



**Administration for Children and Families**

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Data Center for Family Self-Sufficiency

HHS-2013-ACF-OPRE-PD-0548

Application Due Date: 05/20/2013

Data Center for Family Self-Sufficiency  
HHS-2013-ACF-OPRE-PD-0548  
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**Department of Health & Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families**

**Program Office:** Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation  
**Funding Opportunity Title:** Data Center for Family Self-Sufficiency  
**Announcement Type:** Initial  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** HHS-2013-ACF-OPRE-PD-0548  
**CFDA Number:** 93.647  
**Due Date for Applications:** **05/20/2013**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Notices:**

- **On January 1, 2012, the Administration for Children and Families implemented required electronic application submission via [www.grants.gov](http://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](http://www.grants.gov) is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. Standard Forms and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files. Please see *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission* for detailed information on this requirement.**
- **Grants.gov Alert: Grants.gov has discovered an issue with the newest version of Adobe Reader XI. Applicants may encounter the following error that will prevent them from submitting their application: "At least one required Field was empty. Please fill in the required field (highlighted) before continuing." This error message may appear even if the applicant has completed all required fields.** While Grants.gov continues to investigate this issue, they recommend that if applicants encounter this issue, applicants should submit their application using any version below Adobe Reader XI. Please refer to the Adobe Software Version Compatibility, available on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) at [http://www.grants.gov/help/download\\_software.jsp#adobe811](http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#adobe811) for additional information about supported versions of Adobe Reader. Please be sure to read the Technical Alerts updates on this issue. They are available under "What's New at Grants.gov" on the Grants.gov homepage.

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) invites applications for the development, implementation, and ongoing operations of a **Family Self-Sufficiency Research Data Center** (Data Center). The Data Center will support family self-sufficiency research and related activities by serving as the hub for a variety of activities that will support the enhancement of State and local

capacity to collect, link, store, use and provide access to administrative and evaluation data in family self-sufficiency. The Data Center will be an independent entity, but the nature of its work will require close collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, including the members of the Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network. (See Funding Opportunity HHS-2013-ACF-OPRE-PD-0549.)

This cooperative agreement is intended to support the development and implementation of a Data Center that will enhance the capacity and expand the utilization of evaluation and administrative data in family self-sufficiency research and programs. OPRE intends to award one cooperative agreement that will achieve the government's objective through:

- Conducting a national assessment of the state and needs of the field in family self-sufficiency data;
- Negotiating, supporting, and maintaining ongoing access agreements for administrative and program evaluation data across family self-sufficiency programs;
- Facilitating expedited data access and streamlined processes for accessing administrative and evaluation data for research and policy analysis purposes;
- Maintaining an archive of ACF evaluation data that is not accessibly archived elsewhere;
- Engaging in activities to support secondary analysis of such data;
- Conducting and supporting activities to conduct secondary analysis of data accessible through the Data Center;
- Working with State and local human service administrators to improve the quality of administrative data;
- Engaging in outreach activities and providing trainings in data management and analysis to state and local human service agencies; and
- Ensuring adequate safeguards and protections are in place to maintain data security and data privacy.

The Data Center will interface with and engage in ongoing ACF and HHS research priorities.

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

This cooperative agreement is authorized under Section 1110 of the Social Security Act.

### **Description**

#### **A. BACKGROUND**

##### ***The Need for Improved Self-Sufficiency Data Capacity***

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) shifted the landscape of the cash welfare system in a number of ways. What was a centralized system under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program became a decentralized, state-based approach that discouraged cash assistance, imposed work requirements, sanctions, and lifetime limits on assistance and allowed states to shift resources from cash benefits to services. Along with the shift to a state-run block grant program was a corresponding reduction in federal oversight under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, as well as a reduction in the amount and consistency of TANF program data collected across the nation.

The effects of PRWORA on the policy, structure, and operation of the welfare system have received a great deal of attention. However, PRWORA also significantly affected federal and state collection, analysis and reporting of programmatic and administrative data. For example, PRWORA gave States the option to submit either the universe or a sample of their caseload data to the Federal government. States, rather than the Federal government, became primarily responsible for analyzing caseload data and reporting compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements. Many States and localities have reduced their data analysis capacity in the wake of recent state and local fiscal pressures. While a number of States have made significant progress and substantial investments in improving administrative data

quality and integration, there is significant variation across the country and many States lack accessible and integrated administrative data. As a result, despite the persistent need for good data and understanding of how TANF is meeting its legislative and programmatic goals, access to and availability of TANF data is more limited than ever.

OPRE has a long history of supporting data analysis, research, and evaluation related to ACF's programs and mission. Within OPRE, the portfolio of research on economic independence focuses on three major areas: (1) TANF, the safety net, and family economic stability and self-sufficiency; (2) education and training; and (3) employment and the labor market. In addition to these three major areas, OPRE undertakes cross-cutting research and evaluation activities. Through sponsorship of research and evaluation contracts, grants and contracts to support quantitative and qualitative research and support for the dissemination of research evidence, OPRE's portfolio of research in family self-sufficiency, stability and family strengthening is designed to expand knowledge about effective programs to promote economic well-being among low-income families.

To complement these ongoing research and evaluation activities, OPRE is developing a multi-pronged approach to supporting a consortium of research in family self-sufficiency. A critical component of this approach is the development of the **Family Self-Sufficiency Research Data Center** through this funding opportunity. OPRE has supported past efforts to improve data capacity, such as a "Research Center to Support Secondary Analyses of Head Start Impact Study Data"

([www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/research\\_secondary/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/research_secondary/index.html)) and "Child Care State Research Capacity Cooperative Agreements" ([www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/state\\_resrch\\_cpty/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/state_resrch_cpty/index.html)).

In the realm of family self-sufficiency and stability, OPRE awarded a set of grants in 2008 to establish Federal-State Partnerships to Build Capacity in the Use of TANF and Related Administrative Data ([www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare\\_employ/federal\\_state](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/welfare_employ/federal_state)). However, no central data center exists to provide a comprehensive and integrated access to family self-sufficiency and stability data for research and related activities. This cooperative agreement funded through this announcement will fill this gap.

## **B. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is to support the development, implementation, and ongoing operations of the **Family Self-Sufficiency Research Data Center**. The Data Center will serve as the hub for a variety of activities that will support the enhancement of State and local capacity to collect, link, store, use and provide access to administrative and evaluation data in family self-sufficiency. These resources are intended to improve access to high-quality data for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in family self-sufficiency programs.

## **C. GOALS AND DESCRIPTION**

### ***Goal of the Data Center***

The primary goal of this program will be to support the development and implementation of a Data Center that will enhance the capacity and expand the utilization of evaluation and administrative data in family self-sufficiency research and programs.

### ***Description of Activities of the Data Center***

To meet this goal, grantees could engage in any number of activities, including, but not limited to:

- Developing, executing and updating a needs assessment on the current state of family self-sufficiency data across the country;
- Negotiating, supporting, and maintaining ongoing access agreements for administrative and program evaluation data across family self-sufficiency programs;

- Facilitating expedited data access and streamlined processes for accessing administrative and evaluation data for research and policy analysis purposes;
- Maintaining an archive of ACF evaluation data that is not accessibly archived elsewhere;
- Engaging in activities to support secondary analysis of such data;
- Conducting and supporting activities to conduct secondary analysis of data accessible through the Data Center;
- Working with State and local human service administrators to improve the quality of administrative data;
- Engaging in outreach activities and providing trainings in data management and analysis to state and local human service agencies; and
- Ensuring adequate safeguards and protections are in place to maintain data security and data privacy.

### ***Expectations of the Data Center***

There will be high expectations for the Data Center to maintain strong relations with Federal, State, and local data experts and administrators.

OPRE intends to award grants for a Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Scholars Network (Scholars Network) under Funding Opportunity HHS-2013-ACF-OPRE-PD-0549 around the same time as the award for this Center. The Scholars Network is intended to support and sustain the development of ACF's family self-sufficiency research agenda and to improve the integration and application of research evidence and program evaluation into practices and operations of state and local programs focused on family self-sufficiency and stability. OPRE expects that the Data Center will engage with the Scholars Network and consider the Scholars Network's priorities and needs in setting the priorities of the Center.

While OPRE intends that synergies develop between the Scholars Network and the Data Center, a successful Data Center will also serve a broader array of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. In its emphasis on providing resources to improve data access and quality, the Data Center will stand as a distinct complement to other federally funded initiatives such as the Self-Sufficiency Research Clearinghouse, the Welfare Rules Database, and the Poverty Research Centers funded by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE).

The work of the Data Center is intended as a public good, to provide public benefit. Should the project be recompeted in the future and awarded to another entity, all products acquired, developed or maintained during the term of the cooperative agreement shall be provided to ACF or a subsequent Data Center grantee.

### **D. GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS**

The entity receiving this cooperative agreement will be responsible for and required to:

1. Propose and undertake successful execution of a plan of activities that satisfy the goals of this FOA. The plan should contain, at a minimum, the following sections: specific activities planned, partners, background and significance, and data acquisition and management methods, as well as a budget;
2. Develop and implement thorough plans for sustained communication and engagement with ACF/OPRE that achieves the objectives described in the "Description of ACF/OPRE's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement" in *Section II*;
3. Conduct or provide support for analyses of administrative and program evaluation data accessible through the Data Center;
4. Participate in the Scholars Network's activities to serve as a consultative body and source of feedback and ideas about the data needs of the family self-sufficiency research community. Data Center representatives should plan to attend two (2) meetings of the Scholars Network each year in the Washington, DC, area in addition to any additional ACF oversight meetings facilitated via appropriate technology (conference call, webinar, etc.). Each meeting will be approximately three (3) days in length;

5. Provide technical assistance to state and local data experts and other stakeholders in order to improve quality of administrative data and analysts' access to it;
6. Present activities, datasets, or innovations to Federal staff or to the larger social services research community as appropriate;
7. Be prepared and available to provide data access to support "rapid response" research and program evaluation efforts undertaken by ACF/OPRE, key stakeholders, and the Scholars Network;
8. Make recommendations to OPRE on improvements and advances in data analysis, management, and archiving; and
9. Provide all products acquired, developed or maintained during the term of the cooperative agreement to ACF or a subsequent Data Center grantee if the project is recompeted in the future and awarded to another entity.

## II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Total Funding:	\$500,000
Expected Number of Awards:	1
Award Ceiling:	\$500,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	\$400,000 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	\$500,000 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 recipient will be awarded up to \$500,000 for the first 12-month budget period. In subsequent years, recipients **may be awarded up to \$600,000** for each of four subsequent 12-month budget periods for the duration of this cooperative agreement. The initial award will be made for the first 12-month period. Non-competing continuation awards for the subsequent 12-month budget periods will be subject to funds availability, satisfactory progress by the recipient, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Federal government. Supplements to each period may also be allowed if the need and purpose arise. Applicants will receive instructions on how to submit non-competing continuation applications during the first budget period to request funds for the second budget period. Applicants should



include a budget for the first year of the cooperative agreement and then provide budget estimates for activities to be performed during the remaining four option years of the cooperative agreement.

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

Cooperative agreements are assistance mechanisms that differ from regular project grants in that they require substantial programmatic involvement of ACF/OPRE above and beyond the levels required for traditional program management of grants. Specifically, the ACF/OPRE Project Coordinator will cooperate with the Data Center Director as a partner in the research network as described below. By accepting a funding award, the successful applicant agrees to accept the participatory and cooperative nature of the group process, as well as the ultimate decision-making authority of the federal Project Coordinator on essential matters.

The ACF/OPRE Project Coordinator will be the OPRE Family Self-Sufficiency Research Team Leader and additional OPRE social science research analysts, as necessary and appropriate. They will:

- Assist in all functions of the Data Center, including:
  - Developing the overall action plan; and
  - Reviewing and commenting on each stage of the Data Center's work before subsequent stages are started.
- Promote collaborative relationships/partnerships and facilitate the exchange of information (i.e., identifying technical assistance and training needs, emerging issues, research findings, technological innovations, available resources, model programs, and data collection and distribution) between the Data Center and other stakeholders, potentially including members of the Scholars Network, for purposes related to this program and other relevant ACF programs;
- Support collaboration with ACF offices and programs; and
- Continuously review all activities to ensure objectives are being met.

The above responsibilities are in addition to, not in lieu of, the levels of involvement normally required for program stewardship of federal funds.

Work supported under the cooperative agreement must acknowledge the ACF/OPRE Data Center for Family Self-Sufficiency in a manner agreed upon and approved by the ACF/OPRE Program Officer. No work be published or disseminated without this acknowledgement.

This cooperative agreement is meant to serve the public good. Therefore, datasets generated under this cooperative agreement should, to the greatest extent appropriate for each case and while fully respecting privacy rights, be available to all interested parties.

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**

Eligibility under this announcement is limited to **public, private, and State-controlled institutions of higher education**. Eligibility is so limited because, given the goal of sustainably enhancing the capacity and expanding the utilization of evaluation and administrative data in family self-sufficiency research and programs, the entity operating and supporting the Data Center must have two characteristics: (1) sufficient data infrastructure and capacity to provide a wide range of highly technical expertise and assistance to a variety of stakeholders, from government entities to individual researchers and (2) the ability to access, collect, and facilitate sharing of State-level administrative and evaluation data. Accredited public, private, and State-controlled institutions of higher education uniquely meet both of these requirements.



Eligible entities include but are not limited to the following:

(a) Tribally Controlled Land Grant Colleges and Universities (TCUs) as cited in Section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. § 301 note), any other institutions that qualify for funding under the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. § 1801 et seq.), and Navajo Community College, authorized in the Navajo Community College Assistance Act of 1978, Pub.L. 95-471, Title II (25 U.S.C. § 640a);

(b) Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as defined in the amended version of the Higher Education Act of 1965, codified at 20 U.S.C. § 1061(2), that are institutions established prior to 1964 whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and must meet the definition of "Part B institution" in Section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended; and 10 of 36 "Part B institution" in Section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended; and

(c) Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) as defined in the amended version of the Higher Education Act of 1965, codified at 20 U.S.C. § 1101a(a)(5), and that are institutions who satisfy Section 502(a)(5) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

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

Faith-based and community organizations that meet eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity announcement.

## **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](http://www.dnb.com)) and be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM, [www.sam.gov](http://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](https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/SAM%20Quick%20Guide%20Registrations-v1.6.pdf).

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

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

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

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and

- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

## APPLICATION DISQUALIFICATION FACTORS

Applications from individuals, 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](http://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](http://www.Grants.gov) after 11:59 p.m., ET, on the due date, as indicated by a dated and time-stamped email from [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov), will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement. That is, applications submitted to [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov), on or after 12:00 a.m., ET, on the day after the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

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

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

- Any applications received from entities other than public, private, or State-controlled institutions of higher education will be disqualified from competitive review and award.
- Any applications received from public, private, or State-controlled institutions of education that do not include proof of accreditation by one of the regional accrediting commissions recognized by the Department of Education and the Council of Post-Secondary Accreditation will be disqualified from competition and from receiving awards.

## IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

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

Matthew Borus  
 Data Center FOA  
 c/o Mathematica Policy Research  
 1100 1st Street, NE, 12th Floor  
 Washington, DC 20002  
 Phone: (866) 666-4252  
 Email: [DataCenterFOA@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:DataCenterFOA@mathematica-mpr.com)

### Electronic Application Submission:

The electronic application submission package is available at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov).

### Applications in Paper Format:

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

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

Available at the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](http://www.Grants.gov) website and at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_forms](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](http://www.Grants.gov), where the AOR will create a short profile and obtain a username and password from the Grants.gov Credential Provider. AORs will only be authorized for the DUNS number registered in the System for 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](http://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](http://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](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/pdf995_instructions_for_video.pdf). ACF does not endorse any of the software listed on Grants.gov, and applicants are not required to use a

specific type of PDF conversion software to submit an application.

**NOTE:** Applications submitted via [www.Grants.gov](http://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](http://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:**

Applicants are advised to include all required forms and materials. Pages submitted beyond the listed page limits will be removed prior to panel review. Applicants are strongly advised to use headings and subheadings that correspond to the evaluation criteria and the Approach section of the Project Description.

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

Application File One: Limited to **50** pages.

#### **Table of Contents**

**Project Summary/Abstract** (Limited to one single-spaced page)

**Project Description Narrative/Approach**

**Project Budget and Budget Justification**

Application File Two: Limited to **45** pages.

**A. Required: Resumes/CVs for key personnel**

**B. Required: Description of Organizational Capacity other than Resumes/CVs and material covered in the approach.**

**C. Required: Intended time commitment of key personnel to the Data Center and other, non-Data-Center -related time commitments**

**D. Required: Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information**

**E. Proof of Legal Status/Academic Accreditation**

**F. As Appropriate: Third Party Agreements**



Required Standard Forms (SFs) and/or OMB-approved Forms should be submitted separately from the two application files described above, per the instructions in this funding opportunity announcement.

While required forms and application materials are discussed throughout this announcement, a full checklist of them can be found in *Section VIII. Other Information*.

### 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
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.
Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Certification	An example of a standard MOE is available at <a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> . Submission required for all applicants.	Required for all applications.
DUNS Number (Universal Identifier) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	A DUNS number is required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a> . Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. SAM registration is available at <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a> .	A DUNS number and SAM registration are eligibility requirements for all applicants.  See <i>Section III.3. Other</i> for information on obtaining a DUNS number and registration at <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a> .

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.
Proof of academic accreditation for public, State-controlled, or private institution of higher education	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. 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> .
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
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.
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 <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html</a> .  General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/</a> . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email ( <a href="mailto:ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov">ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov</a> ) or by phone (240-453-6900).
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Submission is required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project. Standard Forms must be used. Forms must be submitted by the application due date.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.

## The Project Description

## **The Project Description Overview**

The project description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for available assistance. The project description should be concise and complete. It should address the activity for which federal funds are being requested. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly. In preparing the project description, information that is responsive to each of the requested evaluation criteria must be provided. Awarding offices use this and other information in making their funding recommendations. It is important, therefore, that this information be included in the application in a manner that is clear and complete.

## **General Expectations and Instructions**

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

## **General Instructions for Preparing a Full Project Description**

### **Introduction**

Applicants that are required to submit a full project description shall prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following instructions while being aware of the specified evaluation criteria. The topics listed in this section provide a broad overview of what the project description should include while the Criteria in *Section V.1.* identify the measures that will be used to evaluate applications.

### **Table of Contents**

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers.

### **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 and limited to one page in length.

### **Outcomes Expected**

Identify the outcomes to be derived from the project.

As described elsewhere, applicants should begin their work on the Data Center with an assessment of themes and variations in the data capacity-building needs of stakeholders. Applicants should therefore describe the lessons they expect to learn from this assessment and how they expect to apply those lessons to the continuing work of the Data Center.

At the same time, the ultimate objective of the Data Center is to enhance the capacity and expand the utilization of evaluation and administrative data in family self-sufficiency research and programs. Applicants should propose specific outcomes that would constitute such an enhancement that they expect to achieve through their approach. To the extent possible, outcomes should be specific and measurable. Given that the assessment may point in different or unexpected directions, applicants should address how they will deal with uncertainty and adapt or change expected outcomes based on the assessment as needed.

## **Approach**

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work and state your reason for taking the proposed approach rather than other approaches. Describe any unusual features of the project such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the outcomes 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.

Provide a list of organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

In identifying promising strategies to build data capacity, it is important to begin with an informed understanding of the nature of the problems to be addressed, as well as the policy and operational context within which the strategies are being carried out. Applicants should describe potential activities particularly for use during the first year of funding, to build relationships with stakeholders and assess themes and variations in capacity-building needs.

This assessment will help to guide the work of the Data Center in the second through fifth years of the cooperative agreement. Nonetheless, applicants should propose and describe their approach to potential activities for the Data Center during those years.

For all aspects of the cooperative agreement, applicants should offer a thoughtful description of their approach to the project based on the entirety of this FOA. This approach should take into account potential uncertainties based on lessons from the initial assessment, and it should reflect a strong understanding of potential challenges that may arise and methods of addressing those challenges. The approach taken must include, but not necessarily be limited to:

1. Demonstration that the applicant understands the objectives of the FOA and the need for assistance that it means to address. The application must cogently:

- Describe the current state of data capacity and integration related to family self-sufficiency and stability at the Federal, State, and local levels, and the challenges that this FOA is meant to address;
- Describe the role of a Data Center as hub for technical assistance to state and local governments; and
- Describe the challenges and opportunities that exist in the realm of administrative and program evaluation data in family self-sufficiency research.

2. Description of the proposed technical approach to the creation of the Data Center. The application must:

- Propose a thoughtful, promising, and practical approach for assessing themes and variations in the data capacity-building needs of stakeholders during the first year of the cooperative agreement;
- Propose a convincing approach to creating a comprehensive and integrated network of access to administrative data in family self-sufficiency programs;
- Propose a clear and technologically sound approach to creating a secure, privacy-protected archive of data from distinct family self-sufficiency programs;
- Lay out clear mechanisms for offering and managing access to the Data Center's data, including in situations that call for "rapid response" and time sensitive research and analysis;
- Offer innovative, well-conceived proposals for integrating datasets in order to enhance the overall state of understanding of the overlap between family self-sufficiency programs and the situations of families who are eligible for these programs, keeping in mind the particular challenges around studying populations that are disconnected from many programs for which they are eligible;
- Propose an effective plan to build and facilitate relationships between existing sources of data and to facilitate improvements in access, integration, and collaboration across disparate sources and stakeholders;
- Articulate an effective plan for working collaboratively with stakeholders who are interested in data system enhancement and integration;
- Articulate an effective plan to engage stakeholders in order to spread awareness of the Data Center and what it has to offer;
- Offer innovative, effective proposals for accessible training on data management and analysis for state and local human service providers;
- Demonstrate the ability to provide accurate and applicable technical assistance around data quality and collection issues;
- Reflect a thorough understanding of potential challenges and methods to address them to ensure success of the Data Center.

3. Description of staff qualifications, expertise, and experience. The application must indicate the extent to which the Data Center Director and staff demonstrate adequate research experience in archiving, integrating, managing, analyzing, and providing technical assistance regarding data on family self-sufficiency programs. Specifically, the application must show the extent to which the Director and staff:

- Demonstrate expertise across the broad array of family self-sufficiency research, program operations, and stakeholders, as well as the relevant data systems;
- Demonstrate the capacity to use, store, and integrate a wide range of relevant datasets that may be built on different technical platforms;
- Demonstrate firm knowledge of state-of-the-art analytic techniques and methodologies to address questions of interest;
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of, and sensitivity to, the issues of working with confidential datasets and maintaining data security and personal privacy;
- Demonstrate experience with facilitating timely data access across a wide variety of sources and stakeholders;
- Demonstrate fluency in techniques for archiving large sets of data from multiple programs;

- Describe an adequate management plan for achieving the objectives of the FOA on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality;
  - Demonstrate that project leadership are skilled in project management, delegating tasks, and establishing and maintaining effective collaboration with multiple stakeholders and data systems;
  - Include sufficient numbers of qualified core support staff to effectively manage daily logistics and communications;
  - Demonstrate evidence of strong relationships with other stakeholders in the field;
  - Have appropriate training and are well-suited to carry out the proposed plan, and have an experience level appropriate to the work proposed;
  - Demonstrate the ability to conceptualize and successfully carry out tasks and activities as set forth in this FOA and produce products as required;
  - Show substantial and relevant experience in successfully managing projects of similar scope and type and ensuring staff successfully complete assignments and work effectively and efficiently together;
  - Describe experience with and clear understanding of the data challenges facing researchers, policymakers, and program administrators, particularly with regard to data quality, timely access to data, and integrating data across multiple programs;
  - Offer evidence of strong relationships with stakeholders whose collaboration will be essential in brokering access to and integration of different data systems.
4. A detailed timeline, including milestones and end products of value. The application must demonstrate a clear understanding of the time requirements of all tasks to be performed under the FOA.
5. Description of an effective plan for dissemination of the work of the Data Center. The application must:
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to effectively and appropriately disseminate data innovations and findings to reach the intended audiences; and
  - Includes an effective plan to facilitate the utilization of the Data Center by researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in the field.

## **Evaluation**

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

## **Organizational Capacity**

- Organizational charts
- Documentation of experience in the program area
- Any other pertinent information the applicant deems relevant.

Provide a biographical sketch or resume for each key person appointed. Resumes should be no more than two pages in length. Job descriptions for each vacant key position should be included as well. As new key staff are appointed, biographical sketches or resumes will also be required.

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

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

### Third-Party Agreements

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. The budget justification is a line-item detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form. 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).

***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 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 narrative budget justification for each year of the proposed project. The narrative budget justification should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

The budget and budget justification should be detailed. The budget should contain reasonable cost estimates.

The recipient will be awarded up to \$500,000 for the first 12-month budget period. In subsequent years, recipients **may be awarded up to \$600,000** for each of four subsequent 12-month budget periods for the duration of this cooperative agreement. The initial award will be made for the first 12-month period. Non-competing continuation awards for the subsequent 12-month budget periods will be subject to funds availability, satisfactory progress by the recipient, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Federal government. Supplements to each period may also be allowed if the need and purpose arise. The need for a 60-month project period should be identified in Item 17 on the Standard Form (SF) 424, in the project narrative, and in the budget.

The budget should reflect plans by Data Center representatives to attend two (2) meetings of the Scholars Network Steering Committee each year in the Washington, DC, area in addition to any additional ACF oversight meetings facilitated via appropriate technology (conference call, webinar, etc.). Each meeting will be approximately two and a half (2.5) days in length. The first such meeting will be held as part of



the required grantee kick-off meeting in Washington, D.C. ACF anticipates that this meeting will be held in August.

## **General**

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

## **Personnel**

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

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

## **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, taxes, etc.

## **Travel**

Description: Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization. (This item does not include costs of 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 staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops should be detailed in the budget.

## **Supplies**

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property other than that included under the Equipment category.

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, including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant.

**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 at 41 U.S.C. § 134, 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 delegate agency, by agency title, along with the same supporting information referred to in these instructions.

### **Other**

**Description:** Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: local travel; insurance; food; medical and dental costs (noncontractual); professional services costs; 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, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description is estimated to average 40 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 11/30/2012. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

## Application Submission Options

### Electronic Submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov)

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

### Application Validation at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov)

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

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

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

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

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

### Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

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

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

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

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

either:

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

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

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

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

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

All exemption requests must include the following information:

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

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

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

### **Paper Format Application Submission**

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

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

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

### **IV.3. Submission Dates and Times**

Due Date for Applications: **05/20/2013**

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

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

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

Instructions for electronic submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) are available at: [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply\\_for\\_grants.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp).

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

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

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

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

#### **Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Extensions and/or Waiving Due Date and Receipt Time Requirements**

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

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

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

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

See "What to Expect After Submitting" at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) for more information.

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

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

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

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

## **IV.4. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs**

This program is 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/](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**

Tim Chappelle  
Data Center FOA  
c/o Mathematica Policy Research  
1100 1st Street, NE, 12th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002

##### **Hand Delivery**

Tim Chappelle  
Data Center FOA  
c/o Mathematica Policy Research  
1100 1st Street, NE, 12th Floor  
Washington, DC 20002

##### **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.

#### Understanding of Objectives and Need for Assistance

**Maximum Points: 20**

The extent to which the applicant cogently:

- Describes the current state of data capacity and integration related to family self-sufficiency and stability at the Federal, State, and local levels, and the challenges that this FOA is meant to address;
- Describes the role of a Data Center as hub for technical assistance to state and local governments.
- Describes the challenges and opportunities that exist in the realm of administrative and program evaluation data in family self-sufficiency research.

#### Technical Approach to Creation of the Data Center

**Maximum Points: 35**

The extent to which the applicant:

- Proposes a thoughtful, promising, and practical approach for assessing themes and variations in the data capacity-building needs of stakeholders during the first year of the cooperative agreement;
- Proposes a convincing approach to creating a comprehensive and integrated network of access to administrative data in family self-sufficiency programs;
- Proposes a clear and technologically sound approach to creating a secure, privacy-protected archive of data from distinct family self-sufficiency programs;
- Lays out clear mechanisms for offering and managing access to the Data Center's data, including in situations that call for "rapid response" and time sensitive research and analysis;
- Offers innovative, well-conceived proposals for integrating datasets in order to enhance the overall state of understanding of the overlap between family self-sufficiency programs and the situations of families who are eligible for these programs, keeping in mind the particular challenges around studying populations that are disconnected from many programs for which they are eligible;
- Proposes an effective plan to build and facilitate relationships between existing sources of data and to facilitate improvements in access, integration, and collaboration across disparate sources

- and stakeholders;
- Articulates an effective plan for working collaboratively with stakeholders who are interested in data system enhancement and integration;
- Articulates an effective plan to engage stakeholders in order to spread awareness of the Data Center and what it has to offer;
- Offers innovative, effective proposals for accessible training on data management and analysis for state and local human service providers;
- Demonstrates the ability to provide accurate and applicable technical assistance around data quality and collection issues;
- Reflects a thorough understanding of potential challenges and methods to address them to ensure success of the Data Center.

## **Staff Qualifications, Expertise, and Experience**

**Maximum Points: 25**

The extent to which the Data Center Director and staff demonstrate adequate research experience in archiving, integrating, managing, analyzing, and providing technical assistance regarding data on family self-sufficiency programs. Specifically, the extent to which the Director and Staff:

- Demonstrate expertise across the broad array of family self-sufficiency research, program operations, and stakeholders, as well as the relevant data systems;
- Demonstrate the capacity to use, store, and integrate a wide range of relevant datasets that may be built on different technical platforms;
- Demonstrate firm knowledge of state-of-the-art analytic techniques and methodologies to address questions of interest;
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of, and sensitivity to, the issues of working with confidential datasets and maintaining data security and personal privacy;
- Demonstrate experience with facilitating timely data access across a wide variety of sources and stakeholders;
- Demonstrate fluency in techniques for archiving large sets of data from multiple programs;
- Describe an adequate management plan for achieving the objectives of the FOA on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality;
- Demonstrate that project leadership are skilled in project management, delegating tasks, and establishing and maintaining effective collaboration with multiple stakeholders and data systems;
- Include sufficient numbers of qualified core support staff to effectively manage daily logistics and communications;
- Describe an adequate management plan for achieving the objectives of the FOA on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality;
- Demonstrate that project leadership are skilled in project management, delegating tasks, and establishing and maintaining effective collaboration with multiple stakeholders and data systems;
- Include sufficient numbers of qualified core support staff to effectively manage daily logistics and communications;
- Demonstrate evidence of strong relationships with other stakeholders in the field;
- Have appropriate training and are well-suited to carry out the proposed plan, and have an experience level appropriate to the work proposed;
- Demonstrate the ability to conceptualize and successfully carry out tasks and activities as set forth in this FOA and produce products as required;
- Show substantial and relevant experience in successfully managing projects of similar scope and type and ensuring staff successfully complete assignments and work effectively and efficiently together;
- Describe experience with and clear understanding of the data challenges facing researchers,

policymakers, and program administrators, particularly with regard to data quality, timely access to data, and integrating data across multiple programs;

- Offer evidence of strong relationships with stakeholders whose collaboration will be essential in brokering access to and integration of different data systems.

#### **Appropriateness of the Proposed Budget and Timeline**

**Maximum Points: 10**

The extent to which the applicant:

- Provides a detailed budget that contains reasonable cost estimates; and
- Provides a detailed timeline, including milestones and end products of value. The proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the time requirements of this contract and needs of all tasks.

#### **Dissemination**

**Maximum Points: 10**

The extent to which the applicant's proposed plan:

- Demonstrates an understanding of how to effectively and appropriately disseminate data innovations and findings to reach the intended audiences; and
- Includes an effective plan to facilitate the utilization of the Data Center by researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in the field.

### **V.2. Review and Selection Process**

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

#### **Initial ACF Screening**

Each application will be screened to determine whether it meets 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.

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

Applications may be funded depending on: (1) the ranked order of applicants resulting from the competitive review; (2) staff review and consultations; (3) the funds available; and (4) the best interests of the Federal government.

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

January 01 through March 31	April 30
April 01 through June 30	July 30
July 01 through September 30	October 30
October 01 through December 31	January 30

Fillable versions of the SF-425 form in Adobe PDF and MS-Excel formats, along with instructions, are available at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_forms](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms), [www.forms.gov](http://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](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms).

## **VII. Agency Contacts**

### **Program Office Contact**

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### **Office of Grants Management Contact**

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### **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/>.

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

Administration for Children and Families - GRANTS homepage <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants>.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) <https://www.cfda.gov/>.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) <http://www.gpo.gov>.

United States Code (U.S.C.) <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>.

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) [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
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . Found at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> .  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.	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.
Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Certification	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . An example of a standard MOE is available at <a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> .	Submission is due by the application due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times</i> .

	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.	
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 <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http:// fedgov.dnb.com/ webform</a> . To register at SAM, go to <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a> .	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 <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ grants-forms</a> and at the Grants.gov Forms Repository at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp">http://www.grants.gov/ agencies/ aforms repository information.jsp</a> .	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 <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> .	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-424 Key Contact Form	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . Found at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ grants-forms</a> and at the Grants.gov Forms Repository at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp">http://www. grants.gov/ agencies/ aforms repository information.jsp</a> .	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> .
Certification Regarding Lobbying	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . Found at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants-forms</a> .	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.

Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> . Additional information and necessary forms are available at <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html</a> .	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.
Proof of academic accreditation for public, State-controlled, or private institution of higher education	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. 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> .
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). The Budget Justification is a separate document that may be no longer than 10 pages and 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> .

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> .
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.

## Appendices