



Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Foster/Adoptive Parent Preparation, Training and Development Initiative

HHS-2016-ACF-ACYF-CO-1122

Application Due Date: 04/29/2016

Foster/Adoptive Parent Preparation, Training and Development 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: Foster/Adoptive Parent Preparation, Training and Development Initiative

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: HHS-2016-ACF-ACYF-CO-1122

Primary CFDA Number: 93.652

Due Date for Applications: 04/29/2016

Executive Summary

Notices:

- **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/howto>.**

The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to award one cooperative agreement to develop a state-of-the-art foster/adoptive parent training program to include intensive preparation and development components that reflect the capacities required of successful foster/adoptive parents. This is intended to be a product that could be used by all states, tribes, and territories and consistently applied wherever implemented. Development of this program would include research on the common characteristics of individuals and their foster/adoptive families that have succeeded in terms of well-being and stability. Common characteristics of families that are more likely to foster and/or adopt harder to place children/youth and are successful and remain committed to the relationship will be identified and integrated into the program.

The training program would be inclusive of development, training, and capacity needs of individuals/families that are interested in becoming foster parents, as well as those who are interested in fostering with the intention to eventually adopt, therefore many concepts would be in common for foster and adoptive parents. There would be particular focus for foster parents on working on reunification efforts with birth parents. For adoption parents there would be particular focus on the common adoption issues pertinent to all types of adoption, i.e., child welfare private domestic adoption, and international adoption.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

The legislative authority is the Adoption Opportunities Program, Section 203(b) (42 USC §5113(b)(4)) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption (CAPTA) Reform Act of 1978, as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010 (Public Law (Pub. L.) 111-320, §301(b)).

Description

BACKGROUND

The Children's Bureau (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.

Placement stability and permanency is of the utmost importance to assuring the well-being of these children. Foster care and adoptive placements are most likely to succeed when the resource family has been properly educated about the background and needs of the child placed in their care; has learned appropriate intervention strategies for the mental health, medical, emotional and behavioral challenges of the child; and fully commits to embracing these challenges. Preparation services benefit the adoptive placement by strengthening the caregivers understanding of the unique needs of the child and developing their own capacities in relation to the child's needs and is able to nurture the relational permanency needed.

Much has been learned in the past decade regarding the impact of maltreatment and the long term impact of separation and loss experienced by children removed from or surrendered by their birth parents. The promise of a successful placement for these children and stability in these homes is strongly dependent upon the preparation, education and development of these foster and adoptive parents. Particularly, post adoption stability and well-being of the child/youth is directly linked to the ability of the adoptive parents' capacity to understand and meet their needs and provide the appropriate supports and interventions.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The training curriculum developed will target to prospective foster and adoptive parents interested in becoming parents for children placed through the child welfare system and those interested in parenting through private domestic adoption and/or international adoption.

The curriculum should be a state-of-the-art model developed after robust research and review of evidence-based and evidence-informed practice and other foster and adoptive parent training models. Consideration of the process of training foster and adoptive parents as a continuum of development and capacity building should be integrated into the curriculum model. Potential resource families typically evolve their interest and their abilities along this continuum.

The preparation and development of resource families has certain common core principles that will apply to those seeking to parent children from the child welfare system or those from private and/or internationally focused agencies. Specialty areas of the curriculum will encompass the particular development needs for relative resource families as well as the particular needs and issues related to international adoption.

The successful training curriculum will provide an intensive self-assessment process for the prospective parents as they examine their ability and capacity to parent and will also equip them to think ahead to the issues/needs of a child throughout the course of their life. It will include a thorough review of evidence-based interventions with various behaviors and will focus on skill building in accessing resources for the support and services that may be needed throughout their life together as a family. Building and developing the capacity of foster and adoptive families to meet all of the current needs and issues that are relevant to the children and youth needing foster and adoptive care is central to this initiative. Equipping them to continue to develop as parents as the needs of their children change over the years is essential as is their capacity to access the appropriate supports and services that will continue to meet their needs as a family.

Working with and understanding the importance of birth family connections throughout a child's/youth's life will be emphasized. Preparation for guardianship of a child must be addressed, particularly as it may be an option in relative placements. The curriculum should be state-of-the-art, in-person training, but incorporate modern technology and reflect current knowledge of adult learning. Incorporating interactional learning should be integral to the curriculum.

The availability of tailored technical assistance to states, tribes, and territories, as well as to licensed, private agencies engaged in private domestic and/or international adoption services for the integration of this 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 Foster/Adoptive Parent Preparation, Training and Development Initiative will be all prospective foster, adoptive and guardianship parents interested in being a resource families for children/youth placed through the child welfare system as well as those interested in adopting children/youth privately and/or internationally.

Collaboration

The successful grantee is expected to actively collaborate with CB and other partners to achieve the purposes of this FOA. This Training and Development Initiative will require 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 use the trainings will be required partners.

Program Strategies and Activities

Grantees awarded under this FOA would develop an Initiative that includes state-of-the-art curriculum for training, building capacity, and competence in prospective foster and adoptive/guardianship families.

The grantee will research the existing best practices, training materials, resources, literature, publications, and products to develop the curriculum that can be used by all states, tribes, territories and private agencies that serve prospective foster, adoptive, and guardianship families.

The training modules will build upon one another and be informed by theory and best practice

in adult education and training and knowledge transfer and be based on the best available research evidence.

The training will incorporate all federal guidance and legislative requirements for foster and adoptive parents, i.e., applying the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard per the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (Pub. L. 113-183). It will also include capacity building elements for prospective parents that will enable them to meet the various background elements that children/youth in care and those adopted internationally have experienced. These should include, but not be limited to trauma experiences, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, abandonment, dependency, sex trafficking, alcohol and substance exposure, etc. There should also be elements of preparation for the parenting of children/youth that may currently or in the future identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Questioning, including curriculum on how to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity with youth and a clear articulation that conversion therapy is not an appropriate therapeutic approach based on the evidence.

The grantee will be required to interact with states, tribes, territories, and private agencies in the provision of tailored technical assistance for the successful integration of the curriculum into their training systems and to provide coaching and consultation as necessary in the use of the training.

Phase I: Planning and Information Gathering

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

- Review all existing training formats and curriculum currently available for the preparation, training, and development of foster and adoptive parents;
- Review, define, and develop state-of-the-art foster, adoptive, relative, guardianship parent competencies that will serve as the foundation for the training curriculum and process; these will include the particular competencies required for those adopting privately, both domestically and internationally;
- Coordinate with states, tribes, territories, and pertinent private entities to determine the use of and gaps in the delivery of foster, adoptive, and guardianship parent training curriculum;
- Work with states, tribes, territories and private agencies to plan for the development and integration of the new curriculum into their existing systems and programs;
- Initiate examination of and process for selecting pilot sites; and
- Review, define, and develop a state-of-the-art training curriculum using cutting edge adult learning models, interactive learning strategies, and innovative technology.

The initial year of this cooperative agreement would entail an extensive review of all current training and preparation programs and include new intervention strategies that foster/adoptive parents should be skilled in as they develop as foster and adoptive parents. The initial year would also involve the basic development of the new intensive training modules. The subsequent years would involve testing the training in 6-8 sites, refining the curriculum, making the curriculum available to all states, tribes, and territories and assisting them with integrating it into their systems.

Phase II: Development, Implementation and Evaluation

During Month 10 through Year 5, the Initiative will:

- Confirm pilot testing sites;
- Further develop, refine, and pilot test the training curriculum;
- Make the curriculum available to all states, tribes, territories and private agencies;
- Provide technical assistance as necessary to each state, tribe, territory, and private adoption agency as requested for integration into their training programs of the curriculum; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the training models in select locations to account for the level of competence attainment, the consistency with which the training curriculum is implemented, and improvement in the development of resource families competent to meet the needs of foster, adoptive, and guardianship youth.

Evaluation

The grantee will conduct a rigorous, practical, and feasible program evaluation that will document and support the achievement of the purposes of this FOA and determine the effectiveness of the Foster/Adoptive Parent Preparation, Training and Development Initiative.

The evaluation design will answer key questions about project performance and support the development and refinement of the training curriculum as described in this FOA. The grantee's evaluation must be both efficient and able to provide timely and useful information. It must measure the extent to which this curriculum has enhanced the development of resource families by increasing their competency in meeting the needs of the children/youth in their care and also infuse it into practice across public and private agencies engaged in the training and development of these families.

Program evaluation activities must:

- Be integrated into the project's planning and decision-making, and be reported 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 the training curriculum, monitor adherence to the training model during implementation, and assess the training model's ability to effect learning and behavior-related outcomes; and
- Calculate the costs of its knowledge management, distance learning, product development, and dissemination activities.

The grantee will set clear and measurable objectives and outcomes for its knowledge management and product dissemination activities. Guided by its logic model, the successful grantee will design an evaluation plan, choose methods, develop instruments, collect data, and perform analyses that will help the project determine the degree to which key objectives and intended outcomes are achieved.

Outcomes will include:

- State-of-the-art training curriculum that could be consistently applied across the nation for the development of foster and adoptive parents that will be equipped to meet the current needs of children/youth in the foster care system;

- State-of-the-art training curriculum that could also be used as a model for private domestic and international adoptive families; and
- Improved outcomes for children/youth in foster and adoptive homes with improved capacity to meet their needs.

Dissemination

CB expects that information and knowledge generated by this Initiative will be shared with the field and efforts will be made to integrate project knowledge into policy and practice. The grantee is expected to disseminate strategically and incorporate dissemination activities into their work. Their dissemination activities will focus on key target audiences, for specific purposes, understanding what they need to know, and effectively getting this information to them. The project will disseminate at appropriate times. They will evaluate the extent to which their target audiences have received project knowledge and used it as intended, and assess the impact of dissemination. They will allocate sufficient staff time for dissemination.

The grantee will be expected to work throughout the course of their projects with the Federal Project Officer and other CB projects to:

- Finalize dissemination goals and objectives;
- Identify and engage with target audiences for dissemination;
- Develop and disseminate summarized/synthesized information about the project;
- Produce a high quality comprehensive final report suitable for archiving in the CB Discretionary Grant Library https://library.childwelfare.gov/cbgrants/ws/library/docs/cb_grants/GrantHome; and
- Ensure that publications and websites are accessible. Although not required, applicants are strongly encouraged to consider using Section 508 standards to ensure accessibility.

Other Requirements

1. Have the project fully functioning as described in applicant's timeline, within 90 days following the notification of the award.
2. Participate if CB chooses to do a cross-site evaluation or a technical assistance contract that relates to this FOA.
3. Allocate sufficient funds in the budget to support required travel: a) Within 3 months after the award, the project director, child welfare liaison (if different from the project director), evaluator and/or other key staff must attend a 2- to 3-day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC; and b) The project director, the child welfare agency liaison (if different from the project director) and the evaluator and/or other key staff must attend the annual grantee meeting, usually held in the spring, in Washington, DC.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreement

Estimated Total Funding: \$1,200,000
Expected Number of Awards: 1
Award Ceiling: \$1,200,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor: \$1,000,000 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount: \$1,200,000 Per Budget Period
Anticipated Project Start Date: 09/30/2016

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, recipients 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 recipient's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** See *Section III.2.* of this announcement for information on cost-sharing or matching requirements.

The initial award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of the 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 the project is not to exceed \$1,200,000. Each of the four subsequent 12-month budget periods, the maximum federal share of the project is not to exceed \$2,000,000.

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, training and technical assistance (T/TA), publications or products, and evaluation);
- Close monitoring by CB of the requirements stated in this announcement 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.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is unrestricted.

Collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts are acceptable, but applications should identify a primary applicant responsible for administering the grant.

Public or private agencies or organizations, including adoptive family groups and minority groups, are eligible to apply.

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

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: No

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient’s cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients 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 amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient’s failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where “cost sharing” refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by an applicant and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the applicant will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient’s failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

III.3. Other

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. Federal 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. **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*.

Missing the Application Deadlines (Late Applications)

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. Electronic applications submitted to www.Grants.gov after 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from www.Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to www.Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

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

Each time an application is submitted via 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.4. 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 FOA.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard

Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Electronic Application Submission:

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

Applications in Paper Format:

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package available in the FOA's Grants.gov synopsis at www.Grants.gov. They are also available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* if applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to www.Grants.gov.

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

Available at the Grants.gov Forms Repository website at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#sortby=1>.

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) for assistance at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

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 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, 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.

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. 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 table of contents, 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.

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.

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

The Project Description and the appendices must not exceed a combined total of 125 pages. The Project Description 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. Line Item Budget and Budget Justification

The Appendices 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)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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.

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 earlier 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.

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Professional they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on “Support” at the top bar menu and select “Adobe Software Compatibility”, which is listed under the topic “Find Answers Online.” The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their version of the software by opening a test application package. Grants.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions if an applicant is unable to open the test application package. There is also a help page for configuring Firefox and Chrome to open PDFs using Adobe software.

The Adobe Software Compatibility page located on Grants.gov also provides guidance for applicants that have received error messages while attempting to save an application package. It also addresses local network and/or computer security settings and the impact this has on use of Adobe software.

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 https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf under "How to Apply for a Grant/Submit an Application."

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

Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Special characters that are allowed under Grants.gov’s naming conventions, and are accommodated by ACF’s systems, are listed in the instructions available in the Download Application Package at

Grants.gov. Please also see

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

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. All pages in the application submission must be sequentially numbered.**

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking grant or cooperative agreement awards under this announcement must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications with the application. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this FOA at www.Grants.gov.

Other versions of required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available at Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>.

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.

<p>Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.</p>
<p>SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)</p>	<p>Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.</p>	<p>Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants may cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.</p>
<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 is 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>DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.</p>	<p>A DUNS number is required of all applicants.</p> <p>To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.</p> <p>Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p> <p>SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.</p>	<p>A DUNS number and SAM registration are eligibility requirements for all applicants.</p> <p>See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> for more information.</p>
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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

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. Program 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.

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.I. 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.

Expected Outcomes

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

Approach

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

- Address the goals and objectives in a way that is responsive to the purposes of the funding opportunity announcement and present a clear description of the proposed project, as described in *Section I, Program Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS*.
- Provide a detailed description of the tasks and activities the project proposes to implement during the planning period (Phase I) and a description of how each task and activity will be accomplished. See *Section I, Program Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Phase I, Planning and Information Gathering*.
- Provide a detailed description of the tasks and activities the project proposes to implement during the implementation period (Phase II) and a description of how each task and activity will be accomplished. See *Section I, Program Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Phase II, Development, Implementation and Evaluation*.
- Define the demographic characteristics of the target population and the key partnerships, to include their roles and responsibilities throughout the project, that are critical to successfully develop, implement and evaluate the curriculum; demonstrate an understanding of the mental and behavioral needs of the children/youth in the target population; and describe the plan for sustaining and building upon partnerships for successful program implementation;
- Describe how they will pilot test and evaluate the delivery, utilization, and effectiveness of the curriculum as it pertains to the acquisition of competency and capacity building within the states, tribes, territories, and private agencies and how the Initiative will impact overall improvement (placement, permanency, stability) in the lives of children/youth;
- Describe the process for the delivery of technical assistance on the use and integration of the web-based training to states, tribes, and territories;

- Describe how they will deliver technical assistance as necessary on the curriculum to states, tribes, territories and private agencies for the incorporation of the curriculum into their training and development systems, to include the type and quality of training and technical assistance;
- Describe how they will successfully select, adapt, develop, and deliver state-of-the-art, evidence-based intensive preparation, training, and development curriculum into the child welfare system that is applicable to all states, tribes, territories, and private agencies in the nation with high fidelity, addresses particular training and development needs of resource families serving children from the child welfare system or being adopted privately and/or internationally and is replicable on a national basis;
- Describe the steps and plans they propose to create a state-of-the-art, evidence-informed, evidence-based preparation, training and development curriculum for foster, adoptive and guardianship families with quality improvement components for use on a national basis;
- Describe how the curriculum will be made available, delivered, and integrated into the training systems of states, tribes, and territories;
- Describe how they will assess existing evidence-based, evidence-informed practice, training, research, literature, resources, and products regarding the intensive preparation, training and development of foster, adoptive, and guardianship families and identify key competencies;
- Describe how they will develop state-of-the-art training curriculum using adult learning models and strategies and innovative technology;
- Describe the proposed systems change effort and an overview of the supporting research and evidence base of the training curriculum;
- Describe plans for establishing and building on collaborative partnerships to guide and support successful implementation;
- Demonstrate and describe a history of effective partnerships with public and private child welfare agencies so as to fulfill the implementation of the curriculum into state, local, and private systems; and
- Describe the plan and specific steps they propose are required to assess existing, evidence-based, evidence-informed practice, training, research, literature, resources and products regarding the preparation and intensive development of foster, adoptive, and guardianship parents and the process of identifying key competencies. This plan must address the specific competencies to be developed for training of prospective resource families for children/youth in the child welfare system (both non-relative and relative) as well as prospective families seeking to adopt privately or internationally.

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 may 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 provide a narrative addressing how the conduct of the project and its results will be evaluated. In addressing the evaluation of results, state what measures will be used to determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives and the extent to which the accomplishment of objectives can be attributed to the project. Applicants must discuss 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 the project results and benefits are being achieved. With respect to the conduct of the project, applicants 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.

Applicants must present an evaluation plan that outlines an appropriate sampling plan and ensures that the target sample represents the intended recipients of the services. A sound plan for collecting high quality data on the development and dissemination of the curriculum developed must be included. This plan must also address how the data will be able to be compared to and contrasted with regional, state, and national level data. Applicants must describe a sound plan for conducting a cost evaluation of the proposed program.

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.

Unless directed otherwise, applicants must include proof of non-profit status in the *Appendices* file of the electronic application submission.

Logic Model

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their project. A logic model is a one-page diagram that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the links among program elements. While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this announcement the logic model should summarize the connections between the:

- Goals of the project (e.g., objectives, reasons for proposing the interventions, if applicable);
- Assumptions (e.g., beliefs about how the program will work and its supporting resources. Assumptions should be based on research, best practices, and experience);
- Inputs (e.g., organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, budget);
- Target population (e.g., the individuals to be served);
- Activities (e.g., approach, listing key intervention, if applicable);
- Outputs (i.e., the direct products or deliverables of program activities); and
- Outcomes (i.e., the results of a program, typically describing a change in people or systems).

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);
- 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;

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. Applicants must indicate the method they are selecting for their indirect cost rate. See Indirect Charges for further information.

Project budget calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If 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, 2016, (Title VII, General Provisions – Government-Wide), 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 "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$185,100. 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 of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

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

Applicants must submit a detailed line-item budget (not to exceed \$1,200,000 for the first 12 month budget period) and a detailed budget justification explaining how grant funds would be spent over the full 60-month grant period totaling \$9,200,000.

The applicant includes funds for all required items for the project budget, including travel to attend the entrance conference and annual meetings in Washington, DC.

The budget includes a specific percentage for evaluation and the applicant demonstrates that there are sufficient funds in the applicant's project budgets each year to support evaluation and data collection activities. The applicant provides a convincing rationale justifying the portion of its budget set aside for evaluation.

General

Use the following guidelines for preparing the budget and budget justification. Both federal and non-federal resources (when required) shall be detailed and justified in the budget and budget narrative justification. "Federal resources" refers only to the ACF grant funds for which you are 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 75 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 has one of two methods that an applicant can select. An applicant may only select one.

1) The applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant federal agency.

Note: An applicant must enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. If the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

2) Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f) Indirect (F&A) costs, “any non-Federal entity [i.e., applicant] that has never received a negotiated indirect costs rate, ... may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in § 75.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.”

Justification: This method only applies to applicants that have never received an approved negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposal may request the 10 percent de minimis. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be

charged as direct costs to the grant.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424.

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients 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 amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where "cost sharing" refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by an applicant and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the applicant will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

Justification: If an applicant is relying on match from a third party, then a firm commitment of these resources (letter(s) or other documentation) is required to be submitted with the application. Detailed budget information must be provided for every funding source identified in Item 18. "Estimated Funding (\$)" on the SF-424.

Applicants are required to fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions they propose in order to meet a matching requirement. Applicants are also required to provide documentation in their applications on the sources of funding or contribution(s). In-kind contributions must be accompanied by a justification of how the stated valuation was determined. Matching or cost sharing must be documented by budget period (or by project period for fully funded awards). **A recipient's failure to provide a statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.**

Applications that lack the required supporting documentation will not be disqualified from competitive review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation

criteria in *Section V.1.* of this announcement.

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 and Budget/Budget Justification information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, expiration date is 01/31/2019. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via www.Grants.gov

Additional guidance on the submission of electronic applications can be found at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

After a grant application package is submitted to www.Grants.gov, a confirmation screen will appear on the applicant's computer screen. This screen confirms that an application has been submitted an application to Grants.gov. This page also contains a tracking number to identify the status of the application submission in the Track My Application feature.

When the application has completed the Grants.gov submission process, Grants.gov will send email messages to advise the applicant of the progress of the application through its system. **Over the next two business days, an applicant should receive two emails from Grants.gov:**

- **Submission Receipt Email:** Confirms successful receipt of the application by the Grants.gov system and indicates the application's status as "Received."
- **Submission Validation –OR– Rejection with Errors Email:** Indicates that the application was either successfully validated or rejected by Grants.gov. Either the application has been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency or the application has been rejected due to errors.

Application Validation at www.Grants.gov

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

Next, Grants.gov verifies the submission is valid by ensuring it does not contain viruses, the opportunity is still open, and the applicant login and applicant DUNS number match. If the submission is valid, Grants.gov generates a submission validation receipt via

email and sets the application status to "Validated."

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

Each time an application is re-submitted to www.Grants.gov, the applicant will receive a new **Submission Receipt Email**. Only applications with on-time date and time stamps in Submission Receipt Email, and that pass validation, will be transmitted to ACF. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check are 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.

Grants.gov Support Center

- If applicants encounter any technical difficulties in using www.Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Support Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at support@grants.gov, to report the problem and obtain assistance. Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Grants.gov Support Center is closed on federal holidays.
- Applicants should always retain Grants.gov Support Center service ticket number(s) as they may be needed for future reference.
- **Contact with the Grants.gov Support 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. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)* will determine whether the submission issues are due to Grants.gov system errors or user error.**

Issues with Federal Systems

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All exemption requests must include the following information:

- Funding Opportunity Announcement Title,
- Funding Opportunity Number (FON),
- The listed Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number,
- Name of Applicant Organization and DUNS Number,
- AOR name and contact information,

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

Exemption requests must be *received by ACF no later than two weeks before the application due date*, that is, 14 calendar days prior to the application due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. 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.4. Submission Dates and Times* of this announcement.

Paper Format Application Submission

An exemption is 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.7.* of this announcement for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 p.m, ET, on the due date.

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.4. Submission Dates and Times* in this announcement.

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

All applicants must have a DUNS Number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov/SAM, <https://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 is awarded, registration at SAM must be active throughout the life of the award.

Plan ahead. Allow at least 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM and at least an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems, i.e. Grants.gov.

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 through Grants.gov or prevent the award of a grant. Applicants should maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register for, or renew a registration, at SAM. User Guides are available under the “Help” tab at <https://www.sam.gov>.

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.

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications: **04/29/2016**

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. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

Electronic Applications

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

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

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

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

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

Mailed Paper Format Applications

The deadline for receipt of 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.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

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

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

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

- Applications submitted electronically via www.Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date.

- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Paper format applications received from applicant organizations that were not approved for an exemption from required electronic application submission under the process described in *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Submission* will be disqualified.

Emergency Extensions

ACF may extend an application due date when circumstances make it impossible for an applicant to submit their applications on time. Only events such as documented natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc.), or a verifiable widespread disruption of electrical service, or mail service, will be considered. The determination to extend or waive the due date, and/or receipt time, requirements in an emergency situation rests with the Grants Management Officer listed as the Office of Grants Management Contact in *Section VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)*.

Acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov

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

Applicants will also receive an email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process**, after which a third email is sent with the information that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, the 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 by ACF.

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:

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

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

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

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable. Fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting the Federal program objectives are allowable with prior written approval from the Federal awarding agency. (45 CFR §75.442)

Proposal costs are the costs of preparing bids, proposals, or applications on potential Federal and non-Federal awards or projects, including the development of data necessary to support the non-Federal entity's bids or proposals. Proposal costs of the current accounting period of both successful and unsuccessful bids and proposals normally should be treated as indirect (F&A) costs and allocated currently to all activities of the non-Federal entity. No proposal costs of past accounting periods will be allocable to the current period. (45 CFR §75.460)

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.7. 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 Boulevard
Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209

Hand Delivery

CB Operations Center
c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard
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.4. 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

In reviewing the objectives and need for assistance, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of the goals and objectives of this FOA. The nature and scope of the applicant's stated goals and objectives are responsive to the purposes of this FOA.
2. The applicant presents a clear description of the proposed project, including 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 *Section I, Program Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS* of this FOA.
3. The applicant clearly defines the target population for the curriculum to be developed. In addition, the applicant clearly defines the children/youth 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 the children/youth served by the target population.
4. The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of how the Initiative would select, test, and evaluate the curriculum in pilot sites composed of state, county,

tribal child welfare systems and private agencies and how the Initiative would impact overall system improvement for the placement, permanency and stability in the lives of children/youth.

5. The applicant demonstrates a knowledge of and provides a clear description of how technical assistance will be delivered on the curriculum to states, tribes, territories and private agencies for the incorporation of the curriculum into the applicant's training and development systems.

Approach

Maximum Points:40

In reviewing the approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The specific activities to be conducted under the proposed project are appropriate and are described in detail. The plan and specific steps the applicant proposes as required by this FOA are comprehensive and reflect state-of-the-art knowledge of intensive preparation, training, and development of foster/adoptive and guardianship families.
2. The application provides a reasonable timeline for implementing the proposed project, including major milestones and target dates. The application describes the factors that could speed or hinder project implementation and explains how these factors would be managed.
3. 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 core components of the curriculum.
4. The application clearly defines demographic characteristics of the target population to be affected by the implementation of this cooperative agreement. The proposed target population meets the requirements described in this FOA.
5. The applicant provides a detailed description of the tasks and activities the project proposes to implement during the planning period (Phase I) and a description of how each task and activity will be accomplished, as mentioned in *Section IV.2, The Project Description, APPROACH* and listed in *Section I, Program Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Phase I, Planning and Information Gathering*.
6. The applicant provides a detailed description of the tasks and activities the project proposes to implement during the implementation period (Phase II) and a description of how each task and activity will be accomplished, as mentioned in *Section IV.2, The Project Description, APPROACH* and listed in *Section I, Program Description, PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, Phase II: Development, Implementation and Evaluation*.
7. The applicant describes how the Initiative will assure that states, counties, tribes, territories, and private agencies are collaborative key partners and will take an active role in the project throughout the entire length of the project period.
8. The intended audience for product dissemination is appropriate to the goals of the proposed project. The project's products would be useful to the identified audiences; the plan for disseminating information is appropriate; and the

mechanisms and forums that would be used to convey the information and support replication by other interested agencies are appropriate. The proposed dissemination plan is appropriate in scope and budget.

9. The applicant outlines plans for establishing and building upon collaborative partnerships to guide and support successful implementation.
10. The applicant clearly describes the proposed systems change effort. In addition, the applicant provides a thorough overview of the supporting research and an accurate assessment of the strength of the research evidence base of the training curriculum.
11. The applicant provides a reasonable preliminary plan describing how, when, to whom, and under what conditions tailored T/TA from the 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.
12. The applicant provides a detailed plan for the development, delivery, and infusion of the curriculum into child welfare training systems, making it available to all states, tribes, territories, and private agencies. 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 curriculum beyond the period of federal funding.

Evaluation

Maximum Points:20

In reviewing the evaluation plan, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant proposes a clear and convincing plan for evaluating the project and satisfies the requirements for the evaluation published in this FOA. The methods of evaluation are 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 would rigorously measure achievement of project objectives, customer satisfaction, acquisition of competencies, effectiveness of program services and project strategies, the efficiency of the implementation processes, changes in training practices, and the impact of the Initiative on the preparation and development of foster and adoptive families.
2. The applicant describes a sound plan for collecting high-quality data on the development and dissemination of the curriculum developed.
3. The evaluation plan outlines an appropriate sampling plan that ensures sample sizes sufficient to detect significant effects. The target sample for the outcome evaluation represents the intended recipients of the services to the greatest extent possible given the project's structure and resources. Sample size requirements are described and the evaluation plan ensures sample sizes that are sufficient to detect significant effects.
4. The applicant describes methods of evaluation to include the use of strong measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the curriculum 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.
5. The applicant describes a strong plan for securing informed consent and implementing an Institutional Review Boards.

6. The proposed evaluation examines the effectiveness of the curriculum developed and the process of implementation and utilization within state and tribal child welfare systems and private agencies.
7. The applicant proposes a feasible plan to produce data that can be compared to and contracted 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 curriculum on the adoption competencies gained by the target groups.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. The applicant provides a convincing rationale justifying the portion of the applicant's budget set aside for evaluation.

Organizational Capacity

Maximum Points:15

In reviewing the organizational capacity, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant's organization and any partnering organizations collectively have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of training and development curriculum and activities. Each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) possesses the organizational capability to fulfill its assigned roles and functions effectively.
2. The proposed project director and key project staff demonstrate sufficient relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities (e.g., resume) to effectively institute and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity. The role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors and/or partners, is clearly defined (e.g., job description) and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project.
3. The applicant presents and details 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). The applicant included an organizational chart.
4. The applicant clearly demonstrates the capacity to develop the training curriculum that can be integrated into all state, county, and tribal child welfare systems as well as private agencies for the intended target population.
 5. The applicant demonstrates a history of effective partnerships with public and private child welfare agencies so as to fulfill the implementation of the curriculum into the state, local, and private systems.

Budget and Budget Justification

Maximum Points:5

In reviewing the budget and budget justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. There is a detailed narrative budget justification for each year of the project.
2. 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;
3. The applicant includes funds for all required items for the project budget, including travel to attend the entrance conference and annual meeting in Washington, DC.
4. 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.
5. The applicants' fiscal controls and accounting procedures would ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this FOA.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

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

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 FOA.

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.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

As required by 2 CFR 200 of the Uniform Guidance, effective January 1, 2016, ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), <https://www.fapiis.gov/>, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$150,000) over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR § 200.205 Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1205&rgn=div8.

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 Federal Award Dates

Announcement of awards and the disposition of applications will be provided to applicants at a later date. ACF staff cannot respond to requests for information regarding funding decisions prior to the official applicant notification.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a 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, email, or by GrantSolutions.gov or the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES), whichever is relevant. Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter signed by the cognizant Program Office head. Any other correspondence that announces to a Principal Investigator, or a Project Director, that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance.

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.6. Funding Restrictions*.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are available at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements>.

VI.3. Reporting

Recipients under this FOA will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting requirements is available on the ACF website at

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-2>.

For planning purposes, the frequency of required reporting for awards made under this announcement are as follows:

Performance Progress Reports:	Semi-Annually
Financial Reports:	Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

June Dorn

Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau
CB Operations Center, c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget Shea Westfall
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Administration
Office of Grants Management
CB Operations Center, c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) <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/>.

ACF Grants Homepage <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/>.

For submission of a paper format application, all required Standard Forms (SF), assurances, and certifications are available on the ACF Grants-Forms page through <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/sf-424-family.html>.

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.ecfr.gov/>.

The *Federal Register* <https://www.federalregister.gov/>.

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

Application Checklist

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	<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 http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html 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.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
Project Sustainability Plan	<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.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>

<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.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>Project Summary/Abstract</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>. The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and 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 http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p> <p>These forms are required for applications under this FOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that include only non-construction activities must 	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>

	submit the SF-424A and SF-424B, along with the SF-424 and SF-P/PSL.	
The Project Description	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	<p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>.</p> <p>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 available in the electronic application kit at Grants.gov and at http://www.grants.gov/web/grant/forms.html 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 with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan.</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>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.4. 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>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.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
<p>Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)</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 page under the "Application Package" tab in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.</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.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>SF-424 Key Contact Form</p>	<p>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 http:// www .grants. gov/ web/ grants/forms.html by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)</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 http://www.grants.gov/web/ grants/ forms.html 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.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>Commitment of Non-Federal Resources</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.4</i>. If not available at the time of application submission, due by the time of award.</p>
<p>DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the announcement.</p> <p>To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.</p> <p>To register at SAM, go to http://www.sam.gov.</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>