



Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Research Connections

HHS-2013-ACF-OPRE-YE-0601

Application Due Date: 06/24/2013

Research Connections
HHS-2013-ACF-OPRE-YE-0601
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**Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families**

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Executive Summary

Notices:

- **On January 1, 2012, the Administration for Children and Families implemented required electronic application submission via www.grants.gov for discretionary grant applications. Please see *Section III.3. Disqualification Factors*, *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission* and *Application Submission Options*, and *Section IV.3. Explanation of Due Dates and Times* for information on electronic application submission and the availability of exemptions allowing applicants to submit applications in paper format.**
- **This Fiscal Year (FY 2013) ACF has implemented a new application upload requirement. Each applicant applying electronically via www.grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files. Please see *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission* for detailed information on this requirement.**

The purpose of this program announcement is to award a cooperative agreement to operate The Child Care and Early Education Research Connections website (hereafter referred to as “Research Connections”). Research Connections is an *interactive* website (<http://www.researchconnections.org>) that houses research documents and public use datasets for conducting secondary analyses on topics related to child care and early education with a particular focus on children living in low-income families. Research Connections provides researchers and policymakers access to and technical assistance with comprehensive collections of data, research reports, syntheses, and other critical information from major child care, Head Start, and early education research and evaluation studies. Research Connections supports the Child Care Policy Research Consortium and fosters collaboration and outreach to strengthen dissemination and use of child care and early education research by both the research and policymaker communities.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Statutory Authority

Research Connections is funded generally under the authority of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 9858 *et seq.*, and specifically by the appropriation for Payments to States for the Child Care and Development Block Grant made under Division F, Title II of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012, Pub. L. 112-74, and the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2013, Pub. L. 112-175.

It is also funded under Section 649 of the Head Start Act, as amended by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 9844.

Description

A. Background

Historically, the Research Connections project began as a response to the child care research and evaluation needs of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program. In particular, the Research Connections project focused on the CCDF program's goal of expanding and disseminating research-based knowledge regarding the efficacy of child care and early education programs, particularly those targeting low-income families. To aid in accomplishing this goal, the Research Connections project developed an interactive website, Research Connections (<http://www.researchconnections.org>), that provides high-priority and up-to-date research information and archived datasets to researchers and policymakers on different types of early child care and education programs serving children from birth up to 13 years of age.

Over the years, Research Connections has expanded from primarily including research on state-level child care and early education programs to also include federal-level research on Head Start programs. Therefore, the current Research Connections project will continue to be supported by research funds connected to CCDF and Head Start programs. The Research Connections project focuses on helping CCDF and Head Start programs meet key programmatic goals by fostering Research Connections' ability to be a one-stop clearinghouse for state- and federal-level research content and archived datasets on a wide-range of high-priority issues *within* and *across* child care, Head Start, and early education programs. To explain further:

- **CCDF Program.** CCDF aims to increase the availability of high-quality child care and early education for low-income working families. A major goal of the Research Connections project is to advance understanding of child care and early education issues by increasing the accessibility and dissemination of child care datasets (e.g., Quality Interventions for Early Care and Education [QUINCE], Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods [PHDCN] Project Upgrade in Miami-Dade County, FL); content specific to state-level child care and early education research; and up-to-date links on state-level policies to research and policy communities. **Research funds associated with the CCDF contribute \$750,000 (approximately 50 percent) of the Research Connections project's total funds.**
- **Head Start Program.** Head Start aims to provide comprehensive early child development services (e.g., educational, health-related, and social services) to low-income children and their families. A major goal of the Research Connections project is to advance understanding of comprehensive early child development services by increasing the accessibility and dissemination of Head Start and Early Head Start datasets (e.g., Family and Child Experiences Survey [FACES]), Baby FACES, and Head Start Impact Study); content specific to Head Start research; and up-to-date links on federal-level policies to research and policy communities. **Research funds associated with Head Start contribute \$750,000 (approximately 50 percent) of the Research Connections project's total funds.**

Consistent with statutory authority, the Research Connections project's resources and activities should be dedicated proportionately to reflect the purposes of the two funding streams supporting the project, as

described above in this Section of the FOA. Many CCDF and Head Start programs are partnering with one another and/or combining funds from various sources to coordinate services that best address the child care and early education needs of children and their families. Therefore, it is expected that the Research Connections project's activities will often be cross-cutting in nature. Efforts on project activities surrounding cross-cutting research content, archived data, collaborations, and policies would consequently address both funding streams.

To date, Research Connections houses approximately 150 datasets (<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/holdings/browse>) and over 20,000 research articles and reports (<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/collection.jsp>) to improve access to child care, Head Start, and early education research; promote the use of data for analysis; and facilitate the utilization of research findings by policymakers, practitioners, academics, and other research stakeholders. Research Connections also contains current information in the child care, Head Start, and early education research and policy fields via announcements modules, resource lists, webinars, and federal meetings and conferences (<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/connect/>). Overall, Research Connections strives to be an easily accessible and highly searchable clearinghouse for up-to-date and high-priority research datasets and other research content fostering improved quality child care, Head Start, and early education programs for at-risk children from low-income families. Thus, Research Connections is expected to develop continually in response to the changing needs and priorities of the child care, Head Start, and early education research and policy communities.

Research Connections is currently being carried out by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) and the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research. This cooperative agreement will end on September 29, 2013, at which time the products, hardware, and software developed under this project will be transferred to the organization awarded the cooperative agreement under this funding opportunity announcement. This is in accordance with the Intangible Property Regulations of 45 CFR 74.36 (for details, see Section VI.2 *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*). Additionally, the organization awarded the cooperative agreement under this announcement will be expected to transfer any products, hardware, and software developed to the next prospective organization.

B. Grant Program Goals and Expectations

The purpose of the current project is to support a cooperative agreement to *operate* Research Connections—an interactive website on child care, Head Start, and early education research and research-related information. The overarching goals of the project include the following:

1. Research Connections will be recognized and widely used as a clearinghouse for research content (e.g., research publications, summaries, methodology briefs, and webinars) and archived datasets on different types of child care, Head Start, and early education programs serving children from birth through 13 years of age.
2. Research Connections will be a one-stop location to find and access child care, Head Start, and early education research data and program and policy data (e.g., CCDF), as well as obtain technical assistance and training opportunities when working with, linking, and analyzing these data within and across different archived datasets.
3. Research Connections will act as a magnet for researchers investigating child care, Head Start, and early education by facilitating networking and collaborations; providing access to key research resources promoting quality and high-priority research and data; and building capacity for better research in the future.
4. Research Connections will provide up-to-date links to policies and funding streams as a means of fostering quality child care, Head Start, and early education programs for at-risk children from low-income families.

The six interrelated expectations that foster the achievement of the overarching project goals are to: 1) operate an *interactive* website on research topics related to child care, Head Start, and early education

issues; 2) expand and refine the research content; 3) process, house, and preserve datasets in a quality data archive; 4) maintain and cultivate an indexing and metadata system to foster a highly searchable website; 5) sustain and enhance technical assistance and training opportunities; and 6) uphold and facilitate further collaborations among researchers and policymakers. Further detail regarding each of these goals and expectations is discussed below.

1. Operate an INTERACTIVE website that fosters easy access to research datasets, publications, and other informational tools on child care and early education issues.

The most visible component of this project is Research Connections *interactive* website (<http://www.researchconnections.org>). The majority of website users are individuals or organizations whose primary functions and goals relate to child care, Head Start, and early education research. Important categories of users include child care and early education researchers, legislators, and policy analysts; Head Start researchers, legislators, and policy analysts; child development specialists and educators; professors; and community child care organizations, such as resource and referral agencies and technical assistance intermediaries in search of research-based information to inform the implementation of child care, Head Start, and early education programs. Given the large number and diversity of end users, Research Connections must remain committed to ensuring that research-based information and datasets are easily searchable and accessible with language and formats that meet the needs of ALL the different constituencies.

Researchers who wish to conduct secondary analyses of datasets should be able to readily download data through the website (<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/datasets-instruments.jsp>). Researchers involved in secondary data analyses should be given access to other networks of researchers around the country that are also working on similar datasets and/or analyses. These researchers will be supported specifically by goals 3 through 6 discussed below.

2. Continually expand and refine the content of research publications, webinars, and other related products throughout Research Connections to reflect up-to-date and high-priority issues within the child care, Head Start, early education, and policy communities.

Prominent features of Research Connections include improving access to child care and related early education research; promoting the use of data for analysis; and facilitating the use of research findings by policymakers, practitioners, academics, and other research stakeholders. To date, research documents (e.g., research publications, summaries, methodology briefs, and webinars) have been made available on the Research Connections website through contributions by prominent researchers and organizations within child care and early education communities (<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/connect/>). Moreover, where possible, it is a priority that *full* texts of these research documents are made available. Through these established contribution and collaboration efforts (<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/find/contribute.html>), as well as the application of new and innovative channels, Research Connections will continue to expand its up-to-date and high-priority content holdings.

3. Process, house, and preserve quality datasets and related documents from studies on child care, Head Start, and early education, either directly or in partnership with other archives.

Research Connections currently houses key datasets from child care and Early Head Start and Head Start research (see <http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/holdings/browse>). It will be a priority of this project to maintain and expand this archived data collection and make them useable and accessible to the larger research community.

Processing. Data processing includes, but is not limited to sub-setting of child care and early education-relevant variables and formatting for easy download to statistical packages for analyses; variable labeling; application of weights; and maintenance of subject confidentiality. The amount of data processing required before inclusion in Research Connections varies depending on the number and types of variables in a dataset and the amount of processing completed by the owner of the data

prior to submission. It will also be a priority of the Research Connections grantee to provide ongoing support for users of key government-funded datasets, which will be decided in collaboration with the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE).

Housing. Any child care or early education investigator, regardless of funding source for their project, is encouraged to house data with Research Connections (<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/find/contribute.html>). Since 2000, all research contractors and grantees funded through CCDF discretionary funds have been required to plan for the archiving of their data. The intent is that grantees will prepare their datasets according to sound data processing and documentation practices and house those datasets at Research Connections within 2 years after the end of their funding period. In recent years, Research Connections has expanded their data collection to include the most current child care datasets (e.g., QUINCE; PHDCN; Project Upgrade; and Child Care and Head Start Collaborations) as well as Head Start and Early Head Start datasets (e.g., FACES and Baby FACES, respectively). A grantee is expected to reach out to other researchers collecting data on child care and early education that are not currently part of the data archive. For example, the current project has acquired datasets from the NICHD Study of Child Care; Fragile Families; Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort; and others.

Preserving. The data archive also sets standards and establishes procedures for documentation of datasets (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/content/deposit/guide/>). Data documentation and code books are developed for archived datasets to ensure these data are readily available to other researchers and facilitate secondary analysis. A related goal is to increase the average quality of child care, Head Start, and early education research through systematic improvements in the underlying quality of data.

Many researchers use Research Connections to access public datasets for secondary analysis. Research Connections must maintain a system of data access for primary datasets as well as specially constructed analytic files and interactive tools (<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/datasets-instruments.jsp>). For example, some researchers might need to extract child care data from national longitudinal studies in which child care is embedded in a larger set of issues. Some may need to combine Head Start data from two or more datasets to create a linked data file. Others may need to conduct simple analyses of large datasets like national census estimates or state administrative data. Support for data users by Research Connections grantee is expected to keep growing and evolving over the next several years.

4. Maintain and cultivate an indexing and metadata system of all child care, Head Start, and early education research content and archived datasets that promotes a highly searchable website.

The underlying structure of Research Connections consists of specially processed and documented research products and datasets linked to a comprehensive taxonomy that are highly searchable (<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/find/>). It also includes metadata elements—which describe and categorize both research database and data archive holdings—and an indexing system. These features interface with end users through the interactive website.

Taxonomy. Taxonomy is designed to allow end users of the website to conduct sophisticated searches with ease. The taxonomy will be continually maintained and cultivated as research products are added and new variables are identified. The taxonomy will also account for high-priority issues within child care, Head Start, and early education research and policy communities.

Metadata. Metadata (data about data) that describe holdings were developed in accordance with Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) standards used by nationally recognized archives and information systems. As new products are acquired and indexed in Research Connections, the metadata will continue to evolve. The metadata will also evolve according to high-priority issues within the child care, Head Start, early education, and policy communities.

5. Sustain and enhance technical assistance methods and training opportunities for researchers, policymakers, and other research stakeholders using the Research Connections website.

Providing technical assistance that meets the various needs of Research Connections' users has been a major initiative. On-line technical supports have included Secondary Analysis Tools and other ready-to-use formats that make archived datasets more easily accessible to the research community (<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/find/datatools-01.html>); lists of search tips to facilitate navigation of the research collection content (<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/collection.jsp>); faculty teaching modules to help undergraduate students understand, find, reflect on, and use research (<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/understand/teaching-modules.html>); and technical guidelines and documentation to foster better data processing and access (<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/datasets-instruments.jsp>). The Research Connections grantee should strive to sustain these efforts as well as devise efficient and innovative methods to meet user's changing technical assistance needs. Examples of future technical assistance methods may include, but are not limited to, devising a frequently asked question module; incorporating video tutorials; and using social media, such as Twitter or real-time chat, as part of the interactive technical support.

Research Connections also provides training and technical assistance opportunities by conducting technical roundtables for researchers working on special datasets, such as child care administrative data from the states. Other opportunities might include training institutes that convene a small number of researchers to work in a guided setting with important national datasets. For instance, training opportunities have included workshops and webinars on analyzing weighted samples with Head Start and Early Child Longitudinal Study datasets (<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/support/announcements/2012/09/participate-in-webinar-weighting-and>) and effective analysis of CCDF administrative data (<http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/support/announcements/2012/08/materials-from-research-connections>).

A Research Connections grantee **should** conduct workshop and training sessions on government datasets specific to child care subsidy administration, Early Head Start, and Head Start that are funded through ACF. These workshops should be responsive as datasets become available and according to high-priority research areas that can be addressed through these datasets. Workshops and training sessions will be convened at major national conferences. In particular, a grantee is expected to conduct sessions for researchers at the OPRE Annual Child Care Policy Research Consortium meeting and the Biennial Head Start Research conference. Other possible venues where a Research Connection grantee could conduct workshops and/or training sessions includes, but are not limited to, Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), and American Education Research Association (AERA). Training sessions for other types of audiences such as policymakers, analysts, and program administrators may also be required. **While some technical assistance activities and training opportunities will be supported through this cooperative agreement, others may require outside resources, including other funding partners and fee-for-service arrangements.**

6. Uphold and facilitate further collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders of child care, Head Start, and early education research.

A major function of Research Connections is to facilitate collaboration among researchers to build knowledge, facilitate networking and thematic work across projects, and provide a vehicle for peer technical support and scientific advancement (<http://www.researchconnections.org/content/childcare/connect/>). A related function is to increase interaction and mutual support between the research and policy communities. As researchers try to make their studies more relevant for policy and practice, policymakers will be able to make better use of the findings.

The Research Connections grantee participates as a member of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium (CCPRC) and provides limited support for consortium-wide initiatives. The Research Connections grantee partakes in activities of the consortium steering committee and assists (when

relevant to their mission) with note taking and preparation of summary documents resulting from conference calls, research forums, or major meetings. The Research Connections grantee also supports participants in the annual meeting of the consortium with technical workshops and small group discussions, as well as on-site document preparation and organization of materials to lend depth and breadth to the discussions. (Logistical support for the CCPRC meeting is supplied by contracts outside of this project.) The Research Connections grantee, when requested to do so, also assists with planning for meetings and briefings, coordinating the work of thematic work groups for cross-cutting research, and preparation of proceedings or other summary documents.

The Research Connections grantee is also expected to maintain collaborations and respond to the research needs of the CCDF program by participating in monthly meetings of the Child Care Technical Assistance Network (CCTAN) and other related activities, including participation in the Office of Child Care's Annual State Administrator's meeting; maintain collaborations with other early education programs (e.g., Office of Head Start [OHS] and its technical assistance network), as it relates to the goals of this announcement and in consultation with OPRE; and collaborate in the preparation of documents that can facilitate the use of child care and early education research by program administrators. However, it is not currently the priority of this project to prepare materials that translate research findings to practice. The innovative use of social media tools and partnering with organizational websites interested in child care and early education (e.g., srcd.org, zerotothree.org), is encouraged to forage new collaborations and networks in the research and policy communities.

It is within the scope of this project to identify and develop a **limited** number of publications that synthesize research on critical issues and identify policy implications. Types of publications have included bibliographic lists on key topics, research briefs, and reviews of research. In order to maintain project goals related to operating a state-of-the-art knowledge information system and the dissemination of sound research, the Research Connections grantee should build quality control processes for the development of these materials. Examples include commissioning the development of publications to widely recognized experts in specific topical areas and establishing a formal review process for project publications. As much as possible, product development should leverage the resources maintained by the Research Connections grantee.

CCDF and Head Start programs equally contribute (approximately 50 percent each) to the total research funds for the Research Connections project. Thus, consistent with statutory authority, the Research Connections project's resources and activities should be dedicated proportionately to reflect the purposes of the two funding streams supporting the project. Many CCDF and Head Start programs are partnering with one another and/or combining funds from various sources to coordinate services that best address the child care and early education needs of children and their families. Therefore, it is expected that the Research Connections project's activities will often be cross-cutting in nature. Efforts on goals and activities for the Research Connections project surrounding cross-cutting research content, archived data, collaborations, and policies would consequently address both funding streams.

C. Roles and Responsibilities of Grantees

Under the cooperative agreement, substantial involvement is anticipated between OPRE and the grantee throughout the duration of the funded project.

The grantee will be expected to be a member of and provide limited support to the Child Care Policy Research Consortium. Additionally, the grantee must attend and present displays on how to access Research Connections and demonstrations of research resources that the website provides at the Annual Meeting of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium, Biennial Head Start Research Conference, and the annual Child Care State Administrators' Meeting. These meetings typically are held in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and last approximately 2 days.

II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Total Funding:	\$1,500,000
Expected Number of Awards:	1
Award Ceiling:	\$1,500,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	\$1,000,000 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	\$1,500,000 Per Budget Period

Length of Project Periods:

60-month project with five 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Awards:

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

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

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, grantees will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A grantee's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.**

The initial award will be made for the first 12-month budget period. Continuation awards for the subsequent 12-month budget periods will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress by the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the federal government.

The need for a 60-month project period should be identified in Item 17 on the Standard Form (SF) 424, in the project narrative, and in the budget. Applicants will receive instructions on how to submit non-competing continuation applications each project year to request funds for each of the additional budget periods (up to 4) after the initial award.

CCDF and Head Start programs equally contribute (approximately 50 percent each) to the total research funds for the Research Connections project. Consistent with statutory authority, the Research Connections project's resources and activities should be dedicated proportionately to reflect the purposes of the two funding streams supporting the project. Applicants will maintain internal procedure to track and report on the two funding sources and their associated activities and costs.

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

Under the cooperative agreement, substantial involvement is anticipated between OPRE and the grantees throughout the duration of the funded project. Responsibilities of OPRE federal staff and the successful applicant are negotiated prior to the award. OPRE and the grantee will work collaboratively on the development of products such as work plans, technical assistance materials, summaries or literature reviews, decisions about datasets to be archived, the proportion of the budget that is allotted to key functional tasks, and other matters. OPRE will also participate in any Advisory Group or Technical Work

Group meeting and will work closely with the grantee to promote partnerships and research, both with the CCPRC, ACF program offices (e.g., Office of Child Care [OCC], OHS), and other potential partners. In addition, OPRE will assist with technical assistance and training activities as appropriate and needed. See *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description* for information regarding grantees' roles and responsibilities under the cooperative agreement.

Please see *Section IV.5 Funding Restrictions* for limitations on the use of federal funds awarded under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is limited to:

- Public and State-Controlled institutions of education
- Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) IRS status (other than institutions of higher education)
- Private institution of higher education
- For-profit organizations (other than small businesses)
- Small businesses
- Tribally Controlled Land Grant Colleges and Universities (TCUs) as cited in Section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. § 301 note), any other institutions that qualify for funding under the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978, (25 U.S.C. § 1801 et seq.), and Navajo Community College, authorized in the Navajo Community College Assistance Act of 1978, Pub.L. 95-471, Title II (25 U.S.C. § 640a)
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as defined in the amended version of the Higher Education Act of 1965, codified at 20 U.S.C. § 1061(2), and that are institutions established prior to 1964 whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and must meet the definition of "Part B institution" in Section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
- Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) as defined in the amended version of the Higher Education Act of 1965, codified at 20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5), and that are institutions who satisfy Section 502(a)(5) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
- Faith-based higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and for profit organizations

Justification for limiting the competition to higher education institutions, non-profit organizations with IRS 501(c)(3) tax status, and for-profit organizations, other than sole proprietorships is based on the rationale that these types of institutions and organizations can provide the infrastructure to support activities that are grounded in evidence from state- and federal-level research on high-priority issues *within* and *across* child care, Head Start, and early education programs, ultimately continuing the ongoing work of the Research Connections project.

Individuals, foreign entities, and sole proprietorship organizations are not eligible to compete for, or receive, awards under this announcement. See *Section III.3. Other*.

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

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: No

III.3. Other

DUNS Number and System for Award Management Eligibility Requirements (SAM.gov)

All applicants must have a DUNS number (www.dnb.com) and be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM, www.sam.gov) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete, and should a grant be made, throughout the life of the award. Finalize a new, or renew an existing, registration at least two weeks before the application deadline. This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application or receive an award. Maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register or renew at least two weeks before the deadline. See the SAM Quick Guide for Grantees at: [https:// www.sam.gov /sam /transcript /SAM Quick Guide Grants Registrations-v1.6.pdf](https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/SAM_Quick_Guide_Grants_Registrations-v1.6.pdf).

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

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

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

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

APPLICATION DISQUALIFICATION FACTORS

Applications from individuals, foreign entities, or sole proprietorship organizations will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

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

Application Submission Disqualifications

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at www.Grants.gov. Applicants that do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the Internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow these applicants to submit an application in paper format. Information on requesting an exemption from electronic application submission is found in *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options*.

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times. Electronic applications submitted to www.Grants.gov after 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from www.Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to www.Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

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

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

The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*. Paper applications received after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.** See "Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission" in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*.

Applications that are disqualified under any of these circumstances will receive written notification by letter or by email.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Research Connections Grant Review

c/o ICF International

9300 Lee Highway

Fairfax, VA 22031-6050

Phone: (877) 350-5913

Fax: (703) 934-3740

Email: RCOPRE@icfi.com

Electronic Application Submission:

The electronic application submission package is available at www.Grants.gov.

Applications in Paper Format:

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available at the ACF Funding Opportunities Forms webpage at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms>. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* if applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to www.Grants.gov.

Standard Forms that are compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d):

Available at the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](http://www.Grants.gov) website and at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms.

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service for assistance at 1-800-877-8339 (TTY - Text Telephone or ASCII - American Standard Code For Information

Interchange).

Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING ACF APPLICATIONS

FOR ALL ACF APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

The AOR is an individual(s), named by the applicant/recipient organization, who is authorized to act for the applicant/recipient and to assume the obligations imposed by the federal laws, regulations, requirements, and conditions that apply to grant applications or awards. Each applicant must designate an AOR.

AOR authorization is part of the registration process at www.Grants.gov, where the AOR will create a short profile and obtain a username and password from the Grants.gov Credential Provider. AORs will only be authorized for the DUNS number registered in the System for Award Management (SAM).

Point of Contact

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

Application Checklist

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times* of this announcement.

Follow the instructions provided in this application formatting section to ensure that your application does not exceed the page limitations and can be printed efficiently and consistently for the competitive review.

Accepted Font Styles:

All applicants must use 12-point font in Times New Roman (TNR).

Page Limitations for Application Submissions

Applicants must observe the page limitations listed later in this section. Page limitations do not include OMB-approved Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms

All applications must be double-spaced and in Times New Roman, 12-point font. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the Project Description file or the Appendices file will have the extra pages removed and these pages will not be reviewed.

Page limitations apply to electronically submitted and paper format applications. For applications that are single-spaced and/or one-and-a-half spaced (in whole or in part, except for the exempted elements listed later in this section) and/or use a font smaller than TNR, 12-point, ACF will use a formula to determine the actual number of pages. The formula counts the number of characters an applicant uses when following the instructions and using 12-point TNR and then compares the resulting number with that of the submitted application. For example, an applicant using TNR, 11-point font, with 1-inch margins all around, and single-spacing, would have an additional 26 lines, or 1500 characters, which is equal to 4/5 of an additional page. Extra pages resulting from this formula will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Be sure to print the Project Description and Appendices documents on paper and count the number of pages for each file before submission. Keep the printed copy as a hard copy of your application for your

files.

Copies Required

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

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

Signatures

Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the AOR Authorization and E-Biz POC instructions provided at www.Grants.gov.

The original of a paper format application must include original signatures.

Accepted Application Format

With the exception of the required Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms, all application materials must be formatted so that they will print out onto 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins all around. **The Project Description and Appendices files must be numbered separately.** The font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. Do not scan more than one page of a document on a single page. Application pages with two or more pages of a document scanned to it will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements listed earlier in this section: the one-page Project Summary/Abstract, required Assurances and Certifications, required Standard Forms, required OMB-approved forms, resumes, logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, contracts, and the Budget Justification. These items may be single-spaced. The Project Summary/Abstract is required to be one single-spaced page in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. The Budget Justification may be single-spaced but must be in 12-point font. Resumes must be in 12-point font, but are not required to be double-spaced. The font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable.

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

Application Upload Requirements

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

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

To adhere to the two file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save

documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Professional software suite will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

However, ACF understands that all applicants may not have access to this software. Grants.gov offers a listing of several free PDF conversion programs. These programs can be found on Grants.gov by clicking on 'Applicant Resources' on the far left side of the home page, and then by following the link to 'Download Software' near the top of the screen, or by clicking [HERE](#). Free PDF software is available on this page that will allow users to convert and merge PDF documents. As an example, ACF is providing written instructions on downloading and using one type of free software listed at Grants.gov at the following link: [https:// www.acf.hhs.gov/ sites/default/ files/assets/ pdf995 instructions for video.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/pdf995_instructions_for_video.pdf). A video demonstrating this process is also available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOly0HwXPsa>. ACF does not endorse any of the software listed on Grants.gov, and applicants are not required to use a specific type of PDF conversion software to submit an application.

NOTE: Applications submitted via www.Grants.gov will undergo a validation check. See *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options* for more information. The validation check can affect whether the application is accepted for review. If an application fails the Grants.gov validation check and is not resubmitted by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review. If an applicant resubmits their application to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date and the application does not pass the validation check, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review.

Required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms

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

Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov

Limit file names to 50 characters and do not use special characters (example: &,-,*,%/,#) including periods (.), blank spaces, and accent marks, within application form fields, and file attachment names. An underscore () may be used to separate a file name.

Use only file formats supported by ACF

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

ACF supports the following file formats:

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

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

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

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be accepted for review. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* later in this section under *Application Submission Options* for more information.

Signatures

An original signature of the AOR is required only on the original copy of paper format application submissions. A point of contact on matters involving the application must be identified on the SF-424 at item 8f. The point of contact, known as the Project Director or Principal Investigator, should not be identical to the person identified as the AOR.

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

All application materials must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins. Applications must be in two sections. The first section must contain the entire Project Description and Budget Justification, and the second section must contain all required Appendices. The pages of the two sections must be separately and sequentially numbered.

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

Because each application will be duplicated, do not use or include separate covers, binders, clips, tabs, plastic inserts, maps, brochures, or any other items that cannot be processed easily on a photocopy machine with an automatic feed. Do not bind, clip, staple, or fasten in any way separate sections of the application. Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the federal government for review. All application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes.

Instructions on the order of assembly for paper application submissions are available later in this formatting section.

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.6. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Page Limitations and Content of the Application for All Submission Formats:

The **Project Description** file is limited to **60 pages** and includes:

- Table of Contents
- Project Summary/Abstract (one page maximum)
- Project Description Narrative
 - Approach
 - Organizational Capacity
 - Legal Status of Application Entity
 - Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
 - Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds
- Budget Justification (10 pages maximum)

The **Appendices** file is limited to **50 pages** and includes:

- Biographical Sketches / Resumes / Job Descriptions (2 pages each maximum)
- Organizational Charts
- Proof of Non-Profit Status (if applicable)
- Copies of Third-Party Agreements (if applicable)

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking grant or cooperative agreement awards under this announcement must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications with the application. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available at [ACF Funding Opportunities Forms](#) or at the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#) unless specified otherwise.

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description
DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration..	<p>A DUNS number is required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http:// fedgov.dnb. com/ webform.</p> <p>Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.</p>	<p>A DUNS number and SAM registration are eligibility requirements for all applicants.</p> <p>See <i>Section III.3. Other</i> for information on obtaining a DUNS number and registration at http://www.sam.gov.</p>
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance and SF-P/PSL - Project/Performance Site Location(s)	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.

<p>Certification of Filing and Payment of Federal Taxes</p>	<p>Submission of a certification is required prior to award for grantees receiving more than \$5,000,000 in Federal funding for the first budget year of a multi-year project; or for grantees receiving more than \$5,000,000 in Federal funding for a one-year (12 months) project period; or for grantees receiving more than \$5,000,000 in Federal funding for a multiyear project to be fully funded.</p>	<p>Applicants are advised of the following requirement contained in Section 523 of the "Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008," (P.L. 110-161, Division G). This requirement remains in effect:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sec. 523.</p> <p>None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract in an amount greater than \$5,000,000 or to award a grant in excess of such amount unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, the contractor or grantee has filed all Federal tax returns required during the three years preceding the certification, has not been convicted of a criminal offense under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and has not, more than 90 days prior to certification, been notified of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied, unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default, or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial proceeding. [Emphasis Added]</p> <p>Accordingly, if applicants request more than \$5 million in Federal funds for the first budget year of a multiyear project to be funded in FY 2010, or as a multiyear project to be fully funded in FY 2010, the applicant will be required to submit a certification complying with the requirements, prior to receiving an award.</p>
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Certification Regarding Lobbying	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Submission of this Certification is required for all applications.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If applicable, submission of this form is due at the time of application.	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants	Submission is voluntary. Submission may be made with the application by the application due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . Or, it may be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Non-profit private organizations (not including private universities) are encouraged to submit the survey with their applications. Submission of the survey is voluntary. Applicants applying electronically may submit the survey along with the application as part of an appendix or as a separate document. Hard copy submissions should include the survey in a separate envelope.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.

Non-Federal Reviewers

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

The Project Description

Part I: The Project Description Overview

Purpose

The project description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for available assistance. It should address the activity for which federal funds are being requested, and should be consistent with the goals and objectives of the program as described in *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description*. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly. When appropriate, applicants should cite the evaluation criteria that are relevant to specific components of their project description. Awarding offices use this and other information in making their funding recommendations. It is important, therefore, that this information be included in the application in a manner that is clear and complete.

General Expectations and Instructions

Applicants should develop project descriptions that focus on outcomes and convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Extensive exhibits are not required. Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting information concerning activities that will not be directly funded by the grant or information that does not directly pertain to an integral part of the grant-funded activity should be placed in an appendix.

Part II: General Instructions for Preparing a Full Project Description

Introduction

Applicants must prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following instructions while being aware of the specified evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria*. The text options give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria identify the measures that will be used to evaluate applications.

Letter of Intent

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this announcement. Please submit the letter of intent by the deadline date listed in *Section IV.3 Submission Dates and Times*.

The letter of intent should include the following information: number and title of this announcement; the name and address of the applicant organization; and/or Fiscal Agent (if known); and the name, phone number, fax number and email address of a contact person.

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

Letter of intent should be submitted via e-mail to RCOPRE@icfi.com.

Table of Contents

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers. The table of contents must be single spaced and will be counted against the total page limitations.

Project Summary/Abstract

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

Please place the following at the top of the abstract:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax)
- E-Mail Address
- Web Site Address, if applicable

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

Approach

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Describe any design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and/or community involvement in the project. Provide a list of organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals that will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

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

For the Research Connections grant, applicants must submit the following information:

1) Introduction: Current Issues and Need for Assistance

Applicants must introduce the proposal by briefly discussing current and high-priority issues and initiatives in the child care, Head Start, and early education research and policy communities. Explain the need for an interactive website, such as Research Connections, that focuses on multiple goals and expectations to foster child care, Head Start, and early education research and research-informed policy initiatives. Describe the audience of current Research Connections contributors and users, estimate their numbers, describe their needs, anticipate future needs of this audience, and if applicable, describe underserved or untapped audiences to be served.

2) Approach

Overall Proposed Plan: The applicant must begin by clearly outlining the overall project plan. The overall plan must provide a comprehensive picture of the proposed objectives, goals, milestones, and activities, serving as a roadmap for the 5-year course of the project. This plan must be organized by the overarching Research Connections goals and encompass ALL six interrelated expectations (for details see "B. Grant Program Goals and Expectations" in *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description*). The plan must identify short- and long-term dissemination goals and other specific goals and objectives addressing the six interrelated expectations at the core of the Research Connection project. The plan must also include a timeline and discuss the targeted audiences for each of the proposed goals and objectives. Further, the plan must include succinct explanations of appropriate milestones and activities for evaluating the relative success for accomplishing the proposed goals and objectives.

Proposed Strategies and Activities: The applicant must then describe, *in detail*, all proposed strategies and

activities for *upholding* and *enhancing* their specific goals and objective outlined in the overall plan for the Research Connections project. When describing the proposed strategies and activities for EACH of the specific goals and objectives, applicants must: a) provide sound strategies and activities; b) demonstrate technical knowledge and understanding; c) discuss collaborative efforts; and d) emphasize innovation. Each of the criteria must be addressed as follows:

a) *Provide Sound Strategies and Activities*

Applicants must identify *appropriate* and *sufficient* strategies and activities for addressing EACH of the proposed goals and objectives outlined in the plan. These strategies and activities must be culturally and ethnically sensitive to the diverse target audiences. Applicants must clearly explain approaches for effectively dealing with transitional challenges from the previous project period to the new 5-year project period. Applicants must also include detailed descriptions and rationale on how proposed strategies and activities will support the proposed goals and objectives in the outlined plan. Applicants must indicate how strategies and activities are specific to CCDF programs, specific to Head Start programs, and/or cut across both programs.

Additionally, the identified strategies and activities must include in-depth explanations on the implementation of self-evaluation and performance measures to assess whether the proposed goals and objectives are being met. Further, applicants must address how strategies and activities will be adapted or changed in accordance with the outcomes of these self-evaluation and performance assessments.

Applicants must justify the level of effort for strategies and activities proposed for EACH of the six interrelated expectations, as well as clearly explain the balance of efforts ACROSS the six interrelated expectations with the grantee resources allocated. Applicants are encouraged to propose potential partnerships with other research organizations engaging in similar efforts (e.g., creating and sustaining research websites, research libraries, and data archives) in order to fill any gaps in and expand their own capacity to meet the proposed goals and objectives. Lastly, applicants must provide detailed strategies regarding the passing on of all products acquired, developed, and/or maintained during the term of the cooperative agreement to OPRE or the subsequent Research Connections grantee.

b) *Demonstrate Technical Knowledge and Understanding*

Applicants must clearly identify the technical and logistical challenges that may arise in the process towards achieving the proposed goals and objective to advance the overarching goals of the Research Connections project. Examples of these technical and logical challenges may include (but are not limited to) topics such as the world wide web, access to full-text documents, dissemination strategies, liability, confidentiality, protection of human subjects, and terms-of-use agreements.

Applications must then propose strategies and activities for overcoming the identified technical and logical challenges that are detailed, clear, and emphasize strengths as well as limitations. Applicants must demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of ACF information technology requirements in terms of project boundaries, data security, risk analysis, operational concepts, functional requirements, systems design, deployment plans, and performance strategies when discussing strategies and activities for overcoming these technical and logistical challenges.

c) *Discuss Collaborative Efforts*

Applicants must highlight strategies and activities for achieving their specific goals and objectives that increase collaboration and partnership-building at national, statewide, and local levels. These strategies and activities must also support researchers and other stakeholders in their efforts to build effective partnerships and promote collaboration in a variety of environments, such as colleges and universities, State and local child care and early education agencies, and child care and early education organizations.

Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of the supportive role a Research Connections grantee plays as a member of CCPRC and CCTAN when discussing proposed strategies and activities. Additionally, applicants must propose explicit strategies and activities for working with OPRE to conduct workshops and training sessions relevant to child care, Head Start, and early education research and policy communities at the following conferences: Annual Child Care Policy Research Consortium meeting; the OCC's annual meeting of State Child Care Administrators; and the Biennial Head Start Research Conference.

d) Emphasize Innovation

Applicants must include novel and ground-breaking strategies and goals for accomplishing the proposed project plan and objectives, as well as the overarching goals for the Research Connections project. Identification of cutting-edge strategies must be discussed in detail, highlighting both strengths and limitations. Examples may include the innovative use of social media tools or pioneering new partnerships with organizational websites.

3) *Staff Qualities and Organizational Capacity*

Applicants must describe the contributions of the organizations and key individuals who will work on the project. **The application must specify a project director and key staff with extensive experience regarding research, especially with child care, Head Start, and early education.** Brief resumes and curriculum vitae of the proposed staff members must be included as a separate appendix to the application. The time commitment to the Research Connections project and other existing commitments for each of the proposed staff members must be clearly indicated in chart form.

Applicants must include information regarding their organizational resources, facilities, and capabilities. The applicant must provide detailed descriptions and letters of intent for any organization and/or consultants who may also be involved in the Research Connections projects. Applicants must also briefly explain the exact nature of the effort or contribution from these organizations and/or consultants.

Applicants must include a comprehensive management plan and organizational chart. This management plan and organizational chart must include (but is not limited to) personnel allocations, tasks and subtasks, products, timelines, and coordination of components demonstrating how the proposed project goals and objectives will be accomplished. In addition, applicants must demonstrate capacity to maintain internal procedures to track and report on the two funding sources and their associated activities and costs. See also the related requirements under Organizational Capacity below (i.e., documentation of the qualifications of the organizations and key individuals to carry out the proposed project).

Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of 501(c)(3) non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exemption certificate.

Organizational Capacity

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

- Organizational charts;
- Resumes (no more than two single-spaced pages in length);
- Curricula Vitae (CV);
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description);
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners and/or subcontractors, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively;
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Third-Party Agreements

Third-party agreements include Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Letters of Commitment. General letters of support are **not** considered to be third-party agreements. Third-party agreements must clearly describe the project activities and support to which the third party is committing. Third-party agreements must be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments on behalf of their organization.

Provide written and signed agreements between grantees and subgrantees, or subcontractors, or other cooperating entities. These agreements must detail the scope of work to be performed, work schedules, remuneration, and other terms and conditions that structure or define the relationship.

Collaboration/consortia applicants must provide letters of commitment or MOU identifying the primary applicant that is responsible for administering the grant. The primary applicant must provide documentation of the commitments made by partnering organizations and describe in detail their roles and responsibilities as partners in the collaboration/consortia.

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds

Provide a plan describing how oversight of federal funds will be ensured and how grant activities and partner(s) will adhere to applicable federal and programmatic regulations. Applicants must identify staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities, staff, and partner(s). Applicants must describe procedures and policies used to oversee staff and/or partners/contractors.

Describe organizational records systems that relate financial data to performance data by identifying the source and application of federal funds so that they demonstrate effective control over and accountability for funds, compare outlays with budget amounts, and provide accounting records supported by source documentation.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is input on the Budget Information Standard Form, either SF-424A or SF-424C, according to the directions provided with the SFs. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form. The line-item budget detail and the budget narrative must be submitted as a single Budget Justification application component.

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

Special Note: *The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (Pub.L. 112-74), enacted December 23, 2011, limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary, or any percentage of salary, to an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the Federal Executive Pay scale is \$179,700 (<http://www.opm.gov/oca/12tables/html/ex.asp>). This amount reflects an individual's base salary **exclusive** of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties to the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards/subcontracts under a ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

Provide a budget justification using the 424A and/or 424C, as applicable, for each year of the proposed project. Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for each year of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

General

Use the following guidelines for preparing the budget and budget justification. When a match or cost share is required, both federal and non-federal resources must be detailed and justified in the budget and budget narrative justification. "Federal resources" refers only to the ACF grant funds for which the applicant is applying. "Non-federal resources" are all other non-ACF federal and non-federal resources. It is suggested that budget amounts and computations be presented in a columnar format: first column, object class categories; second column, federal budget; next column(s), non-federal budget(s); and last column, total budget. The budget justification should be in a narrative form.

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

Justification: Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application. For each staff person provide: the title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Do not include the costs of consultants, personnel costs of delegate agencies, or of specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. Contractors and consultants should not be placed under this category.

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate.

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

Travel

Description: Costs of out-of-state or overnight project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization. Do not include in-state travel or consultant travel.

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

Equipment

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

Justification: For each type of equipment requested applicants must provide a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use of the equipment in the project; as well as a plan for the use, and/or disposal of, the equipment after the project ends. An applicant organization that uses its own definition for equipment should provide a copy of its policy, or section of its policy, that includes the equipment definition.

Supplies

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property other than that included under the Equipment category. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than \$5,000.

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

Contractual

Description: Costs of all contracts for services and goods except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contracts with secondary recipient organizations (with budget detail), including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. This area is not for individual consultants.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Recipients and subrecipients, other than states that are required to use 45 CFR Part 92 procedures, must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold fixed by 41 U.S.C. § 134 and currently set at \$100,000. Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

Note: Whenever the applicant intends to delegate part of the project to another agency, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each contractor/sub-contractor, by agency title, along with the same supporting information referred to in these instructions. If the applicant plans to select the contractors/sub-contractors post-award and a detailed budget is not available at the time of application, the applicant must provide information on the nature of the work to be delegated, the estimated costs, and the process for selecting the delegate agency.

Other

Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel; insurance; food (when allowable); medical and dental costs (noncontractual); professional services costs (including audit charges); space and equipment rentals; printing and publication; computer use; training costs, such as tuition and stipends; staff development costs; and administrative costs.

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

Indirect Charges

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category should be used only when the applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant federal agency.

Justification: An applicant that will charge indirect costs to the grant must enclose a copy of the current rate agreement. If the applicant organization is in the process of initially developing or renegotiating a rate, upon notification that an award will be made, it should immediately develop a tentative indirect cost rate proposal based on its most recently completed fiscal year, in accordance with the cognizant agency's guidelines for establishing indirect cost rates, and submit it to the cognizant agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposals may also request indirect costs. When an indirect cost rate is requested, those costs included in the indirect cost pool should not be charged as direct costs to the grant. Also, if the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

Paperwork Reduction Disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 10/31/2015. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via www.Grants.gov

- Additional guidance on the submission of electronic applications can be found at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.
- If applicants encounter any technical difficulties in using www.Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at support@grants.gov, to report the problem and obtain assistance. Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Grants.gov Contact Center is closed on federal holidays.
- Applicants should always retain Grants.gov Contact Center service ticket number(s) as they may be needed for future reference.
- **Contact with the Grants.gov Contact Center prior to the listed application due date and time does not ensure acceptance of an application. If difficulties are encountered, the Grants Management Officer listed in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* will determine whether the submission issues are due to Grants.gov system errors or user error.**

Application Validation at www.Grants.gov

After an application has been successfully submitted to www.Grants.gov, it still must pass a series of validation checks. After an application is submitted, Grants.gov generates a submission receipt via email and also sets the application status to "Received." This receipt verifies that the application has been successfully delivered to the Grants.gov system.

Next, Grants.gov verifies the submission is valid by ensuring it does not contain viruses, the opportunity is

still open, and the applicant login and applicant DUNS number match. If the submission is valid, Grants.gov generates a submission validation receipt via email and sets the application status to "Validated."

If the application is not validated, the application status is set to "Rejected." The system sends a rejection email notification to the applicant and the applicant must re-submit the application package. See "What to Expect After Submitting" at www.Grants.gov for more information.

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

Applicants will be provided with an acknowledgement from Grants.gov that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, a series of checks and validations. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF recognizes that some applicants may have limited or no Internet access, and/or limited computer capacity, which may prohibit them from uploading large files at www.Grants.gov. To accommodate such applicants, ACF offers an exemption from required electronic submission. The exemption will allow applicants to submit hard copy, paper applications by hand-delivery, applicant courier, overnight/express mail couriers, or by other representatives of the applicant.

To receive an exemption from required electronic application submission, applicants must submit a written request to ACF that must state that the applicant qualifies for the exemption for one of the two following reasons:

- Lack of Internet access or Internet connection, or
- Limited computer capacity that prevents the uploading of large documents (files) at www.Grants.gov.

Applicants may request and receive the exemption from required electronic application submission by either:

- Submitting an email request to electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov, or
- Sending a written request to the Office of Grants Management Contact listed in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* in this announcement.

Requests for exemption from required electronic application submission will be acknowledged with an approval or disapproval.

Requests that do not state one of the two listed reasons will not be approved.

An exemption is applicable to all applications submitted by the applicant organization during the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) in which it is received. Applicants need only request an exemption once in a FFY. Applicants must request a new exemption from required electronic submission for any succeeding FFY.

Please Note: electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov **may only be used to request an exemption from required electronic submission.** All other inquiries must be directed to the appropriate Agency Contact listed in *Section VII.* of this announcement. Queries or requests submitted to this email address for any reason other than a request for an exemption from electronic application submission will not be acknowledged or answered.

All exemption requests must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Announcement Title,
- Funding Opportunity Number (FON),
- The listed Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number,

- Name of Applicant Organization and DUNS Number,
- AOR name and contact information,
- Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving the application (i.e., the Point of Contact), and
- The reason for which the applicant is requesting an exemption from electronic application submission. The request for exemption must state one of the following two reasons: 1) lack of Internet access or Internet connection; or 2) lack of computer capacity that prevents uploading large documents (files) to the Internet.

Exemption requests must be received by ACF no later than two weeks before the application due date, that is, 14 calendar days prior to the application due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*. If the fourteenth calendar day falls on a weekend or federal holiday, the due date for receipt of an exemption request will move to the next federal business day that follows the weekend or federal holiday.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times* of this announcement.

Paper Format Application Submission

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

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.6.* of this announcement for address information for paper format application submissions.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times* in this announcement.

IV.3. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Letter of Intent

Due Date for Letter of Intent: **06/09/2013**

Due Date for Applications: **06/24/2013**

Explanation of Due Dates

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

Electronic Applications

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

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

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

Instructions for electronic submission via www.Grants.gov are available at:
http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp.

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

Mailed Paper Format Applications

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

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

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

Applications that are hand-delivered by applicants, applicant couriers, by overnight/express mail couriers, or other representatives of the applicant must be received on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays). Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.6. Other Submission Requirements*.

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

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

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

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

Extensions and/or Waiving Due Date and Receipt Time Requirements

ACF may extend an application due date and receipt time when circumstances make it impossible for applicants to submit their applications on time. These events include natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc.), or when there are widespread disruptions of electrical service, or mail service, or in other rare cases. The determination to extend or waive due date and/or receipt time requirements rests with the Grants Management Officer listed as the Office of Grants Management Contact in *Section VII. Agency Contacts*.

Acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov

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

Applicants will be provided with an acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, a series of checks and validations. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to ACF and will not be acknowledged.

See "What to Expect After Submitting" at www.Grants.gov for more information.

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application

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

IV.4. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs

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

IV.5. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions, are considered unallowable costs under grants or cooperative agreements awarded under this funding opportunity announcement.

Note: Costs incurred for grant application preparation are not considered allowable costs under an award and may not be included in the project budget or budget justification.

Grant awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs.

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

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

IV.6. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

Submission By Mail

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Research Connections Grant Review
c/o ICF International
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031-6050

Hand Delivery

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Research Connections Grant Review
c/o ICF International
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031-6050

Electronic Submission

See *Section IV.2* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via <http://www.Grants.gov>.

For all submissions, see *Section IV.3* for information on due dates and times.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

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

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

Competing applicants will be reviewed and evaluated against the following criteria:

Awareness of Current Issues and Need for Assistance

Maximum Points: 10

Awareness of current issues and need for assistance will be reviewed and evaluated against the following criteria:

- Clearly and accurately describes the significance for an interactive website, such as Research Connections, as an integrated system of knowledge, datasets, technical assistance, and collaboration efforts to foster child care, Head Start, and early education.
- Describes the audience of current Research Connections contributors and users, estimates their number, describes their needs, anticipates future needs of this audience, and if applicable, describes underserved or untapped audiences to be served.

Approach

Maximum Points: 55

Overall Proposed Plan (0-15 points)

Each applicant will be evaluated on the overall proposed *plan*. *This proposed plan should be* structured around the Research Connections overarching goals and encompasses ALL six interrelated expectations described in “B. Grant Program Goals and Expectations” in *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description*. The six interrelated expectations that foster the achievement of the overarching project

goals are to: 1) operate an *interactive* website on topics related to child care, Head Start, and early education issues; 2) expand and refine the research content; 3) process, house, and preserve datasets in a quality data archive; 4) maintain and cultivate an indexing and metadata system to foster a highly searchable website; 5) sustain and enhance technical assistance and training opportunities; and 6) uphold and facilitate further collaborations among researchers and policymakers.

The overall proposed plan will be evaluated based on the extent to which an applicant:

- Proposes a well-structured and clearly outlined plan that addresses the Research Connections overarching goals and ALL six interrelated expectations.
- Includes specific short- and long-term objectives and goals highlighting dissemination of high-priority and up-to-date research content and archived datasets to appropriately targeted audiences/end users of Research Connections.
- Provides a clearly laid out and understandable timeline of these proposed dissemination goals, specific goals and objectives, milestones, and activities over the 5-year course of the Research Connections project.

Proposed Strategies and Activities

Each application will also be evaluated based on the extent to which the proposed strategies and activities for achieving EACH of the proposed objectives and goals reflect *sound strategies and activities, technical knowledge and understanding, collaboration efforts, and innovation.*

Sound Strategies and Activities (0-10 points)

Sound strategies and activities—clear, concise, and effective approaches—for addressing each of the proposed objectives and goals that fosters the overarching Research Connections goals. Sound strategies and activities will be evaluated based on the extent to which an applicant:

- Proposes *appropriate* and *sufficient* strategies and activities for addressing EACH of the proposed goals and objectives for the Research Connections project.
- Indicates how strategies and activities are specific to CCDF programs, specific to Head Start programs, and/or cut across both programs.
- Clearly explains strategies and activities for effectively dealing with transitional challenges from the previous project period to the new 5-year project period.
- Proposes strategies and activities that reflect cultural and ethnic sensitivity to the issues being addressed.
- Discusses performance measures that will be implemented to assess how well EACH of the proposed goals and objectives are being met.
- Identifies a process of self-evaluation for the project, which may include, but is not limited to, monitoring the usage of the website and making comparisons to similar projects in an effort to monitor and improve Research Connections' service to its intended audience.
- Provides a means of monitoring progress, accomplishments, and shortfalls.
- Identifies possible barriers to achieving the proposed results and effective strategies for addressing these barriers.
- Adequately justifies the level of effort ACROSS the six interrelated expectations from the resources allocated, as well as sufficiently explains how partnering with other organizations engaging in similar efforts (e.g., creating and sustaining research websites, research libraries and data archives) will aid in achieving the overarching Research Connections goals.

Technical Knowledge and Understanding (0-10 points)

An in-depth technical understanding of information technology systems—including issues surrounding data archiving, indexing, and metadata systems—is the foundation for successfully operating and continuing to develop Research Connections. Technical knowledge and understanding will be evaluated based on the extent to which an applicant:

- Provides a detailed explanation of the technical specifications of the information technology system that will be sustained and developed to support the *interactive* website, Research Connections, and achieve the proposed objectives and goals.
- Describes issues related to ACF information technology requirements for project boundaries, data security, risk analysis, operational concepts, functional requirements, systems design, deployment plans, and performance standards.
- Explains the technical issues associated with managing a national data archive, the strengths and limitations of existing approaches, and effective solutions to a full range of issues.
- Discusses the relationship between archiving and the protection of human subjects, informed consent, protection from research risks, and Institutional Review Boards (IRB).
- Provides information on the strengths and limitations of different technical assistance strategies that may be utilized on Research Connections regarding topics of research content, data archives, and indexing and metadata systems.
- Provides assurance that, should the occasion arise, all products acquired, developed, and/or maintained during the term of the cooperative agreement will be passed on to OPRE or the subsequent Research Connections grantee.

Collaboration Efforts (0-10 points)

Collaboration efforts with different agencies, organizations, and programs supporting child care and early education (e.g., CCDF, ACF, CCPRC, OCC, and OHS), in consultation with OPRE, will be required in the Research Connections project. Collaboration efforts will be evaluated based on the extent to which an applicant:

- Proposes effective strategies and activities for increasing collaboration and partnership-building at national, statewide, and local levels; supporting researchers and other stakeholders in their efforts to build effective partnerships; and promoting collaboration in a variety of environments, such as colleges and universities, state and local child care and early education agencies, and child care and early education organizations.
- Discusses participation as a member of the CCPRC steering committee and knowledge of supportive roles including preparation of summary documents from conference calls, research forums, or major meetings.
- Describes participation in monthly meetings of the CCTAN and other related activities, including participation in OCC's Annual State Administrator's meeting.
- Identifies possible ways to assist with planning for meetings and briefings, coordinating the work of thematic work groups for cross-cutting research, and preparation of proceedings or other summary documents.
- Discusses strategies for working with OPRE to conduct workshops and training sessions relevant to the child care and early education research and policy communities. This strategy should specifically include plans for the OPRE Annual Child Care Policy Research Consortium meeting, the OCC's annual meeting of State Child Care Administrators, and the Biennial Head Start Research conference.

Innovation (0-10 points)

Considering that information technology system tools and social media are constantly developing, innovation is key to maintaining and enhancing a state-of-the-art and interactive website, such as Research Connections. *Innovation* will be evaluated based on the extent to which an applicant:

- Proposes novel and ground-breaking strategies to achieve each of the proposed goals and objectives in the applicant's outlined plan for the Research connections project.
- Identifies concrete examples of relevant and cutting-edge strategies that could be used to expand research content and datasets, as well as examples of potential partnerships with other data archiving systems, as a means of fostering the mission of ACF.

- Provides cutting-edge strategies for the use of social media tools and partnering with organizational websites interested in child care and early education to foster advancements in dissemination, collaboration, and networking efforts.

Staff Qualifications and Organizational Capacity

Maximum Points: 20

Staff Qualifications (0-10 points)

Staff qualifications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant:

- Commits to an adequate number of staff with the expertise to carry out the project with a high level of accomplishment, on time, and within budget.
- Proposes a project director and key staff with highly relevant *experience*, skills, and knowledge in child care, Head Start, and early education with evidence of sufficient time available to fulfill this role.
- Demonstrates the ability of the proposed staff to fulfill key roles, including their percent effort committed to projects outside of Research Connections.

Organizational Capacity (0-10 points)

Organizational capacity will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant:

- Demonstrates the organizational capabilities required to sufficiently carry out ALL goals and objectives proposed.
- Describes organizations and consultants who may work on the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.
- Provides a detailed management plan, with personnel allocations, tasks and subtasks, products, timelines, and coordination of components which shows how the proposed project goals will be accomplished.
- Provides information on plans for training project staff as well as staff of cooperating organizations and individuals, if needed.
- Demonstrates sufficient resources and appropriate facilities to successfully implement, manage, and further develop Research Connections.
- Demonstrates the capacity to maintain internal records on the two fund sources and their associated activities/costs.
- Includes letters of intention from any subcontractors or primary consultants.

Budget and Budget Justification

Maximum Points: 15

Budget and budget justification will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant:

- Provides a narrative description and sound rationale for the budget information presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A and related budget tables presented in the text. The description and rationale should indicate the proportion of the budget that is allotted to each of the strategies and activities for accomplishing the proposed goals and objectives.
- Demonstrates that costs to operate Research Connections are reasonable, adequate, and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and subtasks, personnel costs/salary, travel, as well as anticipated results and benefits.
- Includes sound fiscal control and accounting procedures to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this announcement on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant or sub-recipient that does not have a DUNS number (www.dbn.com) and an active registration at SAM (www.sam.gov). See *Section III.3. Other*.

Initial ACF Screening

Each application will be screened to determine whether it meets one of the following disqualification criteria as described in *Section III.3. Application Disqualification Factors*:

- Applications that are designated as late according to *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*,
- Applications that are submitted in paper format without prior approval of an exemption from required electronic submission (*Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*), or
- Applications with requests that exceed the award ceiling stated in *Section II. Award Information*.

For those applications that have been disqualified under the initial ACF screening, notice will be provided by postal mail or by email. See *Section IV.3. Explanation of Due Dates* for information on Grants.gov's and ACF's acknowledgment of received applications.

Objective Review and Results

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

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. They are one element in the decision-making process.

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested. ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. ACF will also consider the geographic distribution of federal funds in its award decisions.

ACF may refuse funding for projects with what it regards as unreasonably high start-up costs for facilities or equipment, or for projects with unreasonably high operating costs.

Please refer to *Section IV.2.* of this announcement for information on non-federal reviewers in the review process.

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval that were not funded under the competition because of the lack of available funds may be held over by ACF and reconsidered in a subsequent review cycle if a future competition under the program area is planned. These applications will be held over for a period of up to one year and will be re-competed for funding with all other competing applications in the next available review cycle. For those applications that have been deemed as approved but unfunded, notice will be given of such determination by postal mail.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Announcement of awards and the disposition of applications will be provided to applicants at a later date.

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1. Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Notice of Award (NOA) that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The NOA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via postal mail or email. Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

Project costs that are incurred prior to the receipt of the NoA are at the recipient's risk and may be reimbursed only to the extent that they are considered allowable as approved pre-award costs. Information on allowable pre-award costs and the time period under which they may be incurred is available in *Section IV.5. Funding Restrictions*.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to the uniform administrative requirements and cost principles of 45 CFR Part 74 (Awards And Subawards To Institutions Of Higher Education, Hospitals, Other Nonprofit Organizations, And Commercial Organizations) or 45 CFR Part 92 (Grants And Cooperative Agreements To State, Local, And Tribal Governments). The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is available at <http://www.gpo.gov>.

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

Prohibition Against Profit

Grantees are subject to the limitations set forth in 45 CFR Part 74, Subpart E-Special Provisions for Awards to Commercial Organizations (45 CFR § 74.81_Prohibition against profit), which states that, "... no HHS funds may be paid as profit to any recipient even if the recipient is a commercial organization. Profit is any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs."

Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations

Grantees are also subject to the requirements of 45 CFR § 87.1(c), Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, which says, "Organizations that receive direct financial assistance from the [Health and Human Services] Department under any Department program may not engage in inherently religious activities such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization, as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the Department." Therefore, organizations must take steps to completely separate the presentation of any program with religious content from the presentation of the Federally funded program by time or location *in such a way that it is clear that the two programs are separate and distinct*. If separating the two programs by time but presenting them in the same location, one

program must *completely* end before the other program begins.

A faith-based organization receiving HHS funds retains its independence from federal, state, and local governments, and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs. For example, a faith-based organization may use space in its facilities to provide secular programs or services funded with federal funds without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols. In addition, a faith-based organization that receives federal funds retains its authority over its internal governance, and it may retain religious terms in its organization's name, select its board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in its organization's mission statements and other governing documents in accordance with all program requirements, statutes, and other applicable requirements governing the conduct of HHS-funded activities.

Regulations pertaining to the Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, which includes the prohibition against federal funding of inherently religious activities, "Understanding the Regulations Related to the Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships Initiative" are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/about/regulations/>. Additional information, resources, and tools for faith-based organizations is available through The Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships website at <http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/index.html> and at the [Capacity Building Toolkits for Faith-based and Community Organizations](#).

Award Term and Condition under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to the requirements of Section 106 (g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. § 7104). For the full text of the award term, go to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/award-term-and-condition-for-trafficking-in-persons>. If you are unable to access this link, please contact the Grants Management Contact identified in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* of this announcement to obtain a copy of the term.

Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. §§ 8101-8106) requires that all organizations receiving grants from any federal agency agree to maintain a drug-free workplace. By signing the application, the Authorizing Official agrees that the grantee will provide a drug-free workplace and will comply with the requirement to notify ACF if an employee is convicted of violating a criminal drug statute. Failure to comply with these requirements may be cause for debarment. Government-wide requirements for Drug-Free Workplace for Financial Assistance are found in 2 CFR part 182; HHS implementing regulations are set forth in 2 CFR § 382.400. All recipients of ACF grant funds must comply with the requirements in Subpart B - Requirements for Recipients Other Than Individuals, 2 CFR § 382.225. The rule is available at [Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace](#).

Debarment and Suspension

HHS regulations published in 2 CFR Part 376 implement the governmentwide debarment and suspension system guidance (2 CFR Part 180) for HHS' non-procurement programs and activities. "Non-procurement transactions" include, among other things, grants, cooperative agreements, scholarships, fellowships, and loans. ACF implements the HHS Debarment and Suspension regulations as a term and condition of award. Grantees may decide the method and frequency by which this determination is made and may check the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) located at <https://www.sam.gov/>, although checking the EPLS is not required. More information is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms>.

Pro-Children Act

The Pro-Children Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. §§ 7181 through 7184, imposes restrictions on smoking in facilities where federally funded children's services are provided. HHS grants are subject to these requirements only if they meet the Act's specified coverage. The Act specifies that smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children under the age of 18. In addition, smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility or portion of a facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of federally funded health care, day care, or early childhood development, including Head Start services to children under the age of 18. The statutory prohibition also applies if such facilities are constructed, operated, or maintained with federal funds. The statute does not apply to children's services provided in private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment, or facilities where WIC coupons are redeemed. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in the imposition of a civil monetary penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

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

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Applications funded by federal grant programs are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and are frequently requested under the FOIA. In accordance with the FOIA requirement to proactively disclose frequently requested materials at 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D), and as part of on-going efforts to promote openness in government programs, ACF will post some of the top-ranked applications funded under this FOA in its online FOIA Reading Room at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/e-reading-room>. As required under the FOIA, each of the top-ranked applications will receive appropriate redaction of specific information to protect personal privacy and competitively sensitive commercial information. Applications chosen for posting to the FOIA Reading Room will be placed on the internet website without further notice to the applicants.

Other Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Intangible Property

Grantees are also subject to the requirements of 45 CFR § 74.36(a), Intangible Property which says, "The recipient may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed, or for which ownership was purchased, under an award. The HHS awarding agency reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so." Therefore, the products, hardware and software developed under the Research Connections project will be transferred to the grantee awarded the cooperative agreement under this announcement. Additionally, the grantee awarded the cooperative agreement under this announcement will be expected to transfer any products, hardware and software developed to the next prospective

grantee.

VI.3. Reporting

Grantees under this funding opportunity announcement will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. The frequency of required reporting is listed later in this section. Final reports may be submitted in hard copy to the Grants Management Office Contact listed in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* of this announcement. Instructions on submission of reports electronically will be provided with award documents.

Performance Progress Reports (PPR)

Notice of Award documents will inform grantees of the appropriate performance progress report form or format to use. Grantees should consult their Notice of Award documents to determine the appropriate performance progress report format required under their award. Performance progress reports are due 30 days after the end of the reporting period.

Final program performance reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. For awards that implement the use of the SF-PPR, that form may be found under "Reporting" at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms>.

Federal Financial Reports (FFR)

As of February 1, 2011, HHS began the transition from use of the SF-269, Financial Status Report (Short Form or Long Form) to the use of the SF-425 Federal Financial Report for expenditure reporting. SF-269s will no longer be accepted for expenditure reports due after that date. If an SF-269 is submitted, the ACF will return it and require the recipient to complete the SF-425.

The transition strategy is allowing individual HHS Operating Divisions to select--from a limited number of options--the approach that best fits their programs and business process. This transition does not affect completion or submission of the cash reporting to the HHS Division of Payment Management's Payment Management System (PMS). The primary features of this transition for recipients are that OPDIVs that previously required electronic submission of the SF-269 will receive the SF-425 expenditure reports electronically and, until further notice, OPDIVs that have been receiving expenditure reports in hard copy will continue to do so.

All expenditure reports will be due on one of the standard due dates by which cash reporting is required to be submitted to PMS or at the end of a calendar quarter as determined by the Operating Division. As a result, a recipient that receives awards from more than one OPDIV may be subject to more than one approach, but will not be required to change its current means of submission or be subjected to more than eight standard due dates.

Beginning with budget periods which end from January 1 - March 31, 2011, and for all budget periods thereafter, all affected ACF grantees will be required to submit an SF-425 report as frequently as is required in the terms and conditions of their award using due dates for reports to PMS.

For budget periods ending in the months of:

January 01 through March 31

April 01 through June 30

The FFR (SF-425) is due to ACF on:

April 30

July 30

July 01 through September 30 October 30
October 01 through December 31 January 30

Fillable versions of the SF-425 form in Adobe PDF and MS-Excel formats, along with instructions, are available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms, www.forms.gov, and on at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms>. Further instructions will be provided, as necessary, with award terms and conditions that will address specific reporting periods and due dates on an award-by-award basis.

For planning purposes, ACF reporting periods for awards made under this announcement are as follows:

Program Progress Reports: Semi-Annually
Financial Reports: Semi-Annually

Awards issued as a result of this funding opportunity may be subject to the Transparency Act subaward and executive compensation reporting requirements of 2 CFR Part 170. See ACF's Award Term for Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting Requirement implementing this requirement and additional award applicability information at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/discretionary-competitive-grants>.

SF-428 Tangible Property Report and SF-429 Real Property Status Report

As of April 1, 2012, the Administration for Children and Families has been requiring the use of the SF-428 (Tangible Personal Property Form) as well as the SF-429 (Real Property Status Report).

The **SF-428** is a standard form used by awarding agencies to collect information related to tangible personal property (equipment and supplies) when required by a federal financial assistance award. The form consists of the cover sheet, SF-428, and three attachments to be used as required: Annual Report; Final (Award Closeout) Report and a Disposition Request/Report. A Supplemental Sheet, SF-428S, may be used to provide detailed individual item information.

The **SF-429** is a standard report used by recipients of federal financial assistance to report real property status (Attachment A) or to request agency instructions on real property (Attachments B, C) that has been/will be provided as Government Furnished Property (GFP) or acquired (i.e., purchased or constructed) in whole or in part under a federal financial assistance award (i.e., grant, cooperative agreement, etc.). This includes real property that was improved using federal funds and real property that was donated to a federal project in the form of a match or cost share donation. This report is used for awards that establish a federal Interest on real property.

Beginning with budget periods ending September 30, 2012, and for all budget periods thereafter, all ACF grantees are required to submit (as applicable) an SF-428 and SF-429 report as frequently as required in the terms and conditions of their award(s).

The forms are available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms.

VII. Agency Contacts

Program Office Contact

Christine Fortunato
Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
Division of Child and Family Development
Aerospace Building
370 L'Enfant Plaza Promenade, SW
Washington, DC 20447
Phone: (202) 401-5460
Fax: (202) 205-3598
Email: Christine.Fortunato@acf.hhs.gov

Office of Grants Management Contact

Tim Chappelle
Administration for Children and Families
Research Connections Grant Program
c/o ICF International
9300 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031-6050
Phone: (877) 350-4624
Fax: (703) 934-3740
Email: RCOPRE@icfi.com

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service for assistance at 1-800-877-8339 (TTY - Text Telephone or ASCII - American Standard Code For Information Interchange).

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

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

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

Administration for Children and Families - GRANTS homepage [https:// www.acf.hhs.gov /grants](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants).

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) [https:// www.cfda.gov/](https://www.cfda.gov/).

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [http:// www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov/).

United States Code (U.S.C.) [http:// www.gpoaccess.gov /uscode/](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/) .

All required Standard Forms (SF), assurances, and certifications are available on the ACF Grants-Forms page at [https:// www.acf.hhs.gov /grants -forms](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms).

Grants.gov Forms Repository webpage at [http://www.grants.gov /agencies /](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/)

[aforms_repository_information.jsp](#).

Versions of other Standard Forms (SF) are available on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Grants Management Forms web site at

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms/.

For information regarding accessibility issues, visit the Grants.gov Accessibility Compliance Page at http://www07.grants.gov/aboutgrants/accessibility_compliance.jsp.

Sign up to receive notification of ACF Funding Opportunities at www.Grants.gov

http://www.grants.gov/applicants/email_subscription.jsp.

Application Checklist

Applicants may use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application package.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration..	Referenced in <i>Section III.3. Other</i> in the announcement. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform . To register at SAM, go to http://www.sam.gov .	A DUNS number and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance and SF-P/PSL - Project/Performance Site Location(s)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . Found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms and at the Grants.gov Forms Repository at http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . Found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms . For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> .

	<p>Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional Documents."</p> <p>These forms are required for applications under this FOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that include only non-construction activities must submit the SF-424A and SF-424B, along with the SF-424 and SF-P/PSL. 	
SF-424 Key Contact Form	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. Found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms and at the Grants.gov Forms Repository at http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
Certification Regarding Lobbying	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. Found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms.</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	<p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. Found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms.</p> <p>If applicable, submission of this form is required if any funds have been paid, or will be paid, to any person for influencing, or attempting to influence, an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan.</p>	<p>If applicable, submission of this form is applicable, it is due prior at the time of application. It may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>

<p>Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants</p>	<p>Non-profit private organizations (not including private universities) are encouraged to submit the survey with their applications. Applicants applying electronically, may submit this survey along with the application as part of the appendix or as a separate document. Applicants submitting in paper, please place the completed survey in an envelope labeled "Applicant Survey." Seal the envelope and include it along with the application package.</p> <p>The survey is referenced in <i>Section IV.2</i>. The survey may be found at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms.</p> <p>The survey will not count in the page limitations.</p>	<p>Submission is voluntary. Submission may be made with the application by the application due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i>. Or, it may be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
<p>Certification of Filing and Payment of Federal Taxes</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> of the announcement. The Certification may be found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms.</p>	<p>If applicable to the applicant, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
<p>Letter of Intent</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description</i>.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3</i>.</p>
<p>Table of Contents</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>.</p>	<p>Submission is due as part of the Project Description by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>Project Summary/Abstract</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>. The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>

The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . This is the title for the project narrative that describes the applicant's plan for the project.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i> of the announcement.	Submission of the Project Budget is required on the appropriate Standard Form (424A or 424C) is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Biographical Sketches or Resumes for Key Staff and Job Descriptions for Vacant Positions	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Organizational Charts	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity</i> .	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Third-Party Agreements	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description</i> .	If available, submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3</i> . If not available at the time of application submission, due by the time of award.