Administration for Children and Families

Office of Head Start

Early Head Start Expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants
HHS-2020-ACF-OHS-HP-1852
Application Due Date: 09/21/2020

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Department of Health & Human Services
Administration for Children and Families

Funding Opportunity Title:	Early Head Start Expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants
Announcement Type:	Initial
Funding Opportunity Number:	HHS-2020-ACF-OHS-HP-1852
Primary CFDA Number:	93.600
Due Date for Applications:	**09/21/2020**

Executive Summary

Notice:

- **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 & Funding Page at** https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announces the availability of approximately $103 million to be competitively awarded for the purpose of expanding access to high-quality, comprehensive early learning services for low-income infants, toddlers, and their families.

ACF, within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), will consider applications for Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships, non-partnership Early Head Start (EHS) Expansion, or applications that include a combination of both.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

New or existing Head Start, EHS, and EHS-CC Partnership grantees can apply to use funding to partner with local child care, including family child care providers to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to eligible infants and toddlers through EHS-CC Partnerships. These EHS-CC Partnerships will enhance and support early learning settings to provide full-day, full-year, comprehensive services that meet the needs of low-income working families; enhance access to high-quality, full-time child care; support the development of infants and toddlers through strong relationship-based experiences; and prepare them for the transition into preschool. EHS-CC Partnerships play an important role in the child care system by both expanding high-quality early learning services to infants and toddlers and applying resources and lessons learned from EHS to build the system's capacity.

Through EHS-CC Partnerships, new or existing grantees will partner with local child care centers and/or family child care programs and will leverage current investments through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) or other sources to extend the hours of service and

increase comprehensive services available for EHS eligible children. All infants and toddlers in an EHS-CC Partnership site will benefit from facilities or family child care homes that meet licensing and EHS facility safety requirements. Other children in classrooms with EHS-CC Partnership enrolled children may benefit from lower teacher-child ratios and class sizes, higher qualifications of their teachers, ongoing supervision and coaching, an established curriculum, and parent engagement activities. While only children enrolled in the EHS-CC Partnership program will be eligible for direct family-specific benefits such as home visits, health tracking and promotion, and family partnership agreements through this funding, programs must operationalize services to ensure there is no segregation or stigmatization of EHS-CC Partnership children or families due to the additional requirements or services.

Developing New Family Child Care Providers and Building Networks

Applicants are encouraged to propose innovative approaches that increase the supply of high quality early care and education in their community. Especially in communities with a shortage of child care providers, such approaches might include training new family child care providers and establishing family child care networks. Family child care networks can create increased administrative efficiency and access to resources. They also can decrease isolation and increase professional development opportunities and support among and between family child care providers.

Non-partnership Early Head Start Expansion

New or existing Head Start, EHS, and EHS-CC Partnership grantees can apply to establish or add new traditional EHS slots through non-partnership EHS Expansion. Non-partnership EHS Expansion grantees will also provide early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services that will enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of participating children; support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward self-sufficiency. Given the need for continuity of care for very young age children, the Office of Head Start (OHS) expects that applicants will propose a full-day, full-year model with sufficient hours to meet the child care needs of families and not less than 1,380 hours per year.

Combination Approach

New or existing grantees can apply to both expand the number of EHS slots and implement the EHS-CC Partnership model designed to bring EHS services to infants and toddlers in child care and family child care settings.

General Information for All Applicants

Regardless of the model the applicant selects, only high-quality applications will be funded. All applicants should prioritize providing services to the most vulnerable families with the greatest need due to special challenges, such as extreme poverty, homelessness, involvement with the child welfare system, or substance misuse issues. Grants will be awarded based on how effectively the model design fits the needs of the community to be served and the overall quality of the proposed program, dependent upon available funding. Funds awarded through this FOA must not supplant existing subsidies or other funding. **Please Note:** New and existing grantees should submit applications that are based on the number of children they project can be served in a post-COVID-19 environment without the physical distancing restrictions currently in place

due to COVID-19.

Through this FOA, applicants have the choice of applying in one of three ways: 1) EHS-CC Partnerships, 2) non-partnership EHS Expansion, or 3) a mix of both EHS-CC Partnerships and non-partnership EHS Expansion. However, applicant entities may submit only one application per service area regardless of how they choose to apply. ACF will review only one application for a service area from any applicant. For more information, please see *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*.

High-quality infant and toddler care is particularly important, and often is lacking, in economically-distressed communities. Therefore, ACF reserves the right to prioritize funding for qualified applicants that propose services in census tracts designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones. For more information about federally designated Qualified Opportunity Zones, please visit: https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions and https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx. (See Section *V.2 Review and Selection Process* for more details.)

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

This funding is authorized by Division A, Title II of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Pub. L. 116-94). The Head Start program is authorized by the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. § 9840(a)(5)(A) and 42 U.S.C. § 9840A(d)).

Description

Program Background and Purpose

The EHS program is administered by ACF, an operating division of HHS. ACF intends to fund applications that demonstrate an organization's commitment and capacity to operate an EHS program that raises the quality of early care and education in the community and helps children start school ready to succeed.

The Head Start and EHS programs provide grants to public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to predominately economically disadvantaged children and families. Head Start's primary purpose is to prepare children to be ready for school and ensure their healthy development. In fiscal year (FY) 1995, the EHS program was established to serve pregnant women and children from birth to 3 years of age in recognition of the mounting evidence that the earliest years matter a great deal to children's growth and development. Since its beginning in 1965, Head Start has served more than 35 million children and their families. In FY 2019, Head Start served 1,047,000 children and families; of these, nearly 259,000 participants were served in EHS programs. Currently there are approximately 1,600 Head Start grantees, including approximately 1,100 grantees providing EHS program services for infants, toddlers, and pregnant women.

Head Start and EHS programs must provide directly or through referral, early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services that will enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of participating children in the key domains of physical development and health; social and emotional development; approaches to

learning, language, and literacy; and cognition and general knowledge. Programs support parent engagement in their roles as their children's teachers and advocates, and help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Head Start and EHS programs emphasize family engagement because of the critical role that parents play in supporting their children's healthy development and school success. Effective programs engage parents in their children's development and learning. Programs also emphasize the significant involvement of parents in the administration of local Head Start and EHS programs. These leadership opportunities are designed to strengthen skills that parents can apply to improve their family's economic well-being and to become more effective advocates for their children.

Overview of the Child Care and Development Fund

CCDF is the primary federal program devoted to providing families with child care subsidies and supporting states, territories, and tribes in improving the quality of child care programs. CCDF is administered by ACF's Office of Child Care (OCC), which provides funding, oversight, and technical assistance to states, territories, and tribes that administer the program. CCDF provides child care assistance to 1.3 million children monthly, approximately 370,000 of whom are infants and toddlers. Annual federal CCDF funding is approximately $8.7 billion. State funding and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) transfers provide additional funding. In 2014, the program was reauthorized on a bipartisan basis, and this reauthorization included a number of important reforms to the program. For example, the reauthorized Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act phases in an increase in the minimum amount of funds that must be used to improve the quality of child care and other additional services to parents, such as resources and referral counseling regarding the selection of child care providers, to nine percent. In addition, the law requires states to spend a minimum of three percent to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers.

CCDF grantees (i.e., states, territories, and tribes) have flexibility in many areas that can help support partnerships. For example, within certain federal parameters, CCDF grantees set income eligibility rules that can be aligned with EHS (the CCDF threshold must be below 85 percent of state median income) and set policy on how often to re-determine a family's subsidy eligibility (the frequency can be no less than 12 months). Most families who receive child care assistance through CCDF are required to pay a co-payment, which CCDF grantees can waive for families below poverty, such as families eligible for EHS. CCDF grantees may also waive family co-payments for children who receive or need to receive protective services, or that meet other criteria established by the CCDF grantee. While the majority of CCDF services are funded through certificates/vouchers linked to individual eligible children, CCDF grantees also have the option of awarding grants and contracts to provide a stable source of funding for child care programs. Regardless of the funding mechanism (whether vouchers, grants, or contracts), child care subsidies used in combination with the EHS-CC Partnership funding provided under this FOA will allow grantees to improve the quality of environments and services for a greater number of low-income children.

Child care is provided through a broad array of public, private, for-profit, and not-for-profit programs and providers. In the United States, there are approximately 110,000 licensed child care centers and approximately 120,000 licensed family and group child care homes.

Family child care is an important part of the child care system, especially for infants and

toddlers who are more likely to be cared for in home-based settings compared to older children. In addition, family child care is an important child care option for children whose parents work non-standard work hours or schedules, and it is particularly important in many rural areas where there are few child care centers.

Head Start Program Performance Standards

In addition to the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9831 et seq., Head Start is governed by the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) that define the scope of services necessary to support children's development and school readiness. These program performance standards are found in 45 CFR Parts 1301-1305 https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii. The HSPPS are the foundation on which programs design and deliver comprehensive, high-quality, individualized services to support the school readiness of children from low-income families. The standards set forth the requirements local grantees must meet to support the cognitive, social, emotional, and healthy development of children from birth to age 5. They encompass requirements to provide education, health, mental health, nutrition, and family and community engagement services as well as rules for local program governance and aspects of federal administration of the program.

Facilities

Funded grantees proposing facility purchase, construction, or renovation will be required to meet the requirements in 45 CFR Part 1303 Subpart E – Facilities. This subpart prescribes what a grantee must establish to show it is eligible to purchase, construct, and renovate facilities as outlined in section 644(c), (f), and (g) of the Act. It explains how a grantee may apply for funds; details what measures a grantee must take to protect federal interest in facilities purchased, constructed, or renovated with grant funds; and concludes with other administrative provisions. This subpart applies to facility purchase, construction, and major renovations. It only applies to minor renovations and repairs when they are included with a purchase application and are part of purchase costs.

Program Approach

All grantees funded through this FOA must provide high-quality, comprehensive services. HHS has a goal of ensuring that funding available under this announcement supports robust competition for both non-partnership EHS Expansion and EHS-CC Partnership models.

Based on the strategic plan and community assessment, applicants will propose an approach that responds to the greatest needs of families in the community, including the need for increased access to full-time, stable, high-quality, comprehensive child development services for working families. Having high-quality infant and toddler care is particularly important, and often is lacking, in areas with high concentrations of poverty.

All applicants should consider the birth-to-five continuum of care and education in developing their proposals. Grantees are expected to leverage resources from existing community agencies that provide early learning services – including early intervention, home visiting, and preschool programs – that will support children from birth through kindergarten entry.

Applicants must consider how they will ensure smooth and seamless transitions for children and families, particularly as infants transition into center-based or family child care services, and as

toddlers transition to preschool services. Grantees are required to plan for transitions for children out of EHS, including assisting families with preschool options for children after their program ends through agreements with publicly funded Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and child care programs.

ACF is responsible for ensuring that all entities, regardless of the model, that are awarded a grant through this FOA and where relevant, their partner sites or delegate agencies, meet applicable Head Start and local child care licensing and other regulations for all the children or sites funded by this grant. These include requirements established by the HSPPS; relevant provisions of the Head Start Act; and applicable state, tribal, and/or local child care requirements. ACF acknowledges that meeting applicable requirements will require a commitment by both the grantee and, in the case of EHS-CC Partnership grantees, the partners, to fulfill their agreed-upon roles and responsibilities and adequate funding and support. Grantees that receive funds for EHS Expansion slots will be expected to meet all applicable HSPPS at the point the children are being served in EHS Expansion slots. OHS is responsible for monitoring the quality of EHS program services and the grantees' compliance with federal and other applicable requirements based on the authority in 42 U.S.C. § 9836A(c)(1) of the Head Start Act.

The following list provides a brief summary of the EHS services to be provided to the children and families through this grant:

- **Eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance,** ensuring the most vulnerable children are served;
- **Comprehensive early childhood education and development services** that promote the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development of young children and families during the early years through:
    - **EHS group sizes and teacher/caregiver to child ratios**;
    - **Qualified and trained staff** to ensure warm and continuous relationships between caregivers, children, and families that are crucial to learning and development for infants and toddlers;
    - **Parent involvement** in their children's learning and development;
    - **Provision of learning opportunities** for infants and toddlers to grow and develop in warm, nurturing, and inclusive environments;
    - **Culturally and linguistically responsive** services that support continuity of care between the home environment of the child and the program;
    - **Health and safety** of enrolled children;
    - **Health promotion** by providing comprehensive health, mental health, and oral health services for children, and helping families to identify and access a medical home to ensure ongoing care;
    - **Nutrition,** including participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and arrangements for nursing mothers who choose to breastfeed and provision of formula in center-based programs and family child care homes;
    - **Inclusion of at-risk children with disabilities** by ensuring:
        - Services meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families, including the establishment and implementation of procedures to identify such children and plans to coordinate with programs providing services

as described in 42 U.S.C. § 9840A(b)(11) of the Head Start Act;
    - Children with documented behavioral problems receive appropriate screening and referral;
    - An inclusive, supportive environment where children with disabilities can be served in the same settings as typically developing children; and
    - That 10 percent of the children enrolled have a disability, unless granted a waiver by OHS.
- **Family partnerships** providing services to parents that:
    - Support their role as parents;
    - Promote positive parent-child interactions, including the participation of fathers; and
    - Enable families to move toward self-sufficiency.
- **Community partnerships** by ensuring formal linkages and coordination with community agencies located in the area or state that provide services within the birth-to-five continuum of care and education to ensure that children receive continuous, coordinated services from birth to school entry. Coordination should include such providers as early intervention service providers; other agencies providing services to infants and toddlers, including the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program and other home visiting programs, local Head Start programs; state pre-kindergarten; and other local providers of early childhood education.
- **Administrative and financial management**, including:
    - Ensuring a well-functioning governing body to share responsibility for oversight of the delivery of high-quality services;
    - Ensuring financial management systems are in place that meet requirements set forth in 45 CFR § 75.302;
    - Ensuring family involvement in the program through opportunities such as participation in the policy council or committees at the grantee level;
    - Ensuring that the level of services provided to families responds to their specific needs and circumstances;
    - Recruiting, training, and supervising high-quality staff;
    - Providing professional development plans for each staff member to ensure that each staff person attains and maintains qualifications for his/her position and meets all Head Start requirements for staff working with infants and toddlers (Head Start Act 42 U.S.C. § 9840A(h)(2));
    - Implementing a systematic procedure for transitioning children, such as:
        - Ensuring continuity of services and smooth transitions when the needs of families change, to ensure that children served through the EHS-CC Partnership receive ongoing services through fluctuations of family status;
        - Supporting transition planning with families to ensure each pregnant woman and child experiences smooth transitions into EHS and child care services; and from EHS and child care services to Head Start or other preschool programs.
    - Implementing appropriate financial management systems so that expenditures are attributable to specific activities under the grant award.
- **Transportation** by working with families to address their transportation needs and

providing or helping them find transportation, as needed to participate in the program.

- **Facilities** by ensuring centers and family child care homes meet licensing and all health and safety requirements for infants and toddlers.

Overview of Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Models

EHS enrolls pregnant women and children from birth to age 3. Applicants may request to operate services through the EHS-CC Partnership model for center-based services for infants and toddlers, and family child care services for infants, toddlers, and children up to the age of 3; or through the non-partnership EHS Expansion model for direct or delegated center-based, family child care; home-based or locally designed options with services for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers; or a combination approach of both models. Grantees, regardless of the model(s) or option(s), must serve a sufficient number of pregnant women, infants, and toddlers, and their families so that the funding level is adequate to support the full array of staffing and infrastructure necessary for successful implementation. Although ACF is not setting a minimum number of participant slots for which applicants must apply, ACF recommends applicants not currently operating EHS or EHS-CC Partnerships propose no fewer than 72 slots, which may include multiple child care center and/or family child care home partner sites. ACF recognizes that organizations with existing EHS infrastructure to support the necessary services may propose fewer than 72 slots.

Applicants should identify the model(s) they plan to implement (in a post-COVID-19 without the physical distancing restrictions currently in place due to COVID-19). The non-partnership EHS Expansion model is operated directly by the program and/or its delegates. The EHS-CC Partnership model is operated through child care centers and family child care homes, generally through a contracted partnership. Applicants may also propose to offer both models in a single program.

Regardless of model, all grantees are required to leverage existing local resources and collaborate with community organizations to ensure that a comprehensive array of health, mental health, nutrition, and social services are provided to enrolled pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families.

Program Options

Center-Based Option

Center-based services are delivered in a child care or early education center. Programs select the center-based design that provides sufficient hours to meet the needs of eligible children and families in their communities.

EHS programs must operate a minimum of 1,380 hours per year. While length of day is not prescribed, for most programs, this is a minimum of 6 hours per day, 46 weeks per year. OHS expects EHS-CC Partnership grantees to provide a minimum of 10 hours per day all year to meet the needs of working families. Programs generally use resources in addition to EHS funding to meet the full-day needs of families.

The requirements for the center-based option are listed in the HSPPS, section 45 CFR § 1302.21.

Home-Based Option

The home-based option delivers the full range of required services through a minimum of 46 weekly visits with a child's parent(s) and at least 22 group socialization experiences over the course of the year. For example, for young infants or medically fragile children in very rural areas, and when families prefer not to send their infants and toddlers to center-based care, this option may be implemented when a parent is available at home. The home-based option is not compatible with the EHS-CC Partnership model.

The requirements for this option are fully described in the HSPPS section 45 CFR § 1302.22.

Family Child Care Option

The full range of Head Start services are delivered to children enrolled in family child care homes operated directly by the grantee or through a contract with the family child care provider(s). This model must operate sufficient hours to meet the needs of families and not less than 1,380 hours per year. This option may be implemented, for example, when families need flexible hours, prefer a home-like setting, or want siblings to attend together. It may also be the best option when there is no available facility in a community to operate a center-based program.

> *Developing Family Child Care Providers and Building Networks*
>
> In communities with a shortage of child care, innovative approaches can increase the supply of high-quality early care and education in the community. Such approaches might include training new family child care providers and establishing family child care networks. Family child care networks can create increased administrative efficiency and access to resources. They also can decrease isolation and increase professional development opportunities and support among and between family child care providers.

The requirements for this option are fully described in the HSPPS section 45 CFR § 1302.23.

Locally Designed Program Options

Based on the strategic plan and community assessment, applicants may propose a variation that responds to the needs of families in the community. Some communities or eligible populations may have unique needs for services that do not fall within the standard options or models described earlier. Applicants to provide EHS to such populations or communities are encouraged to propose innovative designs or a combination of existing program options using the waiver process for locally designed options described in section 45 CFR § 1302.24 of the HSPPS. Selection of this option must be supported by evidence that demonstrates the locally-designed variation effectively supports appropriate development and progress in children's early learning outcomes.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CC Partnerships) Model

In this model, eligible infants and toddlers enrolled in center-based and/or family child care receive high-quality, comprehensive services that meet the HSPPS, including requirements for teacher qualifications, curriculum, screening, nutrition, and other services. EHS-CC Partnership grantees are required to use a layered funding model that integrates additional funding and resources for a seamless full-day and full-year of comprehensive services.

More than 60 percent of infants and toddlers served through CCDF are in families living below

the federal poverty level; therefore, they are also eligible for EHS. Children in poverty who need full-day child care frequently also need the comprehensive services provided by EHS. Also, because of the relatively underserved proportion of subsidy-eligible children under age 3 in high-quality early learning programs, applicants are strongly encouraged to target areas with high concentrations of subsidy-receiving and subsidy-eligible (e.g., children on subsidy waiting lists) children and their families. For children in poverty already in child care, improving the quality of those child care programs is a need often identified by communities.

EHS-CC Partnerships have the benefit of "ripple effects" for children who may not be enrolled in an EHS-CC Partnership slot, but who receive services at an EHS-CC Partnership site, increasing the positive reach of the model. For example, all infants and toddlers attending an EHS-CC Partnership site, whether enrolled in EHS or not, may benefit from program-level enhancements such as lower teacher-child ratios, staff training, and facilities and homes that meet licensing and other safety requirements.

EHS-CC Partner Roles and Responsibilities

It is expected that through the EHS-CC Partnership, grantees and their partners will be able to deliver higher quality and comprehensive services to all enrolled children by layered federal funds for the eligible EHS children and the child care subsidies and/or other funds. Funding provided through this grant will support the implementation of these requirements and must be allocated appropriately between the grantee and the partners to do so. The exact role for each partner will vary at the local level, depending on existing and proposed services through EHS and child care for each partnership. The EHS-CC Partnership grantee and partnering child care provider(s) must establish clearly defined roles and responsibilities articulated through a sub-recipient agreement or a contract. Clearly defining joint roles and responsibilities, and those that are separate and distinct, to the grantee and to the partners, is vital in ensuring accountability for meeting all requirements of the grant.

All EHS-CC Partnership grantees must ensure that every child receives all of the required services set forth in the HSPPS, whether that is done directly by the grantee or through support or financial assistance to the child care partner. EHS-CC Partner sites are responsible for meeting the HSPPS for the services rendered through the agreement as specified with the grantee, such as education, health and safety needs, family partnerships, nutrition, etc. Grantees will ensure that all other comprehensive services will be provided directly by the grantee, by the partners, or through community referrals. Roles and responsibilities of the EHS-CC Partnership grantee and the child care partners are summarized in, but not limited to, the list below.

Grantee Level Responsibilities

- Engaging partners early and continuously in the planning process;
- Ensuring the provision of all comprehensive services, including health, mental health, oral health, nutrition, education, and parent engagement services for all children enrolled EHS and EHS-CC Partnership;
- Ensuring that all administrative and financial management requirements are met;
- Ensuring all EHS staff and EHS-CC Partnership teachers meet minimum qualifications for their positions;
- Providing technical assistance and professional development, coaching, and supervision for all staff with an emphasis on continuity of care and relational learning that supports

children and their families and fosters school readiness;
- Ensuring family service workers are available in sufficient numbers to support enrolled families;
- Ensuring a minimum of two annual home visits for each enrolled child;
- Supporting the inclusion and delivery of services to children with disabilities (at least 10 percent of funded enrollment);
- Fully assessing and ensuring the physical environment and facilities meet all HSPPS, including requirements for square footage, health and safety, appropriate crib and sleep spacing and arrangements, and facilities;
- Planning for and providing resources to support partner access to safe, developmentally appropriate outdoor environments that allow children to grow and thrive in the natural environment;
- Ensuring compliance with all applicable regulations, including state and/or local child care licensing;
- Ensuring children retain services regardless of their subsidy status; and
- Engaging parents in program decision-making through involvement on the Policy Council.

EHS-CC Partnership grantees are expected to build upon the existing services provided by the partners as well as other available community resources.

EHS-CC Partner Responsibilities

- Ensuring adult-child ratios and group sizes meet EHS standards or state, territory, or tribal requirements – whichever requirements are more stringent – at all times. (This may require additional staffing to ensure appropriate coverage for full-day services while also minimizing the number of transitions and maximizing the consistency and stability of relationships for very young children);
- Implementing evidence-based curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for infants and toddlers;
- Conducting ongoing assessment of children to individualize the instruction and learning for each child;
- Providing health and nutrition services, including all developmental, sensory, and behavioral screening and assistance with provision of follow-up services; and
- Engaging parents in the full range of child development and family support services.

Start-Up and Implementation Period for All Grantees (regardless of model)

Newly awarded grantees, regardless of model or option(s), should anticipate a reasonable start-up period and will be expected to begin providing services as soon as high-quality services can reasonably be provided (i.e., when high-quality facilities are ready and staff have been trained). Grantees are expected to be fully enrolled no later than 12 months after receiving a grant award.

ACF recognizes that the development and implementation of a start-up plan is critical to the success of new or expanded programs for all grantees, regardless of model. The development of

the timeline for pre-operational activities, including orientation, training, and health and safety checks is also critical to ensure children have the necessary equipment and materials. Planning for the provision of EHS services requires a thoughtful process in both design and implementation, including engagement with community entities. Planning for EHS-CC Partnerships must incorporate the strengths and resources the child care and family child care partners bring to the partnership and the contributions of other community organizations. Planning for program implementation should begin with this application and continue at the time of funding. Start-up planning and implementation will consist of:

- Negotiating and implementing contract agreements with a manageable number of partners;
- Creating an organizational structure to support provision of comprehensive services to children and families;
- Developing plans to provide high-quality, comprehensive services (health, mental health, family support services, and nutrition);
- Hiring qualified staff, including required background checks, and developing professional development plans for each staff member;
- Providing for training and professional development activities, which move staff on a career pathway towards knowledge, skills, and credentials associated with enhanced quality;
- Developing plans to provide both EHS and, if applicable, child care staff with training as required by HSPPS; state, territory, or tribal and local child care licensing; and other regulations;
- Developing plans to ensure high-quality group care environments, including assessing and improving settings to ensure the safety, well-being, and developmental appropriateness for children, staff, and families;
- Developing plans to lessen barriers such as lack of transportation;
- Developing management, fiscal, and facilities plans;
- Developing service plans that include a schedule for screening and ongoing assessment and the selection and implementation of an evidence-based curriculum;
- Developing plans to implement and facilitate a coordinated system of care that will assist in meeting the needs of the children and families, including partnership with the local Part C (of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) intervention agency that coordinates services for infants and toddlers with disabilities;
- Developing systems of ongoing oversight and monitoring to ensure quality;
- Recruiting and enrolling children; and
- Planning for and providing access to safe, developmentally appropriate outdoor environments that allow children to grow and thrive in the natural environment.

Activities completed by all applicants during the planning process require a thorough review and understanding of relevant HSPPS and all relevant requirements in the Head Start Act. All newly funded EHS grantees will have a variety of resources available to support their planning and implementation efforts, including the resources listed in *Section VIII. Other Information, Reference Websites* of this FOA. All EHS Expansion or EHS-CC Partnership grantee applicants are strongly encouraged to use a start-up planner and/or a fiscal consultant to help ensure plans,

policies, and procedures are in place to address all regulations.

Applicants are encouraged to request start-up funds; however, the approval of start-up funding as requested is not guaranteed.

Start-Up and Implementation Period for EHS-CC Partnership Grantees

Early implementation of the first round of EHS-CC Partnership grants has contributed to an expanded body of knowledge regarding the keys to success in these programs. In addition to the previously addressed considerations for all applicants, EHS-CC Partnership grantees should focus on the following during the start-up/implementation period:

- *Conducting self-assessment and partner-assessment activities,* including applicants assessing their own capacity to provide technical assistance to partners to meet EHS standards and considering whether they will need to contract with other entities to provide support through the grant; discussion with partners should include an in-depth assessment of partner needs related to facilities, referral and enrollment protocols, classroom environment, ratios, group size, professional development, staff qualifications, staffing plans (including substitutes), salary enhancements, curriculum, meals, and other supports;
- *Working with partners to jointly develop partnership contracts and agreements* that include information such as sites of services, specific roles and responsibilities of the grantee and the partners, and selection of partnership child care sites; EHS-CC Partnership contracts and agreements should be individualized to address the unique needs of each partner; and programs are encouraged to work with a manageable number of partners;
- *Establishing payment terms and conditions* that are stated in the contract or agreement and ensure partners have access to sufficient funds to accomplish the goals and objectives. Partners should be paid on an enrollment basis -- rather than on an attendance basis. Other costs associated with fully preparing partnership staff and the care environment to meet HSPPS must be calculated into payments made under the agreement. Timing of payments to partners is also crucial. If funds are to be used to support staff qualifications, facilities renovation, and other immediate needs, then those initial costs and methods for providing funds to partners must be covered in the contract. Partner contracts or agreements and the program budgets must anticipate the loss of child care subsidy or other funding and must recognize that the loss of funding is not a basis for dis-enrolling an EHS-CC Partnership child already enrolled in the program;
- *Developing plans for staffing coverage* that allows for primary caregiving relationships and continuity of care for EHS-CC Partnership enrolled children. Because the required EHS staffing ratio is one teacher for every four children and no more than eight children in one group or classroom, additional teachers and staff will be needed to cover full hours of operation and conduct the range of duties (e.g., lesson planning, reflective supervision, etc.) necessary to provide EHS-CC Partnership services;
- *Developing plans to support the professional development of staff over time* and strategies to ensure that wages of EHS-CC Partnership caregivers are on par with similarly qualified EHS teachers; and
- *Planning systems of ongoing oversight and support* to ensure high-quality service

provision through the life of the grant; contract adjustments may be needed over time with constant assessment to help determine the level of adjustment.

Administrative Cost Waiver

No more than 15 percent of total costs may be used for program administration. An HHS official may grant a waiver of the 15 percent limitation on allowable development and administration costs for a Head Start or EHS program approving a higher percentage for a specific period of time not to exceed 12 months (45 CFR § 1303.5).

Oversight and Monitoring Reviews

OHS is responsible for monitoring the quality of Head Start and/or EHS program services and the grantee's compliance with federal and other applicable requirements, and to provide access to training and technical assistance as needed. The federal government uses several mechanisms to conduct its oversight, including ongoing communication with ACF regional offices and periodic site visits. Federal monitoring reviews are required by the Head Start Act. Over the course of the project period, reviews are conducted to ensure compliance with the HSPPS and other applicable regulations. Monitoring reviews may occur onsite or offsite, and include compliance with health and safety requirements, rules related to children's eligibility for the program, and financial management requirements.

Federal Evaluation

As a condition of acceptance of an award under this FOA, all grantees are required to participate fully in ACF-sponsored evaluations and adhere to all evaluation protocols established by ACF to be carried out by its designee contractors.

ACF-led evaluations are subject to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). ACF will obtain OMB approval prior to requiring grantees to respond to a collection of information.

Eligible Participants (all grantees)

EHS programs enroll pregnant women and infants and toddlers from birth to age 3. Additionally, EHS-CC Partnership grantees may serve children in family child care settings from birth to 48 months. Families must have incomes below the poverty line, be eligible for public assistance, be homeless, or be in foster care to be eligible for services (see definitions in 45 CFR § 1305.2). Children are selected for enrollment based on age, income eligibility, and relative level of need with regard to other criteria that are identified within each community (45 CFR § 1302.12(b)(c)).

Head Start regulations permit up to 10 percent of enrolled participants to be from families that do not meet these low-income criteria.

Additionally, programs must ensure that at least 10 percent of the total number of children enrolled by the Head Start or EHS agency and delegates are children with disabilities unless a waiver is granted.

Child care subsidy eligibility requirements under CCDF are established by states, territories, and tribes and vary within a broad set of parameters established by federal rules. Each CCDF

lead agency sets income eligibility limits up to 85 percent of state median income. Families must be working or participating in education/training, and children must be under age 13. In CCDF, more than 60 percent of infants and toddlers served are in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold and, therefore, are eligible for EHS also.

Applicants may elect to propose program models that promote socioeconomic diversity within classrooms. Federal Head Start funds must be used to serve eligible children as described in this section. Additional children who are not income-eligible for EHS can be served as long as their participation is supported through other funding sources such as child care subsidies, public school pre-K allocations, parent-paid tuition, or other sources. Such program designs may be beneficial in promoting socioeconomic diversity within classrooms. All costs must be allocated to appropriate funding sources in compliance with federal requirements.

Mortgages and Long-Term Lease Agreements

If so directed by OHS, the newly funded grantee must accept assignment of any existing mortgages, long-term lease agreements, or security agreements (in the case of a modular unit) on properties subject to a federal interest occupied by the current grantee.

Subawards

Recipients under this grant program may opt to transfer a portion of substantive programmatic work to other organizations through subaward(s). The prime recipient is responsible for oversight of all programmatic, financial, and administrative matters, including reporting, related to the grant. This responsibility includes oversight of these matters as they relate to the subrecipient(s).

In addition, the prime recipient must maintain a substantive role in the project. ACF defines a substantive role as conducting activities and/or providing services funded under the award that are necessary and integral to the completion of the project. Subrecipient monitoring activities alone as specified in 45 CFR § 75.352 do not constitute a substantive role.

Subrecipient(s) must meet the eligibility requirements identified in Section III.1. Eligible Applicants. Additionally, all subrecipient(s) must obtain a DUNS number if they do not already have one. Prime recipients are required to check the System for Award Management (SAM) to verify that the subrecipient(s) is/are not debarred, suspended, or ineligible. See Section IV.3 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM).

Subrecipients may provide cost sharing or matching towards the prime recipient's requirement, if their contribution meets requirements at 45 CFR § 75.306. For more information, please refer to Section III.2. Cost Sharing and Matching.

The prime recipient must conduct a risk assessment of subrecipient(s) in accordance with 45 CFR § 75.352(b). Prime recipients are required to adhere to the requirements noted in 45 CFR § 75.352 and be in compliance with 45 CFR § 75.351 and § 75.353. Prime recipients may be required to report under the Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA). Information about the FFATA is located at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/award-term-for-federal-financial-accountability-and-transparency.

Should a subrecipient perform unsatisfactorily, the prime recipient is responsible for remedying subrecipient issues. The prime recipient will be held accountable for cost disallowances regarding subawarded funds. Subrecipient performance will also be considered during review of

applications for non-competing continuations. If requirements of the program cannot be met due to subrecipient issues, ACF may need to take one or more of the actions listed under 45 CFR § 75.371-.375.

If the applicant proposes to issue subaward(s), but has not yet identified the subrecipient organization(s) by the time of application submission, if awarded, the prime recipient must submit a prior approval request with the name of the subrecipient organization(s), updated description(s) of the work to be performed, and updated subaward budget(s) and budget justification(s). This information must be submitted within 90 days of the start date of the grant. If a subaward was not originally proposed in the application, but later becomes necessary, ACF prior approval is required before any activities in the subaward request begin.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

If, during the project period, OHS and/or grantees are required to adjust program and/or grant requirements due to the coronavirus and COVID-19 or other emergency, OHS will exercise maximum flexibilities as needed. Requirements may be conducted virtually or timelines modified in consultation with OHS.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Grant
Estimated Total Funding:	$103,057,319
Expected Number of Awards:	60
Award Ceiling:	$21,096,468 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	$750,000 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	$1,500,000 Per Budget Period
Anticipated Project Start Date:	03/04/2021

Length of Project Periods:

Length of Project Period:	60-month project period with five 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Awards

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

Applicants must submit an annual (12-month) budget. The funding amount listed on Line 18a (Federal) of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, must reflect a full 12 months of funding. The federal funding amounts reflected on the SF-424 and in the applicant's budget submission must match.

Applications requesting an annual award amount that exceeds the Award Ceiling as listed in this section will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies to the Award Ceiling for a 12-month period, as reflected on the applicant's SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, Line 18a (Federal). Please see *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*.

The applicant's 12-month budget request should include both base and training and technical assistance (T/TA) funding. Base funding is for use in program operations, staff, materials, equipment, facilities, etc. In addition to base funding, applicants should request an additional 2.5 percent of the base funding for training and technical assistance (T/TA) funding. T/TA funding is used for the purposes of improving program quality and helping prepare children to succeed in school and is described in Section 648 of the Head Start Act. Therefore, the total federal funds requested in the applicant's budget and on the applicant's SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, Line 18a (Federal) should include the sum of the applicant's proposed base and T/TA funding. Please see *Appendix, Regional Allocations* for more information.

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

Expected Number of Awards

Please note that the expected number of awards represents a total estimated **range** of awards that OHS might make as the result of this FOA.

Start-up/Pre-Award Costs

Pre-award costs, including start-up costs, may be requested by an applicant in addition to the base operating and training and technical assistance (T/TA) grant funds. If requested, applicants must provide a separate budget for start-up/pre-award costs, in addition to a 12-month budget for the base funding awarded, within the page limitations stated for *The Project Budget and Budget Justification* in S*ection IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. If awarded, start-up/pre-award costs would apply to costs incurred up to 90 days prior to the award start date. Examples of start-up activities are facility renovations, purchase of classroom supplies, building purchase, licensing, background checks, etc.

Approval of start-up/pre-award costs is **not** guaranteed; they are negotiated at the time of award and are based on reasonableness, necessity, and the availability of funds. The incurrence of start-up/pre-award costs in anticipation of an award is done at the applicant's own risk and imposes no obligation on ACF either to make an award or to increase the amount of the approved budget if an award is made for less than the amount anticipated and is inadequate to cover the start-up/pre-award costs incurred. It is possible that ACF may honor start-up/pre-award costs by reducing the base amount of the award to include these costs.

Estimates for start-up/pre-award costs must be identified separately on the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, and in the Budget and Budget Justification section of the application. The start-up/pre-award funding amount must **not** be included in the funding amount listed on Line 18a (Federal) of the SF-424. The funding amount listed in Line 18a of the SF-424 must represent only the total annual federal funding the applicant is requesting for base and T/TA funding. Start-up/pre-award costs, if requested, should be included only on the Other Estimated Funding line (Line 18e) and clearly labeled as "Start-up/Pre-Award Costs" in a

separate line item on the SF-424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs. Additionally, if applicants are requesting start-up/pre-award costs, these costs must be easily identified as a separate budget in the Budget and Budget Justification section of the application.

Inclusion of start-up/pre-award costs in the application submission is not subject to the "Award Ceiling Disqualification" that is explained in this section of the announcement and in *Section III.3. Other, Application Disqualification Factors*. However, if an applicant does not segregate start-up/pre-award costs from the base funding award request (SF-424, line 18a, Federal), the "Award Ceiling Disqualification" will apply.

Start-up budgets will be evaluated against the criteria listed in *Section V.1. Criteria*.

Note: Costs incurred for grant application preparation are not considered an approved use of pre-award costs and may not be included in the project budget or budget justification.

Grant Awards

The successful applicant(s) under this FOA *may* receive grant awards with a project period of up to 5 years (60 months) that may include 4-5 budget periods. For example, grantees may receive a 54-month project period with an initial 18-month budget period and three subsequent 12-month budget periods.

Please see *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions* for limitations on the use of federal funds awarded under this announcement.

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are any public or private non-profit agencies, including community-based and faith-based organizations, or for-profit agencies pursuant to section 645A(d) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9840A(d).

Eligible entities include: (1) entities operating Head Start, (2) entities operating Indian Head Start or Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs, and (3) other public entities and nonprofit or for-profit private entities, including community-based and faith-based organizations, capable of providing child and family services that meet the standard for participation in programs under the Head Start Act.

Please note, "(1) entities operating Head Start programs" includes entities operating Head Start, EHS, and/or EHS-CC Partnership programs.

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

Faith-based and community organizations that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity announcement.
See *Section IV.2. Legal Status of Applicant Entity* for documentation required to support eligibility.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: Yes

Grantees are required to meet a non-federal share of the project cost, in accordance with Section 640(b) of the Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9835 (b).

Grantees must provide at least 20 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF (federal) share and the non-federal share. The non-federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. For example, in order to meet the match requirements, a project requesting $21,096,468.00 in ACF (federal) funds must provide a non-federal share of the approved total project cost of at least $5,274,117.00 , which is 20 percent of total approved project cost of $26,370,585.00 .

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, 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. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by a recipient or subrecipient and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the recipient 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.**

Waivers

To receive a waiver or a reduction in the required non-federal share, the applicant must provide ACF with written documentation of need. This request must identify which of the five waiver criteria found at 42 U.S.C. § 9835(b)(1-5) of the Head Start Act the applicant believes to be

relevant. The applicant may submit the waiver with the grant proposal document or during the budget negotiation period. The applicant cannot assume approval of the waiver request without written notice from ACF. Waiver requests will not impact the award of points in the evaluation of the application.

Please note: The following matching requirement waiver allowed by 48 U.S.C. § 1469a(d) is only available to territorial governmental agencies that are applicants or grantees under EHS in the insular areas. Head Start grantees in the insular areas are not eligible for this waiver.

Matching Waiver Pursuant to 48 U.S.C. § 1469a(d)

Matching requirements (including in-kind contributions) of less than $200,000 (up to $199,999) are waived under grants made to the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (other than those consolidated under other provisions of 48 U.S.C. 1469) pursuant to 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d). This waiver applies whether the matching required under the grant equals or exceeds $200,000.
Non-federal resources will be evaluated under criteria found in *Section V.1.* of this announcement.

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 annual award amount that exceeds the *Award Ceiling* per budget period as stated in *Section II*. Federal *Award Information* will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. This disqualification applies to the *Award Ceiling* listed for a 12-month period, as reflected on the applicant's SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, Line 18a (Federal).

Required Electronic Application Submission
ACF requires electronic submission of applications at www.Grants.gov**. Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.** Applicants that do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the Internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "Request an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission" in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission.*

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

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

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

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

Additional Application Disqualification Factors

- In accordance with 45 CFR § 1304.13, grantees terminated for cause by ACF within 5 years prior to the posting date of this FOA will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

- A Head Start or EHS agency that has had a denial of refunding, in the preceding 5 years is also excluded from competing (45 CFR § 1304.13).

Notification of Application Disqualification
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

HHS-2020-ACF-OHS-HP-1852
Office of Head Start
OHS Operations Center

1401 Mercantile Lane
Suite 401
Largo, MD 20774
Phone: (888) 242-0684
Email: OHSTech@reviewops.org

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

Applications in Paper Format:
For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" available in the FOA's Grants.gov Synopsis under the Package tab at www.Grants.gov. 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.

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

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS
Each applicant applying electronically via www.Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

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

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. Pages that contain blurred text, or text that is too small to read comfortably, will be removed.

English Language
Applications must be submitted in the English language and must be in the terms of United States (U.S.) dollars. If applications are submitted using another currency, ACF will convert the foreign currency to U.S. currency using the date of receipt of the application to determine the rate of exchange.

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.

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).

Corrections/Updates to Submitted Applications
When applicants make revisions to a previously submitted application, ACF will accept only the last on-time application for pre-review under the Application Disqualification Factors. The Application Disqualification Factors determine the application's acceptance for competitive review. See *Section III.3. Application Disqualification Factors* and *Section IV.2. Application Submission Options*.

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

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

Signatures
Applicants submitting electronic applications must follow the registration and application submission instructions provided at www.Grants.gov.

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

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

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

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

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

Page Limitations and File Content

The page limitation is 150 pages for the Project Summary/Abstract, Table of Contents, Project Description (First File), and Appendices. Page limitations are identical for electronic

and paper formats application submissions.

First File

- Project Summary/Abstract *(single-spaced) – limited to 1 page*
- Table of Contents *(single-spaced) – suggested 1 page*
- Project Description *(double-spaced) – suggested 75 pages*
    - Community Need and Objective
    - Project Design and Approach
    - Staffing
    - Planning and Implementation
    - Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems
    - Budget and Budget Justification

Second File

- Appendices *(must be readable) – suggested 73 pages*
    - Certificate of Good Standing
    - Board of Directors Attestation
    - Proof of Legal Status of Applicant
    - Proof of Policy Council Approval
    - Organizational Capacity documentation (e.g., resumes, job descriptions, organizational charts)
    - Third-party agreements
    - Indirect cost rate agreement (IDR)
    - Letters of support
    - Plan for Oversight of Federal Award and Funds Activities
    - Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information
    - Executed Leases, draft leases, unsigned leases, or a letter of intent for each proposed property(ies). **Note:** The lease documentation will not count towards the page limitation.
    - Other supporting documents

Enforcement of FOA Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements

In instances where formatting and font requirements are not adhered to, ACF uses a formula to recalculate the number of pages the application would include if it conformed to the formatting and font requirements listed in this section. 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 1,500 characters, per page which is equal to 4/5 of an additional page. Recalculation of pages using this formula may cause applications to exceed the page limitation, which would cause pages to be removed from the end of the Second File, which includes the Appendices, and excluded from review.

Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project (SF-424)

Applicants **MUST** clearly state the intent of the proposal in Line 15 of the SF-424, Descriptive

Title of Applicant's Project, as one of the following:

- EHS-CC Partnership,
- EHS (Non-Partnership) Expansion, or
- Combined Application for EHS-CC Partnership and EHS Expansion

The Descriptive Title **must include the state(s)** in which proposed service will be provided, for example, "EHS-CC Partnership – North Carolina" or "Non-Partnership EHS Expansion – Illinois."

Additional SF-424 Instructions

Line 18a – Federal: Include the combined base and T/TA funding requested by the applicant

Line 18e – Other: Includes start-up funding amount, if requested.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Acrobat Reader software 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 Acrobat Reader they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" at the top bar menu and select "Adobe Software Compatibility", which is listed under "Applicant Resources." The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their version of the software by opening a test Workspace PDF form. Grants.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions for use, if an applicant is unable to open the test form.

The Adobe Software Compatibility page located on Grants.gov also provides guidance for applicants on filling out a Workspace PDF form. In addition, it addresses local network and/or computer security settings and the impact this has on use of Adobe software.

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

Naming Application Submission Files
Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov**. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces).** Special characters that are allowed under Grants.gov's naming conventions, and are accommodated by ACF's systems, are listed in the instructions available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" at Grants.gov. Please also see https://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. For more information on the exemption, see "*ACF Policy on Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission'" at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6*

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).

Applicants using paper format should download the application forms package associated with the FOA's Synopsis on www.Grants.gov under the Package tab.

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.

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description
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.
Proof of Policy Council Approval	Submission is required of applicants that are **current Head Start and/or Early Head Start grantees**.	Proof of Policy Council Approval of the application is required of applicants that are current Head Start and/or Early Head Start grantees by 42 U.S.C. § 9837(c)(2)(D)(iii) of the Head Start Act and 45 CFR § 1301.3.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
SF-424A Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs / SF-424B Assurances - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424C - Budget Information Construction Programs / SF-424D - Assurances Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for both, non-construction **and** construction activities, under the proposed project. Standard Forms must be used. Standard Forms must be submitted by the application due date. By signing and submitting the SF-424B and/or SF-424D, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to	Required for all applications when applying for non-construction and/or construction activities under the proposed project. Please see special instructions in the *Checklist* in *Section VIII. Other Information* in this announcement. Projects that include both, **non-construction and construction** activities must submit the SF-424A, B, C, and D.

	nondiscrimination.	
Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.	See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)* for more information.
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 must cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
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.
Assurance: Board Attestation	Submission is strongly encouraged for any applicants who collaborate with an external grant-writer, consultant and/or contractor for assistance and/or support on their application submission. The assurance may be submitted with the application package.	A template of this assurance is provided in the *Appendix* of this announcement. The assurance must be **signed** by the Board chair, or person who is authorized to sign the application on behalf of the applicant.

Certificate of Good Standing	Submission is required for all **for-profit organizations**.	Sole proprietorships are not eligible applicants. The submission of the Certificate of Good Standing, along with the current list of board members, and organizational documents that require the establishment and maintenance of a Board of Directors, provide proof of eligibility for for-profit organizations.

Mandatory Grant Disclosure
All applicants and recipients are required to submit, 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. (Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR § 75.113)

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

> 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
>
> **And to:**
>
> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, ATTN: Mandatory Grant Disclosures, Intake Coordinator, 330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen Building, Room 5527, Washington, DC 20201
>
> **Fax:** (202) 205-0604 (Include "Mandatory Grant Disclosures" in subject line) or
> **Email:** MandatoryGranteeDisclosures@oig.hhs.gov

SF-424 Key Contact Form

Applicants must provide contact information on the following in this form:

- Key Management Staff (e.g., Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer);
- Key Program Staff (e.g., Executive Director, Program Director); and
- Board Chairperson

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions
The Project Description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for financial assistance. It must address all activities for which federal funds are being requested and all application requirements as stated in this section. The Project Description must explain how the project will meet the purpose of the FOA, as described in *Section I. Program Description*. As a reminder, reviewers will be evaluating this section in accordance with *Section V.1. Criteria*.

The Project Description must be clear, concise, and complete. ACF is particularly interested in Project Descriptions that convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project Descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting documents designated as required must be included in the Appendix of the FOA.

Table of Contents

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers. The table of contents may be single spaced.

Project Summary

Provide a summary of the application project description. It must be clear, accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. The summary 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 Project Summary:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax, Cell)
- Email Address
- Website Address, if applicable

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

Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Legal Status means being established as a public agency under state law or a non-profit under state or federal law. ACF will accept proof of status as a for-profit organization under state or federal law.

Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-

profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

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

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

For-Profits and Small Businesses

For-profit organizations (including small businesses) applying for funding must submit the following to provide proof of their legal status: Documentation establishing the power granted to the entity to enter into contractual relationships and/or accept awards (i.e. articles of incorporation, bylaws).

For-profit organizations applying for funding must submit the following to provide proof of their eligibility and legal status:

- A Certificate of Good Standing,
- A current list of board members, and
- Organizational documents that require the establishment and maintenance of a Board of Directors.

Additional Eligibility Documentation

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

Proof of Policy Council Approval

Current Head Start and EHS grantees must submit Proof of Policy Council Approval of the application as required by 42 U.S.C. § 9837(c)(2)(D)(iii) of the Head Start Act (45 CFR § 1301.3).

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.

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

1. Community Need and Objectives

Applicants must provide data about why a geographic area is in high need of early childhood education and family support services. Data must include the number of eligible pregnant women, infants, and toddlers by geographic location; the number of families in extreme poverty; jobless rates; incidence of community health problems; or other similar factors.

Demonstrate how the proposed program would target a geographic area with the greatest need for Early Head Start services, and how children and families most in need will be identified and prioritized.

Provide a description of information regarding the availability and access to early childhood education services for infants and toddlers in low-income families in the proposed geographic area.

Clearly justify how the needs of the community are best served by their proposed approach, including a rationale for which ages of children the applicant proposes to serve in its program. Justify the program option(s) proposed for each age group to be served as the most appropriate to meet the needs of the community, as outlined in 45 CFR § 1302.20, including how many pregnant women, infants, and toddlers will be served; and the number of hours per day, days per week, and weeks per year services will be provided.

- Applicants proposing to serve in multiple communities must specify the number of program participants to be served in each community.
- Applicants proposing the home-based option must include the proposed number of home visits and socializations for each age group to be served.

Applicants must discuss the access to other early childhood education programs and services, including the estimated number of EHS-eligible children who are receiving child care subsidy, in the geographic area. Additionally, applicants must describe their plan to effectively leverage available funding streams including child care subsidies.

Applicants must describe barriers to participation including access to transportation. Applicants should propose Early Head Start transportation services as necessary to ensure highest need children can access the program.

Describe how the proposed program will ensure that not less than 10 percent of the total number of children enrolled will be children with disabilities. Describe how the proposed program will partner with other programs or services in the community to best meet the needs of low-income families to be served, with evidence of community engagement and community partnerships in the geographic location(s) to improve service delivery, increase access to services, and prevent duplication.

If proposing EHS-CC Partnership services, discuss if partners have been identified that demonstrate a commitment to the proposed project. Applicants must also demonstrate

their knowledge and awareness of its state's subsidy and CCDF policy landscape in its proposed service area.

If proposing delegate agencies, describe how those delegate agencies were chosen. The applicant must describe how the organization's oversight will ensure the delegate agencies implement high-quality programs that adhere to the requirements outlined in 45 CFR 1303 Subpart D. The applicant must also identify the communities in which the delegate agency will operate, and the number of children to be served including the proposed program option(s).

2. Project Design and Approach

Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to implement and sustain the high-quality, comprehensive, individualized educational, health, mental health, nutritional, oral health, and other social services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families that prepare children to succeed in school. Describe how the program will implement program components and, where applicable, describe separately for infants and toddlers.

Name the curriculum or set of curricula that will be used, describe why it was selected, and present the evidence basis that it effectively promotes progress toward its developmental foundations. Provide evidence supporting how the curriculum is tied to outcomes for children and that it meets the requirements discussed in 45 CFR § 1302.30.

Applicants must describe a process for establishing and measuring school readiness goals (45 CFR § 1302.102) that reflect the ages of children proposed to be served and demonstrate these goals are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Applicants must also explain the extent to which goals were or will be established in alignment with state early learning guidelines, as appropriate.

Describe how service effectiveness and quality will be measured, monitored, and improved upon over time. Applicants must specify the name and process for selection of their assessment tool. The assessment must be developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate. Describe the plan to use child assessment data for individualization and referral, and for aggregation and analysis. Describe how that analysis will be used in combination with other program data to determine grantees' progress toward meeting its goals.

Applicants also must include information about how they will meet the health, oral health, mental health, and nutrition needs for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers. This includes a description of the system for health screening and services that will ensure participants are accurately referred for necessary follow-up evaluation and treatment within time frames specified by 45 CFR § 1302.33.

Provide a plan describing how the applicant will integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to promote children’s learning and development, as discussed in 45 CFR § 1302.34 and 1302.50-52.

Describe how the proposed program will meet the unique needs of special populations, including children with disabilities, dual language learners, children and pregnant women experiencing homelessness, working families, and children in foster care. Provide a plan to develop a unified birth-to-school-entry continuum of care and education through linkages with home visiting programs, Head Start, and other preschool programs. Applicants must explain

their procedures to identify such participants; plans to provide trained personnel; and plans to provide services to assist children in making meaningful progress in attaining age-appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities, and development. In addition, applicants must propose the coordination of services within a community that supports transitions for children and families.

Applicants must describe how they will deliver services to enrolled women post-pregnancy, and how the newborn infant and family will transition into the appropriate program option. They must also describe how the program will support transitions within the EHS program. Lastly, applicants must describe how they will ensure that infants, toddlers, and their families participating in the program will have the opportunity to receive Head Start or other appropriate preschool services for which they are eligible through the age of mandatory school attendance.

Finally, applicants must describe their plan to coordinate with public and private entities that are willing to commit resources to assist the program in providing high-quality child health and developmental services. Such partnerships must include a plan to coordinate with other child care and preschool programs, state pre-kindergarten programs, programs under Part C and Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and with the educational programs that children will enter upon leaving EHS.

If proposing EHS-CC Partnership, applicants must demonstrate that partner sites have been identified and describe their plan for sustaining these partners, as well as contingency plans for replacing proposed partners if any partnerships do not materialize or prove unsustainable.

3. Staffing

Applicants must describe the qualifications of their proposed staff, including their experience in providing child development services in accordance with 45 CFR § 1302.91. This includes a description of key program staff's major functions and responsibilities. Applicants must also describe the management staff's knowledge of the proposed program and how it will ensure that all program staff members understand how those standards are applicable to them. Describe the plan to include staff with infant/toddler expertise in decision-making roles.

Applicants must describe how they will attract and retain qualified staff, including through salary and benefits, with the ability to implement a research-based curriculum; effective instructional strategies; and a high-quality, comprehensive program. Describe the strategies and mechanisms to support staff, and a plan to assess staff performance including under-performing staff. Applicants must also describe how they will provide career development opportunities for professional, paraprofessional, and other staff (45 CFR § 1302.91).

Additionally, applications must describe a plan to evaluate job applicants, including existing grantee staff, to determine which applicants are most capable of implementing a high-quality, comprehensive program.

The narrative must also address the following: (1) how the applicant will facilitate strong staff-child relationships that support the development of infants and toddlers; (2) a plan to ensure that staff are prepared for and supported in implementing evidence-based instructional practices that are individualized to support positive child outcomes; and (3) how all staff will successfully partner with families in supporting children's development.

If proposing center-based or family child care services, describe the plan for observing teacher

practice, including teacher-child interactions. If proposing home-based services, describe the plan for observing home visitor practice, including interactions with the family and child, and supporting the parents in their role as the child's primary caregiver/teacher. For all program services, discuss using this information to inform professional development and practice improvements. Include the names of any instruments to be used.

4. Planning and Implementation

An implementation plan and timeline, including transition period planning, must be included that addresses the following, at a minimum:

- State and local licensing requirements for each proposed age group, the length of time required to obtain licensure for early childhood learning environments, and the impact on the proposed implementation plan.
- The availability of appropriate facilities for the proposed program model(s) and the anticipated timelines for completing any construction, renovation, or adaptation of space to meet requirements.
- As applicable, plans for alternative service provision (e.g., temporary home based services) during start-up, until contracts are in place and facilities are fully operational. Full enrollment is expected no later than 12 months from the date of award.
- Where facilities are not available, a plan to acquire facilities in accordance with 45 CFR § 1303.42.
- The ability to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff to support the proposed start of EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership programming.
- Plan for recruiting eligible children and families, and maintaining enrollment. **If proposing EHS-CC Partnership,** this plan must include how the applicant will identify and enroll families currently receiving CCDF subsidies.

5. Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems

Applicants must demonstrate their ability to oversee operations that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The application must describe the capacity of senior executive managers (for example, Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer) and governing body to:

- exercise effective oversight of program operations and accountability for federal funds;
- set and monitor overall agency priorities and operational systems;
- develop and implement systems for communication, record-keeping, reporting, and ongoing monitoring, and;
- conduct community assessment, annual self-assessments, and outcome-based evaluations.

Applicants must document their plan to constitute and train a governing body that will be in compliance with the program governance requirements established in 42 U.S.C. § 9837(c) of

the Head Start Act. Applicants must also demonstrate their capacity to effectively implement a system of governance that includes the Policy Council and parents in decision making. If applicable, applicants should provide information about how its current governance structure would change (if at all) to meet the HSPPS.

If proposing EHS-CC Partnership, applicants must describe their ability to work with partners, and ensure accountability for meeting HSPPS across multiple sites (as appropriate).

Please see *6. Budget and Budget Justification*, under *The Project Budget and Budget Justification* later in this section for additional program-specific requirements that will be evaluated in the application review process.

Organizational Capacity

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

- Organizational charts;
- Resumes;
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description);
- List of Board of Directors;
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures;
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.
- Information on compliance with federal/state/local government standards;
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

If applicable, for each property rented and proposed for use during the project period for which funds will be charged as a direct or indirect cost to the grant made under this FOA, the applicant must provide an executed lease. If a lease has not been executed prior to submission of an application, the applicant must submit an actual draft of the unsigned lease or a letter of intent describing the potential arrangement including address, terms, length and proposed expenses.

If known at the time of application submission, the applicant must disclose their intent to enter into subaward arrangements in their application. For each proposed subaward, the applicant must include a description of the work to be performed by the subrecipient(s).

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

Grantees are required to ensure proper oversight in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D. These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

- Financial and Program Management
- Property (if applicable by program legislation)
- Procurement
- Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting
- Subrecipient Monitoring and Management
- Record Retention and Access
- Remedies for Noncompliance

Describe the framework (e.g. governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) in place to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D. The description must include: system(s) for record-keeping and financial management; procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues (e.g., audit findings, continuous program performance assessment findings, program monitoring); and those key staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff, and, if applicable, partner(s) and/or subrecipient(s).

Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

Provide a description of how protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive, consistent with applicable federal, state, local and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, will be collected and safeguarded. The applicant must provide the methods and/or systems that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and if applicable, address the process for subrecipient(s) and/or contractors. Also, provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period.

Third-Party Agreements

Third-party agreements include Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Letters of Commitment. Letters of Commitment and MOUs must both clearly describe the roles and responsibilities for project activities and the support and/or resources that the third-party (i.e., subrecipient, contractor, or other cooperating entity) is committing. The Letters of Commitment and MOUs must be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments on behalf of their organization. General letters of support are **not** considered to be third-party agreements.

Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment or MOUs between recipients and third-parties (i.e., subrecipients, contractors, or other cooperating entities). In addition to clearly describing the roles and responsibilities for project activities and support and/or resources that the third-party is committing, these agreements must detail work schedules and estimated remuneration with an understanding that a finalized agreement will be negotiated once the successful applicant is awarded the grant.

Letters of Support

Provide statements from community, public, and/or commercial leaders that support the project proposed for funding. All submissions must be included in the application package. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the individual writing the letter, the organization

they represent, the date, and reason(s) for supporting the project.

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. Applicants are encouraged to review the form instructions in addition to the guidance in this section. 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 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 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020 and Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, (Division A, Title II, Sec. 202), 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 of 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 $197,300. 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 for the initial budget period only (typically the first 12 months of the project) using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable.
Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for only the first budget period 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.

6. Budget and Budget Justification

Applicants must demonstrate that funds are budgeted to provide all required comprehensive EHS services. Evidence of a reasonable per-child cost, based on the proposed program type and program option(s) must be included to ensure the maximum number of eligible children are served. The application must clearly and accurately distinguish between the base operating funds, T/TA funds, total federal funds, and the applicant's non-federal share. Additionally, applications should provide a cost-effective budget that is aligned with the program services, staffing plan, and other program components proposed in the application narrative. The applicant must describe the plan for the expenditure of T/TA funds. **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership,** applicant must include sufficient T/TA resources to assist the child care

and family child care partners with meeting HSPPS.

For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership, applicants must demonstrate that a significant portion of funding will be directed to its child care partners to ensure high-quality early learning experiences. Applicants must also discuss how funding will be directed to child care partners to support staff professional development, including credentialing and other opportunities designed to support increased competencies, credentials, wages, and compensation. Additionally, specific details about the applicant's plan to use a layered funding approach that includes the child care subsidy must be described. Applicant must discuss how it will not supplant existing funding including subsidies for their proposed project. Finally, applicants must describe the plan to ensure that children whose families lose child care subsidy eligibility will continue to be served.

The application must detail the plan to contribute the required non-federal share/match of the total project cost. Each source of non-federal share match must be clearly identified, including the estimated amount per source and the valuation methodology. Finally, the proposed sources of non-federal share/match must only be derived from allowable sources. Please see S*ection III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching* for information on the matching requirement.

Start-up/Pre-Award Costs

The application must demonstrate that start-up/pre-award costs, if proposed, are justified, reasonable, and applicable based on the applicant's proposed EHS program. Applicants requesting start-up funding must submit a separate budget for start-up/pre-award costs as described in S*ection II. Federal Award Information*. If the applicant is not requesting start-up/pre-award costs, this requirement is not applicable.

Start-up/pre-award costs may include the following: 1) ensuring that proposed facilities comply with state and local requirements and are adequately equipped, 2) purchasing classroom equipment and supplies, and/or 3) conducting staff background checks.

Facilities

Applicants must delineate any properties that will be used or proposed for use during the project period and for which funds will be charged to the grant made under this FOA as a direct or indirect cost. Properties must be organized into the following three categories: owned, leased (current lease already in place), or intent to lease (through either a letter of intent or an actual draft/unsigned lease). If a lease(s) has not been executed prior to submission of an application, the applicant must submit an actual draft of the unsigned lease or a letter of intent describing the potential arrangement including address, terms, length, and proposed expenses.

The applicant must identify if the arrangement is an “arm’s-length” or “less-than-arms-length” lease and provide how costs are calculated in accordance with 45 CFR § 75.465 (Rental costs of real property and equipment) and 45 CFR § 75.436 (Depreciation).

In the list of properties, include a detailed breakdown of **all proposed costs**. It must be clear which costs are related to which property. In the budget justification, include a corresponding detailed narrative explanation of the purpose and need for each proposed cost under this grant award to determine reasonableness, allocability, and allowability of costs. Each property must include a breakdown of proposed costs and narrative, including all of the following, if

applicable: the allocable percentage and total dollar amount; the depreciation amount with type of method and calculation used; rent amount with calculation; terms of lease; tax amount; insurance amount and what it covers; maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost; minor alterations and renovations with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost.

For ACF property related policy and guidance, please refer to the ACF website at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/real-property-and-tangible-personal-property.

Use the following guidelines for preparing the project budget and budget justification. The budget justification includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail. Applications should only include allowable costs in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

Personnel
Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages. See 45 CFR § 75.430 for more information on allowable personnel costs. Do not include the personnel costs of consultants, contractors and subrecipients under this category.

Justification: For each position, provide: the name of the individual (if known), their 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. Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application.

Fringe Benefits
Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees in addition to regular salaries and wages. For more information on Fringe Benefits please refer to 45 CFR § 75.431. Do not include the fringe benefits of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients.

Typically, fringe benefit amounts are determined by applying a calculated rate for a particular class of employee (full-time or part-time) to the salary and wages requested. Fringe rates are often specified in the approved indirect cost rate agreement. Fringe benefits may be treated as a direct cost or indirect cost in accordance with the applicant's accounting practices. Only fringe benefits as a direct cost should be entered under this category.

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, taxes, etc.

Travel
Description: Costs of project-related travel (i.e., transportation, lodging, subsistence) by employees of the applicant organization who are in travel status on official business. Travel by non-employees such as consultants, contractors or subrecipients should be included under the Contractual line item. Local travel for employees in non-travel status should be listed on the Other line. Travel costs should be developed in accordance with the applicant's travel policies and 45 CFR § 75.474.

Justification: For each trip show: the total number of travelers; 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 justification.

Equipment
Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit 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 organization's regular written accounting practices.) See 45 CFR § 75.439 for more information.

Justification: For each type of equipment requested provide: a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use on the project; as well as use and/or disposition of the equipment after the project ends.

Supplies
Description: Costs of all tangible personal property, other than included under the Equipment category. This includes office and other consumable supplies with a per-unit cost of less than $5,000. See 45 CFR § 75.453 for more information.

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

Contractual
Description: Cost of all contracts and subawards except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contract or subawards with secondary recipient organizations (with budget detail), including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant. Costs related to individual consultants should be listed on the Other line. Recipients are required to use 45 CFR §§ 75.326-.340 procurement procedures, and subawards are subject to the requirements at 45 CFR §§ 75.351-.353.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Applicants must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold stated in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-18-18: Implementing Statutory Change to the Micro-Purchase and the Simplified Acquisition Thresholds for Financial Assistance and 48 CFR Subpart 2.1 (when amended accordingly). 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.

Indicate whether the proposed agreement qualified as a subaward or contract in accordance with 45 CFR § 75.351. Provide the name of the contractor/subrecipient (if known), a description of anticipated services, a justification for why they are necessary, a breakdown of estimated costs, and an explanation of the selection process. In addition, for subawards, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each subaward, by entity name, along with the same justifications referred to in these budget and budget justification instructions.

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.

   Justification: 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. Choosing to charge a lower rate will not be considered during the objective review or award selection process.

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 cost 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 Section 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 the 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* rate. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources
Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424. This line should be used to indicate required and/or voluntary committed cost sharing or matching, if applicable.

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 or cost sharing by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources (at or above the statutory requirement) in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching or cost sharing amount (and any voluntary committed amount in excess) 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, recipients are not expected to provide cost sharing or matching. However, recipients are allowed to voluntarily propose a commitment of non-federal resources. If an applicant decides to voluntarily contribute non-federal resources towards project costs and the costs are accepted by ACF, the non-federal resources will be included in the approved project budget. The applicant will be held accountable for all proposed non-federal resources as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to meet the voluntary amount of non-federal resources that was accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that was identified in the approved 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 cost share or 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).

Applications that lack the required supporting documentation will not be disqualified from competitive review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this announcement.

Construction

Description: Costs of construction or renovation by applicant or contractor/recipient.

Justification: Provide a separate detailed budget and narrative in accordance with the instructions for other object class categories. Identify which construction activities/costs will be contractual and those that the applicant will assume.

Program Income

Description: The estimated amount of gross income, if any, expected to be directly generated by or earned 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. See 45 CFR § 75.307 for more information.

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

Paperwork Reduction Act Disclaimer
As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 02/28/2022. 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
This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for ACF program applications. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic Delivery
ACF is participating in the Grants.gov initiative to provide the grant community with a single site to find and apply for grant funding opportunities. ACF applicants are required to submit their applications online through Grants.gov.

How to Register and Apply through Grants.gov
Read the following instructions about registering to apply for ACF funds. Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

***Obtain a DUNS Number*:** All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B).

Applicants must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizations DUNS" on the SF-424 form.

For more detailed instructions for obtaining a DUNS number, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html

***Register with SAM*:** In addition to having a DUNS number, organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the System for Award Management (SAM). All organizations must register with SAM in order to apply online. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html

***Create a Grants.gov Account*:** The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Applicants must know their organization's DUNS number to complete this process. Completing this process automatically triggers an email request for applicant roles to the organization's E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) for review. The EBiz POC is a representative from your organization who is the contact listed for SAM. To apply for grants on behalf of your organization, you will need the AOR role.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html

***Authorize Grants.gov Roles*:** After creating an account on Grants.gov, the EBiz POC receives an email notifying them of your registration and request for roles. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of your organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been approved as an AOR.

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov. refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html

***Track Role Status*:** To track your role request, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html

When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization's AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC must authorize individuals who are able to make legally binding commitment on behalf of the organization as an AOR; this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.

How to Submit an Application to ACF via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each FOA, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

The following is an overview of applying via Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html

***Create a Workspace*:** Creating a workspace allows you to complete an application online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

***Complete a Workspace*:** Add participants to the workspace, complete all the required forms, and check for errors before submission.

***Adobe Reader*:** If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace so that they will appear similar to other Standard or ACF forms. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drive(s), then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html

***Mandatory Fields in Forms*:** In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

***Complete SF-424 Fields First*:** The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and DUNS number. To trigger this feature, an applicant must complete the SF-424 information first. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

***Submit a Workspace*:** An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application **at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date** to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

***Track a Workspace*:** After successfully submitting a workspace package, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the package. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email

at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist ACF with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission
All applications must be received by 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date established for each program. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ACF successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submission, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by ACF.

Applicants with slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

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 www.acf.hhs.gov /sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission
To request an exemption from required electronic submission please refer to ACF's "Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission" document for complete guidance at:
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/acf_policy_for_requesting_an_exemption_from_required_electronic.pdf.

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 their efforts to register for, or renew a registration, at SAM. User Guides are available under the "Help" tab at https://www.sam.gov.

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

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

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

complied with these requirements, ACF:

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

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications: **09/21/2020**

Explanation of Due Dates

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

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

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

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

Instructions for electronic submission via www.Grants.gov are available at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

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

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

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

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications
Applications that are hand-delivered by applicants, applicant couriers, by overnight/express mail couriers, or other representatives of the applicant must be received on, or before, the due

date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays). Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.7.Other Submission Requirements*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applicants will also receive an email acknowledging that the received application is in the **Grants.gov validation process**, after which a third email is sent with the information that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, the series of checks and validations. Applications that are submitted on time that fail the validation check will not be transmitted to

ACF and will not be acknowledged by ACF.

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

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:
ACF will provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

This program is covered under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," and 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." Under the Executive Order, States may design their own processes for reviewing and commenting on proposed Federal assistance under covered programs.

Applicants should go to the following URL for the official list of the jurisdictions that have elected to participate in E.O. 12372 https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Intergovernmental_-Review-_SPOC_01_2018_OFFM.pdf. Applicants from participating jurisdictions should contact their SPOC, as soon as possible, to alert them of their prospective applications and to receive instructions on their jurisdiction's procedures. Applicants must submit all required application materials to the SPOC and indicate the date of submission on the Standard Form (SF) 424 at item 19.

Under 45 CFR 100.8(a)(2), a SPOC has 60 days from the application due date to comment on proposed new awards.

SPOC comments may be submitted directly to ACF to: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management, Division of Discretionary Grants, 330 C St. SW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20201.

Entities that meet the eligibility requirements of this announcement are still eligible to apply for a grant even if a State, Territory or Commonwealth, etc., does not have a SPOC or has chosen not to participate in the process. Applicants from non-participating jurisdictions need take no action with regard to E.O. 12372. Applications from Federally-recognized Indian Tribal governments are not subject 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)

No more than 15 percent of total costs may be used for program administration. An HHS official may grant a waiver of the 15 percent limitation on allowable development and administration costs for a Head Start or Early Head Start program approving a higher percentage for a specific period of time not to exceed 12 months (45 CFR § 1303.5).

Please refer to Unallowable Property Costs on the ACF website at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/real-property-and-tangible-personal-property#chapter-9 for more information.

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. Also see *ACF Policy on Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6*.

Submission By Mail

HHS-2020-ACF-OHS-HP-1852
Office of Head Start
OHS Operations Center
1401 Mercantile Lane
Suite 401
Largo, MD 20774

Hand Delivery

HHS-2020-ACF-OHS-HP-1852
Office of Head Start
OHS Operations Center
1401 Mercantile Lane
Suite 401
Largo, MD 20774

Electronic Submission

See *Section IV.2.* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via www.Grants.gov.

For all submissions, see *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

Please note: With the exception of the funding opportunity announcement and relevant statutes and regulations, 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.

In addition to the required elements of the project description found in *Section IV.2*, the objective review panel will evaluate proposals in accordance with the relevant sections of the HSPPS (45 CFR Parts 1301-1305). The review of applications under this FOA will result in a numerical score as evaluated by a panel of non-federal reviewers. The review panel will assign numerical scores for each evaluation criterion based on a range of points (0 points - total point value), taking into consideration the extent to which the application narrative includes substantial and compelling evidence.

1. Community Need and Objectives	Maximum Points:20

To evaluate the Community Need and Objectives, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant presents evidence of the need for EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership services in the proposed community. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- If the proposed service area and location(s) where services will be delivered is clearly described.
- How EHS resources will be directed to the geographic area(s) of greatest need and children and families most in need of EHS services.
- The rationale for which ages of children are proposed to be served, including the estimated number of eligible pregnant women, infants and toddlers, by program type and geographic location(s).
- If the proposed program option (center-based, home-based, family child care, services

to pregnant women, locally designed option, or EHS-CC Partnership) best meets the needs of the local community. Does the justification use information that describes the applicant's process for engaging other entities in the community in making this determination?

- The analysis of access to other early childhood education programs and services, including the estimated number of EHS eligible children who are receiving child care subsidy, in the geographic area.
- The analysis of the quality of other early childhood education programs and services in the geographic area.
- The plan to effectively leverage available funding streams including child care subsidies.
- The plan to enroll children with disabilities.
- If applicable, how the proposed delegate agency is identified, including the communities in which the applicant will operate, the number of children to be served by age of child and their proposed program option(s).
- Evidence of community engagement in the proposed geographic locations that is designed to improve service delivery, increase access to services, and prevent duplication.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership:**
    - The extent to which the applicant has identified partners that have demonstrated a commitment to the proposed project.
    - Evidence of the applicant's knowledge and awareness of its state's subsidy and CCDF policy landscape in its proposed service area.

2. Program Design and Approach	Maximum Points:30

To evaluate Projects Design and Approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant presents evidence of its ability to implement a high-quality, comprehensive program for the population the applicant proposes to serve in the *Community Need and Objectives* section. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- The curriculum or set of curricula and teaching practices proposed that promote progress toward school readiness goals.
- The process for establishing and measuring school readiness goals. Do those school readiness goals reflect the ages of children that the applicant proposes to serve in the program, and are they culturally and linguistically appropriate?
- If the school readiness goals were or will be established in consultation with the parents of children who will be participating in the program.
- How the applicant will meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- The plan to meet the needs of the applicant's targeted population in the child welfare system, dual language learners, homeless children, and pregnant women.
- The plan to develop a unified birth-to-school-entry continuum of care and education through linkages with home visiting programs, Head Start, and other preschool programs.
- How the applicant will meet the health, mental health, nutritional, and oral health needs

of program participants.

- **For applicants proposing center-based or family child care services:** How the applicant describes a plan for observing teacher practice, including teacher-child interactions.
- **For applicants proposing home-based services:** How the applicant describes a plan for observing home visitor practice. Do all applicants describe, using this information, how to inform professional development and practice improvements?
- The process for obtaining required screenings, including developmental hearing and vision, and referring for further evaluation as necessary.
- The process for selecting the specified assessment tool. The plan to use child assessment data to individualize the instruction and learning for each child and, as necessary, refer for additional evaluation and intervention; and to aggregate and analyze child-level assessment data.
- The plan to coordinate with public and private entities to assist the program in providing child health and developmental services and program management services.
- The system proposed to deliver services to enrolled women post-pregnancy, including how the newborn infant and family will transition into the appropriate program option at the appropriate time.
- How the applicant will ensure that infants, toddlers, and their families participating in the program will have the opportunity to receive Head Start or other appropriate preschool services.
- The plan to facilitate the meaningful engagement of parents in activities designed to help them become full partners in the education of their children. Barriers to parent participation should be discussed.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership:**
    - Evidence that the applicant has identified its partner sites and describes a thorough plan for sustaining its child care partners, as well as contingency plans for replacing proposed partners if any partnerships do not materialize or prove unsustainable.

3. Staffing	Maximum Points:15

To evaluate Staffing, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates its ability to recruit, retain, and manage staff with the ability to implement a comprehensive EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership program. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- The plan to ensure all teaching staff will meet the qualification requirements.
- Evidence of the proposed program director and proposed key program staff's ability to meet the required qualifications to administer an EHS program, complex social service program, or early education services.
- The plan to attract, train, and retain qualified staff with the ability to implement a high-quality program.
- How the applicant proposes to provide career development opportunities for professional, paraprofessional, and other staff, including family child care providers.
- If the plan to evaluate job applicants, including existing grantee staff, to determine

which applicants are most capable of implementing a high-quality, comprehensive program is realistic.

4. Planning and Implementation	Maximum Points:10

To evaluate Planning and Implementation, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant details its plan to provide effective and efficient implementation of EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership programming, including start-up period planning. Applicants must include an implementation plan and timeline that addresses, at a minimum, the following:

- State and local licensing requirements, the length of time required to obtain licensure for early childhood learning environments, and the impact on the proposed implementation plan for the timely provision of services.
- The availability of appropriate facilities for proposed program models, and the anticipated timelines for completing any construction, renovation, or adaptation of space to meet requirements.
- As applicable, plans for alternative service provision (e.g., temporary home- based services) during start-up, until contracts are in place and facilities are fully operational to ensure full enrollment not later than 12 months from the date of award.
- Where facilities are not available, a plan to acquire facilities in accordance with federal Head Start regulations.
- The ability to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff to support the proposed start date of EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership operations.
- The plan for recruiting eligible children and families, and maintaining enrollment. **If proposing EHS-CC Partnership,** this plan must include how the applicant will identify and enroll families currently receiving CCDF subsidies.

5. Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems	Maximum Points:15

To evaluate Organizational Infrastructure and Management Systems, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates its understanding of the crucial role of the Board and Policy Council. Reviewers will also consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates a capacity to provide effective program administration and oversight, including child care partner sites if applicable. In reaching their conclusion, reviewers will deliberate the following narrative elements:

- The capacity of the senior executive managers and governing board to:
    - exercise effective oversight of program operations and accountability for federal funds;
    - include the Policy Council in the planning and decision-making process;
    - ensure representation of the diverse community served;
    - set and monitor overall agency priorities and operational systems; and
    - conduct community assessment, annual self-assessments, and ongoing monitoring.
- The ability to plan, constitute, and train a governing body in compliance with Head Start regulations. If applicable, an applicant can describe how its current governance structure would change to meet the requirement of the Head Start Act.

- The existence of management systems for program planning, internal and external communication, record keeping, issuance of internal and external reports, and program self-assessment and monitoring.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership:**
    - The applicant's ability to work with partners, and ensure accountability for meeting HSPPS across multiple sites (as appropriate).

6. Budget and Budget Justification	Maximum Points:15

To evaluate the budget and budget justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates that funds are budgeted to provide all required EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership services, and if the applicant:

- Clearly and accurately distinguishes the proposed base operating funds, T/TA funds, total federal funds, and the applicant's non-federal share, if applicable.
- Provides a cost-effective budget that is aligned with all components of the application narrative as described in S*ection IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership, the applicant:**
    - Effectively demonstrates that a significant portion of funding will be directed to its child care partners to ensure high-quality early learning experiences.
    - Demonstrates that funding will be directed to child care partners to support staff professional development, including credentialing and other opportunities designed to support increased competencies, credentials, wages, and compensation.
- Describes its plan for the expenditure of T/TA funds.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership, the applicant:**
    - Includes sufficient resources for T/TA to assist the child care and family child care partners with meeting HSPPS.
    - Includes evidence of a reasonable per-child cost, based on the proposed program type and program option(s), to ensure the maximum number of eligible children are served.
- **For applicants proposing EHS-CC Partnership, the applicant:**
    - Provides specific details about its plan to use a layered funding approach that includes leveraging child care subsidy for its proposed budget. Does the applicant discuss how it will not supplant existing funding including subsidies for their proposed project?
    - Describes their plan to ensure that children whose families lose child care subsidy eligibility will continue to be served.
- Demonstrates that start-up/pre-award costs, if proposed, are justified, reasonable, and applicable based on the applicant's proposed EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership program. **NOTE:** If the applicant is not requesting start-up/pre-award costs, this criterion is not applicable.
- Details its plan to contribute the required non-federal share/match of the total project cost.

V.2. Review and Selection Process

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

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

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

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

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process. ACF reserves the right to consider other factors in the award decision-making process such as financial viability, and the geographic and programmatic distribution of federal funds to achieve the objectives described in "Additional Federal Review and Funding Considerations."

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.

Pre-Award Discussions and Negotiations

ACF may enter into pre-award discussions and/or negotiations with one or more applicants regarding each applicant's proposed project, budget, and other information related to its organizational capacity to provide high-quality, comprehensive early education services before making final award(s). Based on these discussions, ACF may consider:

- Whether the proposal meets the stated purpose of the funding opportunity as described in *Section I. Program Description.*
- Whether the proposed program is cost effective based on the application submitted for

evaluation in response to *Section IV.2. The Project Description* and *The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.

- Whether the proposal contains contingent activities that may impede, or indefinitely delay, the implementation of the proposed program such as, but not limited to, the ability to timely renovate and/or secure facilities that are required to deliver EHS and/or EHS-CC Partnership services.
- Any other factors necessary for ACF to determine if the applicant is capable of providing high-quality, comprehensive early education services.

Not all pre-award discussions and/or negotiations will result in grant awards. ACF reserves the right to cease discussions and negotiations with applicants prior to award and may enter into discussions or negotiations with other applicants.

Additional Review and Funding Considerations

ACF's priority is expanding access to high-quality programs. Grants will be awarded based on how effectively the model design fits the needs of the community to be served. ACF will prioritize proposals that include a viable plan to reach full enrollment within 12 months of receiving the grant award. Through this FOA, funds are allocated by each geographical region of the country as defined by ACF based on each region's relative share of young children whose families' incomes are below the poverty line. ACF retains administrative flexibility to reallocate between regions as appropriate when making awards using the regional allocation to ensure each grantee meets a high standard of quality and to align with funding priorities.

The Head Start Act gives priority to organizations based on their ability to serve target populations. In keeping with 42 U.S.C. § 9836(d)(3) of the Head Start Act, HHS shall give priority to applicants for Head Start funding that have demonstrated capacity in providing effective, comprehensive, and well-coordinated early childhood education and development services and programs to children and their families. 42 U.S.C. § 9840A(e) of the Head Start Act gives priority in EHS funding to entities with a record of providing early, continuous, and comprehensive childhood development and family services.

ACF reserves the right to prioritize qualified applicants proposing to serve children in census tracts designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones (*See* https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx).

Please note that if the applicant is a current or former Head Start or EHS grantee, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider the grantee's last two OHS monitoring reports. In addition, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider any monitoring reports issued in the 5 years preceding the posting of this FOA. ACF will retrieve, review, and consider any documentation that relates to the fiscal health and financial viability of the applicant. ACF will also retrieve, review, and consider state licensing documentation on the applicant. These reports and documents will be considered in making final funding determinations.

Also, if the applicant is a current Head Start, EHS, or EHS-CC Partnership grantee, ACF will retrieve, review, and consider the grantee's enrollment data for the 3 years preceding the posting of this FOA. Ongoing under-enrollment will be considered in making final funding determinations.

ACF reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant that is presently designated as "high

risk," probationary or not in good standing, or has been debarred or defunded by any federal agency. ACF reserves the right not to fund applicants with unacceptably high federal Head Start per-child costs. Additionally, ACF may decide not to fund projects that would require unreasonably high start-up costs for facilities or equipment or that propose such a low number of children that the project may require unreasonably high operating costs relative to the number of children and families proposed to be served.

The ACF Office of Grants Management will also perform an internal review of all property requests and documentation submitted to assess that costs comply with federal regulations and FOA requirements. ACF reserves the right to request any additional information (e.g., lease agreements, encumbrance documents, etc.) to ascertain allowability and may reduce the budget due to unallowable costs.

Each prime recipient's primary role must be to ensure the delivery of the statutorily authorized services, whether provided directly or through collaborative involvement with their subrecipient(s). Prime recipients of an award under this FOA will be legally accountable to ACF for performance of the project or program. Prime recipients will be held solely responsible in the event of non-compliance by a subrecipient. Applicants proposing to use subrecipient(s) to complete the proposed project will be reviewed by ACF for any management or financial problems. ACF may elect to not allow a prime recipient to subaward if the prime recipient displays an inability to properly monitor and manage subrecipients.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants
As required by 2 CFR Part 200, 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), www.fapiis.gov/, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000) 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).

Approved but Unfunded Applications
Applications recommended for approval in the objective review process, but not selected for award, may receive funding if additional funds become available or may compete for funding during the next review cycle (if one occurs in the next fiscal year). Applications designated as "approved but unfunded" typically cannot be kept in an active status for more than 12 months. 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*.

Grantees may translate the Federal award and other documents into another language. In the event of inconsistency between any terms and conditions of the Federal award and any translation into another language, the English language meaning will control. Where a significant portion of the grantee's employees who are working on the Federal award are not fluent in English, the grantee must provide the Federal award in English and in the language(s) with which employees are more familiar.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to 45 CFR Part 75 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is available at www.ecfr.gov. Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are available at: www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services' single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. ACF grant awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS GPS, which covers basic grants processes,

standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. The general terms and conditions in the HHS GPS will apply as indicated unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary that are specified in the Notice of Award (NOA). The HHS GPS is available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-1.

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

The Head Start specific regulations (known as the Program Performance Standards) are:

- 45 CFR Part 1301, Program Governance
- 45 CFR Part 1302, Program Operations
- 45 CFR Part 1303, Financial and Administrative Requirements
- 45 CFR Part 1304, Federal Administrative Procedures
- 45 CFR Part 1305, Definitions
- And all applicable grant regulations

Copies of the current applicable Head Start regulations are available at the websites identified in S*ection VIII. Other Information, Reference Websites*. Regulations used to determine whether expenditures by Head Start and EHS grantees are allowable can be found at https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy under Fiscal Regulations.

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports: Annually

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 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:

Financial Reports: Semi-Annually

Post- Award Facilities Requirement

It is expected that for all facility related projects the applicable OMB-approved SF-429 forms (e.g., SF-429 Cover Page, SF-429 Attachment A – Annual General Report, SF-429 Attachment B – Acquire or Improve Request, and SF-429 Attachment C – Disposition and Encumbrance Request) be submitted along with supporting documents **in the GrantSolutions On-Line Data Collection system**. For more information, please see ACF Property Guidance, ACF Real Prope

rty Guidance, and Real Property Prior Approvals.

VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Shawna Pinckney
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Head Start
330 C Street, SW.
Washington, DC 20201
Phone: (888) 242-0684
Email: OHSTech@reviewops.org

Office of Grants Management Contact

Jeff Newton
Administration for Children and Families
1961 Stout Street
Office 08-148
Denver, CO 80294
Phone: (303) 844-1149
Email: jeff.newton@acf.hhs.gov

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

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) www.hhs.gov/.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) www.acf.hhs.gov/.

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecast www.grants.gov/.

ACF Funding Opportunity Announcements ami.grantsolutions.gov/.

ACF "How To Apply For A Grant" https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto.

ACF Property Guidance https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/real-property-and-tangible-personal-property

Grants.gov Accessibility Information www.grants.gov/ web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) http://www.ecfr.gov/.

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

Qualified Opportunity Zones https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions and https://www.cdfifund.gov/Pages/Opportunity-Zones.aspx.

The Head Start Act as amended by The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, (Pub. L. 110-134) http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/law.

Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR Parts 1301-1305) https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/hspps-appendix.pdf.

Early Head Start:

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/ncecdtl.

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center:
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc.

EHS-CC Partnership Implementation Planners and Fiscal Consultants

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/local-early-childhood-partnerships/article/ehs-cc-partnership-implementation-planners-fiscal-consultants

Special Quest resources:

https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/children-disabilities/specialquest-multimedia-training-library/specialquest-multimedia-training-library

Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning:
www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel.

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Information on the Internet

Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Resources:
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/starting-partnership.

About the Child Care and Development Fund

Office of Child Care:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ.

CCDF Reauthorization:
https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/ccdf-reauthorization.

Child Care Technical Assistance Network:
https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/.

State CCDF Administrators:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts.

Applicant Support Resources

OHS strongly encourages applicants interested in applying for this funding opportunity to visit https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-4. This webpage provides information on applying for grants, registering and applying through www.Grants.gov, submitting an application, and understanding the grant review process. All interested applicants are reminded to frequently refer back to this FOA when preparing their application.

Prospective applicants will also have the opportunity to send questions to OHS by e-mail at OHSTech@reviewops.org. A summary of the questions and OHS responses will be posted for public view on the applicant support website as soon as they become available.

Interested applicants may also contact the OHS Operations Center at (888) 242-0684 or TTY: 711 if they have additional questions.

Application Checklist

Applicants may use this checklist as a guide when preparing an application package.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Mandatory Grant Disclosure	Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications*.	If applicable, concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.
The Project Description	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*

	section.	
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.	Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C. Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
SF-424A Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs / SF-424B Assurances - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424C - Budget Information Construction Programs / SF-424D - Assurances Construction Programs	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications*. These forms are available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. All forms are ***required*** for applications under this FOA for projects that include both non-construction **and** construction activities.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)* in the announcement. To obtain a DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier), go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. To register at SAM, go to http://www.sam.gov.	A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*

SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.
Project Summary/Abstract	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.* The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Table of Contents	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description*.	Submit with the application by the due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Assurance: Board Attestation	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications and Section V.1. Criteria,* with a template provided in the *Appendix.*	Applicants for whom this applies the assurance must be **signed** by the Board chair, who is authorized to sign the application on behalf of the applicant. Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.

Certificate of Good Standing	See *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications* and *The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity*.	Submission is required with the application by the Application Due Date in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*.
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity*.	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the application due date and time listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4.* of the FOA. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Proof of Policy Council Approval	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications* and *The Project Description, Additional Eligibility Documentation*.	Submission is due by the application due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Application Due Dates and Times.*
Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDR)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*. The IDR must be submitted with the application package.	If the IDR is available by the application due date, it must be submitted with the application package. If it is not available by the application due date, listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*, it may be submitted prior to the award of a grant.

Appendix

1. REGIONAL ALLOCATIONS

Funding is available within each of the 10 ACF regions based on the proportion of young children in poverty in that region. Applicants are encouraged to use the regional allocation funding levels as a guide in determining their proposed funding. Applications that exceed the Award Ceiling listed in S*ection II. Federal Award Information* will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested.

The funding amounts listed for each ACF region in this section represent base funding. Base funding is for use in program operations, staff, materials, equipment, facilities, etc. In addition to base funding, applicants should request an additional 2.5 percent of the base funding for

T/TA funding. T/TA funding is used for the purposes of improving program quality and helping prepare children to succeed in school and is described in section 648 of the Head Start Act.

For example, an applicant from Region I might request $3,351,051 in base funding and $83,776 in T/TA funding (which is 2.5 percent of $3,351,051) for a combined total of $3,434,827 in federal funds requested. The applicant would list $3,434,827 on Line 18a of its SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, and break out its requested base and T/TA funding on the SF-424A and in the budget and budget justification.

Please see *Section II. Federal Award Information and Section V.2. Review and Selection Process* for more information about the state allocations.

Region I (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)

$2,508,495

Region II (New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands)

$9,427,359

Region III (Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, District of Columbia)

$7,375,969

Region IV (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)

$21,096,468

Region V (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin)

$15,588,537

Region VI (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)

$16,489,542

Region VII (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)

$3,648,823

Region VIII (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming)

$2,388,455

Region IX (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Guam, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands)

$13,458,723

Region X (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington)

$3,007,062

2. Assurance Template: Board of Directors Attestation

For applicants to whom this applies, this assurance must be completed, **signed** and dated, and submitted as part of this application in the appendices.

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

I, (name), attest that (Organization) collaborated with an external grant-writer(s), consultant(s), and/or contractor(s) on the development of the application submitted in response to the funding opportunity announcement. Further I, (name), attest that the governing Board of (Organization) actively participated in the content development and commitments included in the applicant's proposal. On behalf of (Organization) I also confirm that its governing Board, and proposed Early Head Start and/or EHS-CC Partnership management staff are fully knowledgeable of the Head Start regulatory requirements.

(Signature)

(First and Last Name)

(Title/Board Chair)

The assurance must be signed by the Board Chair, who is the designated representative of the applicant with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the award and administration of grants.