



**Administration for Children and Families**

Office of Child Support Enforcement

Procedural Justice Informed Alternatives to Contempt (PJAC)

HHS-2016-ACF-OCSE-FD-1172

Application Due Date: 07/08/2016

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

**Program Office:** Office of Child Support Enforcement  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** Procedural Justice Informed Alternatives to Contempt (PJAC)  
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**Funding Opportunity Number:** HHS-2016-ACF-OCSE-FD-1172  
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### 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>.**

**This funding opportunity announcement has been modified.** *Section I. Program Description* and *Section IV.2. The Project Description* have been updated to provide details for applicants who may be implementing random assignment in another child support-led demonstration project.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) invites eligible applicants to submit competitive grant applications to develop and implement programs that offer an alternative to contempt by incorporating procedural justice principles into child support business practices as part of a national demonstration framework. The national demonstration, titled Procedural Justice Informed Alternatives to Contempt (PJAC), will consist of the following core components: 1) initial screening; 2) outreach/engagement; 3) case conferencing, assessment, and action planning; 4) enhanced investigation; 5) enhanced child support services; 6) other support services; and 7) case management. Each of these components will incorporate procedural justice principles into their design.

The grant project period will be 5 years. The first year will be a planning year devoted to start-up and development of the program design and pilot testing. Enrollment into the project will last for a 3 year period, and the final year will focus on evaluation and close-out of the project, as well as continued services to those already enrolled, and sustainability work.

Section 1115 grant funds awarded to each project will be treated as state or tribal expenditures

under title IV-D that, for purposes of the demonstration project, will be reimbursed by the regular title IV-D federal financial participation (FFP) match. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF grant award under Section 1115 and regular FFP. Grantees do not need to provide matching funds. Continuation awards will be offered each year of the project. For additional information see *Section II. Federal Award Information*.

Grantees will not conduct their own evaluations, but must support and fully participate in an OCSE-funded cross-site evaluation. Random assignment of potential participants into treatment and control groups will be required. The evaluation of these grants will be funded through an OCSE cooperative agreement under a companion funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for evaluation of and technical assistance to these projects. Applicants for this grant may also submit an application under the companion FOA, but it is not a requirement for application or selection under this announcement. A successful applicant under this FOA may also be selected as a successful applicant under the companion FOA but one award is not dependent on the other. The recipient under the evaluation FOA will not conduct evaluation activities but will be required to select a third-party organization to conduct the evaluation.

## I. Program Description

### Statutory Authority

[Section 1115 of the Social Security Act](#) (42 U.S.C. 1315) authorizes funds for experimental, pilot, or demonstration projects that are likely to assist in promoting the objectives of Part D of title IV. Section 1115 provides that “the project-- a) must be designed to improve the financial well-being of children or otherwise improve the operation of the child support program; b) may not permit modification in the child support program which would have the effect of disadvantaging children in need of support; and c) must not result in increased cost to the Federal Government under part A of such title. This section authorizes funding recipients to draw Federal Financial Participation (FFP) on the grant award amount according to the federal cost share formula.

In 2014, Section 302(b) of [Public Law 113-183](#) amended section 1115(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1315(b)) to expand the eligibility for OCSE research and demonstration grants to include Tribal IV-D programs. Amended section 1115(b) provides that:

“(2) An Indian tribe or tribal organization operating a program under section 655(f) of this title shall be considered a state for purposes of authority to conduct an experimental, pilot, or demonstration project under subsection (a) to assist in promoting the objectives of part D of subchapter IV of this chapter and receiving payments under the second sentence of that subsection. The Secretary may waive compliance with any requirements of section 655(f) of this title or regulations promulgated under that section to the extent and for the period the Secretary finds necessary for an Indian tribe or tribal organization to carry out such project. Costs of the project which would not otherwise be included as expenditures of a program operating under section 655(f) of this title and which are not included as part of the costs of projects under section 1310 of this title, shall, to the extent and for the period prescribed by the Secretary, be regarded as expenditures under a tribal plan or plans approved under such

section, or for the administration of such tribal plan or plans, as may be appropriate. An Indian tribe or tribal organization applying for or receiving start-up program development funding pursuant to section 309.16 of Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, shall not be considered to be an Indian tribe or tribal organization operating a program under section 655(f) of this title for purposes of this paragraph.”

## **Description**

### **A. Background**

#### **The Title IV-D Program, Use of Contempt, and Opportunities for Procedural Justice:**

Every child support program has a portion of the caseload that is noncompliant with child support orders. Child support and other social responsibility programs, like child welfare, seek strategies to engage parents and encourage parental compliance and responsibility. Key to compliance with child support orders is the parent’s (1) ability to pay the amount ordered, and (2) willingness to pay consistently.

One strategy that some jurisdictions use in response to noncompliance is civil contempt proceedings, including the threat of incarceration, to enforce child support (Gardiner, 2002). Although standard contempt practices sometimes result in one-time “purge” payments to avoid jail, there is no evidence that these practices result in future compliance with the support order through ongoing support payments that families can count on to make ends meet. In fact, incarceration and the threat of incarceration can be counterproductive when the noncustodial parent is indigent (Solomon-Fears, Berry, & Smith, 2012), resulting in the accumulation of additional child support debt and reduced employment (Thoennes, 2002). See [Incarceration as Last Resort Penalty](#). Incarceration has the potential to reduce future earnings, erode a child’s relationship with his or her parent, and negatively impact family and community stability (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010). Even the threat of incarceration can have unintended consequences, by dissuading parents who owe child support from contact with the child support system and driving them into the underground economy (Meyer & Bartfeld, 2003). In addition, contempt procedures are more expensive than other enforcement remedies (Coffin, 2014).

Most unpaid child support arrears are owed by parents with reported incomes below \$10,000 per year (Sorensen, Sousa, & Schafer, 2007). In *Turner v. Rogers*, 564 U.S. \_\_\_, 131 S. Ct. 2507 (2011) the U.S. Supreme Court found that holding a parent who owes child support in contempt and ordering him to be incarcerated without finding that he has the ability to pay his arrearage deprives him of his liberty without due process of law. The Court stated that “the critical question likely at issue in these cases concerns, as we have said, the defendant's ability to pay.”

Recognizing these realities, some child support programs have developed innovative strategies to increase compliance and reduce the build-up of unpaid arrears by working proactively with both parents and addressing the underlying impediments to payment. Some states have redirected their resources away from civil contempt to practices that encourage voluntary compliance with child support orders, such as enhanced investigation, case conferencing, setting income-based orders, early intervention, timely modification,

employment services, and other more cost-effective approaches. For example, following the *Turner* decision, one state reduced its use of civil contempt procedures by almost two-thirds, bringing 2,783 actions in 2013 compared to 7,796 actions in 2010. During that same time period, collections increased by 14 percent, with collections of nearly \$120 million in 2013 compared to \$105 million in 2010 (Lowry & Potts, 2010). See [Illinois Update on Using Civil Contempt to Collect Child Support](#).

OCSE [Information Memorandum 12-01](#), (IM-12-01) issued in June 2012, offers detailed information on promising and evidence-based practices to help state IV-D programs increase reliable child support payments, improve access to justice for parents without attorneys, and reduce the need for jail time. Research suggests that the practices highlighted in IM-12-01 can improve compliance with child support orders, increasing both the amount of child support collected and the consistency of payment. These practices include setting accurate orders based upon the noncustodial parent's actual income, improving review and adjustment processes, developing debt management programs, incorporating employment services into the child support program, and encouraging mediation and case conferencing to resolve issues that interfere with consistent child support payments. OCSE intends for the PJAC demonstration to add to the evidence base of innovations in child support business practices that jurisdictions can use to increase reliable child support and reduce the use of costly contempt proceedings and jail time for noncompliant obligors.

This demonstration program is not intended to prohibit the *appropriate* use of contempt when there is evidence of a parent's ability to pay and willful failure to do so. The issue is not the use of contempt procedures *per se*, but the routine use of contempt actions to gather information from the parents or to leverage the collection of one-time purge payments that do not generally lead to future compliance and regular payments. The routine use of contempt hearings can lead to less employment, more participation in the underground economy, and child support noncompliance. When combined with jail time, it can erode parental earnings capacity. Contempt hearings and the threat of jail in low-income communities can contribute to parental distrust, disengagement, and noncooperation with the child support program (Cook, 2015). See [Child Support Enforcement Use of Contempt and Criminal Nonsupport Charges in Wisconsin](#). As noted by the Supreme Court in *Turner*, "the routine use of contempt for nonpayment of child support is likely to be an ineffective strategy" over the long term.

While some jurisdictions routinely use show cause or contempt proceedings to elicit information relevant to child support compliance from the noncustodial parent without jail as a typical outcome, it is unlikely that filing contempt proceedings are the most cost-effective means to obtain information. For example, in lieu of a court summons and court appearance, one state implemented an "appear and disclose" process, a form of case conferencing that compels parents to come into the office and talk to a trained investigator in a less formal and adversarial setting. Other states have redirected their enforcement resources away from civil contempt to evidence-based practices that encourage voluntary compliance with child support orders, such as setting realistic orders, early intervention, modification, employment services, and other programs when the noncustodial parent falls behind (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2012). See [Establishing Realistic Child Support Orders: Engaging Noncustodial Parents](#).

**What is Procedural Justice?** Procedural justice is sometimes referred to as “procedural fairness”. Very simply, it is “the idea that how individuals regard the justice system is tied more to the perceived fairness of the *process* and how they were treated rather than to the perceived fairness of the *outcome*” (Bradley, 2013). See [The Case for Procedural Justice: Fairness as a Crime Prevention Tool](#). Dozens of studies conducted in criminal and civil legal proceedings, including family law, show that when individuals believe the process and outcome are fair, they are more likely to accept decisions made by courts and other public authorities and are more willing to comply in the future (Tyler, Procedural Justice and the Courts, 2007). See [Procedural Justice and the Courts](#).

Focusing on procedural justice strategies in the child support program may result in parents paying child support reliably if he or she feels that the outcome is arrived at fairly. And reliable payments can lead to other favorable outcomes for the parent, including reduction in potential arrears, avoidance of contempt proceedings, and improved relationships with the custodial parent and their child.

Research suggests that procedural justice is “effective in both creating positive dynamics within families and in facilitating long-term adherence to agreements” (Tyler, Procedural Justice and the Courts, 2007). Perhaps most interesting to the child support program is the finding that trust and confidence in legal authorities increases when people experienced procedural justice, despite receiving less than desired outcomes (Tyler & Fagan, Legitimacy And Cooperation: Why Do People Help the Police Fight Crime in Their Communities?, 2008).

The literature identifies five key elements of procedural justice:

**(1) Voice and Participation** – the litigants’ perception that they have had the opportunity to tell their side of the story and that the decision-maker has taken the story into account in making the decision;

**(2) Neutrality of the Process** – the litigants’ perception that the decision-making process is unbiased and trustworthy;

**(3) Respect** –the litigants’ perception that system players treat the litigants with dignity;

**(4) Understanding** – the litigants’ perception that they understand the process and how decisions are made;

**(5) Helpfulness** – the litigants’ perception that the system players are interested in their personal situation to the extent the law allows (Jensen & Gold LaGrada, 2015). See [Measuring Perceptions of Fairness: An Evaluation Toolkit](#).

The elements of procedural justice identified in the literature are based upon research demonstrating that the manner in which disputes are handled by the courts has an important influence on a person’s impression of their experiences in the court system (Lind, 1988). Incorporating procedural justice elements into the deliberative process can increase the litigants’ perspective that the legal process is just and fair, no matter the outcome. Additionally, incorporating procedural justice elements into business practices can result in increased future compliance with program rules or decisions (Tyler, Procedural Justice and the Courts, 2007).

**How is procedural justice different than due process?** The two concepts are very closely related. The concept of due process of law includes the procedural requirements, such as

notice and opportunity to be heard, that the government must provide before depriving an individual of their property or liberty. Due process is guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which provides "No person shall...be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law," and applies to all states under the 14th Amendment.

Procedural justice builds on due process. It's not only concerned with respecting and meeting a person's legal rights, but also with *how* those rights are met and an individual's *perception* of the process. Incorporating procedural fairness principles is particularly important when litigants are self-represented and are unable to afford an attorney.

**Evidence Base for Procedural Justice:** Research on the positive impacts of procedural justice is supported by a number of laboratory and field studies of trials and other legal procedures (Lind, 1988). As Tyler notes, "At this point the influence of procedural justice is widely supported by both experimental and field research" (Tyler, *Procedural Justice and the Courts*, 2007).

Because perceived fairness is based on the information, experiences and perceptions of the participant, the field of procedural justice has some similarity to behavioral economics research and practice. For example, providing clear, simple information in an accessible and nonthreatening way and simplifying the process has been shown to increase response rates (Richburg-Hayes, et al., 2014). See [Behavioral Economics and Social Policy: Designing Innovative Solutions for Programs Supported by the Administration for Children and Families](#). Similarly, attention to physical space, staff interactions and other environmental factors can increase engagement and compliance (Center for Court Innovation, 2011). See [Procedural Fairness in California](#).

Child support agencies are just beginning to examine the potential impact procedural justice innovations can have on parental engagement with the child support program, accurate order setting, payment reliability, enforcement options, contempt proceedings, and even the relationship between the noncustodial parent, custodial parent, and children. Existing research suggests that the integration of procedural justice practices into child support business processes is likely to increase the reliability of child support payments, as well as increase parents' confidence and trust in the child support program. Parents who are unable to make their child support payments, or who have accrued high arrears, do not generally have favorable opinions of the child support program. In particular, procedural justice practices may help improve the perception of the child support program in low-income communities of color, where distrust of the child support program is high. We expect there to be a positive relationship between reliable payment of child support and the use of procedural justice practices, although the impact of procedural justice interventions on child support payment rates and reducing the number of civil contempt cases has not yet been rigorously tested.

Incorporating procedural justice strategies into child support case practice might mean that a parent who is ordered to pay child support may be more likely to pay regularly if he or she feels that the outcome is arrived at fairly. In turn, regular payment can lead to other favorable outcomes for families including improved co-parenting relationships and greater economic self-sufficiency.

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## **B. Purpose and Goals**

The overall goal of the PJAC demonstration is to increase reliable child support by offering an alternative to contempt that is guided by procedural justice principles. These grants will test the efficacy of an alternative to contempt that helps increase child support compliance and reliable payments by emphasizing procedural justice principles in the following business practices: (1) gathering information through screening, outreach, and case conferencing; and (2) taking the right action at the right time, which includes applying the right child support tool as well as using other appropriate support services if needed.

The evaluation of the PJAC demonstration will result in information on how to design an alternative to contempt that is based on procedural justice principles that can be incorporated into regular child support business operations. It can produce evidence on whether or not these practices improve reliable child support payments, impact other program outcomes, and are more cost effective than traditional contempt practices. PJAC also seeks to increase parent's trust and confidence in the child support process, reduce arrears, minimize the need for continued enforcement actions/sanctions by increasing voluntary compliance, and reduce the inappropriate use of contempt.

## **C. Program Design**

PJAC will incorporate comprehensive procedural justice components into child support business practices as a means of increasing reliable support payments and reducing the need for contempt in addressing noncompliance. OCSE anticipates that grantees will implement the program model and elements described in this funding announcement. OCSE will work with grantees during the first planning year to further refine the proposed model.

PJAC grantees will be part of a national demonstration and peer learning framework that will include a cross-site random assignment evaluation to assess the impact of these programs in order to inform their successful replication nationwide. A cooperative agreement for evaluation of the demonstration program will be awarded under companion FOA, [HHS-2016-ACF-OCSE-FD-1171](#).

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator; grantees must implement a random assignment model with guidance from the evaluator and actively contribute to all aspects of participant and programmatic data collection. Additionally, the evaluation will include an implementation study component (e.g., documenting the characteristics of the demonstration programs, participants, and management structures and practices; experiences of staff and participants; and challenges and lessons learned), and a benefit-cost analysis. The evaluator will provide evaluation-related guidance and assistance to the demonstration grantees (e.g., guidance regarding random assignment; review of case processes and services for the control and treatment groups to ensure that they remain substantially different; etc.).

Grantees must collect and report any data (participant or program) required to support the evaluation. This will ensure that other child support agencies will benefit by learning how to design and implement the program model as an alternative to contempt and how to incorporate procedural justice components into child support operations. Grantees do not need

to conduct their own program evaluation and may not use grant funds to pay for a separate evaluation. However, grant funds may be used to support compilation and analyses of program performance data for purposes of effective management and oversight of program operations.

Random assignment is expected to occur in the PJAC demonstration between October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2020. Applicants must ensure that the child support office(s) in the location(s) being proposed to implement this grant project will not be implementing random assignment in another child support-led demonstration during this time period. If a state child support agency is already involved in another child support-led demonstration that will be conducting random assignment between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2020, it should only apply for this grant in areas of the state that are not involved in that ongoing demonstration. For the purposes of this FOA, OCSE considers all OCSE grants and waivers to be child support-led demonstrations. Additionally, any other demonstration led by the state, tribal, or local child support office without OCSE involvement are also considered to be child-support led demonstrations.

**Target Population:** The PJAC demonstration shall be focused on parents who owe child support arrears and would normally be scheduled for a contempt action. For the demonstration target population, the grantee should have exhausted readily available enforcement remedies typically applied in that jurisdiction to noncompliant cases prior to filing a contempt action. If the grantee does not currently routinely use contempt actions as part of its business model, the target population is noncompliant parents who have been subjected to all available administrative enforcement remedies and continue to be noncompliant.

**Enrollment:** Grantees must have the capacity to identify at least 3,000 noncustodial parents who meet the target population criteria within the three-year enrollment period. This may be across multiple locations within a state or jurisdiction. Grantees must assign 1500 noncustodial parents to receive grant program services, and assign an equal number of noncustodial parents to a control group that will be subject to child support enforcement processes normally implemented by the IV-D program. Noncustodial parents will be randomly assigned according to procedures developed by the national evaluator in consultation with grantees.

**Timeline:** Over the 5-year grant project period, it is expected that the first year will be devoted to start-up and development of the program design and pilot testing; the second, third, and fourth years will provide program enrollment and services; and the final year will be devoted primarily to continued services for those already enrolled, grant close-out, and sustainability planning. New enrollees may be served in the final year, but they may not be included in all aspects of the evaluation.

**Services:** The PJAC demonstration will be led by the child support program. Each grantee will incorporate procedural justice components into child support business practices as a means of increasing reliable support payments and reducing the use of contempt in addressing noncompliance. Grantees are expected to incorporate procedural justice practices into all aspects of their demonstration project. All authorities within the child support system that will be part of the demonstration project must consistently demonstrate commitment to ensuring that parents are treated fairly, respectfully, and compassionately.

Grantees must implement the core program model described in this funding announcement and work with OCSE and the evaluation team to refine program models to facilitate cross-site evaluation and replicability. Service models may vary along dimensions such as partners involved, methods for conducting outreach, and optional services provided.

**The core components of the demonstration project will be:**

1) **Initial screening:** In order for a parent to be eligible for the demonstration project, the IV-D agency must have exhausted the readily available enforcement remedies typically applied in that jurisdiction to a noncompliant parent prior to filing a contempt action. The IV-D agency should be ready to consider contempt or whatever next step that jurisdiction would take. At this point, parents who meet this criterion will be randomly assigned into treatment and control groups. Random assignment will take place prior to pre-contempt screening for ability to pay.

Parents who are randomly assigned to the control group will receive business as usual, including required screening for ability to pay before the jurisdiction files for contempt. Parents randomly assigned to the treatment group will receive program services which are designed to gather relevant case information, apply child support actions appropriate to each case, and provide support services needed to produce reliable payment of child support.

2) **Outreach/engagement:** OCSE anticipates that participants assigned to the treatment group will be challenging to contact. Grantees must develop and implement specialized outreach processes to engage parents in program services. At a minimum, grantees will be expected to establish a specialized outreach team for the purpose of contacting parents who owe support and getting them to appear at a case conference to discuss the program.

3) **Case conferencing, case assessment and action planning:** Grantees will be expected to conduct an introductory case conference with all parents who respond to the outreach efforts and appear for the case conference meeting. The introductory case conference will include an assessment of the noncustodial parent's barriers to reliable payment of support and development of a case action plan to address those barriers. The case action plan will identify which child support services and support services may be needed and determine the extent to which case management is needed.

4) **Enhanced investigation:** If the initial screening and outreach do not yield sufficient information to determine the parent's ability to pay, OCSE expects grantees to conduct an enhanced investigation before pursuing contempt. Parents selected to receive grant services may not be brought into court for contempt unless the child support program has evidence that the parent has the ability to pay the child support order. Grantees must develop a range of investigative approaches that go beyond automated searches and typical administrative reviews to gather information needed to determine the appropriate next steps for engaging the parent.

5) **Enhanced child support services for Noncustodial and Custodial Parents:** *Enhanced Child Support Services for Participants Assigned to the Treatment Group.* Enhanced child support services are a core service that must be available to all members of the treatment group. Although these services must be available, whether they are used will depend upon the circumstances of the case. The first enhanced child support service that grantees will be expected to have available is the ability to proactively conduct a child support review and

initiate a modification if appropriate. The second enhanced child support service that grantees will be expected to have available is the ability to suspend all non-mandatory enforcement actions.

All enhanced child support services implemented as part of the demonstration should focus on the ultimate goal of obtaining steady, reliable child support. Grantees may consider state-owed debt compromise programs as well as negotiation of family-owed debt. Grantees may also consider accepting partial payments or gradual income withholding on the amount due if program participants are unable to pay the full amount of their order. Accepting partial payments up front will demonstrate that the case manager and the child support program understand the noncustodial parent's inability to pay the full order. Similarly, grantees may wish to consider creating an on-ramp to maintaining employment and regular payments through gradual implementation of income withholding (This would require a waiver of 45 CFR 303.100 - Procedures for Income Withholding).

*Enhanced Child Support Services for the Custodial Parent(s).* OCSE expects that each grantee will contact the custodial parent(s) associated with parents in the treatment group to inform them of the noncustodial parent's involvement in the program. This contact may occur during the screening and outreach/engagement stages of the program or after the noncustodial parent has developed an action plan. In addition, OCSE expects that each grantee will develop a process for engaging the custodial parent regarding any items in the noncustodial parent's action plan that might involve the custodial parent, such as adjusting parenting time or compromising family-owed child support debt.

**6) Support services (including dispute resolution and employment services):** OCSE anticipates that employment services and dispute resolution services will be the most commonly requested services and thus is requiring that grantees include them in their grant program services. Grantees are required to include employment services and dispute resolution services as part of their program, but delivery of these services should be directly tied to the case action plans developed for each individual participant and the role these services play in leading to reliable payment of child support. Grantees may incorporate additional, optional support services (e.g., financial literacy, housing assistance, GED classes, legal services, ESL classes, substance abuse, and assistance with parenting time) that they believe will help participants overcome barriers to reliable payment of support. Although multiple partners may be involved in delivering services to program participants, grantees are expected to coordinate service delivery so that participants experience the program as an integrated package.

**7) Case management:** Ongoing assessment of participants' needs and coordinating program services through case management is critical for the success of the project. The required case management activities will assure that noncustodial parents are connected to the right mix of services to overcome barriers to compliance, fully engaged in the alternative to contempt intervention, and held accountable for meeting their child support responsibilities. Grantees are expected to fully incorporate procedural justice into all case management activities. Specialized case management is particularly important for parents with a history of incarceration or where family violence is present.

The program components are expected to assist parents who owe child support to engage with the child support program, increase their willingness to pay support through the formal

process, overcome barriers to reliable payment of child support, and promote positive engagement with the other parent.

The first three components must be offered to all noncustodial parents who are assigned to receive grant program services. The fourth component, enhanced investigation, must be included if the initial screening and outreach/engagement has produced insufficient information to determine ability to pay. The final three components must be provided based upon the circumstances of the case or the needs of the participant as identified during the case assessment and case action plan process or during ongoing case management.

**Domestic Violence Plan:** Safety is a top priority. Family violence safeguards must be fully addressed and additional safeguards will be required for services that involve both the noncustodial parent and custodial parent, such as dispute resolution services. The child support agency must establish ongoing partnerships with domestic violence service providers throughout the life of the grant to promote safe service delivery and provide effective referrals both to treat those who perpetrate violence as well as for those who are victims of violence. Grant funds may be used to pay for domestic violence expert consultation, staff training, development of screening and response protocols as well as direct domestic violence services affecting program participants' ability to provide reliable child support. A domestic violence plan must be developed and adhered to throughout the five-year demonstration. OCSE will provide technical assistance in the development of domestic violence plans, and will assist grantees in securing needed services using national-level resources. After award, grantees must submit a domestic violence plan to OCSE for approval at least 60 days prior to the start of service delivery to participants. **Grantees may not begin service delivery without an approved domestic violence plan.**

**Partnerships:** OCSE expects grantees to partner with other agencies with core competencies in providing the required employment services and domestic violence services. OCSE also expects grantees to partner with other agencies for other support services. Grantees may decide to provide the required dispute resolution services themselves or partner with an organization that has core competency in dispute resolution.

Grantees are also expected to obtain the support of the court (in jurisdictions where contempt procedures are used) and child support attorney's office (if independent from the child support agency), as evidenced, at a minimum, by a letter of support included in the grant application. Grantees may also partner with the court (e.g., a problem solving court) or child support attorney's office as long as these entities are willing to cooperate with and adhere to the implementation and evaluation of the demonstration.

Examples of other partnerships that grantees may establish to support program implementation include, but are not limited to:

- Corrections/reentry programs;
- Fatherhood and parenting programs;
- Community colleges, high schools, vocational training, GED centers;
- Financial literacy and coaching organizations;
- Cooperative parenting service providers and Access and Visitation grantees;
- Legal services;
- Pro se Legal Assistance Centers;

- Court Facilitators;
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment providers;
- Medicaid, CHIP, Healthcare Exchanges/Navigators;
- Faith and community-based groups;
- Access to justice experts; and
- Law Schools.

All partners must agree to adhere to procedural justice principles throughout the process.

Even though most grantees will have several partners, grantees are encouraged to develop a program that fully integrates child support services with other program elements into a single package for the participant. OCSE encourages applicants to propose co-locating services to reduce the burden on participants to navigate multiple agencies and locations and to facilitate communication among partners.

#### **D. Evaluation Design**

This demonstration is intended to generate the best evidence-based knowledge and information possible so that state, tribal and federal policymakers and program administrators can determine whether embedding procedural justice principles into child support business practices can increase reliable child support. It will utilize the gold standard in evaluation design, namely a randomized control trial. Although its shortcomings and challenges are well-documented, random assignment is widely recognized as the best way to isolate the true effects of any one program or treatment on the desired outcomes. Therefore, policymakers now regularly demand this level of evidence in order to make decisions regarding programs in which to invest.

This demonstration project will test the efficacy of an alternative to contempt intervention informed by procedural justice principles in improving the reliability of child support payments. The national evaluation will look at the impact of the demonstration projects on factors such as the amount and reliability of child support payments, child support debt, the use of enforcement actions, the employment and earnings of parents who owe support, and public cost. Perceptions of fairness, levels of trust, and participation in the child support program will also be examined.

All awarded demonstration projects must support and fully participate in a national, cross-site evaluation, which will be conducted by an independent third-party evaluator. They do not need to conduct their own evaluations and are not permitted to expend grant funds on their own evaluation.

OCSE and the evaluator will provide extensive technical assistance to demonstration projects, including, but not limited to refining proposed interventions, developing an appropriate mechanism for randomly assigning individuals into the control or treatment groups, and data collection. The evaluation will include an impact analysis based on random assignment, an implementation analysis (with interviews with program staff and stakeholders), and a benefit-cost analysis. Both the PJAC demonstrations and the evaluation of PJAC grant award are cooperative agreements, and OCSE may amend particulars of the evaluation design and implementation during the project period to best meet the goals of the demonstration.

#### **E. Program Management**

Child support agencies must ensure appropriate project management for PJAC projects. OCSE anticipates that each grantee will employ a project manager or managers to ensure that the project is planned, implemented, and evaluated successfully. This position is expected to be full-time (40 hours/week). It will require oversight of child support case processes and case managers and face-to-face contact with the staff from other partners providing services. OCSE expects that the project manager will hold regular meetings with project staff (across all partners) to discuss any challenges or barriers that they may be facing and attempt to resolve those challenges and barriers as quickly and effectively as possible. Because proximity is important, OCSE anticipates that the project manager(s) will work either in, or in close proximity to the office(s) where the demonstration project is being conducted.

The project manager will also be responsible for ensuring that management records are created and updated as required by the evaluator. OCSE anticipates that the project manager will also function as the site evaluation coordinator, working collaboratively with OCSE and the third-party evaluator supporting data collection and sharing information with the evaluation team as the primary data source for the evaluation will come from administrative records. Grantees may also propose to have separate staff assigned as the project manager and evaluation coordinator. It is imperative that whoever serves as the evaluation coordinator understand the importance of the independent evaluation and maintain the integrity of this independence. Grantees may also propose alternative approaches to project management, but they must be fully justified.

**Annual Workshop:** There will be an annual workshop each year for project grantees in Washington, DC, to support effective project management and peer learning. The annual workshop will promote coordination, information and resource sharing, troubleshooting, training, and learning opportunities. Grantees are required to send at least two key staff to this conference each year, including their project manager. The kickoff grantee workshop will be held in Washington, DC on December 1-2, 2016.

**The project manager/evaluation coordinator is responsible for the following key project tasks:**

**Project development and management:**

- Actively engage and collaborate with OCSE and the evaluation team to refine the project interventions.
- Ensure all project staff and partner staff receives training and support for incorporating procedural justice concepts into all program activities.
- Maintain oversight and knowledge of the implementation of all project components including: outreach, case conferences, random assignment, case assessments, case management, employment services, alternative dispute resolution services, domestic violence services, and other optional services.
- Maintain communication with project decision makers, including the child support (IV-D) director, and ensure that all necessary stakeholders are included as appropriate.
- Check in regularly with project staff to identify issues and concerns related to implementing the demonstration and completing evaluation activities and communicate those to OCSE and the evaluation team.
- Actively participate in OCSE and evaluation team site visits.

## Data collection and management

- Ensure that all evaluation-related data collection and submission is appropriately staffed and managed with access to necessary technology, and that program staff who will be responsible for collecting evaluation-related data receive necessary training from the evaluation team.
- As necessary, assist the evaluation team in making arrangements to obtain child support administrative data, including appropriate consents from program participants, and administrative data of other agencies and programs, and materials that facilitate use of such data (e.g., data dictionaries).
- Assist OCSE and the evaluation team in identifying and addressing any concerns related to administrative data.
- Assist the evaluation team in scheduling interviews, surveys, focus groups, and any other required means of information collection for the purposes of program evaluation.
- Coordinate logistics of OCSE and evaluation team site visits, including preparing agendas, as requested, and arranging for participation by all key decision makers.

## F. Waiver Requirements

The applicant may need to request a waiver of certain provisions of the Act. Section 1115(a)(1) of the Act allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to waive a state plan requirement in Section 454, and Section 1115(a)(2)(A) allows the Secretary to treat certain unallowable expenditures as allowable state expenditures for purposes of the demonstration project. Waivers requested in the application will be covered as part of the cooperative agreement unless noted upon award. Waivers requested after award will be granted if it is determined they are essential to the demonstration. Here are examples of activities that applicants may wish to request waivers for as part of their grant application:

- Employment services, including work supports such as transportation assistance;
- Assistance with parenting time orders;
- Fatherhood programs;
- Financial coaching; and
- Financial incentives.

A request to waive state-wideness and other state plan requirements that facilitate the conduct of the project or enable the state to accomplish the purposes of the project may also be needed.

For more information on program components specific to this FOA, please reference *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, and Budget and Budget Justification*.

## II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Total Funding:	\$1,600,000
Expected Number of Awards:	9
Award Ceiling:	\$200,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	\$117,647 Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount: \$158,824 Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date: 09/30/2016

**Length of Project Periods:**

Length of Project Period: 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.

OCSE expects the total project budget for PJAC awards will be \$588,235 for the first year of funding, which includes both the Section 1115 award and Federal Financial Participation match funding. Applicants should calculate their award request based on their organization's Federal Financial Participation match rate. For example:

- A state that receives \$200,000 in Section 1115 award dollars would have a total project budget of \$588,235, which includes a 66 percent FFP match representing \$388,235; and
- A tribe that receives \$117,647 in Section 1115 award dollars would have a total project budget of \$588,235, which includes a 80 percent FFP match representing \$470,588.

Applicants should provide a detailed budget for the first 12-month budget period, as well as a 5-year budget for the entire project period. Continuation awards will be offered each year of the project. Estimated award ceilings and floors for the 5-year project period are as follows: FY 2016 - \$200,000/\$117,647; FY 2017 - \$225,000/ \$132,353; FY 2018, 2019, and 2020 - \$118,738/\$69,846. The expected funding for the 5-year project period totals a ceiling of \$781,214 and a floor of \$459,538 in Section 1115 funds, plus FFP for a total project budget of approximately \$2,297,688.

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

ACF anticipates substantial involvement in the following activities:

- Providing consultation to each recipient with regard to the development and implementation of program design, approaches to address problems that arise, and identification of areas needing technical assistance;
- Facilitating and guiding the accurate, uniform data collection and application of the random assignment model required to effectively execute a cross-site national evaluation, including technical assistance as needed;
- Providing timely review, comments, and decisions on inquiries and documents submitted by recipients;
- Ensuring that a workshop for grantees is held in Washington, DC, one time for each year the grant program is funded, to promote coordination, information sharing, and access to resources, training, and learning opportunities;
- Ensuring that teleconferences and/or webinars are regularly held among recipients funded under this announcement to promote coordination, information sharing, and access to resources, training and learning opportunities; and
- Working together to address issues or problems identified by the recipient, ACF, or others with regard to the program's ability to carry out the full range of activities included in the approved application in the most efficient and effective manner.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### III.1. Eligible Applicants

State IV-D agencies (including the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) and Tribal Title IV-D agencies or the umbrella agency of the IV-D program are eligible to receive awards under this FOA.

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*.

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

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

#### **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](http://www.Grants.gov) after 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, as indicated

by a dated and time-stamped email from [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov), will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov), on or after 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

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

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

**The deadline for receipt of paper applications is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.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**

Michelle Jadczyk  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Child Support Enforcement  
330 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20201  
Phone: (202) 401-4578

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

The electronic application submission package is available in the FOA's listing at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov).

#### **Applications in Paper Format:**

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format,

Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package available in the FOA's Grants.gov synopsis at [www.Grants.gov](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov).

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

Available at the Grants.gov Forms Repository website at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html#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](http://www.gsa.gov/fedrelay).

## IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

### FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

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

***FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:***

**Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)**

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

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

**Point of Contact**

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

**Application Checklist**

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials.

### **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](http://www.Grants.gov).

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

### **Accepted Application Format**

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

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

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

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

With the exception of Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved forms, the application submission is limited to 100 pages in its entirety. The application should be uploaded in two files:

File One (Project Description)

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Project Narrative
- Budget and Budget Justification

File Two (Appendices)

- Letters of Support
- Resumes and CVs (exempt from the page limitation)
- Third-Party Agreements and/or Other Supporting Material

## **ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

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

Electronic applications will only be accepted via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). **ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.**

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

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

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

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

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

### **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](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](http://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](http://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
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	<p>Submission is required for all applicants and recipients, in writing, to the awarding agency and to the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) all information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award.</p> <p>Disclosures must be sent in writing to:</p> <p>The Administration for Children and Families,            U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,            Office of Grants Management,            ATTN: Grants Management Specialist,            330 C Street, SW.,            Switzer Building,            Corridor 3200,            Washington, DC 20201</p> <p><b><u>And</u></b></p> <p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,</p>	Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR 75.113

	Office of Inspector General, ATTN: Mandatory Grant Disclosures, Intake Coordinator, 330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen Building, Room 5527, Washington, DC 20201	
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
DUNS Number (Unique Entity Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) is required of all applicants.  To obtain a DUNS number, go to <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a> .  Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.  SAM registration is available at <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a> .	A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and SAM registration are eligibility requirements for all applicants.  <i>See Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) for more information.</i>
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants

Construction Programs	Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.	are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants may cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
LGBTQ Accessibility Policy for Discretionary Grants	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	The LGBTQ Accessibility Policy for Discretionary Grants is available in the <i>Appendix</i> section of the FOA and must be included in the "Appendices" file of the application submission.
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	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.	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.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.

**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.

## **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.

**Please note:** If a state wants to apply for this grant project and will be implementing random assignment in the counties that it is proposing as part of another child support-led demonstration, then it must provide the following in the approach: 1) a description of the child-support led intervention and whether it is an OCSE grant, wavier, or other state/tribal/local project; and 2) a detailed explanation of how it will ensure that participants

randomly assigned in the PJAC demonstration will not be members of the treatment group in the other child support-led demonstration.

### **Approach Element 1: Procedural Justice**

The application must discuss how the following procedural justice elements will be incorporated into the demonstration project:

- **Voice and participation:** How will relevant parties to a case have the opportunity to explain their side of the story in their own words? How will the applicant ensure that participants are fully informed and engaged in the process? How will the applicant provide opportunities for the participants to offer suggestions for resolving the child support issues that triggered their involvement and move toward reliable child support payments?
- **Neutrality of the Process:** How will the applicant demonstrate to participants that the process is implemented transparently and without bias? What steps will the applicant take to inform participants of the rules that are being applied, how those rules were made, and why those rules apply to their situation? How will the applicant address perceived bias of the child support system to favor custodial parents?
- **Understanding:** How will the applicant explain the decision-making process and the basis for actions taken by the child support agency in implementing the program intervention? How will program forms, letters, digital communication, and other outreach activities be adapted to ensure they are easy to understand, demonstrate respect both for individuals and their rights, and provide opportunities for participants to address concerns and questions they have about the program intervention?
- **Respect:** What steps will be taken to demonstrate respect for participants in the program intervention? How will the applicant ensure that all agency staff and partners involved in the demonstration project treat participants with dignity?
- **Helpfulness:** How will the applicant demonstrate an interest in program participants' situations and outcomes? What steps will be taken to communicate thoughtful consideration for participants' views, questions, and interests?

### **Approach Element 2: Initial Screening**

The first core service offered to parents in the treatment group is an initial screening to determine a parent's ability to pay and identify other factors that may be contributing to noncompliance. The applicant must include a description of:

- The current process for initiating contempt actions, including what enforcement remedies are exhausted, and how parents who owe support are screened for ability to pay; and
- How the applicant proposes to modify this process for the parents randomly assigned to receive program services (i.e. the treatment group). At a minimum, this discussion should describe the on-line data sources that will be used to determine ability to pay and how the custodial parent will be contacted to solicit information.

### **Approach Element 3: Outreach/Engagement**

Applicants must explain how they will engage parents to participate in the alternatives to contempt program. The application must include a description of:

- How the applicant will conduct outreach for this demonstration;
- How child support staff will be involved in the outreach efforts;
- How the applicant will incorporate procedural justice informed approaches into outreach;
- A rationale for the proposed outreach methods and how they are informed by the demographic and cultural context for which they are proposed;
- Any previously successful outreach efforts of the applicant; and
- Any proposed outreach incentives.

#### **Approach Element 4: Case Conferencing, Assessment, and Case Action Plans**

Applicants must describe how they will conduct an introductory case conference, assess noncustodial parents' barriers to reliable payment of support, and develop case actions plans to overcome those barriers.

The application must include a description of:

- How procedural justice is incorporated into the case conference to ensure that the noncustodial parents who appear for this meeting will have a full understanding of the program, what the consequences of participation are, what their rights are throughout the process, and that they have ample opportunity to express their side of the story and have it treated as relevant;
- Steps the applicant will take to ensure that conferences are conducted in locations and times that promote participation by parents;
- Whether the initial case conference will include both parents, together or separately;
- The elements that will be included in the case assessment, the rationale for those elements and how they will inform case action plans;
- How the assessment and action plan will be tied to the participant's ability to pay child support reliably;
- Assessment and action planning tools or protocols from which the applicant proposes to draw upon when developing their assessment and action plans - copies of draft assessment and action plan tools should be included as appendices to the application.

#### **Approach Element 5: Enhanced Investigation**

The applicant must describe how they will gather additional information about parents who do not respond to the outreach and engagement strategies implemented as part of the project.

The applicant must include a description of:

- 1) How the applicant proposes to handle participants in the treatment group who do not appear for a case conference. The applicant should be specific about how it will conduct an enhanced investigation in those cases where the initial screening and outreach do not yield sufficient information to determine the parent's ability to pay.

#### **Approach Element 6: Enhanced Child Support Services**

*Enhanced Child Support Services for Participants Assigned to the Treatment Group.*

Applicants should describe the enhanced child support services that they propose to have available for parents in the treatment group and under what conditions they propose to use

them.

The applicant must include a description of:

- The current process, if any, the applicant uses to proactively review child support orders and modify those orders if appropriate. Also indicate who is eligible for this service.
- How the applicant proposes to proactively review child support orders and modify those orders if appropriate for members of the treatment group, including the circumstances under which this service will be used.
- The specific non-mandatory enforcement actions that would be suspended and under what conditions these suspensions would take place.

Applicants should discuss any additional enhanced child support services that they propose to offer participants in the treatment group, being specific about the types of services being offered and under what conditions.

*Enhanced Child Support Services for the Custodial Parent(s).* Applicants should describe how they will contact custodial parents and appropriately engage them in demonstration project activities. The applicant must include a description of:

- How and when the applicant proposes to inform the custodial parent(s) of the noncustodial parent's participation in grant services;
- How the applicant proposes to follow up on action items that involve the custodial parent(s);
- Whether and how the applicant proposes to offer case conferencing, dispute resolution services, domestic violence services, or referral services to custodial parent(s) associated with noncustodial parents receiving grant services;
- How procedural justice principles will be embedded into these services.

### **Approach Element 7: Other Support Services**

Applicants must include the following additional core support services as part of their grant program services:

- Employment services, and
- Dispute resolution services.

For employment services, applicants are expected to describe who will provide these services, their experience providing these services, and their experience serving noncustodial parents. Applicants should also describe the method of delivering employment services as well as the type of employment services proposed. All applicants are expected to provide individualized employment services, but employment classes may also be proposed. OCSE encourages applicants to include job development and placement as part of the menu of employment services. Applicants should also describe how these services will be coordinated with other services being offered to parents in the treatment group.

With regard to dispute resolution services, applicants should describe: how they propose to deliver dispute resolution services; who will be delivering these services; their experience in delivering these services, and the types of issues that they expect to address through dispute

resolution. Applicants are encouraged to include assistance with parenting time as part of dispute resolution services.

Applicants are required to include employment services and dispute resolution services as part of their program, and describe how delivery of these services will be directly tied to the case action plans developed for each individual participant and the role these services play in leading to reliable payment of child support.

Applicants may propose additional, optional support services that they believe will help participants overcome barriers to reliable payment of support. Optional services that an applicant proposes to include in their program should be described in detail in their proposal.

Optional services may include, but are not limited to;

- Financial coaching;
- Literacy programs, including high school equivalency certificates (such as GED certificates) and English as a second language (ESL) programs;
- Referrals to additional support services (e.g. housing, substance abuse, legal services); and
- Assistance with parenting time.

### **Approach Element 8: Case Management**

The applicant should describe their proposed approach to providing case management for program participants.

The application must include a description of:

- How case management activities will connect noncustodial parents to the right mix of services to overcome barriers to compliance, support full engagement in program services, and hold parents accountable for meeting their child support responsibilities,
- How the applicant will incorporate procedural justice principles into case management activities, and
- What specialized case management activities will be incorporated for parents with a history of incarceration or family violence.

Applications proposing to offer case management services by a partnering agency must provide a compelling case for why that approach is likely to be more effective in reaching child support program goals.

### **Approach Element 9: Domestic Violence Plan and Services**

Applicants must describe in the grant application how proposed program activities will ensure a comprehensive response to disclosures of domestic violence, safety planning, and referrals to appropriate assistance both before and after the screening process, and build the capacity of program staff and partners to address domestic violence, including a training plan. Applicants are required to identify in their proposals the local, tribal or state-level domestic violence experts with whom they will consult throughout the project, including in the development and implementation of written domestic violence protocols, referral plans, and the provision of domestic violence training for key staff and consultants working with participants. They must also include how they will safeguard custodial parent information to

help ensure their emotional and physical safety. A letter of support from the domestic violence experts must be included in the grant application.

### **Approach Element 10: Partnerships**

Describe the organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution in this project. Applicants should demonstrate inclusion of partnerships and services that strengthen the overall design of the program and support the ability of the child support agency to implement comprehensive procedural justice practices into the proposed alternatives to contempt.

Applicants must include the following partners:

- Employment services providers; and
- Domestic violence service providers.

Applicants may decide to provide dispute resolution services themselves or partner with an organization that has core competency in dispute resolution.

Applicants must have the active cooperation and support of the court and public attorney's office (if separate from the child support agency), as evidenced by a letter of support at a minimum, and may include either or both offices as a grant partner.

Examples of optional partnerships are found in *Section I. Program Description*. Applicants must demonstrate that a relationship exists with these partners or that such a relationship can be established quickly because of existing connections and agreements to work together. In addition, all partners must agree to adhere to procedural justice principles throughout the process.

### **Approach Element 11: Evaluation**

Applications must demonstrate ability of the applicant to:

- Adhere to the random assignment methodology and participate in all activities related to conducting random assignment within their respective site;
- Assign over three years, at least 3,000 eligible parents who owe arrears, approximately half of whom would be assigned to the alternative to contempt intervention and half of whom would go through "enforcement as usual" in the applicant's jurisdiction;
- Work with the evaluator to develop a process for random assignment that meets the needs of the evaluation and minimizes the disruption of program operations;
- Provide data to evaluators on treatment and control groups in required formats through required reports/systems;
- Comply with and maintain the integrity of the evaluation, ensuring the differential between the treatment and control groups;
- Participate in the implementation evaluation including on-site interviews and information collection; and
- Participate in and support any other evaluation activities as required by OCSE.

### **Personnel and Resources**

The applicant must include:

- A qualified project manager with relevant experience and resources adequate to plan, manage, and complete the project;
- An evaluation coordinator (may be the program manager) with relevant experience and resources adequate to meet the data collection and other evaluation needs of the third-party evaluator;
- A description of the role of other key staff members who are proposed to work on the project and a biographical sketch or resume for each of these persons;
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position should be included as well. As new key staff are appointed, biographical sketches or resumes will also be required; and
- Contact persons and telephone numbers.

### **Organizational Capacity and Experience**

The application must include:

- Explanation and evidence of ability and authority to implement the proposed project, including a description of the procurement process that may be necessary for procuring services from third-party entities;
- Explanation and evidence of ability to instill procedural justice practices into the child support program;
- Description of applicant's previous experience and capacity to: screen noncustodial parents for ability to pay, conduct outreach to noncustodial parents who are unable to pay child support, conduct in person meetings, assessments, and draft action plans for noncustodial parents, conduct enhanced investigations and conduct ongoing case management if the child support program is providing this service;
- Description of applicant's previous experience providing enhanced child support services, such as suspension of non-mandatory enforcement actions, expedited review and modification, and compromise of state-owed arrears;
- Description of applicant's previous experience and capacity to screen for domestic violence, implement family violence safeguards, and work with domestic violence experts;
- Description of applicant's previous experience and capacity to provide or coordinate with dispute resolution services;
- Description of applicant's previous experience and capacity to work with third-party organizations to provide employment services and other support services;
- Description of how meaningful involvement of the child support (IV-D) director and other relevant decision-makers will be maintained throughout the demonstration;
- Explanation and evidence of previous experience working with a third-party evaluator, participating in an evaluation, and understanding of the evaluation requirements of the grant project;
- Explanation and evidence of ability and experience managing a grant and working with project partners such as OCSE;
- Explanation and evidence of ability and experience sharing administrative data for evaluation, and sharing it with a third-party evaluator;
- An organizational chart that explains how the project will be organized, what organizations will be involved, and the type of personnel in each organization that will

- be involved in the demonstration; and
- Any other pertinent information the applicant deems relevant to support the organizational capacity required to support the activities outlined in the grant application.

### **Geographic Location**

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

### **Letters Of Support**

Provide statements from community, public, and commercial leaders that support the project proposed for funding. All submissions must be included in the application package.

### **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, (Division E, 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 the first year of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

The application must include:

- A detailed budget that contains reasonable cost estimates for the project, including adequate staffing, costs of participating in the evaluation (including data collection) and justifications for the amounts requested.

Applicants should provide a detailed budget for the first 12-month budget period, as well as a 5-year budget for the entire project period. Refer to Section II, Federal Award Information for 5-year budget estimates.

Budgets and budget narratives should include details on FFP funding, however, the SF-424 and SF-424A should only detail the SECTION 1115 FUNDING request for YEAR ONE.

The budget proposal for the first year must include:

- a full-time project manager that is an employee of the child support agency;
- attendance of the project manager and one additional staff at a 2-day workshop in Washington, DC, during Year 1; and
- reasonable costs for the proposed project design, including sufficient resources to support full participation in the national cross-site evaluation, and support required data collection.

## **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 are required to use 45 CFR 75.328 procedures and 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.

### **Program Income**

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

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

### **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.I.* 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov)**

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

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

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

Each time an application is re-submitted to [www.Grants.gov](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov),

contact the Grants.gov Support Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov), to report the problem and obtain assistance. Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Grants.gov 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](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](http://www.Grants.gov). To accommodate such applicants, ACF offers an exemption from required electronic submission. The exemption will allow applicants to submit hard copy, paper applications by hand-delivery, applicant courier, overnight/express mail couriers, or by other representatives of the applicant.

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

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

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

- Submitting an email request to [electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov), or
- Sending a written request to the Office of Grants Management Contact listed in *Section VII. 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](mailto:electronicappexemption@acf.hhs.gov) may only be used to request an exemption from required electronic submission. All other inquiries must be directed to the appropriate agency contact listed in *Section VII* of this announcement. Queries or requests submitted to this email address for any reason other than a request for an exemption from electronic application submission will not be acknowledged or answered.

All exemption requests must include the following information:

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

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

Due Date for Applications: **07/08/2016**

##### **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](http://www.Grants.gov) is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

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

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

Instructions for electronic submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) are available at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>.

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

##### **Mailed Paper Format Applications**

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

**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](http://www.Grants.gov)**

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

Applicants will 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](http://www.Grants.gov) for more information.

**Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:**

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

**Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:**

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

#### **IV.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**

Jessica Lohmann  
OCSE  
DPI  
Mary E. Switzer Building  
330 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

### **Hand Delivery**

Jessica Lohmann  
OCSE  
DPI  
Mary E. Switzer Building  
330 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

### **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.

Technical Approach

Maximum Points:67

#### Approach Element 1: Procedural Justice (2 points)

- A sound approach for how the applicant will incorporate and consistently demonstrate procedural justice practices in all aspects of the program design, including voice and participation, neutrality of process, understanding, respect, and helpfulness. (2 points)

#### Approach Element 2: Initial Screening (4 points)

- A description of the current process for initiating contempt actions, including what enforcement remedies are exhausted, and how parents who owe support are screened for ability to pay. (1 points)
- A sound approach for how the applicant proposes to modify the current contempt action initiation process for the parents randomly assigned to receive grant services (i.e., the treatment group), including: (1) a description of the on-line data sources that will be used to determine ability to pay, and (2) how the custodial parent will be contacted to solicit information. (3 points)

#### Approach Element 3: Outreach and Engagement (6 points)

- A sound approach of how the applicant will conduct outreach for this demonstration, including a description of how child support staff will be involved. (3 points)
- A sound approach for how the applicant will incorporate procedural justice informed approaches into outreach. (1 point)
- A rationale for the proposed outreach methods and how they are informed by the demographic and cultural context for which they are proposed. (1 point)
- A description of any previously successful outreach efforts of the applicant and any proposed outreach incentives. (1 point)

#### Approach Element 4: Case Conferencing, Assessment, and Case Action Plans (7 points)

- A sound approach for how procedural justice activities will ensure that the noncustodial parents who appears for the case conference meeting will have a full understanding of the program, what the consequences of participation are, what their rights are throughout the process, and ample opportunity to express their side of the story and have it treated as relevant. (1 point)
- A description of the steps the applicant will take to ensure that conferences are conducted in locations and times that promote participation by parents. (1 point)
- Clarification of whether the initial case conference will include both parents, and whether the parents will conference together or separately. (1 point)
- A description of the elements that will be included in an assessment and the rationale for those elements and how they will inform case action plans. (2 points)
- An explanation of how assessment and action plan will be tied to the participant's ability to pay child support regularly. (2 points)

#### Approach Element 5: Enhanced Investigation (5 points)

- A sound approach for handling program participants who do not appear for a case

conference, including specifics about plans for enhanced investigation in those cases where the initial screening and outreach do not yield sufficient information to determine the parent's ability to pay. (5 points)

Approach Element 6: Enhanced Child Support Services (8 points)

- A description of the current process, if any, used to proactively review and modify child support orders, and a sound approach for reviewing and modifying child support orders under the demonstration, including details on the circumstances under which parents in the treatment group would be eligible for this service. (2 points)
- A description of the specific, non-mandatory enforcement actions that will be suspended and under what conditions these suspensions will take place. (1 points)
- A description of other enhanced child support services that will be provided to noncustodial parents in the treatment group. (1 point)
- A sound approach for how the applicant proposes to inform the custodial parent(s) of the noncustodial parent's participation in grant services. (1 point)
- A sound approach for following-up on action items that involve the custodial parent(s). (1 point)
- A sound approach for how the applicant proposes to engage the custodial parent(s) associated with program participants. (1 point)
- A sound approach for how procedural justice principles will be embedded into these services. (1 point)

Approach Element 7: Other Support Services (9 points)

- A sound approach for providing employment services, including a description of who will provide these services, their experience providing these services, and their experience serving noncustodial parents. (2 points)
- A description of the method of delivering employment services, as well as the type of employment services proposed, and how these services will be coordinated with other services being offered to parents receiving grant services. (2 points)
- A plan for providing dispute resolution services and how this service will tie to the case action plans developed for each individual participant, as well as the role these services will play in leading to reliable payment of child support. (3 points)
- A description of any optional support services and an argument for how it will strengthen the overall program. (2 points)

Approach Element 8: Case Management (5 points)

- A sound approach for ensuring ongoing assessment of participants' needs. (2 points)
- A plan for coordinating program services through case management. (1 point)
- A description of how procedural justice is incorporated into case management. (1 point)
- A description of who will provide case management services and, if services are to be provided by someplace other than the child support office, a justification for why a partnering agency that approach is likely to be more effective in reaching

child support program goals. (1 point)

Approach Element 9: Domestic Violence Plans and Services (8 points)

- A description of the applicant’s proposed screening and response to disclosures of domestic violence, paying particular attention to how these responses will vary depending upon whether the proposed services involve only the noncustodial parent or both parents. (2 points)
- A description of the services that will be provided by ongoing partnerships with domestic violence service providers for perpetrators and victims of violence if those services are anticipated to improve the reliability of child support. (2 points)
- A plan for building the capacity of program staff and partners to address domestic violence, including a training plan. (2 points)
- Identification of local, tribal or state-level domestic violence experts with whom the applicant will consult throughout the project. (1 point)
- A strong plan for safeguarding custodial parent information. (1 point)

Approach Element 10: Partnerships (4 points)

- A description of the organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution in this project. (2 points)
- Evidence that demonstrates a relationship with proposed partners or that a relationship can be established quickly because of existing connections and agreements to work together. (2 points)

Approach Element 11: Evaluation (9 points)

- A sound plan for adhering to the random assignment methodology, working with the evaluator to develop a process for random assignment, and describing how services provided to the treatment and control groups will be meaningfully different. (2 points)
- Evidence of the ability to assign, over three years, at least 3,000 eligible parents who owe arrears, approximately half of whom would be assigned to the alternative to contempt intervention and half of whom would go through “enforcement as usual”. (include descriptions of measures planned to ensure control group members do not receive treatment services) (5 points)
- A plan for providing data to the evaluator on treatment and control groups in required formats through required reports/systems and participating in the implementation evaluation including on-site interviews and information collection. (2 points)

Personnel and Resources

Maximum Points:6

To what degree does the applicant demonstrate and/or provide the following:

- Plans to employ a qualified project manager with relevant experience and resources adequate to plan, manage, and complete the project. (2 points)
- Plans to employ an evaluation coordinator (may be the project manager), with

relevant experience and resources adequate to serve as primary liaison to the evaluator. (2 points)

- A description of the role of other key staff members who are proposed to work on the project and a biographical sketch or resume for each of these persons. (2 points)

#### Organizational Capacity and Experience

Maximum Points:16

To what degree does the applicant demonstrate and/or provide the following:

- Explanation and evidence of ability and authority to implement the proposed project, including a description of the procurement process that may be necessary for procuring services from third-party entities. (1 point)
- Explanation and evidence of ability to instill procedural justice practices into the child support program. (1 point)
- A description of applicant's previous experience and capacity to: screen noncustodial parents for ability to pay, conduct outreach to noncustodial parents who are unable to pay child support, conduct in person meetings, assessments, and draft action plans for noncustodial parents, conduct enhanced investigations, and conduct case management if provided by child support staff. (2 points)
- Description of applicant's previous experience providing enhanced child support services, such as suspension of non-mandatory enforcement actions, expedited review and modification, and compromise of state-owed arrears. (1 point)
- Description of applicant's previous experience screening for domestic violence, implementing family violence safeguards, and working with domestic violence experts. (2 points)
- Description of applicant's previous experience providing or coordinating with dispute resolution services. (2 points)
- Description of applicant's previous experience working with third-party organizations to provide employment services and other support services. (2 points)
- Description of how meaningful involvement of the child support (IV-D) director and other relevant decision-makers will be maintained throughout the demonstration. (1 point)
- Explanation and evidence of previous experience working with a third-party evaluator, participating in an evaluation, and understanding of the evaluation requirements of the grant project. (1 point)
- Explanation and evidence of ability and experience managing a grant and working with project partners such as OCSE. (1 point)
- Explanation and evidence of ability and experience sharing administrative data for evaluation, and sharing it with a third-party evaluator. (1 point)
- An organizational chart that explains how the project will be organized, what organizations will be involved, and the type of personnel in each organization that will be involved in the demonstration. (1 point)

#### Project Budget and Justification

Maximum Points:6

To what degree does the applicant demonstrate and/or provide the following:

- A detailed budget that contains reasonable cost estimates for the project, including adequate staffing, and justifications for the amounts requested. (2 points)
- A budget proposal for the first year including a full-time project manager that is an employee of the child support agency; attendance of the project manager and one additional staff at a 2-day workshop in Washington, DC; reasonable costs for the proposed project design; and justifications for the amounts requested. (2 points)
- Estimates for costs required to support full participation in the national cross-site evaluation, including time and costs of staff participating in the evaluation, including data collection and a staff evaluation coordinator. (2 points)

Letter(s) of Support

Maximum Points:5

To what degree does the applicant demonstrate and/or provide the following:

- Letter(s) of support from the court, child support attorney's office (if independent of the child support agency), domestic violence experts, other proposed partners. (5 points)

## V.2. Review and Selection Process

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

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

### **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](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 determined as approved but unfunded, notice will be given of the determination by email.

## **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>.

### **Award Term and Condition for Federal Recognition of Same-Sex Spouses/Marriage**

A standard term and condition of award will be included in the final Notice of Awards (NOA) that states: “In any grant-related activity in which family, marital, or household considerations are, by statute or regulation, relevant for purposes of determining beneficiary eligibility or participation, grantees must treat same-sex spouses, marriages, and households on the same terms as opposite-sex spouses, marriages, and households, respectively. By “same-sex spouses,” HHS means individuals of the same sex who have entered into marriages that are valid in the jurisdiction where performed, including any of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory or in a foreign country, regardless of whether or not the couple resides in a jurisdiction that recognizes same-sex marriage. By “same-sex marriages,” HHS means marriage between two individuals validly entered into in the jurisdiction where performed, including any of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory or in a foreign country, regardless of whether or not the couple resides in a jurisdiction that recognizes same-sex-marriage. By “marriage,” HHS does not mean registered domestic partnerships, civil unions or similar formal relationships recognized under the law of the jurisdiction of celebration as something other than a marriage.”

This project activity is considered research and awardees must follow all direction from OCSE and the evaluation team regarding controls for human subjects. The evaluation plan and design will be approved by the evaluator’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Program grantees are not required to have their projects approved by a separate IRB.

### 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:	Annually
Financial Reports:	Annually

### VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)

#### Program Office Contact

Michael Hayes

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Child Support Enforcement

330 C Street, SW

Washington, DC 20201

Phone: (202) 401-5651

Email: [michael.hayes@Acf.hhs.gov](mailto:michael.hayes@Acf.hhs.gov)

#### Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget Shea Westfall

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Grants Management

330 C Street, SW

Washington, DC 20201

Phone: (202) 401-5542

#### Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) at [www.gsa.gov/fedrelay](http://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](http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html) at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/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/>.

The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) may post applicant resources online at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/grants>. Please check the site periodically for updates.

## Application Checklist

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

**What to Submit**

**Where Found**

**When to Submit**

<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>Commitment of Non-Federal Resources</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i>.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>Letters of Support</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>.</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>Table of Contents</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i>.</p>	<p>Submit with the application by the due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>.</p>
<p>Mandatory Grant Disclosure</p>	<p>Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" entry in the table in <i>Section</i></p>	<p>Concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the</p>

	<i>IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications .</i>	Office of the Inspector General is required.
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>
Project Summary/Abstract	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i> The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.	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-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i>  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."  Also available at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a>  by using the link to "SF-424 Family."	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-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i>	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in

<p>SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs</p>	<p>For electronic application submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Mandatory."</p> <p>Also available at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a> by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p> <p>These forms are <b>required</b> for applications under this FOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects that include only non-construction activities must submit the SF-424A and SF-424B, along with the SF-424 and SF-P/PSL.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
<p>DUNS Number (Unique Entity 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 (Unique Entity Identifier), go to <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a>.</p> <p>To register at SAM, go to <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a>.</p>	<p>A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants.</p> <p>Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p>
<p>SF-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</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the</p>

	<p>SUBMISSION, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional."</p> <p>The form is also available at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a> by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p><i>Overview and in 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 <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a> by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p>	<p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
<p>LGBTQ Accessibility Policy for Discretionary Grants</p>	<p>Referenced in the table <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications.</i></p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package by the application due date found in the <i>Overview and in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>

<p>SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities</p>	<p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>For electronic application submission, this form is available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional."</p> <p>The form is available in the electronic application kit at Grants.gov</p> <p>and at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html">http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html</a> by using the link to "SF-424 Family."</p> <p>If applicable, submission of this form is required if any funds have been paid, or will be paid, to any person for influencing, or attempting to influence, an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection 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.</p> <p>If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</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</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.</p>

available  
on the FOA's Grants.gov page  
under the  
"Application Package" tab  
in the section  
entitled, "Mandatory."

Available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>  
by using the link to "SF-424  
Family."