



**Administration for Children and Families**

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative

HHS-2014-ACF-ACYF-CO-0798

Application Due Date: 06/09/2014

National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative

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**Department of Health & Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families**

**Program Office:** Administration on Children, Youth and Families - Children's Bureau  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative  
**Announcement Type:** Initial  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** HHS-2014-ACF-ACYF-CO-0798  
**Primary CFDA Number:** 93.652  
**Due Date for Applications:** **06/09/2014**

### Executive Summary

#### *Notices:*

- **In Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 ACF implemented a new application upload requirement. Each applicant applying electronically via [www.grants.gov](http://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.**
- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire funding opportunity announcement (FOA) carefully and observe the application formatting requirements listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. For more information on applying for grants, please visit “How to Apply for a Grant” on the ACF Grants Page at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-to-apply-for-grants>.**

The Children's Bureau (CB) announces the availability of competitive grant funds authorized by the Adoption Opportunities program. The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to establish, by awarding one cooperative agreement, a National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (the Initiative) that will build the capacity of child welfare professionals and mental health practitioners that serve youth moving toward permanency through adoption or guardianship as well as youth who have already moved to permanency in adoptive or guardianship homes. This initiative is intended to improve the well-being outcomes for the children moving to adoption/guardianship as well as providing support and the appropriate therapeutic interventions to assure stable and secure post-permanency experiences for these youth.

The Initiative will build on previous adoption competency models and complement existing initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of child welfare staff and mental health practitioners serving the population of the children/youth with goals of adoption/guardianship as well as those already in adoptive/guardianship homes.

This funding opportunity provides for a 5-year cooperative agreement that will include the following activities:

- Assess existing evidence-based, evidence-informed practice, training, research, literature, resources, and products regarding adoption competency for child welfare professionals and mental health providers, and identify key competencies;
- Select, adopt, and deliver state of the art, evidence-informed curricula in a web-based format for

- both child welfare staff and mental health practitioners;
- Deliver tailored technical assistance on the web-based training models to states, tribes, and territories;
  - Evaluate delivery, utilization, and effectiveness of the web-based model of training; and
  - Provide for a national certification process for Adoption Competent Child Welfare and Mental Health Professionals that can be consistently and universally utilized to denote the completion of the training and competency acquired through the training by all states, tribes, and territories.

Outcomes will include:

- Creation of state of the art, evidence-informed, adoption competent mental health web-based curriculum for child welfare staff and mental health practitioners with quality improvement components for use on a national basis;
- Enhanced adoption competence infused in the provision of mental health interventions targeted to children and youth with goals of adoption/guardianship and those already in adoption/guardianship homes and their families;
- Web-based trainings that states will utilize and integrate into their own training systems; and
- A national certification of competence process that can be utilized by all states, tribes, and territories.

## **I. Program Description**

### **Statutory Authority**

The statutory authority is title II, section 203(b) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. 5113(b)(1)), as most recently amended by CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010.

### **Description**

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### **Ensuring the Well-Being of Vulnerable Children and Families**

CB is committed to facilitating healing and recovery, and promoting the social and emotional well-being of children who have experienced maltreatment, exposure to violence, and/or trauma. This FOA is designed to ensure that effective interventions are in place to build skills and capacities that contribute to the healthy, positive, and productive functioning of children and youth into adulthood.

Quality mental health services are difficult to find for the general population as demonstrated by the efforts of a number of national groups that have sought to improve access, quality, and availability of child and family mental health services for a number of decades now. Qualified adoption-sensitive mental health professionals are even more difficult to find, and families typically visit many providers before finding one that can truly understand and meet the needs related to adoption, i.e., separation and loss and reactive attachment disorder. These families often find themselves in the position of having to teach therapists about the basic issues of adoption such as trust, loss, rejection and divided loyalties.

Though a number of states, counties and private agencies have developed various formats for training professionals that work with all aspects of the adoption triad, there remains to be developed one universally recognized web-based curricula that can be consistently integrated into all state, tribes, territories, or private systems that will raise and assure the competence level of all professionals providing mental health services to children/youth and the families touched by adoption.

##### **Barriers to Successful Adoptions: Behavioral and Mental Health Needs of Children in Foster Care**

Research shows that children in foster care have significantly higher rates of acute and chronic medical problems, developmental delays, educational disorders, and behavioral health problems than other

children of similar backgrounds. [1] Relevant findings include:

- Eighty percent of children in foster care have at least one chronic medical condition, 25 percent have three or more chronic problems, and an estimated 30 to 70 percent of children in foster care have severe emotional problems. [2][3][4]
- Approximately one-third score in the clinical range for behavior problems on the Child Behavior Checklist. [5]
- By the time they are 17, 62 percent of youth in foster care will exhibit both the symptoms of a mental health disorder and the symptoms of trauma.[6]
- Children in foster care are more likely to have a mental health diagnosis than other children. In a study of foster youth between the ages of 14 and 17,[7] 63 percent met the criteria for at least one mental health diagnosis at some point in their lives. The most common diagnoses were Oppositional Defiant Disorder/Conduct Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder/Major Depressive Episode, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

Left unaddressed, these unmet needs are likely to derail normal development, hinder healthy functioning, and impede the achievement of permanency, including successful adoption. This conclusion is supported by a 2007 study on the psychosocial functioning of adopted youth, which found that in assessments of children at 2, 4, and 8 years following adoption, adopted foster youth had significantly more behavioral problems than their non-foster care counterparts.[8]

Since the mid-1980s, specific federal legislation has been enacted in order to ensure that children in the current foster care system have permanent homes. The number of children who are adopted following their involvement in the foster care system has steadily increased in the years since the passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980. Almost two decades later, the enactment of the Adoption of Safe Family Act (ASFA) Public Law 105-90 placed even greater focus on facilitating the placement of children into permanent homes as quickly as possible whenever reunification with biological parents is not possible. Additionally, in 1993, the Adoption Incentive Program provided important incentives to states to increase the number of adoptions by providing incentive awards to states. In the years since ASFA was enacted, an overwhelming majority of all adoptions from the U.S. public child welfare system have met the requirements for special needs adoptions (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2002). The term special needs adoptions generally refers to the adoption of children who are older, belong to a sibling group, or have physical, mental, or emotional problems.

Two studies conducted in 2007 illustrate the complex needs of children and families who go through the adoption process. Conducted by AdoptUSKids under the guidance of Ruth McRoy, PhD, these CB funded projects assess the barriers and successes in special needs adoptions.[9] Children in both studies presented with complex behavioral, emotional, and physical needs. The first study focused on adoptive parents in the study who finalized their adoptions. These parents reported that, at the time of placement, the most challenging issues were children's medical needs (22 percent) and having a history of child abuse and neglect prior to adoption (22 percent). Other hurdles these families mentioned were: ADHD (18 percent), educational needs (16 percent), behavioral problems (14 percent), and prenatal drug and alcohol exposure (14 percent).

The second study examined disrupted adoptions, meaning that parents who had made a permanent commitment later relinquished their children. Contributing factors associated with adoption disruption include relational attachment problems, negative foster care experiences and history, behavior problems, mental health needs, and sparse availability of services. Children in the study exhibited an average of 10 difficult behaviors and 58 percent of the parents described their child as difficult or very difficult to parent. Over half of the sample had some type of attention deficit diagnosis and half had learning disabilities.

In summary, the two most commonly mentioned child challenges in both studies were behavioral and emotional problems. Over three-quarters of the children were characterized by their adoptive parents as

having behavioral problems, while 68 percent of the children were characterized as having emotional problems. An overwhelming majority of study participants reported that they needed additional mental health services to help address the unique needs of these children.

A key barrier in the provision of these mental health services is the absence of a sufficient number of mental health professionals who understand adoption issues and the experiences of adoptive families. As noted in the paper produced through the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, “Keeping the Promise: The critical need for Post-Adoption Services to Enable Children and Families to Succeed,” numerous surveys of counseling professionals have documented a very low percentage that consider their training or experience to have equipped them to treat adoption issues. This lack of training and experience leaves many adoptive families seeking help in a worse situation than when originally seeking help. They experience blame and a general pathologization of the adoption rather than support and direction for appropriate interventions.

State of the art training needs to be developed to consistently meet the needs of youth and families as they are moving to an adoption or guardianship as well as for the many stages and aspects of their post adoption/guardianship experience. This training needs to be made available and accessible to all states, territories and tribes so as to develop the community of mental health providers that can meet the growing demand. This is key to the well-being of children/youth and to their hope for stability in an adoptive or guardianship permanent family.

Appropriate therapeutic interventions from highly skilled child welfare workers and mental health professionals with in-depth knowledge of adoption must be a primary support for families that are developed by adoption or guardianship. The states must have the ability to develop the capacity to meet this need on a consistent and comprehensive basis.

### **Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Results**

Federal monitoring of child welfare systems across the nation have found that state child welfare systems often struggle to provide accessible and effective mental and behavioral health services. The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is a review process that examines states’ achievement of outcomes for children and families related to safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. The CFSR process includes the review of cases involving children who are in foster care as well as children and families who receive services in their homes. The range of programs reviewed includes child protection services, foster care, adoption, family preservation, and independent living services. The CFSRs also examine seven systemic factors that affect the quality of services delivered to children and families and the outcomes they experience. [10]

In 2010, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) completed the second round of CFSRs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Among the findings of both rounds of reviews is a need for enhanced focus on the case planning process, which is grounded in accurate and comprehensive assessments of the strengths and needs of the children and families that state and local child welfare agencies serve. In the CFSR performance indicator that addresses family assessments and service provision by reviewing individual cases, ACF determined that only one state among the initial 52 state reviews performed adequately, and no state did in the second round of reviews.

Reviewers observed that assessments were particularly weak in capturing mental health needs as opposed to physical or educational needs. Further, when needs were identified, there was frequently no evidence that services had been provided to address them.

When reviewing states' systemic ability to provide services to meet the needs of their population, CB also identified a number of barriers. In the 2nd round of reviews, while 32 states received a strength rating pertaining to having in place an adequate array of services, most of those states had trouble applying the array effectively. Only 18 states individualized services sufficiently to meet children’s needs, and only one state was able to adequately ensure that services were consistently accessible to families and children across all jurisdictions.

## **Recent Federal Legislation and Guidance Related to the Social and Emotional Needs of Children in Foster Care**

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-351) amended title IV-B, subpart 1 of the Social Security act to require state and tribal title IV-B agencies to develop a plan for ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services. The plan must describe how it will ensure a coordinated strategy to identify and respond to the health care needs of children in foster care placements, including mental health and dental health needs, and provide for continuity of health care services, which may include establishing a medical home for children who are in foster care.

The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 (Pub. L. 112-34) further amended the law by adding to the requirements for the health care oversight and coordination plan. Among these new requirements, Pub.L. 112-34 requires that the health care oversight and coordination plans outline how health needs identified through screenings will be monitored and treated, including emotional trauma associated with a child's maltreatment and removal from home (section 422(b)(15)(A) of the Act).

Although there are a burgeoning number of evidence-based and evidence-informed mental and behavioral health interventions for children and youth, limited resources have constrained the ability to develop knowledge about how such programs work well within child welfare systems.

### **Working with Other CB Discretionary Grant Projects**

CB currently funds approximately 200 discretionary grants projects in over 40 different program areas. Through their work with a broad spectrum of populations within the child welfare arena, discretionary grantees develop a wealth of knowledge across numerous program areas. The findings from these programs can be useful in informing the field. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize the knowledge being developed by CB discretionary research and demonstration projects and other related Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) activities when developing proposals in response to this FOA. For more information on CB discretionary grant programs, please see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/grants/discretionary-grant>.

## **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**

Note: See *Section IV.2 Application and Submission Information/The Project Description* for application instructions.

The Web-based Training Curriculum developed will be targeted to child welfare professionals working in the adoption/guardianship community as well as to the mental health professionals working with this community. The web-based trainings will provide for a national certification process designating the completion and attainment of competency that can be applied in all venues in which it is delivered. The curricula should be a state of the art model for child welfare staff and mental health practitioners with quality improvement components for use on a national basis developed after robust research and review of evidence-based and evidence-informed practice and other adoption competent mental health training models.

The availability of tailored technical assistance to states, tribes, and territories for the integration of this web-based training into their system will be a critical aspect of this cooperative agreement, and coordination with these systems during the development phases will be essential to the success of the project.

### **Target Population**

The target population for the adoption competent mental health curriculum will be the child welfare professionals and mental health practitioners serving the adoption community both in preparation for adoption/guardianship as well as in post adoption/guardianship. Professionals serving these populations through the child welfare system as well as through private domestic and international adoption

communities should be considered in the development of this curriculum. The grantee will have a defined target population and key partnerships critical to successfully develop, implement, and evaluate the adoption competent mental health curriculum.

### **Collaboration**

The grantee is expected to actively collaborate with CB and other partners to achieve the purposes of this FOA. This FOA requires collaboration with agencies and organizations, with which partnerships are critical to successfully implement the proposed project. The states, tribes, territories, and private organizations that will implement and utilize the web-based trainings will be required partners.

In many cases, strong partnerships with public mental and behavioral health departments and/or community mental health agencies and providers will be necessary. Private service providers serving the adoption community may also be important partners in this FOA.

The grantee is expected to engage with those having expertise with the adoption triad and adoption issues and the particular mental/behavioral health issues identified for this population. Understanding the array of treatment options for the mental/behavioral health needs of this population is essential.

### **Program Strategies and Activities**

It is the goal of CB in funding this Initiative to develop state of the art, web-based curricula for training, and building capacity and competence in the child welfare community to address the mental/behavioral health needs of children/youth that are moving towards, or have already moved to, permanency through adoption/guardianship.

The grantee will research the existing best practices, training materials, resources, literature, publications, and products to develop web-based curricula that can be utilized by all states, tribes, and territories to prepare professionals to serve youth and their families in an adoption-competent manner. The primary purpose of the curricula will be to build the competencies and key skills of these professionals. The developed curricula will be comprised of a series of training sessions that can be easily accessed online and serve the needs of remote participants. The training modules will build upon one another and be informed by theory and best practice in adult education and training, knowledge transfer, and distance learning, as well as the best available research evidence.

The grantee will require interaction with states, tribes, and territories in the provision of tailored technical assistance for the successful integration of the web-based model into their training systems and to provide coaching and consultation as necessary in the utilization of the training. The web-based training modules must be easily accessible and free to users.

The grantee will develop a structure for ongoing support for a national certification process designating the successful completion of the web-based training. Certificates and records of successful completion will be contingent upon demonstrated understanding and application of the training content.

The grantee will also be required to complete the following program activities:

- Have a project director and key project staff that demonstrate relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities needed to effectively institute and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity;
- Have the project fully functioning within 90 days following the notification of the award;
- Travel to Washington D.C. to attend an entrance conference and annual meeting;
- Submit all plans for project activities, including, but not limited to, plans for the design, delivery, and dissemination of distance learning modules and all proposed products and tools, to CB for review and approval prior to development and implementation;
- Submit all completed curricula, modules, products, tools, publications, and other content to CB for review and approval prior to delivery or dissemination to the public;
- Use comprehensive and current software that is accessible to and compatible with the ACF computer network and/or available to ACF staff. All grantee products, publications, materials, and

web content will identify the National Adoption Competent Mental Health Training Initiative as “a service of the Children’s Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services” and include other identifying marks, as directed;

- Submit an original and two copies of the final program and evaluation reports and any program products to CB within 90 days of project end date;
- As appropriate, archive data from the program evaluation with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect within 90 days of the termination of federal funding for the project. The applicant's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and research participants should be made aware that the data from the project will be archived and made available to other researchers after personal identifiers have been removed. Archiving will involve providing individual respondent data in electronic form and the accompanying documentation, including the codebook, the final report, and copies of the research instruments, as appropriate. A manual describing the guidelines of the Archive, *Depositing Data with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect: A Handbook for Investigators*, is available from the Archive directly at the Family Life Development Center, MVR Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 (phone: (607) 255-7799), from the Archive website at: <http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu>, or from the Child Welfare Information Gateway website at: <http://childwelfare.gov>; and
- Include the following notice with all grantee materials, products, publications, news releases, etc.:
  - Funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant # \_\_\_\_\_. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funders, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This information is in the public domain. Readers are encouraged to copy and share it, but please credit the National Adoption Competent Mental Health Training Initiative.

### ***Phase I: Planning and Information Gathering***

During an initial 9 month planning and information gathering process, the grantee will:

- Develop a comprehensive, quintessential definition of an Adoption Competent Mental Health Professional;
- Review existing training formats for professional adoption mental health competence;
- Review, define, and develop state of the art adoption competencies that will serve as the foundation for the training and certification process;
- Coordinate with states, tribes, territories, and pertinent private entities to determine the current level of professional adoption mental health competence;
- Work with states, tribes, and territories to plan for development and inclusion of web-based curricula into their systems; and
- Review, define, and develop state of the art web-based training curricula, including the use of new and innovative technologies that are web- and mobile-based.

### ***Phase II: Development, Implementation, and Evaluation***

During Month 10 through Year 5, the grantee will:

- Develop and pilot test the web-based curricula;
- Make the web-based curricula available to all states, tribes, territories, and pertinent private agencies;
- Provide technical assistance as necessary to each state, tribe, and territory for inclusion in their training programs of the curricula;
- Develop and implement the National Certification process for Adoption Competent Child Welfare and Mental Health Professionals; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the training models in select locations to account for level of

competence attainment, consistency with which training curricula is implemented, and improvement in well-being and stability within the adoption community.

In the first budget period, including Phase I, the maximum federal share of the project is not to exceed \$1,000,000. In subsequent budget periods, including Phase II, the maximum federal share of the project is not to exceed \$2,000,000 per budget period. The project awarded will be for a project period of 60 months.

## **Evaluation**

Note: See *Section IV. Application and Submission Information/The Project Description/Program Performance Evaluation Plan* for application instructions.

The grantee will conduct a rigorous, practical, and feasible program performance evaluation plan that will document and support the achievement of the purposes of this FOA. The program performance evaluation plan will answer key questions about project performance and support the development and refinement of the web-based curriculum described in this FOA. The grantee's program performance evaluation plan must be both efficient and able to provide timely and useful information.

Program performance evaluation plan activities will:

- Be integrated into the project's planning, decision making, and reporting to CB throughout the project period;
- Answer key process and outcome questions related to satisfaction, accessibility, usability, participation, reach, use, and acquisition of competencies and skills;
- Be able to clearly describe and specify the key aspects of a single, web-based replicable, adoption competent mental health curriculum; monitor adherence to the web-based training model during implementation; and assess the training model's ability to effect proximal learning and behavior-related outcomes;
- Calculate the costs of its knowledge management, distance learning, product development, and plan for collecting high-quality data on the development and dissemination of the curricula developed; and
- Include a feasible plan to produce data that can be compared to and contrasted with regional, state, and national level data.

Guided by a well-defined logic model, the grantee will refine an evaluation plan, choose methods, develop instruments, collect data, and perform analyses that will help determine the degree to which key objectives and intended outcomes are achieved.

Outcomes will include:

- Creation of state of the art, evidence-informed adoption competent mental health web-based curriculum for child welfare staff and mental health practitioners with quality improvement components for use on a national basis;
- Enhanced adoption competence infused in the provision of mental health interventions targeted to children and youth with goals of adoption/guardianship, and those already in adoption/guardianship homes and their families;
- Web-based trainings that states will utilize and integrate into their own training systems; and
- A national certification of competence process that can be utilized by all states, tribes, and territories.

Grantees in collaboration with each other, their state and tribal partners, CB, and any applicable national evaluation contractor(s), may produce a comprehensive evaluation report at the conclusion of the project period and present findings to CB and other stakeholders.

Grantees will have a plan for addressing protection of human subjects. General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained using the link in the table under *Section IV.2., Forms, Assurances and Certifications* and in the *Section VIII. Checklist*.

## **Endnotes**

[1] McCarthy, J. (2002). Meeting the Health Care needs of Children in the Foster Care System, Georgetown University Child Development Center. Retrieved from: <http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/products/FCSummary.pdf>

[2] Simms, M.D., and Halfon, N. (1998). "The Health Care Needs of Children in Foster Care: A Research Agenda." *Child Welfare* 73:505-524.

[3] Halfon, N., Mendonca, A., and Berkowitz, G. (1995). Health Status of Children in Foster Care. *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, 149(4):386-392.

[4] Silver, J., DiLorenzo, P., Zukoski, M., Ross, P.E., Amster, B.J., Schlegel, D. (1999). "Starting Young: Improving the Health and Developmental Outcomes of Infants and Toddlers in the Child Welfare System." *Child Welfare* 78:148-165.

[5] The *National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being* (NSCAW) is a longitudinal study required by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 overseen by the Administration on Children and Families. It is a key source of information about the social and emotional well-being of children who have experienced maltreatment, including information on rates of psychotropic medication use.

[6] Griffin, G; McClelland, Holzberg, M; Stolbach, B; Maj, N; & Kisiel, C (2012). Addressing the impact of trauma before diagnosing mental illness in child welfare. *Child Welfare* 90(6).

[7] White, CR; Havalchak, A; Jackson, L; OBrien, K; & Pecora, PJ. (2007). Mental Health, Ethnicity, Sexuality, and Spirituality among Youth in Foster Care: Findings from The Casey Field Office Mental Health Study. Casey Family Programs.

[8] Simmel, C.; et al. (2007). Adopted youths psychosocial functioning: A longitudinal perspective. *Child and Family Social Work*. 12(4):336. BPI: Behavior Problems Index

[9] Report to Congress on Barriers & Success Factors in Adoptions from Foster Care: Perspectives of Families and Staff. (2007). Retrieved from: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/report-congress-barriers-success>

[10] More information on the CFSRs is available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/monitoring>

## II. Award Information

|                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Funding Instrument Type:        | Cooperative Agreement         |
| Estimated Total Funding:        | \$1,000,000                   |
| Expected Number of Awards:      | 1                             |
| Award Ceiling:                  | \$1,000,000 Per Budget Period |
| Award Floor:                    | \$500,000 Per Budget Period   |
| Average Projected Award Amount: | \$1,000,000 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. Other, 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 for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Federal Government.

In the first budget period, the maximum federal share of each project is not to exceed \$1,000,000. In subsequent budget periods, the maximum federal share of the project is not to exceed \$2,000,000 per budget period. The project awarded will be for a project period of 60 months.

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

A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding federal assistance in which substantial federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of CB and the awardee prior to the award. CB anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. The involvement and collaboration includes:

- CB review and approval of planning stages of the activities before implementation phases may begin;
- CB and recipient joint collaboration in the performance of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, information technology enhancements, T/TA, publications or products, and evaluation);
- Close monitoring by CB of the requirements stated in this FOA that limit the awardee's discretion with respect to scope of services offered; and
- Close monitoring by CB during performance which may, in order to ensure compliance with the intent of this funding, exceed those federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities.

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**

Eligible applicants are public and private agencies and organizations.

Collaborative efforts are strongly encouraged, but applicants must identify a primary applicant responsible for administering the grant. If the primary applicant responsible for administering the grant funded under this FOA is not the public child welfare agency, the applicant must provide documentation of a strong partnership with the state and local child welfare agencies in order to fulfill the implementation of the curricula into the child welfare system.

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

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity announcement. Faith-based organizations are encouraged to review the ACF Policy on Grants to Faith-Based Organizations at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/acf-policy-on-grants-to-faith-based-organizations>.

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 (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) on the System for Award Management (SAM.gov, [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)).

Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant should be made, registration in the CCR at SAM must be active 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 (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

### Award Ceiling Disqualification

Applications that request an award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period or per project period as stated in *Section II. 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.

### Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). **Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Applicants that do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the Internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "Request an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission" in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*.

### Application Deadlines

**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](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov), will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to [www.Grants.gov](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov) at any time during the open application period, and prior to the due date and time, which fail the [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) validation check, will not be received at, or acknowledged by, ACF.

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

**The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 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.**

### Notification of Application Disqualification

Applications that are disqualified under these criteria are considered to be "non-responsive" and are excluded from the competitive review process. Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this funding opportunity announcement.

## IV. Application and Submission Information

### IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

CB Operations Center  
c/o LCG, Inc.  
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900  
Arlington, VA 22209

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

The electronic application submission package is available in the FOA's listing at [www.Grants.gov](http://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> and on the Grants.gov Forms page under "424 Family." 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](http://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 website at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>.

#### **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**

**In FY 2013 ACF implemented a new application upload requirement. Each applicant applying electronically via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.**

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

##### **Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)**

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

AOR authorization is part of the registration process at [www.Grants.gov](http://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 Awards 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.

### **Accepted Font Style**

Applications must be in Times New Roman (TNR), 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be TNR 10-point font.

### **Page Limitations**

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

**All applications must be double-spaced 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 last extra pages removed and the removed pages will not be reviewed.

### **Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements**

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced: the one-page Project Summary/Abstract, required Assurances and Certifications, required SFs, required OMB-approved forms, resumes, logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, third-party agreements, letters of support, footnotes, tables, the line-item budget and/or the budget justification.

### **Adherence to FOA Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements**

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

In instances where formatting and font requirements are not adhered to, ACF uses a formula to determine the actual number of pages to be removed. The formula counts the number of characters an applicant uses when following the instructions and using 12-point TNR and 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.

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

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

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

### **Copies Required**

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

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

### **Signatures**

Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov).

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

### **Accepted Application Format**

With the exception of the required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, all application materials must be formatted so that they are 8 ½" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins all around.

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

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

### **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](http://www.Grants.gov). **ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.**

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

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

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

### **Adherence to the Two-File Requirement**

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

**Please do not attach additional documents to the SF-424 at Question 14 and/or after Question 15. Instead of providing a separate response to Question 14, all applicants are required to submit the SF for Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL). In the SF-P/PSL, applicants may cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites. Documents submitted as attachments to the SF-424 will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed.**

### **Application Upload Requirements**

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

limitations, are listed 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 "Applicants" at the top menu bar and selecting "Applicant Resources" from the drop-down list. Go to the "Technical Support & Self-Help" section and click on "Grants.gov Compatible Software." A link to "PDF Conversion Software" is available in the left-hand menu box. Free PDF software, available on this page, will allow users to convert and merge their PDF documents. As an example, ACF is providing written instructions for 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). 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.

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or with SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants> under "Grants Related Information."

### **Required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms**

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

### **Naming Application Submission Files**

**Observe the file naming conventions required by [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov).** Applicants should name their application files so that the content is easily identified by ACF.

### **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.

#### **Format Requirements for Paper Applications**

All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single 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.**

#### **Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications**

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

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

##### **Application Package Components**

The Project Description file must include these items in this order:

1. Table of Contents
2. Abstract
3. Objectives and Need for Assistance
4. Approach
5. Evaluation
6. Organizational Capacity
7. Logic Model
8. Line Item Budget and Budget Justification

The Appendices file must include these items in this order:

1. Certifications and Assurances
2. Proof of Legal Status (if applicable)
3. Third-party agreements
4. Staff and Position Data (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
5. Indirect Cost Rate Letter (if applicable)

Total page limit, inclusive of both files, is 125 pages.

Do not include Standard Forms or OMB-approved forms as part of the Project Description file or the Appendices file. For electronic applicants, Standard Forms are submitted separately at Grants.gov. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms are not included in the page limitations.

**ORGANIZING THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND APPENDICES:** The applicant must address

all requirements listed in *Section IV.2* in their project description. Reviewers will use the specific evaluation criteria in *Section V.1 Application Review Information* of this FOA to review and evaluate each application. Therefore, applicants must organize their Project Description and Appendices in the sequence used in *Section V.1* so that reviewers can readily find information that directly addresses each of the specific review criteria.

### 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 will be available in the application kit posted for this funding opportunity at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

Other versions of required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available at ACF Funding Opportunities Forms at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms> and at Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html> by using the link to "SF-424 Family," unless specified otherwise.

| Forms / Assurances / Certifications   | Submission Requirement   | Notes / Description   |
|---|--|---|
| Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)   | Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. | Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.   |
| SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance   | Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.   | Required for all applications.  |
| SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)  | Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.   | Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants may cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites. As a Standard Form (SF), this form is not included in the application's page limitation.                      |
| 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>SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities</p>           | <p>If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>  | <p>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.</p>   |
| <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 518 of the “Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2014,” (Pub.L. 113-76, Division H).</p> <p>This requirement remains in effect: Sec. 518.</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.</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 2014, or as a multiyear project to be fully funded in FY 2014, the applicant will be required to submit a certification complying with the requirements, prior to receiving an award.         |
| DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration. | <p>A DUNS number is required of all applicants.</p> <p>To obtain a DUNS number, go to <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a>.</p> <p>Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p> <p>SAM registration is available at <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a>.</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 DUNS number at <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a> and registration at SAM.gov at <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a>.</p> |

### 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.

### **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.

### **Objectives And Need For Assistance**

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance including the nature and scope of the problem must be demonstrated, and the principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly and concisely stated; supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned interests other than the applicant, may be included. Any relevant data based on planning studies should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as well as data describing the needs of the target population and the proposed service area as needed. When appropriate, a literature review should be used to support the objectives and needs described in this section.

### **Outcomes Expected**

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

### **Approach**

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

Applicants must describe a plan for how they will meet the Project Strategies and Activities as stated in *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS*.

### **Project Timeline and Milestones**

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function, or activity, in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. Data may be organized and presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. For example, each project task could be assigned to a row in the first column of a grid. Then, a unit of time could be assigned to each subsequent column, beginning with the first unit (i.e., week, month, quarter) of the project and ending with the last. Shading, arrows, or other markings could be used across the applicable grid boxes or cells, representing units of time, to indicate the approximate duration and/or frequency of each task and its start and end dates within the project period.

When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

### **Program Performance Evaluation Plan**

Applicants must describe the plan for the program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement. The program performance evaluation should monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project. Include descriptions of the inputs (e.g., organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, budget, and other resources), key processes, and expected outcomes of the funded activities. The plan must be supported by a logic model and must explain how the inputs, processes and outcomes will be measured, and how the resulting information will be used to inform improvement of funded activities.

Applicants must describe the systems and processes that will support the organization's performance management requirements through effective tracking of performance outcomes, including a description of how the organization will collect and manage data (e.g. assigned skilled staff, data management software) in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles for implementing the program performance evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed.

Applicants must describe a plan for how they will meet the Evaluation project requirements as stated in *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Evaluation.*

Applicants must propose a rigorous program performance evaluation plan that will determine the effectiveness of the adoption competent mental health web-based curriculum for child welfare professionals and mental health practitioners. The Program Performance Evaluation Plan will measure the extent to which the web-based curriculum has enhanced adoption competence and infused it into practice in the nations' child welfare systems as demonstrated by improved competence and increased capacity to deliver adoption competent mental health services to children/youth and their adoptive/guardianship families.

The applicant must provide a narrative addressing how the conduct of the project and its results will be evaluated. In addressing the evaluation of results, the applicant must state what measures will be used to determine the extent to which stated objectives were met and the extent to which the accomplishment of objectives can be attributed to the project. The applicant must describe the criteria to be used to evaluate results, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine if the needs identified and discussed are being met and if results and benefits are being achieved. With respect to the conduct of the project, the applicant must define the procedures to be employed to determine whether the project is being conducted in a manner consistent with the work plan presented, and discuss the impact of the project's various activities that address the project's effectiveness.

The applicant will set clear and measurable objectives and outcomes for its knowledge management, distance learning, and product dissemination activities.

### **Geographic Location**

Describe the precise location of the project and boundaries of the area to be served by the proposed project.

### **Legal Status of Applicant Entity**

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

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

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

When applying electronically, it is strongly suggested that the applicant attach proof of non-profit status with the electronic application.

### **Additional Eligibility Documentation**

Applicants must provide the additional, required documentation, or required credentials, to support eligibility for an award, as described in *Section III. Eligibility Information* of this announcement:

If the primary applicant responsible for administering the grant funded under this FOA is not the public child welfare agency, the applicant must provide documentation of a strong partnership with the state and local child welfare agencies in order to fulfill the implementation of the curricula into the child welfare system.

### **Logic Model**

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their project. A logic model is a tool that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the linkages among program elements. While there are many versions of the logic model, they generally summarize the logical connections among the needs that are the focus of the project, project goals and objectives, the target population, project inputs (resources), the proposed activities/processes/outputs directed toward the target population, the expected short- and long-term outcomes the initiative is designed to achieve, and the evaluation plan for measuring the extent to which proposed processes and outcomes actually occur.

### **Project Sustainability Plan**

Applicants must propose a plan for project sustainability after the period of federal funding ends. Grantees are expected to sustain key elements of their grant projects, e.g., strategies or services and interventions, which have been effective in improving practices and those that have led to improved outcomes for children and families.

Describe the approach to project sustainment that will be most effective and feasible. Describe the key individuals and/or organizations whose support will be required in order to sustain program activities. Describe the types of alternative support that will be required to sustain the planned program. If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how their cooperation and/or collaboration will be maintained after the end of federal funding.

### **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);
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures;
- 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.

### **Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information**

If any confidential or sensitive information will be collected during the course of the project, whether from staff (e.g., background investigations) or project participants and/or project beneficiaries, provide a description of the methods that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and safeguarded. Also provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period.

## Dissemination Plan

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

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

## 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.

## 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 entered 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.

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, 2014 (Pub.L. 113-76), enacted January 17, 2014, 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 \$181,500 (<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2014/EX.pdf>). 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 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 the first 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.

In the first budget period, including Phase I, the maximum federal share of the project is not to exceed \$1,000,000. In subsequent budget periods, including Phase II, the maximum federal share of the project is not to exceed \$2,000,000 per budget period. The project awarded will be for a project period of 60 months. The initial cooperative agreement award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the project, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Federal Government.

Applicants must designate a specific percentage of their budget for evaluation and demonstrate that there are sufficient funds in their project budgets each year to support evaluation, data collection and dissemination activities, and related staff time.

Applicants must make it clear that grant funds will not be used primarily for child welfare service delivery.

Applicants must include funds for all required items for the project, including travel to attend the entrance conference and annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

## **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, as amended by 2 CFR Part 200.88, and currently set at \$150,000. 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**

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: consultant costs, local travel; insurance; food (when allowable); medical and dental costs (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.

### **Program Income**

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

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

### **Paperwork Reduction Disclaimer**

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description and Budget/Budget Justification is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 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](http://www.Grants.gov)

- Additional guidance on the submission of electronic applications can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.
- If applicants encounter any technical difficulties in using [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov), contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at [support@grants.gov](mailto: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](http://www.Grants.gov)

After an application has been successfully submitted to [www.Grants.gov](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov) for more information.

Each time an application is submitted, or resubmitted, via [www.Grants.gov](http://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.

**NOTE:** The Grants.gov 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.

Similarly, if an applicant resubmits their application to Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, and the resubmitted application does not pass the validation check, it will not be transmitted to ACF and will be excluded from the review.

## Systems Issues

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or with SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants> under "Grants Related Information."

## 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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 Applications: **06/09/2014**

#### **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](http://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](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov) are available at: [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply\\_for\\_grants.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp).

Applications submitted to [www.Grants.gov](http://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](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov)**

Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to [www.Grants.gov](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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. Also see *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*.

##### **Submission By Mail**

CB Operations Center  
c/o LCG, Inc.  
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900  
Arlington, VA 22209

##### **Hand Delivery**

CB Operations Center  
c/o LCG, Inc.  
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900  
Arlington, VA 22209

##### **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. Submission 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.

## **OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE**

**Maximum Points: 20**

1. The applicant demonstrates an understanding of issues relevant to this FOA (0-5 points).
  - The applicant demonstrates a clear linkage between project activities and the project goals and outcomes.
  - The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of how the web-based training curricula would benefit and be infused with each state's child welfare training system.
2. The applicant presents a logical sequence of goals and objectives that fully encompass the development and implementation of the project (0-15 points).
  - The applicant includes a clear statement of the goals (i.e., the intended end products of an effective project) and objectives (i.e., measurable steps for reaching these goals) of the proposed project. The proposed goals and objectives clearly address each of the items listed in the Project Requirements section of this FOA (see *Section I. Funding Opportunity Description Project Requirements* and *Section IV.2 The Project Description*).
  - The applicant clearly defines the target population for the curricula to be developed. In addition, the applicant clearly defines the children/youth and the adoptive/guardianship families served by the target population. The applicant clearly demonstrates a thorough understanding of the mental and behavioral health and social and emotional service needs of this population and community as they relate to successful adoption outcomes.
  - The nature and scope of the applicant's stated goals and objectives are responsive to the purposes of this FOA.

## **APPROACH**

**Maximum Points: 40**

1. The applicant proposes a sound technical approach (0-20 points).
  - The applicant provides a reasonable timeline for implementing the proposed project, including major milestones and target dates related to project implementation. The applicant clearly describes the factors that could speed or hinder project implementation and convincingly explains how these factors would be managed.
  - The applicant provides a thorough overview of the supporting research and an accurate assessment of the strength of the research evidence base of the adoption competent mental health curricula.

- The applicant provides a convincing preliminary plan for distance learning that will result in the creation of training modules that will be easily accessible and meet the needs of the target users. The applicant specifies its target participants, the number of proposed modules, training duration, content and design, module format, learning objectives, and the competencies and skills that will be targeted by training. The applicant provides sound justification for its proposed activities, citing theory, best practices, and research evidence base for its training methods. The applicant gives sufficient detail about how modules will be made available online via the web.
  - The applicant provides a reasonable preliminary plan describing how, when, to whom, and under what conditions tailored T/TA from the Adoption Competent Mental Health Training Initiative might be provided. The applicant describes the type and quantity of T/TA that may be expected to be delivered during the project period.
  - The applicant presents a sensible, coherent, and strategic dissemination plan. The applicant sets measurable goals for participation, reach, and use, and the plan seems likely to achieve them.
  - The applicant offers sound plans for utilizing innovative technologies in its T/TA, product development, and dissemination activities when practical and feasible. The applicant identifies any technology services to be used and justifies why these are the most appropriate to meet project goals. The applicant's proposal is likely to increase access to target participants and consumers and achieve project objectives.
  - The applicant provides a detailed plan for the development, delivery, and infusion of the curricula into child welfare training systems, making it available to all states, tribes, and territories. The applicant describes how they will ensure successful implementation of the proposed approach with high fidelity, and there is a sound plan for continuing the use of the curricula beyond the period of federal funding.
2. The applicant's proposal is responsive to the purposes and requirements of this FOA (0-15 points).
- The proposed approach clearly includes a detailed description of the activities the program proposes to undertake during both the planning and implementation periods.
  - The proposed project provides for a strong partnership between knowledgeable, adoption competent behavioral and mental health entities and state child welfare systems.
  - The applicant proposes a feasible plan to enhance child welfare agency capacity to develop adoption competence among child welfare staff and mental health providers, thus improving the processes, practices, functional outcomes, and adoption/guardianship stability for the youth and families served by the target population.
  - The state, county, or tribal child welfare agencies are considered key partners in the implementation of the curricula, and plans for their involvement are clearly delineated.
  - The proposed project would be culturally responsive to the target population.
3. The applicant proposes a project that would inform the field (0-5 points).
- The proposed curricula developed would serve as a model of adoption competent mental health training.
  - There is a clear and sound plan for the creation of a National Competency in Adoption Mental Health Practice Certification process.

## **EVALUATION**

**Maximum Points: 20**

1. The applicant proposes a strong evaluation plan (0-8 points).
- A well-defined logic model guides the proposed project. The logic model demonstrates strong links between proposed inputs and activities and intended short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. This includes a clear articulation of the connection between the needs of the target population and the curricula to be developed.
  - The plan describes a clear and convincing plan for evaluating the project. The methods of

evaluation are clearly feasible, comprehensive, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and context of the project. The evaluation plan is strongly guided by the project's logic model.

- The project's evaluation plan can be expected to answer the proposed evaluation questions with sufficient rigor to provide credible, meaningful, and timely feedback to the project and to CB to report progress, inform decision making, and facilitate adjustments, if necessary. The applicant proposes a sound plan that will measure process and proximal outcomes, including the achievement of project objectives, satisfaction, accessibility, usability, participation, reach, use, and acquisition of competencies and skills.
- The plan would provide detailed answers to relevant evaluation questions and would rigorously measure achievement of project objectives, target group acquisition of competencies, the efficiency of the implementation processes, and the impact of the curricula on outcomes for children/youth and their families affected by adoption and guardianship.
- The plan clearly outlines an appropriate sampling plan that ensures sample sizes sufficient to detect significant effects. The target sample represents the intended recipients of the services to the greatest extent possible given the project's structure and resources.
- The plan clearly includes an appropriate control or comparison group for determining the influence of the project activities on outcomes. If a comparison group is not proposed, the applicant provides a very reasonable explanation for not using a comparison group and offers another, rigorous approach to evaluating the influence of the program on outcomes. This comparison group and the program/treatment group are clearly assigned at random or matched on key characteristics. If not assigned at random or matched on key characteristics, the applicant provides a very reasonable explanation of how it will identify and address any pre-existing differences between the comparison group and the program/treatment group.

2. The applicant proposes a strong plan for data collection, management, analysis, and reporting (0-7 points).

- The applicant describes a sound plan for collecting high-quality data on the development and dissemination of the curricula developed. The methods of evaluation include the use of strong measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the curricula as identified in the project logic model. The evaluation includes measures of outcomes, in addition to measures of inputs and outputs. The measures are objective and have strong reliability, validity, and internal consistency. There is a sound plan for securing informed consent and implementing an IRB review.
- The proposed evaluation examines the effectiveness of the curricula developed and the process of implementation and utilization within state child welfare systems.
- The applicant proposes a feasible plan to produce data that can be compared to and contrasted with regional, state, and national level data. The applicant proposes a sound plan for collecting, managing, and analyzing data. The proposed evaluation plan would rigorously measure the effects of the proposed curricula on the adoption competencies gained by the target groups.
- The applicant provides an appropriate, feasible, and realistic plan for using evaluation findings to produce ongoing documentation of project activities and results. The evaluation plan includes performance feedback and periodic assessment of program progress that can be used to modify the program, as necessary, and serve as a basis for program adjustments.
- The applicant clearly describes a sound plan for conducting a cost evaluation of the proposed program, lists the factors that would be considered in this evaluation, and describes the plan for comparing the program to other similar programs with respect to these factors.

3. The applicant demonstrates capacity to conduct a rigorous evaluation (0-5 points).

- The applicant either demonstrates that the applicant has the in-house capacity to conduct an objective and rigorous evaluation of the project or presents a sound plan for contracting with a third-party evaluator. The proposed evaluator has extensive experience with research and/or evaluation, clearly understands the population of interest, and demonstrates the necessary

independence from the project to assure objectivity.

- The applicant provides a convincing rationale justifying the portion of their budget set aside for evaluation.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

**Maximum Points: 15**

- These organizations collectively have extensive relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of similar programs. Each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) clearly possesses the organizational capability to fulfill its assigned roles and functions effectively.
- The role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors, and/or partners, are clearly defined (e.g., job description; Full Time Equivalents) and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project.
- The proposed project director and key project staff demonstrate the extensive relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities (e.g., resume) needed to effectively institute and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity. Key project staff or consultants demonstrate sufficient interdisciplinary knowledge, experience, and expertise. Principal areas of expertise include adult education and training; knowledge management and transfer; public child welfare and adoption; and mental health. The proposed project director and key project staff must possess the ability to assess needs; organize information; design high-quality curricula and products; deliver distance and group-based learning opportunities; provide tailored consultation; and communicate and disseminate information.
- The applicant clearly demonstrates the capacity to develop the adoption competent mental health curriculum that can be integrated into all state child welfare systems for the intended target population.
- There is documentation of a strong partnership with the state and local child welfare agencies on the part of the applicant so as to fulfill the implementation of the curricula into the state systems.
- There is a sound management plan for achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality. The plan clearly defines the role and responsibilities of the lead agency. The plan clearly describes the effective management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants (if applicable).

## **BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION**

**Maximum Points: 5**

### 1. Budget line-items and narrative (0-4 points).

Note: In the first budget period, the maximum federal share of the project is not to exceed \$1,000,000. In subsequent budget periods, the maximum federal share of the project is not to exceed \$2,000,000 per budget period. The project awarded will be for a project period of 60 months. The initial cooperative agreement award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the project, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the federal government.

- The applicant provides a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for the first year of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived.
- The applicant provides a line-item budget for each year of the project.
- The costs of the project are reasonable and program-related and are commensurate with the types and range of activities and services to be conducted, the number of participants to be served, and

the expected goals and objectives.

- The applicant includes funds for all required items for the project budget, including travel to attend the entrance conference and annual meeting in Washington, D.C.
- The budget includes a specific percentage for evaluation and the applicant demonstrates that there are sufficient funds in their project budgets each year to support evaluation and data collection activities.

2. The applicant's fiscal controls and accounting procedures would ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of funds received under this FOA (0-1 points).

## **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](http://www.dbn.com)) and an active registration at SAM ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)). See *Section III.3. Other*.

### **Initial ACF Screening**

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

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

### **Objective Review and Results**

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this 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. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award 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**

Applications will be reviewed during the summer 2014. Funded projects will have a start date no later than September 30, 2014.

## **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 <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/resource/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 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2001-title45-vol1/content-detail.html>.

## **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. Such applications are frequently requested under the FOIA, consistent with the FOIA's requirement to proactively disclose frequently requested materials at 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D). Each released application will receive appropriate redaction of specific information to protect personal privacy and competitively sensitive commercial information. Information on filing a FOIA request is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/submit-a-foia-request>.

## **Other Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Grantees under this funding opportunity announcement acknowledge that CB reserves the right to secure and distribute grantee products and materials, including copies of journal articles written by grantees about their grant projects.

Grantees under this funding opportunity announcement must transfer all curricula, online training modules, products, tools and other materials developed to CB or its designee within 90 days of the project end date.

### **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.

| <b>For budget periods ending in the months of:</b> | <b>The FFR (SF-425) is due to ACF on:</b> |
|--|---|
| January 01 through March 31                        | April 30                                  |

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| April 01 through June 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](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms) and 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

### **Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Subaward and Executive Compensation**

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>.

### **Tangible Property Report (SF-428)**

As of April 1, 2012, the Administration for Children and Families began requiring the use of the Tangible Personal Property Form (SF-428).

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 form is available under "Reporting" at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms> and at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_forms](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms).

### **Real Property Status Report (SF-429)**

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

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.

The form is available under "Reporting" at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms> and at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_forms](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms).

## VII. Agency Contacts

### Program Office Contact

June Dorn  
Children's Bureau  
CB Operations Center  
c/o LCG, Inc.  
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Phone: (888) 203-6161  
Email: [CB@grantreview.org](mailto:CB@grantreview.org)

### Office of Grants Management Contact

Robin Bunch  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Grants Management, Division of Discretionary Grants  
CB Operations Center  
c/o LCG., Inc.  
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Phone: (888) 203-6161  
Email: [CB@grantreview.org](mailto:CB@grantreview.org)

### 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) [http:// www.hhs.gov/](http://www.hhs.gov/).

HHS Grants Forecast <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/hhsgrantsforecast/index.cfm>.

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

ACF Grants Homepage [https:// www.acf.hhs.gov/grants](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants).

ACF Funding Opportunities <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/>.

ACF "How to Apply for a Grant" <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-to-apply-for-grants>.

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

For submission of a paper format application, all required Standard Forms (SF), assurances, and certifications are available on the ACF Grants-Forms page at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms>.

Standard grant forms are available at the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Forms Repository webpage at [http:// www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html](http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html). See "SF- 424 Family."

For information regarding accessibility issues, visit the Grants.gov Accessibility Compliance Page at <http://www07.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/accessibility-compliance.html>.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>. See link under "Featured Collections."

The *Federal Register* <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>. See link under "Featured Collections."

United States Code (U.S.C.) <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>. See link under "Featured Collections."

## Application Checklist

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

| What to Submit  | Where Found  | When to Submit   |
|---|--|--|
| Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form) | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> .<br><br>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov page under the "Application Package" tab in the section entitled, "Mandatory."<br><br>Available at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http:// www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> and at <a href="https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a> by using the link to "SF-424 Family." | Submission is due with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. |

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| <p>SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance</p> | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> and at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a> by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</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> <p><b>Do not attach required application elements or additional pages to the SF-424 at Questions 14 or 15! See Section IV.2. Formatting ACF Applications.</b></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>   |
| <p>Proof of Non-Profit Status</p>                  | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity.</i></p>  | <p>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.</p>     |
| <p>Project Sustainability Plan</p>                 | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></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>   |

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| <p>The Project Budget and Budget Justification</p>                  | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i> of the announcement.</p>   | <p>Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A or SF-424C. It must be submitted with the application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p> |
| <p>Third-Party Agreements (also, MOUs and Consortia Agreements)</p> | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description</i>.</p>   | <p>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.</p>                   |
| <p>Logic Model</p>  | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>.</p>   | <p>Submission is due with the application package by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>  |
| <p>The Project Description</p>                                      | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>.</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>   |
| <p>Table of Contents</p>  | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>.</p>   | <p>Submit with the application by the due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>   |
| <p>SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)</p>           | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.<br/><br/>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application</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>   |

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|  | <p>Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> and at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a></p> <p>by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>  |   |
| <p>DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.</p> | <p>Referenced in <i>Section III.3. Other</i> in the announcement.</p> <p>To obtain a DUNS number, go to <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a>.</p> <p>To register at SAM, go to <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a>.</p>  | <p>A DUNS number and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants.</p> <p>Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p> |
| <p>SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities</p>  | <p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional."</p> <p>The form is also available at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> and at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a> by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</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</p> | <p>If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p> |

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|   | with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan.   |   |
| Certification of Filing and Payment of Federal Taxes  | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> of the announcement.</p> <p>The Certification may be found at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http:// www.acf.hhs.gov/ grants -forms</a>.</p>   | If applicable to the applicant, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.   |
| <p>SF-424A - Budget Information - Non- Construction Programs and</p> <p>SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs</p> | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov /grants -forms</a> and at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/ web/ grant s/ forms.html</a> by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p> <p>These forms are <b>required</b> for applications under this FOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects that include only non-construction activities must submit the SF-424A and SF-424B, along with the SF-424 and SF-P/PSL.</li> </ul> | 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> . |