

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
UNIFORM PROJECT DESCRIPTION (UPD) 2023-2026
ATTACHMENT B

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GUIDANCE FOR USE

Administration for Children and Families UNIFORM PROJECT DESCRIPTION (UPD)

WHAT IS THE UPD:

The Uniform Project Description (UPD) is a series of text options that Program Office (PO) staff will use to select required elements of the Project Description and the Budget and Budget Justification for Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) issued by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Applicants that apply for funding must submit an application in response to all options selected by the PO.

The UPD is approved for use in all discretionary NOFOs published by ACF to solicit applications for the competitive award of grants and cooperative agreements.

HOW THE UPD IS USED:

The UPD is a generic project description, however, certain text options may be tailored for program-specific requirements, and text boxes are available for those options. Otherwise, POs will have the option to select check boxes linked to standard language and optional standard language text options, that including their titles, may not be modified in any way.

POs should only choose standard language options that are necessary and important for response by applicants. This is to ensure that there is sufficient information in applications for objective review. Evaluation criteria in the NOFOs should be reflective of the standard language options chosen by the POs.

Text boxes allowing the PO to include program specific language are available for the following text options only:

- **Letter of Intent.** This text box may be used to include the method of submission for the Letter of Intent (LOI). The purpose of an LOI is to project the number of applications so that the PO can plan for an appropriate number of reviewers that will be required for the competition.
- **Legal Status of Applicant Entity.** This is a three-part section: Part 1 provides a text box to list the types of required legal status documentation from entities other than non-profit, for-profit, or small business. Part 2 provides optional standard language selections for non-profit status documentation. Part 3 provides optional standard language selections for for-profit or small business legal status documentation.
- **Geographic Location.** This text box may be used to include program-specific requirements about the location of the proposed project for the primary recipient, and if applicable, the subrecipient organization(s).

- **Additional Eligibility Documentation.** The text box is available for the PO to specify documentation required of otherwise eligible applicants that is related to a programmatic eligibility requirement.
- **Objectives.** This text box may be used to specify requirements for the objectives of the project, and how they relate to the overall purpose of the program.
- **Approach.** A text box is available that allows the PO to include specific directions for applicants that will tailor the project description to the requirements of the specific program described by the NOFO.
- **Organizational Capacity.** This text box may be used to give further instructions on organizational capacity requirements.
- **Program Performance Evaluation Plan.** A text box is available to allow the PO to include specific instructions related to the NOFO. The instructions must not contradict the standard language.
- **Funded Activities Evaluation Plan.** A text box is available to allow the PO to include specific instructions related to the NOFO. The instructions must not contradict the standard language. This is a plan for a third-party evaluation.
- **Logic Model:** This text box may be used to provide program specific requirements for applicants to prepare a logic model.
- **Business Plan.** This text box may be used to include specific requirements for a business plan, which is an integral part of applications under certain programs.
- **Project Budget and Budget Justification.** A text box is available to include program specific budget items and requirements. For example, recipient travel costs to Washington, DC for required meetings with PO staff.

The UPD is a section of the NOFO template in the ACF Announcement Module System, AM 2.0, which houses the electronic templates for all ACF discretionary NOFOs. Other than the options noted above, which have text boxes to allow the PO to enter program specific information, it is not possible to alter the approved text of the UPD.

OTHER INFORMATION COLLECTIONS IN NOFOs:

- **Pre-Award Information Collections:** It is acceptable to include references and URLs to program-specific application forms and formats in ACF NOFOs in conjunction with the UPD only when those collections have received OMB approval under the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA).
- Forms, formats, or other requests for information that are not approved information collections, may not be included in ACF NOFOs. The Office of Grants Policy (OGP) will work with the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) to identify any such

collections during the NOFO review process.

- **Post-Award Information Collections, Other than Reporting:** If a PO requires a specific set of questions for evaluation of a project **post-award**, OGP will work with OPRE to assist the PO in determining whether the collection requires OMB approval.
- **Program-specific Reporting Requirements:** All reporting requirements that are in addition to ACF’s standard form for Program Performance Reporting (PPR) are required to have OMB approval if the reporting requirements apply to 10 or more respondents.
- In cases where the PO expects recipients to collect and report on specific data or variables, the PO may be required to submit a request for full OMB approval of an Information Collection prior to publishing the NOFO. The PO should consider whether to pursue generic OMB clearance (a somewhat shorter process) for expanding on the Program Performance Report (PPR) requirements for their recipients.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

Whenever information is solicited from the public, or from a non-Federal agency, the requesting Federal agency must implement the requirements of the PRA of 1995 [[44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3520](#)]

For more information on the requirements of the PRA, please contact:

For questions about NOFO content and how to use the UPD: Please contact your designated Office of Grants Policy (OGP) Contact.	For OMB clearance related questions: Molly Jones ACF PRA Reports Clearance Officer Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation (OPRE) mary.jones@acf.hhs.gov (202) 205-4724
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The Project Description Overview

General Expectations and Instructions

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

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

The Project Description

The Project Description is a series of standardized and generic text options that can be used, as needed, to inform applicants of the requirements for developing a project description, budget, and budget justification in response to a specific Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). It is the single OMB-cleared information collection to be used by applicants under ACF NOFOs. Most program-specific project description requirements can be integrated into the UPD text options that allow such additions.

The Project Description-Budget/Budget Justification

Use the available options and text boxes to provide clear instruction to applicants on the content that applicants must submit in their applications.

If the NOFO was pre-populated from an older NOFO, be sure to double-check that everything the applicant must submit is included under this section. New options may have been added to the Project Description and/or Budget Justification since the older NOFO was published.

Please Note:

Anything that the applicant is required to address in their application must be included in this section.

- *Program-specific project description requirements must be added to the text box under, "Approach." However, ensure that all UPD options are reviewed in advance of adding program-specific information under "Approach." These application requirements may already be addressed elsewhere as an option in the UPD.*
- *Do not create internal hyperlinks to connect different NOFO sections. The links will not work properly. Instead, add cross-references to other sections of the NOFO. For example, "See Section V.1. Criteria."*
- *Use "must" instead of "should" when discussing mandatory program requirements.*

Check Box: Letter of Intent

Select this option if an optional letter of intent (LOI) is requested for this NOFO. Use the text box only to provide the method of submission (name, address, phone, email, etc.). Receipt of Letters of Intent by email is preferred.

Do not use the text box to request additional information in the LOI.

Selection of this option will also pre-select the LOI in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times. AM 2.0 will auto-generate the LOI based on the NOFO publication date and the number of days after publication that the LOI is due and populate it in Section IV.4. The number of days from publication and the auto-generated due date for the LOI must appear in Section IV.4. Application Submission Dates and Times. The actual due date will not generate until the NOFO publishes.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this NOFO. **The letter of intent is optional. Failure to submit a letter of intent will not impact eligibility to submit an application and will not disqualify an application from competitive review.** Letter of Intent information is used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to evaluate applications.

Please submit a letter of intent by the deadline date listed in Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times. The letter of intent should include the following information: number and title of this funding opportunity; the name and address of the applicant organization; and the name, phone number, and email address of a contact person.

Text Field: Letter of Intent

Check Box: Table of Contents.

Check the box to include this option in the Project Description.

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

Check Box: Project Summary

Select this option to request a Project Summary from applicants. The standard language includes all the information that is requested in the Project Summary.

Provide a summary of the project description. The summary must include a brief description of the applicant’s proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed activities or services, and if applicable, the population group(s) to be served. The summary must be clear, accurate, concise, and without cross-references to other parts of the application. Please place the following at the top of the Project Summary:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address

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

Check Box: Geographic Location

Check the box to include this option in the Project Description.

Describe the precise physical location of the project and boundaries of the area to be served by the proposed project. If the geographic area(s) are served by both the primary grant recipient and subrecipient organization(s) describe the locations covered by all organizations anticipated to receive funding from the grant award.

Text Field: Geographic Location

Check Box: Legal Status of Applicant Entity

This is a three-part text option. Please read the instructions.

Part 1: Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Part 1 may be used alone only if non-profit organizations and for-profit organizations are NOT eligible. If non-profits are eligible, Part 1 must be used with Part 2. If for-profit organizations or small businesses are eligible, Part 1 must be used with Part 3. If both non-profit and for-profit organizations are eligible, all three Parts must be used.

Part 1 consists of checking the box to include the title of "Legal Status of Applicant Entity" and the lead-in sentence "Applicants must provide the following documentation." In the Part 1 text box, list the specific types of documentation required from an applicant to certify their legal status. This may include, but is not limited to, items such as the Governing Board Membership Documentation and Tribal Resolutions.

Do not include proof of non-profit status or documents listed under Part 3 in the Part 1 text box.

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Text Field: Legal Status of Applicant

Part 2: Legal Status of Applicant Entity: Non-Profit Status.

Part 2 may not be used alone. Part 2 must be used in conjunction with Part 1 (title and lead-in sentence).

There are three options available. Lead Authors will choose 1 of the 3 options.

Note: *If non-profit organizations were selected as eligible applicants in Forecast, the first text option will be pre-selected but may not be specific to the types of non-profit organizations eligible under this NOFO.*

Non-Profit Organizations

Check Box: Option 1: 501(c)(3) and non-501(c)(3) non-profit organizations are eligible

Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

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

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

Check Box: Option 2: Only 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible

Non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of 501(c)(3) non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exemption certificate.

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

Check Box: Option 3: 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations are eligible

Non-profit 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) tax-exemption certificate.

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

Part 3: Legal Status of Applicant Entity: For-Profit or Small Business Status

Part 3 may not be used alone. Part 3 must be used in conjunction with Part 1 (title and lead-in sentence). Parts 1, 2, and 3 must be selected when non-profits and for-profits are both eligible.

There are two options available. Lead Authors must choose Option 1 if for-profits are eligible. Only choose option 2 if small businesses are eligible **and** the program statute does not have a special definition of small business. The Small Business Administration sets guidelines for which business concerns qualify as small businesses, and most other federal programs reference their regulations.

In the Part 3 text box, list the specific types of documentation required from an applicant to certify their legal status.

This option was added based on input from the Office of General Counsel (OGC) to ensure that ACF is requesting proof of legal status for entities that are not non-profits.

For-Profits or Small Businesses

Check Box: Option 1: For-Profits and Small Businesses

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

Check Box: Option 2: Small Businesses

Small businesses must submit a certification signed by the chief executive officer or designee that states that the entity qualifies as a small business under 13 CFR §§ 121.101-121.201.

Text Field: For Profit and Small Business Requirements
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Unless directed otherwise, applicants must include proof of legal status documentation in the *Appendices* file of the application.

Check Box: Additional Eligibility Documentation

This option allows Lead Authors to include requests for required documentation or credentials that will support the applicant's eligibility.

Documentation/credentials requested under this option should also be described in Section III.1. Eligible Applicants or in Section III.3. Other.

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

Text Field: Additional Eligibility Documentation

Check Box: Need for Assistance

Check the box to include language in the Project Description.

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance, including the nature and scope of the problem, must be demonstrated. Supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned parties, may be included in the Appendix. Any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments should be included or referred to in the endnotes or footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as available.

Check Box: Objectives

Check the box to include language in the Project Description.

Clearly state the principal and if applicable, subordinate objectives of the project. Applicants must address how the objectives stated relate to the overall purpose of the program and describe how objectives will be achieved.

Text Field: Objectives

Check Box: Expected Outcomes

Check the box to include language in the Project Description.

*This option requests that **applicants** define their projected outcomes in relation to the overall goals for the NOFO. NOFOs that request specific outcomes for applicants must include this information in Section I. of the NOFO.*

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

Check Box: Approach

This text option provides the central requirements of the Project Description narrative. A text box is available so that Lead Authors may specify requirements that are the critical elements used by objective reviewers during the application review process.

Use the text box to specify instructions to applicants on the program-specific requirements of their project descriptions. Do not repeat standard language or the requirements for all applicants that appear earlier in the NOFO template.

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

Cite potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing project goals and explain strategies

that will be used to address these challenges.

Text Field: Approach

Check Box: Project Timeline and Milestones

This option requests that applicants provide a project management plan, including a project timeline, and a description of key milestones in their proposed project.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections (for the entire project period) of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity, for example 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. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

Organizational Capacity

Check the boxes for the items that applicants must include in their application submission. This option assumes that at least one item in the checklist will be selected.

A text box is available after the checkboxes for any other items not listed in the checklist but are deemed important for applicants to include.

NOFOs with Multiple Funding Sources

POs should consider the inclusion of the following selections:

- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to those offered under this NOFO.*
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners and/or subcontractors, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.*

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

- Organizational charts
- Resumes
- Curricula Vitae (CV)
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description)
- College transcripts for graduate student research fellows
- List of Board of Directors
- Financial statements adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), if available, submit statements for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years (this requirement does not apply to start-up organizations).
- Audit reports or statements from Certified Public Accountants/Licensed Public Accountants, if available, submit statements for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years (this requirement does not apply to start-up organizations).
- Audit summary report including auditor's opinion in lieu of the full audit report, if

applicable.

- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures.
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this NOFO.
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's personnel policies.
- Names of payment/performance bond carriers used by the applicant organization (construction projects).
- Child-care licenses and other documentation of professional accreditation.
- Information on compliance with federal/state/local government standards.
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

Text Field: Organizational Capacity

Check Box: Current and Pending Funding Support

Lead Authors may opt to include the following language if applicable.

Applicants must submit a list of their current and pending funded support for ongoing projects and proposals from all sources including federal, state and local governments, public or private foundations, for-profit organizations, etc. All projects and proposals requiring a committed portion of time for the Project Director, Principal Investigator, or key personnel must be included. Indicate the total award amount, awarding entity, and amount of time staff will devote to each project.

Check Box: Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

Check the box to include language in the Project Description. NOFOs with multiple funding streams must have this box checked. OGP recommends all NOFOs include this option.

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

- Financial and Program Management
- Property Management
- Procurement
- Performance and Financial Monitoring and Reporting
- Subrecipient Monitoring and Management
- Record Retention and Access
- Remedies for Noncompliance
- Prior written approval

Describe the framework (e.g., governance, policies and procedures, risk management, systems) in place to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities in accordance with 45 CFR

Part 75 Subpart D. The description must include system(s) for record-keeping and financial management; procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues (e.g., audit findings, continuous program performance assessment findings, program monitoring); and those key staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff, and, if applicable, partner(s) and/or subrecipient(s).

Check Box: Program Performance Evaluation Plan

*Lead Authors may select **one or both** evaluation options. This first option is an evaluation for quality improvement purposes. A text box is available so Lead Authors may provide details that are specific to the NOFO.*

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

Applicants must describe the organizational systems and processes that will effectively track performance outcomes, including a description of how the organization will collect and manage data (e.g., assigned skilled staff, data management software, data integrity, etc.) in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles for implementing the program performance evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed. Applicants must include a timeline for how information from the quality improvement evaluation will be reviewed and applied to the ongoing project.

Text Field: Program Performance Evaluation Plan

Check Box: Funded Activities Evaluation Plan

*Lead Authors may select **one or both** evaluation options. This second option supports a more “rigorous” approach which may involve a significant portion of project funds to meaningfully implement. “Rigorous” evaluation plans do not mean a randomized control trial approach is required, it indicates the expectation that the applicant should provide a data collection plan that will appropriately and directly answer the research questions within the constraints of their funded activities.*

Remember that if you are too specific about what ACF wants to know, and how ACF wants it to be studied, then either the program office or the recipient will need to pursue OMB approval. You could request that the applicant describe their research questions and their plan for data collection (e.g., how data will be collected, how participants will be recruited, how consent will be obtained, how participants will be retained in the study, and who will be part of the study). You may also ask what will be learned from the study and how it may inform the broader field.

If considering this option, please work with OPRE. A text box is available so Lead Authors may provide details that are specific to the NOFO. Lead Authors could consider also requiring a Logic Model to support the evaluation plan (see Logic Model option in Section IV.2 Project Description).

Applicants must describe the plan for rigorous evaluation of funded activities. The evaluation must assess activities and progress towards the goals and objectives of the project, and whether the project is having the expected effects and impacts. The evaluation plan must specify expected outcomes and any research questions, as well as how the results of this evaluation will provide greater understanding and improvement of the funded activities.

The plan must include a valid and reliable measurement plan, detailed timeline, and sound methodological design. Details regarding the proposed data collection activities, the participants, data management, data integrity, and analyses plans must be described. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles foreseen in implementing the evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed.

Text Field: Funded Activities Evaluation Plan

Check Box: Logic Model

Lead Authors may select to require a logic model, to support the design, management and/or evaluation of the project. A text box is available so Lead Authors may provide details that are specific to the NOFO. Use the text box to clearly link the logic model to the evaluation plan, if both are required. (See the Funded Activities Evaluation Plan option in Section IV.2 Project Description).

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing, managing, and/or evaluating the project. A logic model is a diagram that presents how inputs drive activities to produce outputs, outcomes, and the ultimate goals of the proposed project, and explains the links among project elements. Logic models must target the identified objectives and goals of the grant project. While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this announcement, the logic model may include the connections between the following elements:

- Inputs (e.g., additional resources, organizational profile, collaborative partner(s), key staff, budget)
- Target population (e.g., the individuals to be served, identified needs)
- Activities, Mechanisms, Processes (e.g., evidenced-based practices, best practices, approach, key intervention and evaluation components, continuous quality improvement efforts)
- Outputs (i.e., the immediate and direct results of program activities)
- Outcomes (i.e., the expected short and long-term results the project is designed to achieve typically described as changes in people or systems), and
- Goals of the project (e.g., overarching objectives, reasons for proposing the project)

Text Field: Logic Model

Check Box: Project Sustainability Plan

Check the box to include language in the Project Description.

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

Describe the approach to project sustainability that will be most effective and feasible. Provide a description of key individuals and/or organizations whose support will be required. Address the types of alternative support that will be required to maintain the program. If the proposed project involves key project partners, describe how their cooperation and/or collaboration will be maintained after the end of federal funding.

Check Box: Business Plan

If a business plan is a required as part of the project description, select this option and use the text box to describe its required elements. Lead Authors may use this text box to provide descriptions, requirements, and/or any necessary instructions.

When federal grant funds will be used to support a business operation, provide a business plan.

Text Field: Business Plan

Check Box: Protection of Sensitive and/or Confidential Information

Select this option if applicants are required to collect any sensitive or confidential information.

Provide a description of how protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive; consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality, will be collected and safeguarded. The applicant must provide the methods and/or systems that will be used to ensure that confidential and/or sensitive information is properly handled and if applicable, address the process for subrecipient(s) and/or contractors. Also, provide a plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the project period. See 45 CFR 75.303(e) for more information.

Check Box: Dissemination Plan

Select this option if applicants are required to disseminate any products as part of the awarded project.

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

- Dissemination goals and objectives
- Strategies to identify and engage with target audiences
- Allocation of sufficient staff time and budget for dissemination purposes
- A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received

- project information and have used it as intended.
- The timeline for dissemination

Check Box: Third-Party Agreements

Five third-party agreements text options are available. The first two options are very similar, but the second option requests additional information from the applicant. Lead Authors may select as many of the available options as are applicable to the NOFO.

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

Check Box: Applicants must provide Letters of Commitment, MOUs, or MOAs between recipients and third-parties (i.e., subrecipients, contractors, or other cooperating entities).

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

Check Box: Collaboration/consortia applicants must provide letters of commitment, MOUs, or MOAs identifying the primary applicant and all collaborators that are responsible for project activities.

Check Box: A third-party agreement covering a loan transaction must contain, at a minimum, the following information: (1) purpose(s) for which the loan is being made; (2) interest rates and other fees; (3) terms of the loan; (4) repayment schedules; (5) Collateral security; (6) default and collection procedures; (7) signatures of the authorized officials of the lender and the borrower.

Check Box: A third-party agreement covering an equity investment must contain, at a minimum, the following: (1) purpose(s) for which the equity investment is being made; (2) the type of equity transaction (e.g. stock purchase); (3) cost per share and basis on which the cost per share is derived; (4) number of shares being purchased; (5) percentage of ownership in the business; (6) term of duration of the agreement; (7) number of seats on the board, if applicable; (8) signatures of the authorized officials of the grantee and third party organization.

Check Box: **Letters of Support**

Check the box to include this option.

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

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

There are three budget and budget justification selections followed by a text box to allow Lead Authors to provide further directions to applicants on filling out the SF-424A or the SF-424C. For example, Lead Authors might use the text box to remind applicants to include costs for project leadership/staff to travel to DC for required meetings. The text box is meant for Lead Authors to provide clarification and reminders for specific project costs.

NOFOs with multiple funding streams must read the [ACF Guidance on Multiple Funding Sources in a Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for instructions on using this text box.

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is also entered on the Budget Information Standard Form, either SF-424A or SF-424C. Applicants are encouraged to review the form instructions in addition to the guidance in this section. The project budget consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form.

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

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

Special Note: *The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2022 and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this NOFO may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" which can be found at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>. The salary limitation reflects an individual's base salary **exclusive** of fringe benefits, indirect costs, and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

- Provide a budget for the initial budget period only (typically the first 12 months of the

project) using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable.

For the first budget period only, provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for only the first budget period of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

- Provide a budget using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable, for each year of the proposed project.

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

- Provide a budget using the SF-424A and/or the SF-424C, as applicable, for the entire project period that is being fully funded (the budget period and the project period are the same).

Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for the full project period. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

Text Field: Project Budget and Budget Justification

To create your line-item budget and justification, see detailed instructions on our websiteT.

THE FOLLOWING DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS TO BE PLACED ON THE WEBSITE

Preparing Your Line-Item Budget and Justification

General Instructions

Use the following guidelines for preparing your line-item budget and budget justification. Also consider these guidelines when preparing your Budget Information Standard Form.

Your budget must follow any guidance on allowable costs in the NOFO and the cost principles in subpart E of the Uniform Guidance ([45 CFR part 75](#); effective on or after 10/1/2025: **2 CFR Parts 200 and 300**) with some exceptions noted below. Make sure to follow any funding restrictions in the NOFO and the salary limitation cap in [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages. See 45 CFR 75.430 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §200.430) for more information on allowable personnel costs.

Do not include the personnel costs of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients under this category.

Justification: For each position, provide: the name of the individual (if known), their title; time

commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application.

Fringe Benefits

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits which are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees in addition to regular salaries and wages. For more information on Fringe Benefits please refer to 45 CFR 75.431 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §200.431).

Do not include the fringe benefits of consultants, contractors, and subrecipients. List those costs under the “Contractual” category as part of the total value of the contract or agreement.

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

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

Travel

Description: Costs of project-related travel such as transportation, lodging, subsistence, by employees of the applicant organization who are in travel status on official business.

Include travel by non-employees such as consultants, contractors or subrecipients under the Contractual line item. List local travel for employees in non-travel status] under the Other category.

Develop travel costs in accordance with the applicant’s travel policies and 45 CFR 75.474 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §200.475).

Justification: For each trip provide:

- 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
- other transportation costs and subsistence allowances.

If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key project staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops/conferences/grantee orientations should be detailed in the budget justification.

Equipment

Description: "Equipment" means tangible personal property (including information technology

systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: the capitalization level established by the recipient or subrecipient for financial statement purposes, or \$10,000. (

See 2 CFR §§200.1, 200.216, 200.313(e) equipment threshold of \$10,000, and 45 CFR 75.439 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §200.439) for more information.

Justification: For each type of equipment requested provide:

- a description of the equipment
- the cost per unit
- the number of units
- the total cost
- a plan for use on the project; as well as use and/or disposition of the equipment after the project ends.

Supplies

Description: All tangible personal property other than those described in the Equipment definition. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is below the lesser of capitalization level established by recipient or subrecipient for financial statement purposes or, \$10,000, regardless of the length of its useful life.

See 2 CFR §§200.1, 200.314(a) supplies threshold of \$10,000, and 45 CFR §§ 75.321 and 75.453 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §§200.314, 200.453) for more information.

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

Contractual

Description: Cost of all contracts and subawards except those that should be placed under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, procurement contracts, and subawards.

You must use procurement procedures at 45 CFR §§ 75.326-75.340(effective 10/1/2024: 2 CFR §200.320 micro-purchase threshold of \$50,000; effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §200.317 – 200.327). Additionally, subawards are subject to the requirements at 45 CFR §§ 75.351-75.353 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §200.331 – 200.333).

List costs related to professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees in the Other category. (These arrangements may be through either a consultant agreement directly with an individual or a contract with a company that employs the consultant.)

If applicable and charged as a direct cost, include cost of third-party renting or leasing agreements for equipment; and third-party renting or leasing agreements for real property by address for each building, facility, administrative office, space, structure, land, and other real

property.

Justification: Indicate whether the proposed agreement qualifies as a subaward or contract in accordance with 45 CFR § 75.351 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §200.331). Provide:

- the name of the contractor or subrecipient, if known
- a description of anticipated services
- a justification for why they are necessary
- a breakdown of estimated costs
- an explanation of the selection process.

Additionally, for subawards, provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each subaward, by entity name, along with the same justifications referred to in the instructions above.

For contracts, demonstrate that you will conduct procurement transactions in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. You must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold stated in 48 CFR § 2.101.

We may require you to provide us with pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc.

If applicable and charged as a direct cost, for each real property proposed or claimed for rent or lease include:

- the rent amount with calculation
- terms of lease
- maintenance
- repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost
- minor A&R with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost
- the computation and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

Real Property Financing Costs

Only when allowable and with prior approval, describe the financing costs (including interest) including terms for the real property address. For applicable ACF grant programs with real property authority, see [ACF Property Guidance](#) site.

Do not include real property owned by the recipient or arrangements considered:

- “less-than-arms-length”
- “sale and lease back”
- “finance lease” per Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB)
- “financed purchase” per Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) standards

These costs must be treated as either direct or indirect costs, not both. List these costs, such as depreciation costs:

- If charged as a direct cost, under the “Other” category
- If charged as an indirect cost, as part of their indirect cost pool that is used to calculate an indirect cost rate.

For more information, see 45 CFR §75.2, 75.414, 75.430-75.431, 75.434, 75.436, 75.439, and 75.452 (effective 10/1/2024: 2 CFR §200.414(f) de minimis rate threshold increase to 15%, with exceptions; effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §§200.1, 200.414, 200.430-200.431, 200.434, 200.436, 200.439, 200.452, and 2 CFR §300.315).

Construction (if allowable)

Description: Provide a separate detailed budget and narrative in accordance with the instructions outlined on the SF-424C Construction Program form.

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

Other

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include, but are not limited to:

- individual consultant costs
- local travel
- insurance, when not included under the Fringe category
- food, when allowable
- medical and dental costs (non-personnel)
- professional service costs, such as audit charges
- depreciation of real property and equipment, when not treated as an indirect cost
- printing and publications
- training costs, such as tuition and stipends
- staff development costs
- administrative costs, when not treated as an indirect cost

Costs must be allowable per subpart E of the Uniform Guidance (45 CFR Part 75 effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR Part 200).

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

Real Property Depreciation

If applicable and charged as a direct cost, include depreciation by real property address for each building, facility, administrative office, structure, land, and other real property proposed for use and depreciation of equipment proposed for use.

For each real property owned by the recipient or less-than-arms-length lease intended to be proposed or claimed for use provide, if applicable, and in accordance with 45 CFR §§75.436 and 75.465 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §§200.436 and 200.465):

- the allocable percentage and total dollar amount
- the depreciation amount with type of method and calculation used
- tax amount
- insurance amount and what it covers

- maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost; minor A&R with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost
- the ownership type (e.g., owned, leased, or intent to lease)
- show the computation and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

For more information, please see the [ACF Property Guidance](#) site.

Do not include costs of third-party renting or leasing real property and equipment because those costs should be under the “Contractual” category.

Indirect Charges

Description: Indirect costs are those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. These are also referred to as Facilities & Administration (F&A) costs.

Typical examples of indirect or F&A costs include:

- depreciation on buildings and equipment
- equipment and capital improvements
- operation and maintenance expenses
- general administration and expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of personnel administration and accounting.

For more information, see 45 CFR §75.2, 75.414, 75.430-75.431, 75.434, 75.436, and 75.439 . Enter the total amount of indirect costs (effective 10/1/2024: 2 CFR §200.414(f) de minimis rate threshold increase to 15%, with exceptions; effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §§200.1, 200.414, 200.430-200.431, 200.434, 200.436, 200.439, and 2 CFR §300.414).

To charge indirect costs you can select one of two methods:

Method 1 – Approved rate. You currently have an indirect cost rate approved by your cognizant federal agency.

Justification: Enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. If you are requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed. Choosing to charge a lower rate will not be considered during the merit review or award selection process.

Method 2 – *De minimis* rate. Effective 10/1/2024, per per 2 CFR §200.414(f), if you do not have a current negotiated indirect costs rate you may elect to charge a de minimis rate. If you choose this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs. The de minimis rate does not require documentation to justify its use and may be used indefinitely. Once elected, you must use the de minimis rate for all Federal awards until you choose to receive a negotiated rate.

The rate is 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Effective 10/1/2024, see 2 CFR §200.1 for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

Please Note: this 15% de minimis rate does not apply to HHS Training or Foreign awards, for which HHS retains the fixed rate at 8% per 45 CFR §75.414(c)(1) (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §300.414).

Justification: The de minimis method only applies if you do not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency.

If you choose this method, you must not charge costs included in the indirect cost pool as direct costs to the grant.

Program Income (if anticipated)

Description: The estimated amount of gross income, if any, expected to be directly generated by or earned from this project. Program income includes:

- income from fees for services performed
- the use or rental of real or personal property acquired under federally-funded projects
- the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award
- license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights
- interest on loans made with award funds.

For more information, see 45 CFR 75.307 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §§200.307, 300.315).

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

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424. Use this line to indicate required or voluntary committed cost sharing or matching, if applicable.

All Awards

For all federal awards, ACF must accept any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, as part of the recipient's cost sharing when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR 75.306 (effective on or after 10/1/2025: 2 CFR §200.306).

Awards Requiring Cost Sharing

For awards that require matching or cost-sharing by statute, we must hold you accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources (at or above the statutory requirement) in their application budgets and budget justifications. This includes commitments by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards.

If you fail to provide the statutorily required matching or cost-sharing amount (and any voluntary committed amount in excess) we may disallow federal funds. We will require you to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.

Awards Not Requiring Cost Sharing

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, we do not expect you to provide cost sharing or matching. However, you are allowed to voluntarily propose a commitment of non-federal resources. If you decide to do so and we accept those costs, we will include the non-federal resources in the approved project budget.

We must hold you accountable for all proposed non-federal resources as shown in the Notice of Award (NoA). If you fail to meet that amount we may disallow federal funds. We will be require you to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.

Justification: If you rely on cost share or match from a third party, then a firm commitment of these resources in the third-party commitment submitted with your application.

You must provide detailed budget information for every funding source identified in Item 18. "Estimated Funding (\$)" on the SF-424.

You must fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions you propose to meet a matching requirement.

You must provide documentation in your applications on the sources of funding or contributions. Justify in-kind contributions by explaining how you determined the stated valuation .

You must document matching or cost sharing by budget period or by period of performance for fully funded awards).

If your justification lacks the required supporting documentation the application will not be disqualified from merit review; however, it may impact an application's scoring under the evaluation criteria of this NOFO.

Paperwork Reduction Act Disclaimer

Notification required under Pub. L. 104-13.

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 03/31/2026. 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.