Contacts and Support.

Learn more

Visit Applying for an ACF Grant Award on the ACF Grants page.

Watch the webinar

We will have an information session on Tuesday, November 17, 2026 from 1:00 pm est to 2:00 pm est.

Link: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/236212605724474?p=dR7qOoNexfRma122eO

The goal of this session is to clearly explain the funding opportunity, eligibility requirements, application process, and evaluation criteria to ensure potential applicants have the information they need to submit high-quality proposals.

Participants joining virtually may remain anonymous.

Opting not to participate in the session will not affect eligibility, application scoring, or the award selection process. Applicants unable to attend can access the recording and transcript on the ORR website after the session has concluded: https://acf.gov/orr/grants-funding

If there is a discrepancy between the presentation or materials and the NOFO, the NOFO takes precedence.

Step 3: Build Your Application

In this step

Application checklist 37
Application contents and format 38

Application checklist

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

File one: Narratives

Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.

Component	Included in page limit?
☐ Table of contents	Yes
☐ Project summary	Yes
☐ Project narrative	Yes
☐ Line-item budget and budget narrative	Yes

File two: Attachments

Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.

Component	Included in page limit?
☐ ACF Priorities Alignment Attestation	No
☐ Indirect cost agreement	Yes
☐ Legal proof of nonprofit status	Yes
☐ Legal proof of for-profit status	Yes
☐ Legal proof of small businesses	Yes
☐ Additional eligibility documentation	Yes
☐ Organizational capacity supporting information (including organization chart)	Yes
☐ Third-party agreements	Yes
☐ Letters of support	Yes

Standard forms

Use each required form in Grants.gov.

Component	Included in page limit?
☐ Project Abstract Summary	No
☐ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	No
☐ Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	No
☐ (SF-424B) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs	No
☐ Key Contacts	No
☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form	No
☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	No
☐ Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	No

Application contents and format

You will submit two files plus the standard forms in the application package.

Your organization's authorized official must certify your application.

See intergovernmental review to find out if you need to make any other submissions.

Required format

Page limit for file one and file two combined: 200 pages.

File format: Portable Document Format (PDF) is recommended, but not required. ACF supports the following file formats when you attach files to the Project Narrative Attachment form and the Other Attachments form:

Accepted file formats

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

Document formats

Paper size: 8 ½ inches x 11 inches

Margins: 1 inch all around

Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

Do not include external links to information you want reviewers to assess because reviewers will score the application solely on information provided in the application.

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

Color: Black

Size: 12-point font

Footnotes and text in tables and graphics may be 10-point.

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced

Project summary: Must be single-spaced

Project narrative: Must be double-spaced

Line-item budget and budget narrative: Can be single-spaced

Attachments: Can be single-spaced

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

See disqualifying factors to understand what may disqualify your application from consideration.

File one

To submit file one, you will use the Project Narrative Attachment form found in the Grants.gov application package for this NOFO.

This file includes:

- Table of contents.
- Project summary, one page.
- Project narrative.
- Line-item budget and budget narrative.

Table of contents

At the beginning of file one, insert a table of contents that guides a reader through the contents of both files in your application. If possible, include links to the relevant content in file one.

Project summary

Provide a one-page summary of the project description. Do not cross-reference to other parts of your application. The summary must include:

- At the top, the project title, applicant name, address, phone numbers, email addresses, and any website URL.
- A brief description of the project, including the needs and population you will address, your proposed services or research questions.

Project narrative

The project narrative is where you address all your proposed activities. It is a critical section of your application, which we evaluate using merit review criteria and rank based on application scores.

Remember that substance and measurable outcomes are more important than length. We are particularly interested in project narratives that convey strategies for achieving intended performance.

In it, you must:

- Explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in the program description section.
- Make sure your narrative is clear, concise, and complete.

- Use cross-referencing rather than repetition.
- Be sure to include any required supporting documents noted. You generally provide these in your attachments.
- Use the headings and order of the sections that follow.

Response

Approach

Outline your action plan. Describe the scope of your proposed project and describe in detail how you will accomplish it. Account for all functions or activities you identify in your application.

Explain potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing your project goals. Explain the strategies you will use to address them.

Program design

- Explain how your group home, shelter, transitional foster care (TFC) program, or a combination will work.
  - Include the type of program that you are proposing, the service area, and how many children you will serve.
- Explain how you will train all staff and volunteers who work with children while meeting state licensing requirements and ORR policies. You must discuss:
  - What topics you will cover.
  - How often training will happen.
  - Who will provide the training.
- Describe:
  - How staff will be equipped to handle the specific challenges faced by unaccompanied alien children.
  - How trauma-informed practices will be a part of the day-to-day management of the proposed program.
- Explain how you will include the ORR-required services (except any required service or services to which the applicant has expressed a religious objection to providing) in your daily operations.
  - If you have a religious objection to providing any required service, identify which service and explain your objection.
- Explain the specific steps you will take to provide ORR-required services on time. Specifically discuss:
  - Case management and health services and how you will prioritize urgent health care requests.

- Describe how you will create a stable and nurturing environment that includes physical safety, emotional support, and the ORR-required services.

Program implementation

- Provide a detailed description of your organization's past work and experience in efficiently and effectively implementing and operating a residential group home, shelter, and/or TFC program designed to serve children.
    - Include information about the demographics served, the size of the program(s), and results of the programs.
    - Outline the step-by-step plan for implementing the proposed program, including:
        - What tasks must be done before opening.
        - When and how staff will receive training prior to opening.
        - Who is responsible for each task.
- Provide a detailed plan of how you will recruit, onboard, train, and retain staff and foster parents (if proposing TFC). If proposing TFC, include how you'll adhere to your state's licensing requirements for foster parent certification.

Program location and real property

If you are proposing multiple real properties, you must clearly indicate each location in your responses.

- Describe each location where you are proposing to provide services. In your description, include the distance (in time and mileage) between the proposed location and the
    - local immigration court,
    - airport,
    - fire department,
    - police station, and
    - the nearest health care facilities.
- Provide documentation that the proposed location complies with all required zoning, fire, safety, and health codes.
    - If noncompliant, provide a detailed plan to address deficiencies.
- Describe the proposed location where group home, shelter, and/or TFC services will take place.
    - Include photographs or drawings with measurements that clearly identify the following areas:
        - Sleeping arrangements.

  - Food preparation areas.
  - Kitchen and dining spaces.
  - Classrooms.
  - Office spaces.
  - Restrooms.
  - Outside recreation areas.
  - Isolation/quarantine rooms.
  - Living spaces.
- Describe all security measures in place to prevent unauthorized absences, entrances and monitor entry and exit at the proposed group home, shelter, and/or TFC program.

Program management

- Describe the management structure of your program.
  - Provide a detailed operational plan that outlines the day-to-day management of the program. Describe how you will ensure that all activities are carried out efficiently and effectively; also include information on key processes and procedures.
- Provide a detailed plan that demonstrates how you will ensure background checks are conducted on all people working with or having direct access to UAC (e.g., staff, contractors, volunteers, and adults residing in foster homes).

Bonus Points

You will be eligible for bonus points if you propose:

- A shelter or group home that with no more than 24 beds.
- A shelter, group home, or TFC based in a state near the U.S. southern border.

Faith-based organizations seeking religious accommodation

ACF recognizes that some potential recipients may have religious objections to providing certain services. ACF is committed to identifying appropriate ways for faith-based organizations to partner with ACF and other recipients, while also ensuring that individuals receive the full range of legally permissible services in a timely manner and in a way that respects their religious backgrounds.

Consistent with 45 CFR § 87.3(b), an organization that has a religious objection to providing an ORR-required service may request an accommodation for one or more program requirements. ACF will review each request on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States. Organizations must

include any accommodation request in their application, along with a summary of an alternative approach that explains how they will meet their award obligations. ACF requests this information to ensure the proposed project scope is clear and, if selected, the recipient can administer the project with any approved religious accommodation procedures in place before a request for the objected-to services arises.

If an alternative approach is proposed, ACF will review the alternative approach during the merit review process to preliminarily determine whether it is consistent in principle with the following criteria:

- The approach will ensure timely provision of all services for which the individual is eligible.
- The approach is not burdensome to the child.
- The approach is operationally feasible for ACF.

Resources and capabilities

Current and pending funding support

Provide a list of your current and pending funding for ongoing projects and proposals. Include all sources, such as federal, state, and local governments, public or private foundations, and for-profit organizations.

Indicate which projects and proposals require committed time from the project director, principal investigator, or other key personnel of the project you are proposing in this application.

Show the total award amount, awarding entity, and the amount of time each key staff member will devote to each project.

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

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

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

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

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

Protection of sensitive or confidential information

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

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

For more information, see 2 CFR 200.303(e).

Support requested

Line-item budget and budget narrative

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

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

Justify the costs you ask for and provide detail, including calculations for the "object class categories" in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for the initial budget period only. See information on funding periods.

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project's purpose and activities.
- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See the funding policies and limitations.
- Annotating line-item expenses with specific details so reviewers can understand per-item costs.

Please also review the Standard Form instructions.

To create your line-item budget and justification, see detailed budget instructions on our website.

In general, you must:

- Indicate the method you will use for your indirect cost rate. See the indirect costs section for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail necessary for the calculation to be duplicated.
- For any cost sharing, include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance.
- For applicants planning to use subawards, if your subaward budget is more than 50% of total direct costs, justify why you are subawarding that portion of the project. Explain:
- How you plan to maintain a substantive role in the project.
- Why you cannot achieve your goals without the subrecipients' participation.

Start-up Costs: Identify one-time costs called "start-up costs" that are necessary to get the facility, foster home, and group home up and running. Start-up costs are expenses that occur in the first year and are related to setting up a new program. These costs are included in the total costs of the first-year budget. Start-up costs must be clearly identified in the detailed cost breakdown and budget explanation, separate from ongoing operating costs, and aligned with the SF-424A cost categories.

Overtime Costs: If you anticipate the need for overtime for certain positions like Clinicians, Case Managers, Youth Care Workers, and Medical Staff, you must include the projected overtime costs in the Personnel budget category.

Staff Allocation: Applicants proposing staff allocated to several funding sources or several applications must ensure that full-time equivalent (FTE) allocations do not exceed 100%. Budgets must include the names of staff for positions already filled and corresponding levels of effort (percentage dedicated to the project).

Service Contract Act (SCA) Requirements: This award is also subject to the provisions of SCA. Budgets must reflect SCA-compliant compensation and fringe benefit rates for all positions that are subject to SCA provisions.

To find SCA wage and benefit rates, you can search SAM.gov using the location of the facility or service location for TFC in their application. You must then match the job position to the wage determination list to find the correct wages and benefits. More information on identifying job codes can be found at ACF's Service Contract Act (SCA) Wage Classifications for ORR Providers.

Transportation Cost: The budget must include transportation costs for airfare, escort, and transport to and from the residential facility. Cost should reflect no more than 15% of the estimated number of children the applicants propose to serve annually.

Office Space: The budget must include a detailed breakdown of all proposed costs for each real property. It must clearly state which costs are related to each real property. The budget justification must include a corresponding detailed narrative explaining the purpose and need for each proposed cost under this award in order to determine reasonableness, allocability, and allowability of costs. Each real property listed must include a separate breakdown of proposed costs and narrative, including all the following, if applicable (in accordance with 2 CFR 200.465 and 2 CFR 200. 436):

- The terms of the lease.
- The total dollar amounts and allocable percentages of all costs.
- Maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost.
- Minor Alterations & Renovations (A&R) with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost.

Medical Costs: Only include the cost of medical personnel and medical supplies in the budget. No funds may be charged to this award for medical services as this is provided under a separate ORR-managed care program.

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

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

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

File two: Attachments

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

This file includes all attachments.

ACF Priorities Alignment Attestation

Not included in the page limit. This attestation must be submitted with your application.

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

I hereby attest and certify that:

_____ (Applicant Name) affirms its commitment to supporting and advancing ACF's published Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), consistent with the applicable statutes, including any relevant court orders, regulations, and the scope of the award and its activities.

Insert Date of Signature:

Print Name and Title of the AOR: Signature of AOR

Indirect cost agreement

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

See the indirect costs section for more information.

Legal proof of nonprofit status

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

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

Legal proof of for-profit status

If your organization is a for-profit, including a small business, you need to attach proof.

Include documentation establishing your organization's power to enter into contractual relationships or accept awards. This might include your articles of incorporation or bylaws.

Legal proof of small businesses

In addition to the proof that your organization is for-profit required in the previous section, small businesses must submit a certification signed by the chief executive officer or designee that states that the entity qualifies as a small business under 13 CFR 121.101-121.201.

Additional eligibility documentation

You must attach an active license (child placement license and/or any other required license according to state regulations) to provide group home, shelter, or transitional foster care services (TFC) for children. If you are proposing more than one service model, you must provide a license for each.

Organizational capacity supporting information

You must attach the following information to support the information in your organizational capacity section:

- Organizational charts, including all partners.
- Resumes, biographical sketches, or curricula vitae for all key personnel.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.
- List of your board of directors.
- Financial statements adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), if available, for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years (this requirement does not apply to start-up organizations).
- Audit reports or statements from certified public accountants or licensed public accountants, if available, for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years (this requirement does not apply to start-up organizations).
- Audit summary report including auditor's opinion, if applicable.
- Copy or description of your organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.
- Information on compliance with federal, state, and local government standards.
- State-issued licenses and other documentation of professional accreditation.

Third-party agreements

You must submit agreements with all third parties involved in the project. Third parties include subrecipients, contractors, and other cooperating entities. Third-party

agreements include letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, and memoranda of agreement. We do not consider general letters of support to be third-party agreements.

Any such agreement must:

- Describe each party's roles and responsibilities for project activities.
- Describe the support and resources that the third party is committing to the proposed project.
- Be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments.
- Identify the primary applicant and all collaborators responsible for project activities if the agreement is for a collaboration.

Letters of support

Attach statements from community, public, or commercial leaders that support your project. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the person writing the letter, the organization they represent, the date, and their reasons for supporting the project.

Standard forms

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

Forms	Submission requirement
Project Abstract Summary	With the application.
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With the application.
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With the application.
Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	With the application.
Key Contacts	With the application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	With the application or before award.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable based on instructions, with the application or before award.

Forms	Submission requirement
Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	With the application. Cite your primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.

Important: public information

When filling out your SF-424 form, pay attention to Box 15: Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project.

We share what you put there with USAspending. This is where the public goes to learn how the federal government spends taxpayer money.

Instead of just a title, insert a short description of your project and what it will do.

See instructions and examples [PDF].



Step 4: Learn About Review and Award

In this step

Application review	53
Award notices	60

Application review

Initial review

We will review your application to make sure that it meets the responsiveness requirements listed in the disqualification factors section. If your application does not meet these criteria, we will disqualify it and we will not move it to the merit review (scoring) phase.

We will let you know if your application is disqualified within 30 days of the application deadline. You won't receive any notice from ACF if your application failed Grants.gov validation checks.

If you submit more than two files in addition to your forms, we will remove the extra files. We will let you know if this happens.

We will also remove blurred or illegible pages and any file formats that are not supported.

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

If your application fails to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements, we will adjust your application by removing page(s) from the application. We will remove the pages before the merit review and will not send them to reviewers.

If we do so, we will send you a letter after we make awards to notify you that we amended your application.

Merit review process

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The panel members use the criteria shown in each section of the project narrative and in the line-item budget and budget narrative section.

Our reviewers typically are not federal employees. See the section on proprietary and personally identifiable information.

Criteria summary

Criterion	Total number of points = 130
1. Response: Program design	25 points
2. Response: Program implementation	20 points

Criterion	Total number of points = 130
3. Response: Program location and real property	15 points
4. Response: Program management	20 points
5. Support requested: Line-item budget and budget narrative	20 points
6. ACF Priority Alignment	10 points
Bonus Points: Bed capacity	10 points
Bonus Points: Geographic location	10 points

Scoring criteria

Response: Program design

Maximum points: 25

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Describe how your proposed group home, shelter, Transitional Foster Care (TFC) program, or combination of these program types will operate. Include the program type, service area, and the number of unaccompanied alien children you plan to serve. (0-5 points)
- Describe how you will:
  - Ensure staff and volunteer training plans meet state licensing requirements and ORR policies. Include specific training for staff working with unaccompanied alien children; and
  - Prepare staff to handle the specific challenges faced by unaccompanied alien children; and implement trauma-informed care in the day-to-day program management. (0-5 points)
- Explain:
  - The inclusion of ORR-required services (except any required service to which you have requested religious accommodation) in the daily operations of your proposed program. (0-5 points)
  - The specific steps for timely case management and health services, including prioritizing urgent health care requests. (0-5 points)
  - The creation of a stable and nurturing environment that includes physical safety, emotional support, and ORR-required services. The measures are realistic and specific. (0-3 points)

- The preparation of children and families for successful transitions from group home, shelter, or TFC care with specific strategies that will be used. (0-2 points)

Response: Program implementation

Maximum points: 20

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Describe your organization's past work and experience efficiently and effectively implementing and operating a residential group home, shelter, and/or TFC program designed to serve children with specific information about the demographics served, the size of the program(s), and results of the program(s). (0-7 points)
- Describe a step-by-step plan for implementing proposed program, including specific tasks, timelines, and milestones. Identify who will be responsible for each task and resources that will be needed to accomplish your plan. (0-7 points)
- Describe a comprehensive plan to recruit, onboard, and train staff as well as foster parents (if proposing TFC services). For TFC services, the plan must demonstrate adherence to your state's licensing requirements for foster parent certification. (0-6 points)

Response: Program location and real property

Maximum points: 15

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Describe each location where you propose to provide services including the distance, in time and mileage, between the proposed location and the local immigration court, airport, fire department, police station, and the nearest health care facilities. (0-2 points)
- Document that the proposed location complies with all required zoning, fire, safety, and health codes. If noncompliant, provide a detailed plan to address deficiencies. (0-5 points)
- Describe the proposed group home, shelter, and/or TFC location including photographs and/or drawings with measurements that identify the sleeping arrangements, food preparation areas, kitchen and dining spaces, classrooms, office spaces, restrooms, outside recreation areas, isolation/quarantine rooms, and living spaces. (0-5 points)
- Describe all security measures in place to prevent unauthorized absences and entrances and how entry and exits will be monitored at the proposed group home, shelter, and/or TFC program. (0-3 points)

Response: Program management

Maximum points: 20

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Describe the management structure of your program, including a detailed operational plan that outlines day-to-day management and program oversight. The plan should explain how activities will be carried out efficiently and effectively and include key processes and procedures. (0-10 points)
- Clearly describe your plan for completing background checks including all individuals working with or having direct access to UAC (e.g., staff, contractors, volunteers, and adults residing in the foster homes). (0-10 points)

Support Requested: Line item and budget narrative

Maximum points: 20

The reviewer will assess how well you:

- Present a detailed line-item budget and budget justification for the first budget period. Ensure all proposed costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with the proposed program and activities. (0-5 points)
- Clearly list each proposed real property by facility name and location and include the names of staff for positions already filled and the percentage dedicated to the project. (0-5 points)
- Clearly link each budget item to program objectives through your proposed activities, accounting for funding restrictions. (0-5 points)
- Provide documentation of your most recent financial audit, management letter, or summary report that includes the disclosure of any findings or recommendations noted in the most recently completed single audit. (0-5 points)

Alignment with ACF Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles (Up to 10 Points)

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

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

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

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

Scoring Considerations for the next three criteria:

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

1. Demonstrated Review and Understanding (Up to 2 Points)

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

Reviewers will look for:

- Identification of specific ACF priorities (not general or vague references)
- A clear explanation of how those priorities relate to the proposed project
- **Operationalization in Program Design and Implementation (Up to 3 Points)**

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

- Ensuring Value Alignment in Funding

Reviewers will assess if the applicant:

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

3. Integration into Performance and Continuous Improvement (Up to 5 Points)

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

- Ensuring Value Alignment in Funding

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the application:

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

Bonus points

Bed capacity

Maximum Points: 10 points

The reviewer will assess how well your proposal clearly demonstrates the proposed group home or shelter program, as a whole, with a maximum capacity of 24 beds.

Note: If a program is a 100-bed facility with 5 cottages of 10 beds each, it will not receive bonus points.

Geographic location

Maximum Points: 10 points

Applicants proposing shelter, group home, or TFC programs in the states near the U.S. southern border with Mexico listed below will receive bonus points.

Location	Points
Arizona	3
California	2
Florida	2
Texas	3

We do not consider voluntary cost sharing during merit review.

Risk review

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

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

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

For more details, see 2 CFR 200.206.

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review and scoring results, including the ten points for Alignment with *ACF Vision, Mission, Values, Priorities, and Guiding Principles* to the extent permitted by law. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor.
- Organizations serving emerging, unserved, or underserved populations.
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution.
- The past performance of the applicant.
- The application's compliance with this NOFO's prohibition on using funds awarded under this NOFO to support DEI and DEIA activities, to the extent permitted by law, including any relevant court orders.
- Funding Preference for Alignment with Agency Priorities. Before final funding decisions are made, division leadership will review awards for consistency with applicable laws and alignment with agency priorities.
- ORR reserves the right to make awards in the Unaccompanied Alien Children Bureau's best interest in alignment with ORR capacity needs, service delivery, and other regulatory requirements.

We may:

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

We will not fund:

- A disqualified application.
- An incomplete application.

Award notices

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

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

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

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



Step 5: Submit Your Application

In this step

Application submission and deadlines 62

Application submission and deadlines

Application

Deadline

Due on Tuesday, December 29, 2026.

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

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

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

Grants.gov submission

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

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the Quick Start Guide for Applicants.

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

See Contacts and Support if you need help.

Issues with federal systems

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

Exemptions for paper submissions

We need to give you an exemption before you can apply on paper. See the ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission [PDF]. Once we have approved your exemption, download your forms package under the Package tab in Grants.gov.

To submit your application, mail it to:

ORR Operations Center

C/O LCG, Inc.

ATTN: HHS-2027-ACF-ORR-ZU-0045

6000 Executive Boulevard

Suite 410

Rockville, MD 20852

Follow these requirements when you submit your paper application:

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

Intergovernmental review

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs does not apply to this NOFO. You do not need to take any action.

Step 6: Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post-award requirements and administration 65

Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

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

- All terms and conditions in the Notice of Award, including the ACF Standard Terms and Conditions and, if applicable, any program-specific terms and conditions. We incorporate this NOFO by reference.
- The rules listed in 2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, effective October 1, 2025. These replace those in 45 CFR 75, with some exceptions in 2 CFR 300.
- The HHS Grants Policy Statement (GPS). This document has terms and conditions tied to your award. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your Notice of Award.
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in the HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements and the ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements.
- 45 CFR Part 87 Appendix B, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations. This appendix explains the obligations of and protections for faith-based organizations applying for grants.
- Other relevant statutory and regulatory requirements include:
    - Section 235 of the TVPRA, 8 U.S.C. 1232.
    - Relevant portions of the PREA, 34 U.S.C. 30307(d).
    - Unaccompanied Children Program Foundational Rule, 45 CFR Part 410 (Apr. 30, 2024).
    - Standards to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment Involving Children, 45 CFR Part 411.
    - ORR's Investigations of Child Abuse and Neglect Rule, 45. CFR Part 412.
    - Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794(a), and HHS implementing regulations at 45 CFR part 85 (applicable to programs and activities conducted by the agency), and 45 CFR part 84 (applicable to programs receiving federal financial assistance).
    - Additionally, ORR must also comply with any applicable terms of the Stipulated Settlement Agreement in Flores v. Bondi, Case No. 2:85-4544-DMG-

AGR (C.D. Cal.) that remain in force after the agreement's partial and conditional termination as to HHS in an Order dated June 28, 2024 (see ECF 1447).

Reporting

As a recipient, you will have to submit performance and financial reports. To learn more about reporting, see Reporting at the ACF website.

- Performance report form: ACF-OGM-PPR
- Performance report frequency: Quarterly
- Financial report form: SF-425 FFR
- Financial report frequency: Quarterly



Contacts and Support

In this step

Agency contacts	68
Help with systems	68
Reference websites	68
Paperwork Reduction Act disclaimer	69

Agency contacts

ORR

Yolanda Barnes

UCBGrants@acf.hhs.gov

Grants management

Bernard Morgan

bernard.morgan@acf.hhs.gov

Help with systems

Grants.gov

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

- Phone: 1-800-518-4726
- Email: support@grants.gov

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can:

- Call 866-606-8220.
- Live chat with the Federal Service Desk.

Reference websites

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
- Grants.gov
- Applying for an ACF Grant Award
- Grants.gov Accessibility Information
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- United States Code (U.S.C.)
- Award Terms and Conditions (see also the ACF Standard Terms and Conditions [PDF])

- ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements
- ACF Property Guidance
- Service Contract Act Wage Classifications for ORR Providers
- ORR Unaccompanied Alien Children Program

Paperwork Reduction Act disclaimer

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

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