



Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System

HHS-2013-ACF-ACYF-CO-0593

Application Due Date: 06/10/2013

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

Program Office: Administration on Children, Youth and Families - Children's Bureau
Funding Opportunity Title: Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System
Announcement Type: Initial
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Executive Summary

Notices:

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

The purpose of this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is to solicit applications to fund cooperative agreements for the purpose of developing programs to recruit resource families for children in foster care. Applications submitted in response to this announcement should propose projects that will:

1. Implement comprehensive, multi-faceted diligent recruitment programs for resource families, including kinship, foster, concurrent, and adoptive families for children and youth served by public child welfare agencies; effectively identify, engage, and support resource families as a means of improving permanency outcomes and building lasting connections for children in foster care;
2. Integrate the diligent recruitment programs into the Child and Family Service Plan and with other agency programs, including foster care case planning and permanency planning processes, to facilitate active concurrent planning activities;
3. Demonstrate the capacity to use this project as a transformative platform for improved system response to permanency and building connections, incorporating changes at the policy and practice level and embracing the philosophy of permanency beginning at entry into the child welfare system;
4. Evaluate the implementation of the comprehensive diligent recruitment programs to document processes and potential linkages between diligent recruitment strategies and improved outcomes; and

5. Develop identifiable sites that other states/locales seeking to implement improved diligent recruitment methods can look at for guidance, insight, and possible replication.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Statutory Authority

Adoption Opportunities Program, section 203 (42 USC 5113) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978, (Public Law (P.L.) 95-266), as amended by P.L. 111-320, the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, the Adoption Opportunities program, and the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, as amended.

Description

BACKGROUND

Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF)

Within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) administers national programs for children and youth; works with states, tribes, and local communities to develop services that support and strengthen family life; seeks joint ventures with the private sector to enhance the lives of children and their families; and provides information and other assistance to parents. Many of the programs administered by ACYF focus on children from low-income families; abused and neglected children; children and youth in need of foster care, independent living, adoption, or other child welfare services; preschool children; children with disabilities; runaway and homeless youth; and children from Native American and migrant families.

Ensuring the Well-Being of Vulnerable Children and Families

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

Children who have experienced maltreatment, exposure to violence, and/or trauma are impacted along several domains, each of which must be addressed in order to foster social and emotional well-being and promote healthy, positive functioning:

- **Understanding Experiences:** A fundamental aspect of the human experience is the development of a world view through which one's experiences are understood. Whether that perspective is generally positive or negative impacts how experiences are interpreted and integrated. For example, one is more likely to approach a challenge as a surmountable, temporary obstacle if his or her frame includes a sense that "things will turn out alright." On the contrary, negative experiences can color how future experiences are understood. Ongoing experiences of abuse might lead children to believe they deserve to be maltreated and affect their ability to enter into and stay engaged in safe and healthy relationships. Interventions should seek to address how young people frame what has happened to them in the past and their beliefs about the future.
- **Developmental Tasks:** People grow physically and psychosocially along a fairly predictable course, encountering normal challenges and establishing competencies as they pass from one developmental stage to another. However, adverse events have a marked effect on the trajectory of normal social and emotional development, delaying the growth of certain capacities, and, in many cases, accelerating the maturation of others. Intervention strategies must be attuned to the developmental impact of negative experiences and address related strengths and deficits to ensure children and youth develop along a healthy trajectory.

- **Coping Strategies:** The methods that young people develop to manage challenges both large and small are learned in childhood, honed in adolescence, and practiced in adulthood. Those who have been presented with healthy stressors and opportunities to overcome them with appropriate encouragement and support are more likely to have an array of positive, productive coping strategies available to them as they go through life. For children who grow up in unsafe, unpredictable environments, the coping strategies that may have protected them in that context may not be appropriate for safer, more regulated situations. Interventions should help children and youth transform maladaptive coping methods into healthier, more productive strategies.
- **Protective Factors:** A wealth of research has demonstrated that the presence of certain contextual factors (e.g., supportive relatives, involvement in after-school activities) and characteristics (e.g., self-esteem, relationship skills) can moderate the impacts of past and future negative experiences. These protective factors are fundamental to resilience; building them is integral to successful intervention with children, youth, and families.

The skills and capacities in these areas support children and youth as challenges, risks, and opportunities arise. In particular, each domain impacts the capacity of young people to establish and maintain positive relationships with caring adults and supportive peers. The necessity of these relationships to social and emotional well-being and lifelong success in school, community, and at home cannot be overstated and should be integral to all interventions with vulnerable children and youth. Additionally, building these skills and capacities through the implementation of effective interventions will ready children, youth, and families for positive permanency outcomes.

An important component of promoting social and emotional well-being includes addressing the impact of trauma, which can have a profound effect on the overall functioning of children and youth. ACYF promotes a trauma-informed approach, which involves understanding and responding to the symptoms of chronic interpersonal trauma and traumatic stress across the domains outlined above, as well as the behavioral and mental health sequelae of trauma.

ACYF anticipates a continued focus on social and emotional well-being as a critical component of its overall mission to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

The Children's Bureau

Within ACYF, the Children's Bureau (CB) plans, manages, coordinates, and supports child abuse and neglect prevention and child welfare services programs. CB is the agency within the federal government that is responsible for assisting Child Welfare systems by promoting continuous improvement in the delivery of CW services. CB programs are designed to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of all children, including those in foster care, available for adoption, recently adopted, abused, neglected, dependent, disabled, or homeless, and to prevent the neglect, abuse, and exploitation of children.

The purpose of CB programs is to promote strengthening of the family unit in order to help prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families and encourage reunifying families, when possible, if separation has occurred. State and tribal child welfare systems are designed to deliver direct services that protect children who have suffered maltreatment, who are at risk for maltreatment, or who are under the care and placement responsibility of the state and/or tribe because their families are unable to care for them. These systems also focus on securing permanent legal placement with families, such as reunification, guardianship, and adoption for children and youth who are unable to return home.

Information about CB programs can be found at: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb

Diligent Recruitment Programs (Need and Rationale)

The Adoption Opportunities program provides discretionary funds for projects designed to eliminate barriers to adoption and help find permanent families for children who would benefit from adoption, particularly children with special needs.

The major program areas, as mandated by the legislation, are:

1. The development and implementation of a national adoption and foster care data gathering and analysis system;
2. The development and implementation of a national adoption information exchange system;
3. The development and implementation of an adoption training and technical assistance program;
4. Increasing the placements in adoptive families for children of color who are in the foster care system and have the goal of adoption, with a special emphasis on recruitment of families of color who are from communities representative of the children in care;
5. Post-finalization adoption services for families who have adopted children with special needs, including day treatment and respite care;
6. Support the placement of children in kinship care arrangements, pre-adoptive, or adoptive homes;
7. Study the efficacy of state contracting with public and private agencies (including community-based and other organizations);
8. Increase the number of older children adopted from foster care, emphasizing several child-specific recruitment strategies, including media campaigns to inform the public of the needs of older children available for adoption; train personnel in older children's needs; recruit families to adopt older children; and educate families on adoption and attachment issues, particularly issues with older children;
9. Improve efforts to eliminate inter-jurisdictional adoption barriers;
10. Study the manner in which interstate placements are financed; best practice recommendations for inter and intrastate adoptions; and how state definitions of special needs differentiate and/or group similar categories of children; and
11. Research adoption outcomes and factors that affect these outcomes.

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994, as amended, prohibits the delay or denial of any adoption or placement in foster care due to the race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster or adoptive parents. It also requires states to provide for diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed. Section 1808 of P.L.104-188 affirms the prohibition against delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption or foster care on the basis of race, color, or national origin of the foster or adoptive parents of the child involved (42 U.S.C .1996b). To meet MEPA's diligent efforts requirements, comprehensive plans must include:

1. A description of the characteristics of waiting children;
2. Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community;
3. Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child-specific information;
4. Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access by all members of the community;
5. Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities;
6. Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers;
7. Non-discriminatory fee structures; and
8. Procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a waiting child, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures must ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

State child welfare agencies and eligible tribes are required to submit a 5-year comprehensive Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) which outlines initiatives and activities the state or tribe will carry out in administering programs and services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. The CFSP must describe the plan for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. In the Annual Services and Progress Report (ASPR), these entities must describe the system's progress and accomplishments made in the past fiscal year with regard to the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children under their

jurisdiction for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed, as well as explain planned activities for recruiting foster and adoptive families in the coming year. Projects funded under this funding opportunity will be expected to develop strategies and coordinate activities in support of the state's or tribe's CFSP.

MEPA was intended to reduce the length of time that some children waited for adoptive placement and to facilitate the expedient selection of a home that could provide for the child's long-term needs for family connections and relationships. As with the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, there was an emphasis on the child's need to achieve permanency as quickly as reasonably possible to reduce the trauma of the uncertainty of foster care placement. However, continued monitoring of permanency achievement in states indicates that further efforts are required to reduce the length of time that children await a permanent family.

In March 2004, ACF completed the initial Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In these reviews, no state achieved substantial conformity on the outcome that evaluates the timely achievement of permanency goals for children in foster care. On the CFSR Onsite Review Instrument performance indicator that addresses stability of foster care placements (Item 6), a scarcity of appropriate placement resources, particularly for children with special care needs or severe behavior problems, was noted in 19 states. On the CFSR Onsite Review Instrument performance indicator that addresses adoption (Item 9), only six states performed satisfactorily. In 17 states, a contributing factor was a lack of consistency in conducting adoptive home studies or completing adoption related paperwork in a timely manner. In 14 states, a shortage of foster homes was identified, particularly for:

- Adolescents;
- Juvenile sex offenders;
- Children with disabilities or other physical care needs; and
- Large sibling groups.

In 22 states, a need for more culturally diverse homes (e.g., Native American, African American, and Hispanic) was identified. Finally, findings related to the CFSR Onsite Review Instrument systemic factors identified that 30 states had no formal process for analyzing the characteristics of the children in foster care in order to formulate a diligent recruitment plan with specific strategies for different communities based on the demographics of the children in foster care from that community.

In 2010, ACF completed a second round of CFSRs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In these reviews, no state achieved substantial conformity on the outcome that evaluates whether children in foster care have permanency and stability in their living situations.

On the CFSR Onsite Review Instrument performance indicator which addresses stability of foster care placements (Item 6), no state received a strength rating. Across all applicable cases, a scarcity of appropriate placement resources that could best meet the child's needs was an issue, particularly for children with special care needs or severe behavior problems. From further analysis of the contributing reasons for the cases where this item was an area needing improvement, reviewers noted that current placements were instable inherently because they were temporary shelters or emergency placements. Reviewers also noted that caretakers were unwilling, unable, or unprepared to handle children's behavioral issues.

On the CFSR Onsite Review Instrument performance indicator which addresses adoption (Item 9), no state performed satisfactorily. Across the applicable cases reviewed across States, in only 36 percent of the cases was this item considered to be a strength. A lack of consistency in conducting adoptive home studies or completing adoption related paperwork in a timely manner was again noted as a contributing factor for the cases in which there was an area needing improvement.

Finally, findings related to the systemic factors identified that 33 states received an area needing improvement rating for the item assessing whether the state provides for the diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes to meet the needs of children. In many of these States, we identified a concern with

there being no formal process or an insufficient process for analyzing the characteristics of the children in foster care in order to formulate a diligent recruitment plan with specific strategies for different communities based on the demographics of the children in foster care from that community. All of these findings support the need to develop more effective programs in support of placing children and youth with families who can provide permanent family connections.

Based on Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data, there were 400,540 children in foster care on the last day of FY 2011. The average age of these children was 9 and they had been in care for an average of 24 months. Over half (52 percent) were males. Black or African-American non-Hispanic children comprised 27 percent of the population of children in foster care, white non-Hispanic children comprised 41 percent, and Hispanic children (of any race) comprised 21 percent. Forty-seven percent of the children and youth were placed in non-relative foster home settings, 27 percent were placed in relative foster homes, and 4 percent were placed in pre-adoptive homes. While 52 percent of these children had a case goal of reunification, 25 percent had a goal of adoption.

These data also show that there were 104,200 children waiting to be adopted on the last day of FY 2011. On average, they were 8 years old and had been in foster care for an average of 24 months. Just over half (51 percent) were males. African-American non-Hispanic children comprised 28 percent of the population of children waiting to be adopted, white non-Hispanic children comprised 40 percent, and Hispanic children (of any race) comprised 22 percent. For the 61,400 children waiting to be adopted on the last day of FY 2011 whose parent's parental rights had been terminated, their parent's parental rights had been terminated for an average of 24 months.

Of the 50,500 children and youth adopted in FY 2011 with public child welfare agency involvement, 54 percent of the adoptions were by foster parents, 31 percent were by relatives, and 15 percent by non-relatives. Sixty-eight percent of these adoptions were by married couples and 27 percent of adoptive parents were single females. The percentage of children who are placed for adoption dramatically decreases as the child ages. Children who are 9 years old and over account for 42 percent of the population of waiting children, yet they comprise only 26 percent of adoptions.

While these data provide a limited description of the characteristics of children needing placement resources at the national level, recipients of these awards are expected to complete a thorough and far more detailed analysis of data on the characteristics of these populations in their jurisdictions. This analysis will guide the design of strategies to be used to develop a pool of potential families as placement resources that will meet the needs of the children in care.

Research has shown that barriers to permanency include inappropriate placements, poorly selected and improperly trained foster parents, and caseworkers failing to address permanency issues early and consistently in case planning. The AFCARS data above documents that foster parents and relatives most frequently become the adoptive families for children and youth, and thus, should be fully supported in preparation to transition to permanent placement setting for the children and youth they care for.

In an effort to assist child welfare agencies in finding homes for older children in foster care, CB, in partnership with the Ad Council and AdoptUSKids, launched the first national public service announcement (PSA) campaign for the adoption of children from foster care in July 2004. This campaign was focused on recruiting families for children over the age of 8. The multi-media recruitment campaign continues with both Spanish and English language PSAs for print, radio, television, and social media. Through a cooperative agreement with CB, AdoptUSKids provides the fulfillment activities for the campaign, including a toll-free telephone number answered in both English and Spanish for families interested in foster care or adoption. It also operates <http://adoptuskids.org/>, with information about adoption and foster care and photo listings of specific children waiting for adoption. Projects funded under this program announcement will be expected to collaborate with CB National Adoption Recruitment Campaign and the fulfillment activities conducted by AdoptUSKids.

AdoptUSKids also provides training and technical assistance to states and tribes to support them in the

development and implementation of diligent recruitment strategies. The "Answering the Call" series of guidebooks can be found at: www.adoptuskids.org/resourceCenter/atcPublications.aspx. These guidebooks are designed to support states and local agencies in developing and implementing multi-dimensional diligent recruitment strategies.

A large number of children and youth ages 9 and older who are awaiting families are ultimately not placed in adoptive homes. This points to the need for the foster care and adoption community to question the strategies and models of current permanency planning programs, dual foster and adoptive home study processes as well as current diligent recruitment and training programs and strategies. Although the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 authorized the use of concurrent planning, the movement towards full utilization of this technique had been slow, inconsistent, and at times piecemeal. True concurrent planning provides for procedures which support staff and families in actively moving toward two or more permanency plans simultaneously. The support for active concurrent planning required from the agency and collaborating agencies includes training, policy, leadership, a practice model, and resources, including dual-licensed or concurrent families. Through a cooperative agreement with CB, the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections has developed a Concurrent Planning Web-based Practice Toolkit that is intended as an online tool for states and tribes, where promising practices, programs and resources are made available. This toolkit can be found at: www.nrcpfc.org/cpt/

Diligent recruitment should not be viewed as a separate system. Rather, it should be part of the overarching process for achieving permanency from the day that a child or youth enters care. The analysis of the children's characteristics should take into account the larger percentage of older children who are not expediently placed in permanent homes by current foster care and adoption programs. This information can be used to specifically recruit resource families who are willing to be dual-licensed to both foster and adopt and who are trained to act as concurrent homes, supporting the achievement of at least two permanency plans. Families, whether relatives or others having existing relationships with youth, should be contacted and included in the permanency planning process early and on an ongoing basis during the child's time in care. That way they can develop a community of support for the child or youth in moving into a family setting that will become the youth's new permanent home if reunification cannot be achieved. The expertise of adoption programs can assist foster care case planning staff early in the case by helping to assess families' commitment to the child or youth and preparing foster families or relatives for the long-term legal commitment of adoption via effective training and support programs.

There is a need to design and implement models of diligent recruitment for kinship, foster, and adoptive families to improve permanency outcomes for children and youth in foster care and to meet the diligent recruitment requirements of MEPA. These models must be multi-faceted and recognize that permanency efforts should begin when a child first enters care. Options for permanency should include the early and continued exploration of kin, including both paternal and maternal family members, foster and adoptive families who can provide for children's concurrent planning placements, as well as thorough exploration of the youth's existing and past relationships in order to find those willing to build a commitment to become adoptive parents or enter into some type of permanent relationship with the child. Projects under this program announcement will be expected to meet the diligent recruitment provisions of MEPA. Recruitment efforts should be designed to provide information to potential resource families throughout the community about the characteristics and needs of the available children; the nature of kinship care, foster care, and adoption processes; and supports available to kinship, foster, and adoptive families. This includes the provision of information to the community of natural relationships such as, but not limited to, teachers, mentors, coaches, parents of friends, communities, and extended family members.

Effective models to recruit concurrent, kinship, foster, and adoptive parents must be multidimensional. General, targeted, and child-specific recruitment efforts should all be included. Child-specific recruitment efforts should be broadly viewed to include specific family and relationship exploration and work with youth to identify and develop existing relationships and nurture them into long-term connections and even possible permanent legal placements for the youth. The funded projects will collaborate and partner with

groups representative of the communities from which children in care come, to help identify and support potential resource families, and to conduct activities that make the waiting children more visible. The target populations for this project may include any children or youth in public foster care systems awaiting permanent placement.

Tips for Preparing a Competitive Application

It is essential that applicants read the entire announcement package carefully before preparing an application and include all of the required application forms and attachments. The application must reflect a thorough understanding of and support the purpose and objectives of the applicable legislation. Reviewers expect applicants to understand the goals of the legislation and CB's interest in each topic and to address and follow all of the evaluation criteria in ways that demonstrate this understanding. Applications that do not clearly address the evaluation criteria or program requirements generally receive very low scores and are rarely funded.

CB's website (www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb) provides a wide range of information and links to other relevant websites. Before preparing an application, applicants can learn more about CB's mission and programs by exploring the website.

NOTE: See *Section IV.2, The Project Description: Approach and Evaluation* for additional instructions for applicants.

Project Requirements: Diligent Recruitment Programs

Diligent recruitment projects funded under this FOA will implement multi-faceted, comprehensive diligent recruitment programs in order to recruit, train, and support a cadre of foster and adoptive families (including concurrent and dual) that reflect the characteristics of the children and youth in foster care awaiting placement. Projects will serve a defined geographic area and a target population based on characteristics of children and youth awaiting permanent placement, based on current analysis of applicable data. Projects must enable children and youth to benefit from a continuum of services focusing on permanency, beginning upon entry into care.

These Cooperative Agreement projects are expected to integrate the strategies and activities funded under this FOA with the works of other agency programs to facilitate improving permanency outcomes in a collaborative and integrated manner, creating systemic change. Therefore, projects funded under this FOA will:

1. Implement comprehensive, multi-faceted diligent recruitment programs (general, targeted, and child-specific) for resource families, including kinship, foster, concurrent, and adoptive families for children and youth served by public child welfare agencies as a means of improving permanency outcomes;
2. Integrate the diligent recruitment program with other agency programs, including foster care case planning and permanency planning processes, to facilitate active concurrent planning activities;
3. Demonstrate the capacity to use this project as a transformative platform for improved system response to permanency, incorporating changes at the policy and practice levels, and embracing a philosophy of permanency beginning at the entry in the child welfare system;
4. Evaluate the implementation of the comprehensive diligent recruitment programs to document processes and potential linkages between diligent recruitment strategies and improved outcomes; and
5. Develop identifiable sites that other states, counties and tribes seeking to implement improved diligent recruitment methods can look to for guidance, insight, and possible replication.

In order to meet the five requirements above, diligent recruitment projects must operate within a design that clearly and concisely outlines a strategy for a 12-month Planning and Strategy Development Phase (Phase I) as well as a 48-month Implementation Phase (Phase II).

Planning and Strategy Development (Phase I)

Diligent Recruitment projects will begin with a 12-month Planning and Strategy Development Phase (Phase I) in order to build from current strengths and address barriers and challenges at the policy, procedure, and practice levels to ensure systemic impact and permanency outcomes improvements for children and youth in foster care. In Phase I, programs will complete, at a minimum, the following activities in preparation for program implementation during years 2-5:

- Develop a description of the characteristics of children in care for the specific areas of service, utilizing information and analysis of AFCARS data and other state, local and tribe-specific data available;
- Complete a projection of the types of foster, concurrent and permanent families who may be needed based on current case trends for different characteristics of children and youth;
- Assess the current pool of available foster, concurrent, and adoptive placement resources and explore gaps in the current pool based on the determined characteristics of children in foster care;
- Analyze challenges and barriers presented by the system's current structure or processes and identify strategies that will be explored for implementation in order to increase the rate of retention of prospective foster, concurrent, or adoptive families and to reduce the dropout rates;
- Explore barriers and identify possible strengths of the agency in support of the dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes;
- Develop or enhance collaborations (internal and external) and public-private partnerships that reflect the communities where the children in care come from;
- Identify or develop training for staff to engage effectively with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities who are reflective of the children and youth in foster care;
- Identify or develop training to prospective foster and adoptive parents regarding the characteristics, needs, and issues of children who have experienced trauma and removal, as well as adoption clinical issues;
- Explore barriers and identify possible strengths of the agency in working with families, youth, and possible placement resources on active concurrent plans;
- Explore barriers and identify possible strengths of the agency in developing and utilizing a "customer service" model in collaboration with AdoptUSKids in responding to kin as well as prospective foster or adoptive parents, with a focus on improving retention rates;
- Conduct an assessment of agencies and community-based organizations that can provide services (including foster care, adoption, and support of potential and existing resource families) in a family-centered model of active concurrent planning with families involved in the child welfare system and develop strategies to improve performance if necessary; and
- Enhance and fine-tune the Preliminary Phase II Plan submitted with the original proposal in order to secure CB approval of a Final Phase II Plan that describes the approach and process that will be used to guide project goals and activities during years 2-5.

Diligent Recruitment Program Expectations for Phase I

During the initial year, projects will be refining their Preliminary Phase II Plan for meeting the requirements and accomplishing the goals of implementation as described in this FOA. Additionally, they will be actively working on program development and implementation issues so that they are ready to begin implementation activities at the beginning of Year 2. The initial year will provide time to fine-tune the proposed strategies and put in place infrastructure to carry out the plan, subject to CB approval.

Implementation (Phase II)

In years 2-5, the programs will be in the Implementation Phase (Phase II). During this time, programs must carry out program-specific activities that will:

- Complete the infrastructural and resource development of a comprehensive diligent recruitment program;
- Realize selected strategies for the target population selected during Phase I;

- Build on agency and partner's strengths while analyzing and addressing challenges and barriers to successful implementation;
- Ensure dissemination of products and materials that build knowledge and awareness of the populations of children and youth in foster care in need of permanent homes, the strategies within the comprehensive diligent recruitment program, and the expected impact and positive outcome changes;
- Develop and implement sustainability strategies to ensure that agency leadership, partners, customers, stakeholders, and the community support continued implementation of the diligent recruitment program after this grant has ended; and
- Evaluate success of selected strategies and impact on child and youth permanency outcomes.

Diligent Recruitment Program Expectations for Phase II

During Phase II, diligent recruitment programs, at a minimum, will:

- Develop strategies to move the child welfare system towards a philosophy of working on permanency from the first day that children enter the child welfare system, including revision of policy, procedures, and practice models that do not support that philosophy;
- Develop and implement procedures for consistently updating and sharing with partners and the community the characteristics of children in care utilizing information and analysis of AFCARS data and other data available to the state, region, county or tribe;
- Establish procedures for ongoing analysis of the current pool of available foster, concurrent, and adoptive placement resources;
- Maintain relationships and collaborative works with both public and private agencies and groups representative of the communities from which children come, to help identify and support potential kinship, foster, concurrent, and adoptive families;
- Apply general, targeted, and child-specific recruitment strategies, including relationship mining for youth, to meet placement needs of children in care;
- Recruit, develop, and continuously support resource homes, including relative homes, who can provide placement as a part of concurrent or permanency planning for the child;
- Recruit, develop, and continually support the development of homes for siblings in care to be placed together or reunited when they have been separated in care;
- Ensure that all prospective parents, including relatives and people who have important existing relationships with youth in care, have access to a friendly and supportive home study process, including foster, concurrent, and adoptive parent training at a local or community level, and that the home studies are initiated and completed in a timely manner;
- Utilize a "customer service" model in collaboration with AdoptUSKids responding to kin as well as prospective foster, concurrent, and adoptive families and to increase a sense of support and to improve retention rates;
- Address barriers presented by the child welfare system infrastructure, as well as agency policy and processes in order to increase the rate of retention of prospective foster, concurrent, and adoptive families and to reduce the dropout rates;
- Train staff to engage effectively with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities that are reflective of the children and youth in foster care;
- Provide training to prospective foster and adoptive parents regarding the characteristics, needs, and issues of children who have experienced trauma and removal as well as adoption clinical issues;
- Address customer service challenges in recruitment of resource families due to linguistic barriers;
- Ensure a non-discriminatory fee structure, including the use of purchase of service arrangements with public and private agencies (including community-based and other organizations) when necessary to facilitate and support placement;
- Provide dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes so as to support expediting permanency when appropriate;
- Work with families, youth, and possible placement resources on active concurrent plans;

- Collaborate and coordinate with CB's National Adoption Recruitment Campaign and the fulfillment of activities conducted by AdoptUSKids;
- Conduct timely searches for prospective parents for children in care awaiting permanency, including strategies for locating relatives (both maternal and paternal), mining existing relationships of youth, and eliminating barriers to the interjurisdictional placement of children, including the use of at least one of the following mechanisms that recruit adoptive families for children in foster care, who are waiting for an adoptive home: <http://adoptuskids.org/>; a regional adoption exchange; or a local adoption exchange; as well as the establishment of procedures and processes to facilitate interjurisdictional placements and payment mechanisms;
- Collaborate with agencies and community-based organizations that can provide services (including foster care, adoption, and support of potential and existing resource families) in a family-centered model of active concurrent planning with families involved in the child welfare system and implement strategies to improve performance if necessary;
- Develop plans to address legal issues related to the effective judicial support of early and continuous family finding and relationship mining as one aspect of child specific recruitment for foster, concurrent, and adoptive homes; and
- Provide training and knowledge building/sharing strategies and opportunities for educating staff, collaborating partners, stakeholders, and the community on the structure, goals, activities, and subsequently, findings of the project.

Evaluation: Diligent Recruitment Projects

For further information regarding CB expectations of applicants' plans for evaluation activities, refer to *Section IV. 2, The Project Description and Evaluation*. Reviewers will be assessing applicants' plans based on criteria related to the proposed evaluation plan listed in *Section V, Application Review Information, V.1. Criteria*.

CB expects grantees to engage in a strong, local evaluation in order to build evidence regarding best/promising practices and demonstrate linkages between project activities and improved outcomes at the children and youth permanency and system levels.

Using the most rigorous design possible, local evaluations will show how implementing the applicant's comprehensive diligent recruitment program improves the permanency outcomes for children and youth in the target populations awaiting permanent placement and increases the recruitment and retention of potential and existing foster and adoptive families in building a system's capacity to meet the needs of children and youth in their care. The project evaluation will be designed to determine to what degree project activities strengthen protective factors and address the impact of trauma on child well-being, and whether integrated projects of this type are an effective means to promote social and emotional well-being, and support healthy, positive functioning in children, youth, and families served.

In addition, the evaluation will address systems-level outcomes to show to what degree the integration of diligent recruitment programs contributes to improved outcomes for children and youth in the target population by helping them to connect with permanent placement resources and "forever families" in ways that meet their needs for safety, sustained permanency, and improved social and emotional well-being in the family setting.

Guided by a logic model and theory of change for the project, the local evaluation will include both process and outcomes evaluation components. The process evaluation will assess the implementation of the integrated project, as well as the linkages between the collaborative partners that will help ensure that identified needs of children, youth, and family members are met. The outcomes component will use a sufficiently rigorous design to examine how the integrated and comprehensive approach to diligent recruitment affects key outcomes of interest, including permanency and child well-being indicators. In addition, the outcomes evaluation will address key elements of diligent recruitment as outlined in the Phase II (Implementation) plan to determine the effectiveness of each practice.

Grantees are required to rigorously evaluate their projects. Rigorous research incorporates the four following criteria (Proctor, et al., 2010):

Credibility: Ensuring what is intended to be evaluated is actually what is being evaluated; that descriptions of the phenomena or experience being studied are accurate and recognizable to others; and that the method used is the most definitive and compelling approach that is available and feasible for the question being addressed. If conclusions about program efficacy are being examined, the study design should include a comparison group (i.e., randomized control trial or quasi-experimental design); see the HomVEE website for standards for study design in estimating program impacts: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/homvee).

Applicability: Ensuring the generalizability of findings beyond current project (i.e., when findings "fit" into contexts outside the study situation). Ensuring the population being studied represents one or more of the population being served by the program.

Consistency: Consistently following and clearly describing processes and methods, so that someone else could replicate the approach and other studies can confirm what is found.

Neutrality: Producing results that are as objective as possible and acknowledge the bias brought to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the results.

Demonstration grant projects funded by CB are expected to add to the evidence-base of what works in the field of child welfare. In order to determine what works, grantees are expected to devote a substantial amount of resources to the collection of data for evaluation purposes, and the evaluation of the impact of comprehensive diligent recruitment programs on outcomes related to safety, permanency and well-being for children, youth, and families being served.

The site-specific evaluation will be designed to provide meaningful feedback to grantees to support improvement throughout the implementation process and to demonstrate potential linkages between project activities and improved outcomes. Grantees will be expected to capture details about their implementation approach; to measure the extent to which the comprehensive diligent recruitment program is being practiced with fidelity; and to assess the degree to which behaviors, capacities, connections, and/or well-being of participants change, and whether participation in the diligent recruitment program results in improved well-being and sustained permanency for the children and youth in the target population.

Grant projects will develop knowledge that will help identify where in the service delivery system, with which populations, and in which manner the comprehensive diligent recruitment program works best. The evaluation design will clearly articulate the approach to test the effectiveness of particular diligent recruitment strategies to determine which work best within the overall program and/or which are most effective with certain target populations or circumstances.

Given the scarce resources available for child welfare programs and the push to establish cost efficiency measures, programs funded under this FOA are expected to conduct a cost analysis that will provide policymakers with the information they need to make more thoughtful decisions about resource allocation in their communities.

A grantee may choose to partner with an internal or external evaluator for the local evaluation. External evaluators from different types of organizations may be suited to this project, including university professors or university-based teams, independent consultants, or research/consulting firms. The local evaluators, defined as an individual, team, or an organization such as a university or evaluation contractor, must have the staff qualifications and organizational capacity to implement a rigorous evaluation of a project of this type within the project period.

Helpful information on evaluation for program managers may be found in a document titled "Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation," which can be accessed at:

Dissemination

For further information regarding CB expectations of applicants' plans for dissemination, refer to *Section IV. 2, The Project Description: Approach, Evaluation, and Budget and Budget Justification*.

CB expects that information and knowledge generated by these grant projects will be shared with the broad child welfare field and efforts will be made to integrate project knowledge into policy and practice. Grantees will be expected to disseminate strategically and effectively, so their project information and knowledge is received by key target audiences and used as intended to achieve identified dissemination goals. This will include both individual project dissemination of individual project products and findings and cluster dissemination of cross-cluster products and findings.

Grantees will be expected to work throughout their projects with Federal Project Officers, the CB Training and Technical Assistance Network, and other grantees in the cluster to:

- Finalize individual and cluster-wide dissemination goals and plans;
- Identify and engage with target audiences for dissemination;
- Produce detailed procedures, materials, and other products based on the program evaluation; and
- Develop and disseminate, at appropriate times, summarized/synthesized information about the project.

Collaboration

For further information regarding CB expectations of applicants' plans for collaboration, refer to *Section IV.2, The Project Description: Approach and Evaluation*.

If the grantee lead agency responsible for administering the grant is a non-profit organization, the grantee must demonstrate a strong partnership with the public CW agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the CW program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s). This partnership, as well as those with public, private, community, or faith-based agencies, will be reflected in a project management plan that supports collaboration components and activities, including data sharing, and enables the proposed project to build on any previous accomplishments of the collaboration.

Demonstration Projects

Activities funded under this FOA are demonstration projects. At CB, a demonstration project is one that puts into place and tests new, unique, or distinctive approaches for delivering services to a specific population.

Demonstration projects may test whether a program or service that has proven successful in one location or setting can work in a different context. Demonstration projects may test a theory, idea, or method that reflects a new and different way of thinking about service delivery. Demonstration projects may be designed to address the needs of a very specific group of clients or focus on one service component available to all clients. The scope of these projects may be broad and comprehensive or narrow and targeted to specific populations. A demonstration project must:

- Develop and implement an evidence-informed model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- Determine the effectiveness, costs, and benefits of the model and its components or strategies using a rigorous evaluation approach;
- Disseminate strategically and effectively collaborate with other projects in the grant cluster to establish goals; identify and engage with target audiences; produce detailed procedures, materials, and other products, based on the programs evaluations; and disseminate information about project activities, products, and findings; and
- Contribute to the evidence base on strategies, practices, and programs that may be used to guide

replication, program improvements, systems change, or testing in other settings.

Working with Other CB Discretionary Grant Projects

CB currently funds approximately 300 discretionary grants projects in over 50 different program areas. Through their work with a broad spectrum of populations within the child welfare arena, discretionary grantees develop a wealth of knowledge across numerous program areas. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize the knowledge being developed by CB discretionary research and demonstration projects, including current Family Connection grant projects, when developing proposals in response to this FOA.

For more information on CB discretionary grant programs, please see:

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/grants and
http://library.childwelfare.gov/cbgrants/ws/library/docs/cb_grants/GrantHome.

Information on the funded Family Connection grant projects can be found at the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections.

Additional Project Requirements

The applicant's signature on the application constitutes its assurance that it will comply with the requirements stated in *Section IV.2, Additional Assurances and Certifications*.

Use of Funds

Grantees must adhere to the Funding Restrictions as noted in *Section IV.5, Funding Restrictions*.

NOTE: See *Section IV.2, The Project Description, Approach*, for additional instructions for the applicants.

II. Award Information

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Funding Instrument Type: | Cooperative Agreement |
| Estimated Total Funding: | \$3,200,000 |
| Expected Number of Awards: | 8 |
| Award Ceiling: | \$400,000 Per Budget Period |
| Award Floor: | \$200,000 Per Budget Period |
| Average Projected Award Amount: | \$400,000 Per Budget Period |

Length of Project Periods:

60-month project with five 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Awards:

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

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

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

The initial award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the federal government.

In the first budget period, the maximum federal share of each project is not to exceed \$400,000. The projects awarded will be for a project period of 60 months.

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

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

- CB review and approval of planning stages of the activities before implementation phases may begin;
- CB and recipient joint collaboration in the performance of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, information technology enhancements, training and technical assistance, publications or products, and evaluation);
- Close monitoring by CB of the requirements stated in this announcement that limit the awardee's discretion with respect to scope of services; and
- Close monitoring of performance by CB that may exceed those federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities, in order to ensure compliance with the intent of this funding.

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

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are limited to state governments, county governments, and Native American tribal governments (federally recognized). This competition is limited to the named entities because the purpose of these grants is to transform recruitment policies, procedures, and practice within child welfare systems to ensure that foster and adoptive families are available to the children in care. Therefore, the grantees themselves need both the access and authority to assess and make changes in child welfare agencies. State, county, and tribal governments will lead these projects with private agencies contributing as strategic partners.

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

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: No

III.3. Other

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

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

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.

Collaborative efforts are strongly encouraged, but applicants must identify a primary applicant responsible for administering the cooperative agreement.

APPLICATION DISQUALIFICATION FACTORS

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

Award Ceiling Disqualification

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

Application Submission Disqualifications

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

The deadline for electronic application submission is 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date listed in the Overview and in Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times. Electronic applications submitted to www.Grants.gov after 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email

from www.Grants.gov, will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to www.Grants.gov, on or after 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

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

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

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

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

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

CB Operations Center, c/o Lux Consulting Group
8405 Colesville Road, Suite 600
Silver Spring , MD 20910

Electronic Application Submission:

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

Applications in Paper Format:

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

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

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

Federal Relay Service:

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

Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING ACF APPLICATIONS

FOR ALL ACF APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

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

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

Point of Contact

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

Application Checklist

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

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

Accepted Font Styles:

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

Page Limitations for Application Submissions

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

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

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

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

Copies Required

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

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

Signatures

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

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

Accepted Application Format

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

The Project Description and Appendices files must be numbered separately. The font size on any scanned documents must be large enough so that it is readable. Do not scan more than one page of a document on a single page. Application pages with two or more pages of a document scanned to it will be removed and will not be reviewed.

Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

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

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

Application Upload Requirements

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

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

To adhere to the two file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Professional software suite will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging

documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

However, ACF understands that all applicants may not have access to this software. Grants.gov offers a listing of several free PDF conversion programs. These programs can be found on Grants.gov by clicking on 'Applicant Resources' on the far left side of the home page, and then by following the link to 'Download Software' near the top of the screen, or by clicking [HERE](#). Free PDF software is available on this page that will allow users to convert and merge PDF documents. As an example, ACF is providing written instructions on downloading and using one type of free software listed at Grants.gov at the following link: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/pdf995_instructions_for_video.pdf. A video demonstrating this process is also available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOly0HwXPpA>. ACF does not endorse any of the software listed on Grants.gov, and applicants are not required to use a specific type of PDF conversion software to submit an application.

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

Required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms

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

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

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

Use only file formats supported by ACF

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

ACF supports the following file formats:

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

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the

affected file will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This removal may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

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

Signatures

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

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

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

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

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

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

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

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

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

NOTE: ADDITIONAL CB-SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL APPLICATIONS UNDER THIS FOA

The Project Description file is limited to 75 pages and must include these items in this order:

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

The Appendices file is limited to 50 pages and must include these items in this order:

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

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

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

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

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

| Forms / Assurances / Certifications | Submission Requirement | Notes / Description |
|--|---|---|
| DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.. | <p>A DUNS number is required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http:// fedgov.dnb. com/ webform.</p> <p>Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.</p> | <p>A DUNS number and SAM registration are eligibility requirements for all applicants.</p> <p>See <i>Section III.3. Other</i> for information on obtaining a DUNS number and registration at http://www.sam.gov.</p> |
| SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance and SF-P/PSL - Project/Performance Site Location(s) | Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date. | Required for all applications. |

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| <p>SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and</p> <p>SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs</p> | <p>Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.</p> | <p>Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.</p> |
| <p>Certification of Filing and Payment of Federal Taxes</p> | <p>Submission of a certification is required prior to award for grantees receiving more than \$5,000,000 in Federal funding for the first budget year of a multi-year project; or for grantees receiving more than \$5,000,000 in Federal funding for a one-year (12 months) project period; or for grantees receiving more than \$5,000,000 in Federal funding for a multiyear project to be fully funded.</p> | <p>Applicants are advised of the following requirement contained in Section 523 of the "Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008," (P.L. 110-161, Division G). This requirement remains in effect:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sec. 523.</p> <p>None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract in an amount greater than \$5,000,000 or to award a grant in excess of such amount unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, the contractor or grantee has filed all Federal tax returns required during the three years preceding the certification, has not been convicted of a criminal offense under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and has not, more than 90 days prior to certification, been notified of any unpaid Federal tax assessment for which the liability remains unsatisfied, unless the assessment is the subject of an installment agreement or offer in compromise that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service and is not in default, or the assessment is the subject of a non-frivolous administrative or judicial proceeding. [Emphasis Added]</p> <p>Accordingly, if applicants request more than \$5 million in Federal funds for the first budget year of a multiyear project to be funded in FY 2010, or as a multiyear project to be fully funded in FY 2010, the applicant will be required</p> |

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| | | to submit a certification complying with the requirements, prior to receiving an award. |
| SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities | If applicable, submission of this form is due at the time of application. | If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. |
| Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule) | Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. | Form is available at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html . General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/ . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email (ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900). |
| Certification Regarding Lobbying | Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant. | Submission of this Certification is required for all applications. |

ADDITIONAL CB-SPECIFIC PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The applicant's signature on the application constitutes its assurance that it will comply with the following requirements:

1. Have the project fully functioning as described in applicant's timeline, within 90 days following the notification of the award;
2. Participate if CB chooses to do a cross-site evaluation or a technical assistance contract that relates to this FOA;
3. Allocate sufficient funds in the budget to support required travel: a) Within 3 months after the award, the project director, child welfare liaison (if different from the project director), evaluator

and/or other key staff must attend a 2- to 3-day kick-off meeting in Washington, D.C.; and b) The project director, the child welfare agency liaison (if different from the project director) and the evaluator and/or other key staff must attend the annual grantee meeting, usually held in the spring, in Washington, D.C.;

4. Submit all performance indicator data, program, evaluation, and financial reports in a timely manner (see *Section VI.3*), in the recommended formats (to be provided). CB prefers and will accept the interim and final reports and attachments on disk or electronically using a standard word-processing program; however, projects are required to provide the original and two copies of performance progress and final reports;
5. All grantee materials, products, publications, news releases, etc., will include this notice: Funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant #_____. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funders, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This information is in the public domain. Readers are encouraged to copy and share it, but please credit _____;
6. CB reserves the right to secure and distribute grantee products and materials, including copies of journal articles written by grantees about their grant projects;
7. Submit an original and two copies of the final program/evaluation report and any program products to CB within 90 days of project end date.

Non-Federal Reviewers

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

The Project Description

Part I: The Project Description Overview

Purpose

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

General Expectations and Instructions

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

Part II: General Instructions for Preparing a Full Project Description

Introduction

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

Table of Contents

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

Project Summary/Abstract

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

Please place the following at the top of the abstract:

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

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

Objectives And Need For Assistance

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

Approach

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

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

NOTE: CB-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF ALL APPLICANTS

Planning and Strategy Development (Phase I) Plan

In their proposals, applicants must present a Planning and Strategy Development Plan (Phase I Plan) that describes in detail how they would develop and address **each** of the planning components below, which support the development and implementation of a diligent recruitment Program. The activities that support each component of the Phase I Plan take place during the first year of award. In this plan, the detailed description of each component must also include information regarding:

- Goals;
- Benchmarks;
- Responsible parties;
- Collaborating entities; and
- Timeframes.

In addition, the Phase I Plan will describe how the components will be addressed at the policy, procedure, and practice levels to ensure systemic impact and permanency outcomes improvements for children and youth in foster care.

The Phase I Plan components include, at a minimum:

- Description of the characteristics of children in care for the specific areas of service, utilizing information and analysis of AFCARS data and other state, local and tribe-specific data available;
- Projection of the types of foster, concurrent, and permanent families who may be needed, based on current case trends for different characteristics of children and youth;
- Assessment of the existing pool of available foster, concurrent and adoptive placement resources and exploration of gaps in the current pool based on the determined characteristics of children in foster care;
- Description of each of the general, targeted, and child-specific recruitment strategies that will be implemented to increase recruitment of resource families from the communities the children and youth in foster care who need permanent placements come from;
- Analysis of challenges and barriers presented by the system's current structure or processes, and identification of strategies that will be explored for implementation in order to increase the rate of retention of prospective foster, concurrent, or adoptive families and to reduce the dropout rates;
- Exploration of barriers and identification of possible strengths of the agency in support of the dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes;
- Development and enhancement of collaborations (internal and external) and public-private partnerships that reflect the communities where the children in care come from;
- Identification and development of training for staff to engage effectively with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities that are reflective of the children and youth in foster care;
- Identification and development of training for prospective foster and adoptive parents regarding the characteristics, needs, and issues of children who have experienced trauma and removal, as well as adoption clinical issues;
- Exploration of barriers and identification of possible strengths of the agency in working with families, youth, and possible placement resources on active concurrent plans;
- Exploration of barriers and identification of possible strengths of the agency in developing and utilizing a "customer service" model in collaboration with AdoptUSKids in responding to kin as well as prospective foster or adoptive parents, with a focus on improving retention rates;
- Conducting an assessment of agencies and community-based organizations that can provide services (including foster care, adoption, and support of potential and existing resource families) in a family-centered model of active concurrent planning with families involved in the child welfare system and development of strategies to improve performance if necessary; and
- Development of a Preliminary Implementation (Phase II) Plan.

Implementation (Phase II) Plan

Preliminary Version

In their proposal, applicants must submit the Preliminary Implementation (Phase II) Plan. In this preliminary plan, applicants must describe the approach and processes that will be used to guide project goals, strategies, and activities during implementation (years 2-5) as provided in the section below titled “Components of the Phase II Plan”, as well as address anticipated logistical and administrative issues in implementation of the proposed program.

Final Version

During Phase I (year 1), the projects must further develop their Preliminary Phase II Plan, building on the work completed and knowledge gained during the planning and strategy development phase. Once funded, projects will have considerable flexibility in making revisions to the plan. The project must submit the Final Phase II Plan to CB 9 months after the award of the cooperative agreement for review and approval. The Final Phase II Plan must present a clear and comprehensive vision that will guide the project goals, strategies and activities as provided in the section below titled “Components of the Phase II Plan”. This plan must explain how the logistical and administrative issues provided in the Preliminary Phase II Plan are being addressed to mitigate previously noted barriers to implementation as well as address any additional barriers or challenges that may have arisen since the Preliminary Phase II Plan was submitted.

The Final Phase II Plan must be approved by CB before it can be implemented. Any changes desired to be made in implementation strategies and activities after approval must be submitted in writing and approved by CB prior to the changes taking place.

Components of the Phase II Plans (applicable to preliminary and final versions)

Serving as a guide for the program’s goals, strategies, and activities during the implementation phase (years 2-5), the Phase II plan must address:

- How the proposed project will operate, including infrastructure and resource development;
- What strategies will be realized and what each strategy will accomplish;
- How the proposed project will integrate critical strategies and activities so as to create systemic change that increases recruitment and retention of resource families and positively impacts children and youth outcomes;
- What will be evaluated to determine success of strategies implemented, and how will it be evaluated;
- How project products and findings will be disseminated; and
- What activities the applicant will engage in to ensure sustainability of key strategies and best practices.

Phase II plans require the applicant to complete a detailed description of each component, and for *each* component, include information regarding:

- Goals;
- Benchmarks;
- Responsible parties;
- Collaborating entities; and
- Timeframes.

In addition, the Phase II plans will describe how the components will be addressed at the policy, procedure, and practice levels to ensure systemic impact and permanency outcomes improvements for children and youth in foster care.

The Phase II Plan components include, at a minimum:

- Development of strategies to move the child welfare system towards a philosophy of working on permanency from the first day that children enter the child welfare system, including revision of

- policy, procedures, and practice models that do not support that philosophy;
- Development and implementation of procedures for consistently updating and sharing with partners and the community the characteristics of children in care utilizing information and analysis of AFCARS data and other data available to the state, region, county or tribe;
 - Establishing procedures for ongoing analysis of the current pool of available foster, concurrent, and adoptive placement resources;
 - Maintaining relationships and collaborative works with both public and private agencies and groups representative of the communities from which children come, to help identify and support potential kinship, foster, concurrent, and adoptive families;
 - Application of general, targeted, and child-specific recruitment strategies, including relationship mining for youth, to meet placement needs of children in care;
 - Recruitment, development, and continuous support of resource homes, including relative homes, who can provide placement as a part of concurrent or permanency planning for the child;
 - Recruitment, development, and continuous support of the development of homes for siblings in care to be placed together or reunited when they have been separated in care;
 - Ensuring that all prospective parents, including relatives and people who have important existing relationships with youth in care, have access to a friendly and supportive home study process, including foster, concurrent and adoptive parent training at a local or community level and that the home studies are initiated and completed in a timely manner;
 - Utilization of a "customer service" model in collaboration with AdoptUSKids, responding to kin as well as prospective foster, concurrent, and adoptive families and to increase a sense of support and to improve retention rates;
 - Address of barriers presented by the child welfare system infrastructure as well as agency policy and processes in order to increase the rate of retention of prospective foster, concurrent, and adoptive families and to reduce the dropout rates;
 - Training of staff to engage effectively with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities who are reflective of the children and youth in foster care;
 - Provision of training for prospective foster and adoptive parents regarding the characteristics, needs, and issues of children who have experienced trauma and removal, as well as adoption clinical issues;
 - Addressing customer service challenges in recruitment of resource families due to linguistic barriers;
 - Ensuring there is a non-discriminatory fee structure, including the use of purchase of service arrangements with public and private agencies (including community-based and other organizations) when necessary to facilitate and support placement;
 - Provision of dual licensure of foster and adoptive homes so as to support expediting permanency when appropriate;
 - Work with families, youth, and possible placement resources on active concurrent plans;
 - Collaboration and coordination with CB's National Adoption Recruitment Campaign and the fulfillment of activities conducted by AdoptUSKids;
 - Conducting timely searches for prospective parents for children in care awaiting permanency, including strategies for locating relatives (both maternal and paternal), mining existing relationships of youth, and eliminating barriers to the interjurisdictional placement of children; the use of adoption exchanges, including <http://adoptuskids.org/> and/or regional or local exchanges; as well as the establishment of procedures and processes to facilitate interjurisdictional placements and payment mechanisms;
 - Collaboration with agencies and community-based organizations that can provide services (including foster care, adoption, and support of potential and existing resource families) in a family-centered model of active concurrent planning with families involved in the child welfare system and implementation of strategies to improve performance if necessary;
 - Development of plans to address legal issues related to the effective judicial support of early and continuous family finding and relationship mining as one aspect of child-specific recruitment for foster, concurrent, and adoptive homes; and

- Provision of training and knowledge building/sharing strategies and opportunities for education of staff, collaborating partners, stakeholders, and the community on the structure, goals, activities, and subsequently, findings of the project.

Use of Funds

Applicants must present documentation of fiscal control and accounting procedures to ensure proper disbursement and accounting of federal funds. Applicants must describe their commitment to use grant funds for allowable activities only, documenting that funds will only be used for the activities and purposes identified in the FOA. Refer to *Section IV.5. Funding Restrictions* for further information.

Project Timeline and Milestones

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

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

Program Performance Evaluation Plan

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

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

NOTE: CB-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF ALL APPLICANTS

The applicant must propose a rigorous evaluation design, which is appropriate to the population, proposed intervention, and potential comparison groups, and is realistic and feasible within the 60-month project period. The applicant's plan must include a detailed description of both process and outcomes evaluation components.

Process Evaluation:

The process evaluation must assess the implementation of the diligent recruitment program, as well as the linkages between the collaborative partners that will help ensure that identified needs of children, youth, and resource families are met. The applicant's process evaluation must be designed to show the extent to which the diligent recruitment program results in:

- Increased engagement of internal and external partners in successful strategies and activities that

support increasing placement options for and permanent placements of children and youth in the target population;

- Increased integration with other agency programs, including incorporation of strategic changes at the policy and practice levels to collaboratively effect outcome improvements; and
- Increased stakeholder and community awareness and interest regarding the characteristics and needs of children and youth awaiting permanent placement and the benefits of providing a stable, permanent home.

Projects funded under this announcement must, at a minimum, collect descriptive data on:

- Characteristics of the target population and resource families served;
- Types and nature of needs identified and met;
- Services provided;
- Measures of client outcomes;
- Client satisfaction;
- Cost benefit; and
- Service utilization.

The applicant must include in the evaluation plan a description of how they will:

- Identify and develop appropriate evaluation measures;
- Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from one or, if needed, multiple agencies, including defining the process to be followed and a potential timeline;
- Incorporate fidelity measurement into program services as part of the process evaluation;
- Identify any potential challenges or barriers to implementing the program performance evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed; and
- Incorporate ongoing evaluation findings into the operation of the program to improve or enhance its effectiveness.
- Applicants must present a plan to conduct a cost analysis. Given the scarce resources available for CW programs and the push to establish cost efficiency measures, programs funded under this FOA are expected to conduct a cost analysis that will provide state, local and tribal policymakers with the information they need to make more thoughtful decisions about resource allocation in their communities. Factors to be considered in this analysis may include, but are not limited to, staff caseloads, supervisor to worker ratios, cost per family or unit of service, training, and consultation costs.
- Applicants must present plans for evaluating the strategic dissemination of project products and findings to determine whether this was effective in meeting dissemination goals related to project implementation and sustainability, and knowledge transfer in their role as demonstration projects.

Funded Activities Evaluation Plan

Applicants must describe the plan for rigorous evaluation of funded activities. The evaluation must be supported by a logic model. The evaluation must assess processes and progress towards the goals and objectives of the project, and whether the project is having the expected effects and impacts. The evaluation plan must specify expected outcomes and any research questions. The plan must discuss how the results of this evaluation will provide greater understanding and improvement of the funded activities. The plan must include a valid and reliable measurement plan and sound methodological design. Details regarding the proposed data collection activities, the participants, and data management, and analyses plans must be described. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles foreseen in implementation of the planned evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed.

NOTE: CB-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF ALL APPLICANTS

The applicant must propose a rigorous evaluation design, which is appropriate to the population, proposed intervention, and potential comparison groups, and is realistic and feasible within the 60-month project period. The applicant's plan must include a detailed description of both process and outcomes evaluation components.

Outcomes Evaluation:

The applicant's outcomes evaluation must be designed to show the extent to which the diligent recruitment program results in:

- Increased numbers of permanent placements of the target population of children and youth with relatives/kin and non-related resource families; and
- Increased numbers of foster, concurrent, dual, and adoptive homes available to care for children and youth in foster care.

For the purpose of informing the program evaluation, applicants must propose plans to capture data, including, but not limited to:

- By what percentage has the racial and ethnic distribution of approved foster homes changed to more closely mirror the racial and ethnic distribution of children and youth in foster care?
- By what percentage has the racial and ethnic distribution of approved adoptive homes either awaiting placement of a child or awaiting finalization of an adoption changed to more closely mirror the racial and ethnic distribution of children and youth in foster care awaiting adoptive placement?
- Does the racial and ethnic distribution of approved foster homes in local jurisdictions more closely mirror the racial and ethnic distribution of children and youth in foster care in those jurisdictions?
- By what percentage has the number of dual licensed homes increased?
- By what percentage has the number of placements with relatives increased?
- By what percentage has the length of time in care been reduced for children leaving foster care to a permanent placement?
- By what percentage has the number of children and youth leaving foster care to a permanent home increased?
- What percentage of families inquiring about relative care, foster, concurrent, or adoptive licensure received a return call within 5 working days, and by what percentage has this increased?
- What was the average length of time between families' initial inquiry regarding relative care or foster, concurrent, and adoptive licensure and the home study approval, and by what percentage has this decreased?; and
- What was the average length of time between families' home study approval and the placement of a child or youth with those families, and by what percentage has this decreased?

Geographic Location

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

Logic Model

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

Project Sustainability Plan

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

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

Organizational Capacity

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

- Organizational charts;
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures;
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners and/or subcontractors, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively;
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Dissemination Plan

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

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

Third-Party Agreements

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

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

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

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

Budget Information Standard Form. The line-item budget detail and the budget narrative must be submitted as a single Budget Justification application component.

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

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

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

NOTE - CB-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF ALL APPLICANTS

In addition to the budget and budget justification required for the first year of the proposed project, applicants must provide a detailed budget (without accompanying justification) for each subsequent year of the proposed project.

Funds for evaluation must appear in the budget, and applicants must state the percentage of the total budget that will be allocated to evaluation. Projects are encouraged to set aside sufficient funds for the costs of assessments and instruments needed for screening and measuring well-being outcomes of families, data collection, and dissemination activities, including staff time related to these activities.

Applicants must allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for the project director, the evaluator, and key partners to travel to Washington, DC to attend the Kick-off Meeting for funded grantees to be held within the first 3 months of the project (first year only); and the 3-day Annual Grantees Meeting, usually held in the spring.

General

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

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

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

Fringe Benefits

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

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

Travel

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

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

Equipment

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

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

Supplies

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

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

Contractual

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

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

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

Other

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

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

Indirect Charges

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

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

Paperwork Reduction Disclaimer

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

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via www.Grants.gov

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

Application Validation at www.Grants.gov

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

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

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

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

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

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All exemption requests must include the following information:

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

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

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

Paper Format Application Submission

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

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

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

IV.3. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications: **06/10/2013**

Explanation of Due Dates

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

Electronic Applications

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

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

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

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

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

Mailed Paper Format Applications

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

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

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

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

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

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

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

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

Extensions and/or Waiving Due Date and Receipt Time Requirements

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

Acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov

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

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

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application

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

IV.4. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs

This program is 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 http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/. 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, 370 L'Enfant Promenade SW., 6th Floor East, Washington, DC 20447.

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.5. Funding Restrictions

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

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

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

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

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

IV.6. Other Submission Requirements

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

Submission By Mail

CB Operations Center c/o Lux Consulting Group
8405 Colesville Road, Suite 600
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Hand Delivery

CB Operations Center c/o Lux Consulting Group

Electronic Submission

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

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

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

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

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

OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS FOR ASSISTANCE

Maximum Points: 20

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

1. The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the issues relevant to this FOA. (0-5 points)
 - The applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the need for knowledge in the field about: a) the effectiveness of diligent recruitment strategies to provide permanent, lasting placements for children and youth in foster care; and b) the importance of developing a pool of able and available foster, concurrent, and adoptive families that reflect the characteristics of and can address the needs of children and youth in need of permanent placement; and
 - The applicant identifies and demonstrates a thorough understanding of key recruitment and retention issues and challenges faced in achieving and sustaining permanency for those in foster care.
2. The applicant presents a clear description of the proposed project that is responsive to this FOA. (0-15 points)
 - The application presents a clear vision for the proposed project to be developed and implemented. The applicant makes a clear statement of the needs, goals and objectives of the proposed project, and these closely relate to the purposes of this FOA. The lessons learned through the proposed project would benefit policy and practice in addressing the needs of the target population;
 - The applicant clearly defines and identifies the service area, key socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the target population of children/youth and their families, and anticipated numbers to be served, through presentation of a thorough analysis of current, local data. The

estimated number of children/youth and family members to be served by the project is reasonable and appropriate;

- The proposed project will contribute to achieving the legislative goals and objectives and the goals stated in this FOA;
- The application demonstrates a thorough understanding of the need for agencies to develop and implement comprehensive diligent recruitment programs for the target population specified in this FOA, as well as the need for these programs to be effectively linked to the permanency planning process and procedures as a means of improving permanency outcomes;
- The application demonstrates a thorough understanding of the need to assess the characteristics of the target population, including age, race, ethnicity, sibling status, and connection to the community; the service needs of this population and community; and the status of existing services for the target population;
- The application demonstrates an understanding of the CFSP requirements related to diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families;
- The proposed project will support and coordinate with its state's CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP), if relevant to areas being addressed in the PIP;
- The applicant clearly presents its rationale for how the comprehensive diligent recruitment program would improve outcomes related to permanency, well-being, and systemic factors around foster and adoptive parent recruitment, licensing, and retention. The application describes significant results or benefits that can be expected for children, youth, and resource families; and
- The applicant describes and justifies how the proposed project will promote effective partnerships between public and private, community, and faith-based agencies to better support bringing children and youth in foster care to permanency in a meaningful setting.

APPROACH

Maximum Points: 40

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

1. The applicant proposes a sound technical approach for the proposed project. (0-12 points)
 - The application provides a reasonable timeline for implementing the proposed project, including major milestones and target dates. The application describes the factors that could speed or hinder project implementation and explains how these factors would be managed;
 - A well-defined logic model guides the proposed project. The logic model demonstrates strong links between proposed inputs and activities and intended short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes. This includes a clear articulation of the connection between the needs of the target population, the core components of the service delivery approach and desired outcome (i.e. theory of change); and
 - The design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and literature on known effective practices and builds on current theory, research, evaluation data, and best practices. The project is innovative and would contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problems and issues addressed by this FOA. The project is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies and contribute to and promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.
2. The applicant proposes a sound programmatic approach for the proposed project. (0-20 points)
 - The application clearly defines the geographic and demographic characteristics of the agency's service population and the target population to be affected by the implementation of this cooperative agreement. The proposed target population meets the requirements described in this program announcement;
 - The proposed project will provide for the development and implementation of a comprehensive, multi-faceted diligent recruitment plan that reflects the population of children in care;

- The state, county or tribal child welfare agency is the lead agency and will take an active role in the project throughout the entire length of the project;
- The diligent recruitment plan is integrated with other agency programs, including the foster care case planning and permanency planning processes to facilitate active concurrent planning activities;
- The approach addresses each of the planning period and implementation period requirements listed in this FOA. There is a detailed description of the activities the program proposes to implement during the planning period and during the implementation period;
- The proposed project is likely to enhance child welfare agency capacity to provide a range of placement resources for children in care. The proposed project will increase capacity to improve processes, practices, and permanency outcomes for children in care; and
- The proposed services would involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of service delivery. If collaboration is proposed, there are letters of commitment or memoranda of understanding from organizations, agencies, and consultants that will be partners, subcontractors, or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents describe the role of the agency, organization, or consultant, and detail specific tasks to be performed;
- The project would be culturally responsive to the target population.

3. The applicant proposes a project that will inform the field. (0-4 points)

- The proposed project would develop into a model site for other jurisdictions to look to in developing the ability to implement comprehensive, multi-faceted diligent recruitment plans as an ongoing part of agency functions. The project would develop products and provide information on strategies used and the outcomes achieved that would support evidence-based improvements of practices in the field. The schedule for developing these products is appropriate in scope and budget; and
- The intended audience (e.g., researchers, policymakers, practitioners) for product dissemination is appropriate to the goals of the proposed project. The project's products would be useful to the identified audiences; the plan for disseminating information is appropriate; and the mechanisms and forums that would be used to convey the information and support replication by other interested agencies are appropriate. The proposed dissemination plan is appropriate in scope and budget.

4. The applicant demonstrates its commitment toward sustainability. (0-4 points)

- The proposed project would be integrated into the grantee's ongoing practices with the goal of continuous data-informed, diligent recruitment of placement resources who reflect the characteristics of the children in care; and
- There is a sound plan for continuing this project beyond the period of federal funding under this FOA.

EVALUATION

Maximum Points: 20

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

1. The applicant proposes a strong evaluation plan. (0-11 points)

- The applicant proposes a clear and convincing plan for evaluating the project and satisfies the requirements for the evaluation published in this FOA. The methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and context of the project. The evaluation plan is strongly guided by the project's logic model;
- The project's evaluation plan would rigorously measure achievement of project objectives, customer satisfaction, acquisition of competencies, effectiveness of program services and project strategies, the efficiency of the implementation processes, changes in recruitment and retention practices, and the impact of the project on the permanency outcomes for children and youth;

- The methods of evaluation include the use of strong measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the program as identified in the project logic model. The evaluation includes measures of outcomes, in addition to measures of inputs and outputs. The measures are objective and have strong reliability, validity, and internal consistency. There is a sound plan for securing informed consent and implementing an IRB review, if applicable; and
- The evaluation plan outlines an appropriate sampling plan that ensures sample sizes sufficient to detect significant effects. The target sample represents the intended recipients of the services to the greatest extent possible given the project's structure and resources.

2. The evaluation plan includes an appropriate comparison group for determining the influence of the project activities on outcomes. If a comparison group is not proposed, the applicant provides a reasonable explanation for not using a comparison group and offers another, equally rigorous approach to evaluating the influence of the program on outcomes. This comparison group and the program/treatment group are assigned at random or matched on key characteristics. If not assigned at random or matched on key characteristics, the applicant provides a reasonable explanation of how it will identify and address any pre-existing differences between the comparison group and the program/treatment group; The applicant proposes a strong plan for data collection, analysis and reporting. (0-5 points)

- The applicant proposes a sound plan for collecting high-quality data on the services provided, the costs of these services, the outcomes of these services, and their cost effectiveness;
- The application provides an appropriate, feasible, and realistic plan for using evaluation findings to produce ongoing documentation of project activities and results. The evaluation plan includes performance feedback and periodic assessment of program progress that can be used to modify the program, as necessary, and serve as a basis for program adjustments;
- The applicant provides clear and detailed evidence that commitments have been secured, via a data sharing agreement or other means, to access administrative child welfare data necessary to allow or a refined identification and assessment of the needs of the target population and to track child welfare outcomes and foster and adoptive family recruitment, training and approval data; The project's evaluation plan uses process, practice, and outcome performance indicators from the CFSR On Site Review Instrument (OSRI) or similar indicators from their state's quality assurance system. The proposed evaluation plan would be likely to yield data that can be compared to and contrasted with regional, state, and national level CFSR data. The proposed evaluation plan would measure the effects of the proposed implementation of the proposed project on safety, permanency, and well-being. In addition to measuring OSRI items, the proposed evaluation plan will also measure other outcomes of value to the child welfare field; and
- The application clearly describes a sound plan for conducting a cost analysis of the proposed program, lists the factors that would be considered in this analysis, and describes the plan for comparing the program to other similar programs with respect to these factors.

3. The applicant demonstrates sufficient capacity to conduct a rigorous evaluation. (0-4 points)

- The applicant either demonstrates that they have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective and rigorous evaluation of the project or presents a sound plan for contracting with a third-party evaluator. The proposed evaluator has sufficient experience with research and/or evaluation, understands the population of interest, and demonstrates the necessary independence from the project to assure objectivity;
- The evaluation is expected to yield findings that show the project has achieved its stated objectives, the accomplishment of objectives can be attributed to the project, and the applicant is cognizant that results from randomized control studies provide the most compelling evidence of causal links between interventions and outcomes;
- The applicant presents a reasonable plan to evaluate the extent to which strategic dissemination of project products and findings to target audiences was effective (information was received by the

intended audiences and used as intended), and to assess the impact of dissemination in supporting project implementation and sustainability and knowledge transfer in their role as a demonstration project; and

- The applicant provides strong documentation that the proposed evaluator has extensive experience with research and/or evaluation of this nature, clearly understands the population of interest, and demonstrates the necessary independence from the project to ensure objectivity.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES

Maximum Points: 15

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

1. The applicant demonstrates the qualifications and capacity of the applicant organization and any partnering organizations and their staff. (0-8 points)

- The application strongly documents the ability of the applicant and partnering organizations to conduct a project of the type specified under this FOA, within the project period of 60 months;
- The applicant (and its partners and contractors, if applicable) provides strong evidence of sufficient experience and expertise in the program areas of this announcement; in collaboration with partner organizations; in culturally competent service delivery; and in administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of similar projects; and
- The proposed project director and key project staff clearly possess sufficient relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities to implement and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity effectively, as documented, e.g. with resumes.

2. The applicant demonstrates systematic capacity and develops an executable management plan. (0-7 points)

- The applicant presents a sound management plan for achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality. The plan clearly describes the effective management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants (if appropriate);
- The applicant documents clearly the role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors, and/or partners. These are well defined and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project with respect to the target population;
- The application clearly demonstrates systemic capacity to effectively implement the proposed project by strongly documenting the commitment of the applicant organization and any partnering organizations and their staff to develop and provide a comprehensive, multi-faceted diligent recruitment program;
- The applicant provides a comprehensive list of community organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution. This plan includes, where appropriate, Letters of Commitment and/or Third-Party Agreements from identified partners;
- The applicant provides strong documentation that each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) clearly possesses the organizational capability to fulfill their assigned roles and functions effectively in serving the target populations; and
- The applicant demonstrates that there would be a mutually beneficial relationship between the proposed project and other work by the applicant which is planned, anticipated, or underway with federal assistance.

BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Maximum Points: 5

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

1. The applicant includes a clear, detailed budget for each year of the project, and a detailed narrative budget justification for the costs outlined for the first year of the project. (0-4 points)
 - The costs of the proposed project are necessary, reasonable and commensurate with the types and range of activities and services to be conducted, the number of participants to be served, and the expected goals and objectives;
 - Funds which are specified are allowable and will not supplant or augment any other funding;
 - The application clearly identifies funds for all required items for the project budget, including travel to attend the Kick-off Meeting and annual Grantees Meeting in Washington, DC; and
 - The budget includes a specific, reasonable percentage of funds for the purpose of evaluation, and the applicant clearly demonstrates that there are sufficient funds in the budget for each budget period to support evaluation and data collection activities, and dissemination activities.
2. The applicant's fiscal controls and accounting procedures would ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this FOA. (0-1 points)

V.2. Review and Selection Process

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

Initial ACF Screening

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

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

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

Objective Review and Results

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

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

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested. ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations,

including those populations located in pockets of poverty. ACF will also consider the geographic distribution of federal funds in its award decisions.

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

Approved but Unfunded Applications

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

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

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

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1. Award Notices

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

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

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

Prohibition Against Profit

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

Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations

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

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

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

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

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

Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. §§ 8101-8106) requires that all organizations receiving grants from any federal agency agree to maintain a drug-free workplace. By signing the application, the Authorizing Official agrees that the grantee will provide a drug-free workplace and will comply with the requirement to notify ACF if an employee is convicted of violating a criminal drug statute. Failure to comply with these requirements may be cause for debarment. Government-wide requirements for Drug-Free Workplace for Financial Assistance are found in 2 CFR part 182; HHS implementing

regulations are set forth in 2 CFR § 382.400. All recipients of ACF grant funds must comply with the requirements in Subpart B - Requirements for Recipients Other Than Individuals, 2 CFR § 382.225. The rule is available at [Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace](#).

Debarment and Suspension

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

Pro-Children Act

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

HHS Grants Policy Statement

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

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Applications funded by federal grant programs are subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and are frequently requested under the FOIA. In accordance with the FOIA requirement to proactively disclose frequently requested materials at 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D), and as part of on-going efforts to promote openness in government programs, ACF will post some of the top-ranked applications funded under this FOA in its online FOIA Reading Room at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/e-reading-room>. As required under the FOIA, each of the top-ranked applications will receive appropriate redaction of specific information to protect personal privacy and competitively sensitive commercial

information. Applications chosen for posting to the FOIA Reading Room will be placed on the internet website without further notice to the applicants.

VI.3. Reporting

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

Performance Progress Reports (PPR)

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

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

Federal Financial Reports (FFR)

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

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

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

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

For budget periods ending in the months of:

January 01 through March 31

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

April 30

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| April 01 through June 30 | July 30 |
| July 01 through September 30 | October 30 |
| October 01 through December 31 | January 30 |

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The forms are available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/forms>.

VII. Agency Contacts

Program Office Contact

Taffy Compain
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau
Portals Building
1250 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 205-7793
Fax: (202) 205-7887
Email: taffy.compain@acf.hhs.gov

Office of Grants Management Contact

Robin Bunch
Grants Management Officer
Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families, Office of Grants Management
Aerospace Building 370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
6th Floor East
Washington, DC 20447
Phone: (202) 401-5513
Fax: (202) 401-5513
Email: acfogme-grants@acf.hhs.gov

Federal Relay Service:

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

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

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

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

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

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

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

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

All required Standard Forms (SF), assurances, and certifications are available on the ACF Grants-Forms

page at [https:// www.acf.hhs.gov /grants -forms](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms).

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

Versions of other Standard Forms (SF) are available on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Grants Management Forms web site at [http:// www.whitehouse.gov /omb /grants_forms/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms/).

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

Sign up to receive notification of ACF Funding Opportunities at www.Grants.gov
[http:// www.grants.gov /applicants /email_subscription.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/email_subscription.jsp).

Application Checklist

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

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

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| | <p>submission, these forms are available on the FOA's Grants.gov "Download Opportunity Instructions and Application" page under "Download Application Package" in the section entitled, "Optional Documents."</p> <p>These forms are required for applications under this FOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that include only non-construction activities must submit the SF-424A and SF-424B, along with the SF-424 and SF-P/PSL. | |
| Certification Regarding Lobbying | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. Found at http:// www.acf.hhs.gov /grants-forms.</p> | <p>Submission is due with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p> |
| SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities | <p>"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. Found at http://www. acf.hhs.gov /grants-forms.</p> <p>If applicable, submission of this form is required if any funds have been paid, or will be paid, to any person for influencing, or attempting to influence, an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan.</p> | <p>If applicable, submission of this form is applicable, it is due prior at the time of application. It may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p> |
| Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule) | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i>. Additional information and necessary forms are available at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/ forms /index.html.</p> | <p>Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i>. If the information is not</p> |

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| | | available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. |
| Certification of Filing and Payment of Federal Taxes | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> of the announcement. The Certification may be found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms . | If applicable to the applicant, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. |
| Project Summary/Abstract | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page. | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . |
| Table of Contents | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . | Submission is due as part of the Project Description by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . |
| The Project Description | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . This is the title for the project narrative that describes the applicant's plan for the project. | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . |
| The Project Budget and Budget Justification | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i> of the announcement. | Submission of the Project Budget is required on the appropriate Standard Form (424A or 424C) is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . |
| Logic Model | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . | Submission is due with the application package by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . |

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|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Third-Party Agreements | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description</i> . | If available, submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3</i> . If not available at the time of application submission, due by the time of award. |
| Project Sustainability Plan | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> . | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> . |

Appendices