



Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth and Families - Children's Bureau

Strengthening Child Welfare Systems to Achieve Expected Child and Family Outcomes

HHS-2018-ACF-ACYF-CO-1360

Application Due Date: 07/18/2018

Strengthening Child Welfare Systems to Achieve Expected Child and Family Outcomes
HHS-2018-ACF-ACYF-CO-1360
TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Overview
- Executive Summary
- I. [Program Description](#)
- II. [Federal Award Information](#)
- III. Eligibility Information
 - 1. [Eligible Applicants](#)
 - 2. [Cost Sharing or Matching](#)
 - 3. [Other](#)
- IV. Application and Submission Information
 - 1. [Address to Request Application Package](#)
 - 2. [Content and Form of Application Submission](#)
 - 3. [Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)
 - 4. [Submission Dates and Times](#)
 - 5. [Intergovernmental Review](#)
 - 6. [Funding Restrictions](#)
 - 7. [Other Submission Requirements](#)
- V. Application Review Information
 - 1. [Criteria](#)
 - 2. [Review and Selection Process](#)
 - 3. [Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates](#)
- VI. Federal Award Administration Information
 - 1. [Federal Award Notices](#)
 - 2. [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#)
 - 3. [Reporting](#)
- VII. [HHS Awarding Agency Contact\(s\)](#)
- VIII. [Other Information](#)

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

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Funding Opportunity Title: | Strengthening Child Welfare Systems to Achieve Expected Child and Family Outcomes |
| Announcement Type: | Initial |
| Funding Opportunity Number: | HHS-2018-ACF-ACYF-CO-1360 |
| Primary CFDA Number: | 93.652 |
| Due Date For Letter of Intent: | 06/03/2018 |
| Due Date for Applications: | 07/18/2018 |

Executive Summary

Notice:

- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire funding opportunity announcement (FOA) carefully and observe the application formatting requirements listed in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission*. For more information on applying for grants, please visit "How to Apply for a Grant" on the ACF Grants Page at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto>.**

When children are placed in out-of-home care (also called foster care), it is important that child welfare agencies find safe, permanent homes for them as quickly as possible. In many circumstances, children can be reunited with their families, but in some cases, children find homes with relatives or adoptive families. Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) have consistently found that many child welfare systems need to improve their adoption work, as evidenced by their difficulty in achieving substantial conformity on permanency outcomes. These shortcomings include failure to make concerted efforts towards timely permanency for adoption and preserving family connections; inadequate engagement of parents, children, and youth in case planning; limited and ineffective service provision; insufficient frequency and duration of child visitations/parenting time; punitive uses of visitation/parenting time; delays in establishing the goal of adoption; a lack of meaningful concurrent planning; and lengthy appeal processes for contested termination of parental rights (TPR).

These permanency outcomes relate to basic social work, legal, and judicial practices that impact adoption outcomes and also have effects on the safety and well-being of children in care. The purpose of this FOA is to award up to five 5-year cooperative agreements to develop, implement, and evaluate strategies that focus on better adoption outcomes. This can be done by improving basic social work, legal, and judicial practice to eliminate systemic barriers to adoption, preventing entry into foster care, and other forms of permanency.

The safety and well-being of the children in need of a permanent home requires a system focused on better adoption outcomes, which can be done by improving concurrent planning and reducing time to permanency. Therefore, through these grant awards, the Children's Bureau (CB) aims to support states with resources to implement and sustain child welfare system

improvement, including technical assistance (TA) support, to assist grantees in strengthening outcomes related to permanency, safety, and well-being. Applicants are required to use the state child welfare agency's most current CFSR findings, Program Improvement Plans (PIPs), Child and Family Services Plans (CFSPs), Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), Court Improvement Program (CIP) Plans, and CIP Self-Assessments (as applicable) to identify barriers, challenges, and help inform strategies to improving the following outcomes: placement of children in kinship care arrangements, pre-adoptive, or adoptive homes; permanency planning and achievement; ensuring child safety; enhanced engagement with and service delivery to children and families, including fathers; enhancing case planning; and/or maintaining family relationships and connections.

During the project period, grantees will address these barriers and challenges through the development, implementation, and evaluation of strategies, practices, and activities that focus on improving adoption outcomes by improving basic child welfare practice that help ensure family-focused approaches, meaningful engagement, high quality legal representation, and CFSR systemic factors.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority

Title II, Section 203(b)(4) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978 (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C. 5113(b)(4)).

Description

BACKGROUND

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

The Children's Bureau's (CB) Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) are designed to assess title IV-B and IV-E funded state child and family service programs' conformity with certain federal requirements for child protection, foster care, adoption, family preservation/family support, and independent living services. The overall goal of the CFSRs is to assist states in improving child welfare services and the outcomes for families and children who receive the services by identifying the strengths and needs within state programs and those areas where technical assistance (TA) could lead to program improvements. Other purposes of the reviews include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting states in becoming more self-evaluating over time;
- Identifying best practices that can be emulated across the country;
- Identifying state TA needs and providing access assistance needed to implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP); and
- Providing timely and specific feedback to states that is directly related to program performance and outcomes.

Outcomes are assessed for each state through a Statewide Assessment and an onsite review process. The outcomes and goals are as follows:

- Safety Outcome 1 (S1): Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Safety Outcome 2 (S2): Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Permanency Outcome 1 (P1): Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- Permanency Outcome 2 (P2): The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.
- Well-Being Outcome 1 (WB1): Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Well-Being Outcome 2 (WB2): Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Well-Being Outcome 3 (WB3): Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental/behavioral health needs.

During the CFSR, CB also assesses how well states perform on the following systemic factors:

- Statewide information system;
- Case review system;
- Quality assurance system;
- Staff and provider training;
- Service array and resource development;
- Agency responsiveness to the community; and
- Foster adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention.

Common Barriers to Achieving Permanency

According to CFSR findings, there are several barriers to child welfare agencies achieving permanency for the children and youth in their care. One common barrier is the lack of emphasis on contacting fathers and extended family members (both maternal and paternal) and involving them early and throughout the life of the case planning process. Another common barrier is the lack of oversight and management of foster care cases by both the child welfare agency and presiding courts. Challenges inherent in this area include high staff turnover; high caseloads; insufficient staff training; lack of communication with courts; delays when cases are transferred from one unit, caseworker, judge, or attorney to another (e.g., from the foster home unit to the adoption unit); and incomplete case records.

The court management of foster care cases may present another barrier to permanency. This includes frequent continuance of cases, crowded dockets, difficulty scheduling hearings, and communication challenges with the child welfare agency. The termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings also present obstacles, including the reluctance of the court to terminate parental rights without an identified adoptive home; failures to initiate TPR within statutory required timelines without compelling reasons; parents' file for appeal; and prior services that do not address parents' identified problems.

Other frequently cited barriers to permanency include inconsistent use of concurrent planning; delays in approving adoptive homes; obstacles and delays in inter-jurisdictional placements;

poor or inadequate legal representation; and lack of use of a uniform approach to child assessment.

Most recent CFSR findings suggest that states continue to experience challenges with achieving substantial conformity on P1, including failure to make concerted efforts toward timely permanency for adoption (CFSR, Round 3 Results). In addition, while most states are also experiencing difficulty with achieving substantial conformity on all CFSR outcomes, reviews suggest that they perform worse on P2, S2 and WB1 – three goals that have direct implications on a child welfare system’s ability to facilitate a child's adoption outcomes.

CFSR findings also offer insight into the inadequate performance of child welfare agencies on S2. In 24 percent of foster care and 22 percent of in-home services cases, children remained in homes with unaddressed safety concerns. Furthermore, agencies performed worse on assessing risk and safety of in-home services cases relative to foster care cases. While Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System data suggests that of the 670,342 children who were served during fiscal year 2015, 359,282 were the subject of at least one report prior to the report related to their most recent removal. These statistics support the need for child welfare agencies to go beyond facilitating permanency after a child has entered care by increasing efforts to ensure that children and youth avoid entry and re-entry into care.

The Role of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in Child Welfare

CQI systems in public child welfare agencies are charged with performing “the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions.” This process is comprehensive and transformative, guiding the way that agencies make decisions and measure progress as they strive to achieve better outcomes for children, youth, and families (Casey Family Programs & NRCOI, 2005).

Well-designed and well-functioning CQI systems provide child welfare agencies with critical information about their processes, decision-making, and service delivery. They allow agencies to investigate connections between quality, performance, and outcomes in order to produce actionable information for improvement. CB has identified five essential components that CQI systems require in order to function effectively: 1) a foundational administrative structure that provides strong oversight and ensures consistency; 2) the collection of high-quality qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources; 3) regular ongoing case record reviews that support the need for generalizable findings; 4) sound processes for the analysis and dissemination of usable information and results; and 5) a well-established mechanism for providing feedback to stakeholders and decision makers and for using results to adjust processes and programs.

CB advises states to maintain and enhance their quality assurance (QA) systems using a CQI approach that allows them to monitor processes, measure the quality of services, and assess the effects of their systems and services on child and family outcomes ([ACYF-CB-IM-12-07](#)). Past reviews suggest that state QA often need extensive refinements to assess and measure improvements on an ongoing basis, specifically with regard to CFSR outcomes and systemic factors.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this FOA is to fund demonstration projects for the development, implementation, and evaluation of strategies that focus on improving adoption outcomes by improving basic social work and organizational practice and eliminating systemic barriers. Projects must identify and address barriers to adoption that arise from legal and judicial practice.

This section highlights grantee requirements in the following areas:

- Targeted CFSR outcomes;
- Target population;
- Program strategies, practices, and activities;
- Planning period;
- Technical assistance;
- CQI process;
- Collaboration;
- Organizational readiness and capacity;
- Evaluation;
- Dissemination; and
- Project sustainment.

Targeted CFSR Outcomes

Projects will address site-specific issues in order to improve the targeted child welfare system's adoption outcomes through an improvement in Permanency Outcome (P1) and as applicable, one or more of the following related CFSR outcome(s):

- Safety Outcome 2 (S2): Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Permanency Outcome 2 (P2): The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families.
- Well-Being Outcome 1 (WB1): Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

In establishing strategies for addressing these outcomes, projects should also take into account past performance on one or more systemic factors (i.e., foster adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention; the agency's statewide information system; QA system; staff and provider training; service array and resource development; and agency responsiveness to the community).

Target Population

Projects should target children, youth, and families who have not successfully achieved permanency and would benefit most from strategies designed to improve relevant CFSR outcomes, including adoption as a form of permanency. This population may be a subset of the child welfare population (e.g., children and youth within a specific geographic region, age group, race/ethnic group, at greatest risk of experiencing a poor permanency outcome) being served by the child welfare agency.

In targeting child and family outcomes, projects must work to improve basic social work

practice, and thus the target population must include child welfare professionals and other professionals who may be impacted by the proposed strategies. However, the ultimate target population will be child welfare-involved children and families.

Program Strategies, Practices, and Activities

Based on the applicant's assessment of the child welfare agency's and courts' identified barriers and challenges to achieving permanency and improving P1, and/or P2, S2, and/or WB1 outcomes, projects will focus on improving one or more of the following child welfare practices related to ensuring an approach that is family-focused and driven by basic social work skills:

- Strengthening of partnerships between state, tribal, and county systems, courts, and community partners, including faith-based organizations;
- Effective engagement of children, youth, and families, including fathers;
- Appropriate concurrent planning focused on the achievement of timely permanency for children and families;
- Appropriate assessment and mitigation of safety and risk factors in families, as well as timely and individualized provision of services, resources, and supports for children and parents of youth in foster care and receiving in-home services;
- Ensuring the timeliness and quality of court filings, hearings, reviews, and orders; and/or
- Strengthening parents' capacity to protect and provide for their children.

Projects must identify core project components along with CFSR performance indicators to measure improvement of adoption opportunities and applicable child, youth, adult, and/or family outcomes that align with their proposed program strategies and activities. Selected performance indicators must focus on adoption and be consistent with how CFSR operationalizes and measures the targeted CFSR outcomes.

CB-supported TA providers will work with grantees after the award to assess the fit of program strategies and activities for the identified target population and review how the quality of the program services and activities influence the intended outcomes of the grant. Grantees and CB-supported TA providers will also collaborate to make adjustments after award to ensure that proposed project strategies and activities are well defined. Grantees will meet with TA providers and CB staff during annual grantee meetings, to be held in Washington, D.C. By identifying the core components of the proposed project and looking at the implementation of the strategies and activities, CB expects to better understand the factors associated with the successful implementation and sustainment of program strategies and activities.

Planning Period

The project period will include an initial 9-month planning period. During this time, grantees will work with CB's TA providers to reassess data presented in the application, to include priority CFSR outcomes and data supporting the selected project strategies and activities. This planning phase will also include a collaborative planning process to further develop and refine the proposed project as described in this application. During the planning period, projects must include collaboration with other initiatives within the child welfare agency, courts, other relevant state and community agencies, and TA providers to ensure that the proposed intervention strategies build upon current initiatives and best practices focusing on the targeted outcomes.

The culmination of this process will be the development and implementation of a detailed plan to be executed upon approval by CB. Project activities of the planning period that will be completed with the assistance of CB's TA provider(s) include but are not limited to:

- Reassessment of the child welfare agency and court and legal representation related barriers and challenges to adoption, concurrent planning, and achieving the targeted CFSR outcome(s) and any supporting data;
- Review of the planned program strategies and activities, including any core project components;
- Reassessment of the appropriateness and fit of the selected strategies, activities, and/or services for the targeted children and their families;
- Reassessment of planned strategy and fit with organizational culture (i.e., organizational readiness);
- Revisiting the approach to measuring CFSR outcomes and relevant systemic factors;
- Review of the project evaluation plan, including revisiting the project's logic model and theory of change;
- Development (or adaptation) of proposed strategies and activities, particularly practice that is not well-defined;
- Implementation planning and a review of the project timeline, to include a plan for achieving full implementation by the end of Year 2;
- Review of the project timeline;
- Review and approval of the plan by CB; and
- Revisions to the plan, as necessary.

Technical Assistance

Projects will receive TA from CB's capacity building and evaluation TA providers. Projects will also be permitted to use internal TA providers, provided the internal TA does not conflict or run counter to the CB-provided TA. The purpose of CB's TA provision is to help child welfare agencies to enhance their organizational capacity and to successfully implement practice improvements that will affect their adoption and other child welfare outcomes. In addition to the TA provision during the planning period, TA will also be provided throughout the life of the project to assist with continued capacity building, implementation, and evaluation activities.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Process

Projects will enhance and/or maintain a functioning CQI process that meets the five essential elements: 1) foundational administrative structure; 2) quality data collection process; 3) method for conducting ongoing case reviews; 4) process for the analysis and dissemination of quality data on performance measures; and 5) a process for providing feedback to stakeholders and decision makers. The child welfare agency's CQI process should be well-functioning or the project must include strategies for improving the agency's process. The child welfare agency's activities to strengthen the CQI process will be documented throughout the project period.

Collaboration

Projects will foster strategic coordination and institutionalized collaboration between the state or county's child welfare agency with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), CIP, and local courts. Projects will also be implemented in collaboration with other service providers to

include: adoption agencies, health and mental health agencies, substance abuse treatment services, juvenile justice agencies, child support enforcement, law enforcement, workforce development, youth/adult education providers, housing, transportation, community-based providers, and/or other groups in the community that focus on prevention and permanency services.

Collaborations may include, but are not limited to, the following components: (1) routine consultation and interaction with other agencies; (2) joint accountability and shared outcomes among agencies in memorandums of agreement/understanding (MOA/MOU); (3) cross-training and staff development; (4) processes for communication and information sharing; and (5) willingness and agreement to share administrative data for program evaluation and/or research. Methods of strengthening collaboration include addressing how partners' values and principles help or hinder the agency's ability to achieve permanency, safety, and well-being and having agreements about shared resources.

Organizational Readiness and Capacity

Projects will assess and document the child welfare agency's readiness and capacity to implement each of the identified project strategies and activities by considering key aspects of the child welfare agency's organizational capacity, including but not limited to:

- Resources (concrete materials and assets), including staff and financing;
- Infrastructure (organizational structure, policies, processes, and systems), including training, data, and CQI systems;
- Knowledge and skills (workforce preparedness, expertise, competencies);
- Climate and culture (shared beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes), including buy-in and leadership commitment; and
- Engagement and partnerships (intra- and inter-organizational relationships and connections), including partnerships with adoption agencies, courts, other public agencies, and community organizations.

For more information about dimensions of organizational capacity visit: <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/capacity-building/organizational-capacity-guide/>

Evaluation

Projects will include process and outcome evaluations. The process evaluation will examine how the demonstration project has been implemented, including but not limited to the policies and procedures that have been put in place, the types and quality of services delivered, and the characteristics of the population served. Outcome evaluations will examine: the reach of the implemented strategies (i.e., the percentage of the target population who engaged in the strategies or were impacted by them); project effectiveness (i.e., the extent to which the strategies and practices were successful in improving the targeted outcomes); the adoption of the strategies throughout the participating child welfare agencies and other agencies; and maintenance (i.e., steps taken to support the continuation of project strategies and activities beyond the life of the current project period).

At a minimum, projects' outcome evaluations should take into consideration the state child welfare agency's CFSR-approved PIP measurement plan. Methods of data collection will include case reviews using a modified version (as defined by the grantee) of CB's Federal

Onsite Review Instrument (a tool used to review foster care and in-home services cases during the onsite review component of the CFSR) and measures that are culturally sensitive. Projects may use the child welfare agency’s most recently approved CFSR PIP measurement plan to inform their evaluation. At CB's discretion, projects will actively participate in a cross-site evaluation.

A copy of the Federal Onsite Review Instrument is available at: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cfsr_r3_osri.pdf.

Dissemination

Grantees will be expected to work throughout the course of their grants with federal project officers, relevant CB TA providers and support, and other grants in this cluster to:

- Finalize individual grant dissemination goals, objectives, and strategic plans;
- Identify and engage with target audiences for dissemination;
- Produce detailed procedures, materials, and other products based on the program evaluation and the needs of identified target audiences;
- Develop and disseminate summarized/synthesized information about the project, and ensure that publications are accessible. Although not required, projects are strongly encouraged to consider using *Section 508* standards to ensure wide accessibility; and
- Produce a high quality comprehensive final report suitable for archiving in the CB Discretionary Grant Library at https://library.childwelfare.gov/cbgrants/ws/library/docs/cb_grants/GrantHome.

Project Sustainment

CB is interested in ensuring that the most effective program strategies, practices, and activities will be sustained. Therefore, projects must make ongoing efforts to assess and gather evidence on the particular strategies and activities initiated under this cooperative agreement that the child welfare agency needs to sustain in order to continue improving child welfare outcomes. Projects should take into consideration the resources, infrastructure, engagement, and partnerships that will be necessary to sustain these activities.

II. Federal Award Information

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Funding Instrument Type: | Cooperative Agreement |
| Estimated Total Funding: | \$8,050,000 |
| Expected Number of Awards: | 5 |
| Award Ceiling: | \$1,610,000 Per Budget Period |
| Award Floor: | \$1,000,000 Per Budget Period |
| Average Projected Award Amount: | \$1,610,000 Per Budget Period |
| Anticipated Project Start Date: | 09/30/2018 |
| Length of Project Periods: | |
| Length of Project Period: | 60-month project period with five 12-month budget periods |

Additional Information on Awards:

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

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

Note: For those programs that require matching or cost sharing, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the required amount of match or cost share. **A recipient's failure to provide the required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.** See *Section III.2.* of this announcement for information on cost-sharing or matching requirements.

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

In the first budget period, the maximum federal share of each project is not to exceed \$1,610,000. In subsequent budget periods, the maximum federal share of this project is not to exceed \$1,750,000 per budget period.

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

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

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

customary for grant activities.

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

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Per 42 U.S.C. §5113(b)(4), eligibility is limited to public or private agencies or organizations. Eligibility is open to the following: state governments, local county governments, city or township governments, special district governments, independent school districts, public and state controlled entities, and public or private organizations, public and private institutions of higher education, Native American tribal governments (federally recognized), public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities and Native American tribal organizations (other than federally recognized tribal governments), nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS other than institutions of higher education, nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, for profit organizations other than small businesses, and small businesses.

CB welcomes applications from consortia of county-level child welfare agencies. Applications from consortia and collaborations must identify a primary applicant responsible for administering the grant.

If the primary applicant responsible for administering the grant is not the state title IV-E child welfare agency, the applicant must document a strong partnership with the child welfare agency with responsibility for supervising and/or administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s) and courts having jurisdiction over the targeted child welfare population.

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

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

See *Section IV.2. Legal Status of Applicant Entity* for documentation required to support eligibility.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: No

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient's cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for

projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where “cost sharing” refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by an applicant and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the applicant will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

III.3. Other

Application Disqualification Factors

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.

Award Ceiling Disqualification

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

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at www.Grants.gov. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not been approved for an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and from funding under this announcement.**

Applicants that do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents to the Internet may contact ACF for an exemption that will allow the applicant to submit applications in paper format. Information and the requirements for requesting an exemption from required electronic application submission are found in "ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Electronic Application Submission" at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6.

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

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

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

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

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

Notification of Application Disqualification

Applicants will be notified of a disqualification determination by email or by USPS postal mail within 30 federal business days from the closing date of this FOA.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

CB Operations Center c/o LGC, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209

Phone: (888) 203-6161

Email: CB@grantreview.org

Electronic Application Submission:

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

Applications in Paper Format:

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Forms Package available in the FOA's Grants.gov Synopsis under the Package tab at www.Grants.gov. See *Section IV.2. Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission* if applicants do not have an Internet connection or sufficient computing capacity to upload large documents (files) to www.Grants.gov.

Federal Relay Service:

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

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

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

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR)

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

Point of Contact

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

Application Checklist

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

Accepted Font Style

Applications must be in Times New Roman (TNR), 12-point font, except for footnotes, which may be TNR 10-point font. Pages that contain blurred text, or text that is too small to read comfortably, will be removed.

English Language

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

Page Limitations

Applicants must observe the page limitation(s) listed under "PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:". *Page* limitation(s) do not include SFs and OMB-approved forms.

All applications must be double-spaced. An application that exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the Project Description file or the Appendices file will have the last extra pages removed and the removed pages will not be reviewed.

Application Elements Exempted from Double-Spacing Requirements

The following elements of the application submission are exempt from the double-spacing requirements and may be single-spaced: the table of contents, the one-page Project Summary/Abstract, required Assurances and Certifications, required SFs, required OMB-approved forms, resumes, logic models, proof of legal status/non-profit status, third-party agreements, letters of support, footnotes, tables, the line-item budget and/or the budget justification.

Adherence to FOA Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements

Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's FOA formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will be adjusted by the removal of page(s) from the application. Pages will be removed before the objective review. The removed page(s) will not be made available to reviewers.

Applications that have more than one scanned page of a document on a single page will have the page(s) removed from the review.

For applicants that submit paper applications, double-sided pages will be counted as two pages. When the maximum allowed number of pages is reached, excess pages will be removed and will not be made available to reviewers.

NOTE: Applicants failing to adhere to ACF's FOA formatting, font, and page limitation requirements will receive a letter from ACF notifying them that their application was amended. The letter will be sent after awards have been issued and will specify the reason(s) for removal of page(s).

Corrections/Updates to Submitted Applications

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

Copies Required

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

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

Signatures

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

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

Accepted Application Format

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

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

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

PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:

With the exception of Standard Forms (SFs) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved forms, the application submission is **limited to 110 pages** in its entirety. The two files applicants must submit are the Project Description file and the Appendices file.

The Project Description file must include these items:

1. Table of Contents
2. Abstract

3. Objectives and Need for Assistance
4. Approach
5. Evaluation
6. Organizational Capacity
7. Logic Model
8. Line Item Budget and Budget Justification

The Appendices file must include these items:

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

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

Adherence to the Two-File Requirement

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

Application Upload Requirements

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

To adhere to the two-file requirement, applicants may need to convert and/or merge documents together using a PDF converter software. Many recent versions of Microsoft Office include the ability to save documents to the PDF format without need of additional software. Applicants using the Adobe Professional software suite will be able to merge these documents together. ACF recommends merging documents electronically rather than scanning multiple documents into one document manually, as scanned documents may have reduced clarity and readability.

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Professional they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on “Support” at the top bar menu and select “Adobe Software Compatibility”, which is listed under the topic “Online Answers.” The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their version of the software by opening a test application package. Grant.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions if an applicant is unable to open the test application package.

The Adobe Software Compatibility page located on Grants.gov also provides guidance for applicants that have received error messages while attempting to save an application package. It also addresses local network and/or computer security settings and the impact this has on use of Adobe software.

Required Standard Forms (SFs) and OMB-approved Forms

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

Naming Application Submission Files

Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by www.Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Special characters that are allowed under Grants.gov’s naming conventions, and are accommodated by ACF’s systems, are listed in the instructions available in the Download Application Package at Grants.gov. Please also see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/submitting-utf-8-special-characters.html>.

Use only file formats supported by ACF

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

ACF supports the following file formats:

- Adobe PDF – Portable Document Format (.pdf)
- Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)
- Microsoft Excel (.xls or .xlsx)
- Microsoft PowerPoint (.ppt)
- Corel WordPerfect (.wpd)

- Image Formats (.JPG, .GIF, .TIFF, or .BMP only)

Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files

If ACF cannot access submitted electronic files because they are encrypted or password protected, the affected file will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This removal may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make awards based on an incomplete application.

FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:

The following requirements are only applicable to applications submitted in paper format. Applicants must receive an exemption from ACF in order for a paper format application to be accepted for review. For more information on the exemption, see "*ACF Policy on Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*" at www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6

Format Requirements for Paper Applications

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

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

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

Addresses for Submission of Paper Applications

See *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements* for addresses for paper format application submissions.

Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking grant or cooperative agreement awards under this announcement must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications with the application. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this FOA at www.Grants.gov.

| Forms / Assurances | Submission Requirement | Notes / Description |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------|

| / Certifications | | |
|--|--|--|
| Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration. | <p>Required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.</p> <p>Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p> <p>SAM registration is available at http://www.sam.gov.</p> | See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> for more information. |
| SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance | Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date. | Required for all applications. |
| SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities | If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant. | If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. |
| Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form) | Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. | Submission of the certification is required for all applicants. |
| Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB | Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package | Form is available at http:// www.hhs.gov/ohrp/ assurances/ forms/index.html . |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule) | by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. 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. | General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/ . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email (ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov) or by phone (240-453-6900). |
| SF-424 Key Contact Form | Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date. | Required for all applications. |
| 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. By signing and submitting the SF-424B, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. | Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project. |
| SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL) | Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date. | Required for all applications. In the SF-P/PSL, applicants must cite their primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites. |

Mandatory Grant Disclosure

Submission is required for all applicants and recipients, in writing, to the awarding agency and to the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG) all information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. (Mandatory Disclosures, 45 CFR 75.113)

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Grants Management, ATTN: Grants Management Specialist, 330 C Street, SW., Switzer Building, Corridor 3200, Washington, DC 20201

And to:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, ATTN:
Mandatory Grant Disclosures, Intake Coordinator, 330 Independence Avenue, SW., Cohen
Building, Room 5527, Washington, DC 20201

Fax: (202) 205-0604 (Include “Mandatory Grant Disclosures” in subject line) or

Email: MandatoryGranteeDisclosures@oig.hhs.gov

Non-Federal Reviewers

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

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

Purpose

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

General Expectations and Instructions

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

General Instructions for Preparing a Full Project Description

Introduction

Applicants must prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following instructions while being aware of the specified evaluation criteria in *Section V.I. Criteria*. The

text options give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria identify the measures that will be used to evaluate applications.

Letter of Intent

Applicants are strongly encouraged to notify ACF of their intention to submit an application under this announcement. Please submit the 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 announcement; the name and address of the applicant organization; and/or Fiscal Agent (if known); and the name, phone number, fax number and email address of a contact person.

Letter of intent information will be used to determine the number of expert reviewers needed to evaluate applications. **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.

The letter of intent should be submitted to:

CB Operations Center c/o LGC, Inc.
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: (888) 203-6161
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Table of Contents

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

Project Summary/Abstract

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

Please place the following at the top of the abstract:

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

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

Objectives And Need For Assistance

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

Expected Outcomes

Identify the outcomes to be derived from the project. Outcomes should relate to the overall goals of the project 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.

Applicants must target P1. They should also indicate whether they will target any of the following CFSR outcomes: S2, P2, and/or WB1. The identified targeted outcome(s) must be supported by findings from the state child welfare agency's most recent CFSR findings. In addition to providing support from the title IV-E state child welfare system's most recent CFSR findings (as reflected in the state's final report), applicants should reference the agency's PIP, CFSP, Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review, APSRs, CIP Plans, and CIP Self-Assessments, as applicable.

Applicants who propose to target S2, P2, and/or WB1 must link the outcome to achieving permanency, including adoption and efforts aimed at preventing children from entering or re-entering foster care. Applicants should also identify relevant systemic factors that will be targeted in order to elicit the expected outcomes.

Approach

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

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

Targeted CFSR Outcomes

Applicants must present an assessment of barriers and challenges to improving adoption opportunities and achieving substantial conformity on the identified outcome(s). In identifying barriers and challenges, applicants should list the child welfare agency and CIP's current initiatives that are seeking to address these challenges, including ongoing challenges with

and/or the promising nature of current initiatives. As it relates to the child welfare agency, the assessment should focus on barriers to permanency outcomes and S2 and/or WB1, across areas such as:

- Communities and environmental factors (e.g., jurisdiction specific challenges to permanency, including the role of adoption agencies and the court system).
- Service delivery and access, including workforce stability, workforce competency, and front-line practice (e.g., visitation, safety and risk assessment, family engagement, etc.), and supervision. The assessment should include any existing program models in the applicant's jurisdiction that have been demonstrated to be effective. Applicants should cite data from evaluations of these efforts to demonstrate the program's effectiveness.
- Collaboration and joint accountability, including established interagency collaborative efforts or plans to establish interagency collaborative efforts with relevant child and family serving agencies, and formal and informal resources that comprise the continuum of care for families.
- Policies and procedures, including an analysis of those policies or procedures that may present de facto barriers to implementation of services and programs that effectively address permanency and work plans for necessary revisions, if revisions cannot be completed in the planning period.

Applicants should also provide an assessment of any of the following relevant systemic factors contributing to the need for child welfare system improvement in order to improve adoption opportunities:

- Foster adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention;
- Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System and other statewide information system;
- QA system;
- Staff and provider training;
- Service array and resource development; and
- Agency responsiveness to the community.

Target Population

Applicants must clearly describe the target population for the proposed strategies, practices, and activities. In describing the target population, applicants should explain the rationale for choosing the population(s). This should reflect children, youth, and/or families whose safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes the agency intends to impact through this project and should present relevant agency level data to support their rationale. The description of the target population should include the characteristics and needs of the population, an estimate of the number of children/families and cases that the project intends to impact and child welfare status and history (e.g., substantiated reports of abuse and neglect, foster care status, concurrent planning, lengths of stay in care). The size and characteristics of the target population should be large enough to yield inferential statistics and to elicit improvement in statewide CFSR outcome(s).

Applicants should also clearly identify other direct recipients of any proposed strategies and

practices (e.g., adoptive and foster parents, caseworkers, etc.).

Program Strategies and Activities

Applicants must clearly describe the proposed strategies, practices, and activities that will be implemented to address the identified barriers and challenges to improving adoption outcomes and performance on P1, P2, S2, and/or WB1. Applicants must provide a rationale for selecting the proposed strategies, practices, and activities to meet the needs of the identified target population. Proposed strategies should include one or more of the following basic social work and attorney or judicial practices:

- Strengthening of partnerships between state, tribal, and county systems, courts, and community partners, including adoption agencies and faith-based organizations;
- Effective engagement of children, youth, and families, including fathers;
- Appropriate concurrent planning focused on the achievement of timely permanency for children and families;
- Appropriate assessment and mitigation of safety and risk factors in families, as well as timely and individualized provision of services, resources, and supports for children and parents of youth in foster care and receiving in-home services; and/or
- Strengthening parents' capacity to protect and provide for their children.

Applicants' implementation plan should provide the following:

- Clear description of core components;
- Recipients of proposed strategies, practices, and activities (e.g., children, youth, parents, adoptive parents, foster parents, caseworkers);
- Manner in which the target population's needs will be addressed;
- Existing evidence linking each proposed strategy to the identified safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes the demonstration is supposed to address (i.e., history of success, research and evaluation findings and other data demonstrating support for the application of the chosen intervention(s) to the defined target population); and
- Work necessary to implement the proposed project.

Applicants must include a plan for having the project fully implemented by the end of Year 2.

Planning Period

Applicants must provide a plan for activities that will occur during the project's 9-month planning period. The plan should clearly describe the:

- Process for collaborating with other initiatives within the child welfare system (i.e., the child welfare agency, adoption agencies, courts, and the CIP) and other relevant agencies to ensure the fit between the proposed and current initiatives;
- Process for engagement and review of activities with TA providers (i.e., review of needs assessment, proposed interventions, organizational readiness, implementation and evaluation plans, and project timeline);
- Teaming structure for accomplishing activities;
- Purpose, authority, and membership/roles;

- Communication plan; and
- Decision-making protocols.

Technical Assistance

Applicants should provide a description of any current TA the child welfare agency, adoption agencies, courts, or CIP are using to address the identified barriers, or any TA provider it anticipates using during the project period. Applicants should also identify any anticipated TA needs from CB's TA capacity building providers and document support for this need. This may include, for example, seeking TA to support such strategies as coaching, mentoring, or supervision improvements to facilitate implementation. Since working with CB's capacity building TA is a requirement of the project, applicants who currently have TA in place should document plans to coordinate between various providers and a plan for how conflicting TA approaches will be resolved.

Collaboration

Applicants must describe the child welfare agency's current cross-system coordination with adoption agencies, the AOC, CIP, and local courts, and a plan for improving collaboration, as necessary. Applicants must also describe how the child welfare agency will collaborate with community stakeholders relevant to the goals of the project to include stakeholders currently involved with relevant child welfare initiatives and children, youth, and families being served by the child welfare system.

Detailed information should be included related to the teaming structure to manage implementation of the demonstration, including:

- Identification and description of partner organizations and collaborative partners and their respective roles and responsibilities, including financial commitments to the project;
- Identification and description of management procedures, positions, and functions; and
- Description of the processes for monitoring implementation progress, including ongoing identification of barriers or emerging implementation issues.

Organizational Readiness and Capacity

Applicants must document organizational and systems readiness and capacity to address the identified barriers and challenges to achieving the targeted child and family outcome(s) and to implement proposed strategies.

In documenting organizational and systems readiness and capacity, applicants should describe the child welfare agency's:

- Resources (concrete materials and assets), including adoption resources, staff, and financing;
- Knowledge and skills (workforce preparedness, expertise, competencies);
- Climate and culture (shared beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes), including buy-in and leadership commitment;
- Infrastructure (organizational structure, policies, processes, and systems). This should

include: (i) training, data, and CQI systems and (ii) current processes and service system functioning that need attention because they are incompatible with the project's key components and would impede the desired goals and outcomes (e.g., union agreements that may impact staff selection processes for new programs, current levels of coordination and cooperation between community service providers and what may be needed for successful implementation of the project);

- Engagement and partnerships (intra- and inter-organizational relationships and connections), including partnerships with courts, other public agencies, and community organizations; and
- Implementation supports (e.g., infrastructure enhancements, policy changes) that need to be developed to ensure that demonstration components are able to be executed as intended.

In demonstrating organizational readiness and capacity, applicants should also provide:

- Written agreements between the state child welfare system, adoption agencies, and relevant court partners and county-level child welfare agencies (if agency is state supervised/county administered, or applying as a county consortium) participating in the proposed project;
- Evidence of buy-in from appropriate leadership (e.g., letters of commitment from state government, child welfare agency administrators, and community stakeholders); and
- A proposed strategy to continue the project initiative despite leadership change.

Please see *Appendix* for a list of organizational capacity readiness tools and references.

Project Timeline and Milestones

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

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

Program Performance Evaluation Plan

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

will be measured, and how the resulting information will be used to inform improvement of funded activities.

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

CQI Process

Applicants must demonstrate that the relevant child welfare agency has a functioning CQI system in place. Applicants should describe the child welfare agency's framework for CQI and implementation and provide a description of the role of monitoring and evaluation in informing the implementation and refinement of the demonstration project's components. Evidence of a functioning CQI system should indicate the degree to which the child welfare agency is currently meeting the following functional components or intends to do so through this funding opportunity:

- Foundational administrative structure. Applicants should demonstrate that: strong administrative oversight exists to ensure that the child welfare agency's CQI system is functioning effectively and consistently; a systemic approach to review, modify, and implement any validated CQI process exists; there are written and consistent CQI standards and requirements in place; there is an approved training process for the child welfare agency's CQI staff; and there is capacity and resources to sustain an ongoing CQI process, including designated CQI staff.
- Quality data collection. Applicants should demonstrate their ability to input, collect, and extract quality child welfare data from various sources, including federal databases or reports. Applicants must demonstrate that there is a clear process that the child welfare agency uses to collect and extract accurate quantitative and qualitative data and that the process is consistently and properly implemented.
- A method for conducting ongoing case reviews. The applicant must describe a case review process that is feasible and includes a stratified sample to include a proportion of cases that reflect different age groups, permanency goals, and other considerations, such as varying geographic areas of the state and tribal communities, as appropriate.
- Data analysis and dissemination plan. Applicants should describe a process for the analysis and dissemination of quality child welfare data on performance measures. The process should demonstrate the applicant's ability to gather, organize, and track information and results over time regarding the targeted outcomes and relevant services (at the child, caseworker, office, regional and state level, as appropriate).
- Stakeholder feedback and iteration. Applicants should describe a process for providing feedback to stakeholders and decision makers and, as needed, adjusting child welfare programs and process. The description should demonstrate how their CQI process will be used to guide collaborative efforts, inform goals and strategies around permanency, safety, and/or well-being outcomes and services, and to improve practice, services, and

monitor/track progress.

Additional Evaluation Requirements

Applicants must describe a plan for process and outcome evaluations. Applicants must propose a data collection strategy for examining how the project strategies, practices, and/or activities were implemented, including but not limited to policies and procedures that were put in place. Applicants should also propose measures of implementation readiness and implementation fidelity, along with a data analysis plan. Applicants must describe the methods they will use to evaluate project outcomes and assess change in practice. The outcome evaluation plan should include a description of the proposed case review plan (to include case reviews at multiple time points), demonstrated ability to use CB's Federal Onsite Review Instrument, and strategies for identifying a sample size that will enable measurement of improvements in the identified child and family outcome(s). The evaluation plan should also include performance indicators for measuring CFSR outcomes that are consistent with CB's operationalization and measurement. Applicants may propose additional methods of data collection, such as surveys and interviews with stakeholders. All proposed measures must be culturally sensitive. For the purpose of the project's evaluation plan, as applicable, applicants should:

- Include a timeline for activities related to securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and conducting a Tribal review; and
- Consider how their latest approved CFSR PIP measurement plan may be used to evaluate their project. Applicants may propose adjustments accordingly.

Evaluation plans should address the following questions of interest (but not limited to):

- What were the strategies, practices, or activities (including core project components) that were implemented?
- How did the site prepare for implementation (increase readiness/build capacity) of the strategies, practices, or activities?
- Were the strategies, practices, or activities implemented as intended?
- To what extent were the strategies, practices, or activities integrated within the existing system?
- What services did sites deliver to families or communities?
- To what extent did the strategies, practices, or activities improve effective concurrent planning adoption opportunities?
- To what extent did concurrent planning reduce the time to permanency?
- What steps did sites take to support the continuation of the program strategies and activities beyond the life of the current project period?
- What effects did the strategies, practices, or activities have on key outcomes?
- What was the degree of collaboration between partnering organizations and the extent to which interagency collaborations impacted the outcomes?

Geographic Location

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

Legal Status of Applicant Entity

Applicants must provide the following documentation:

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 electronic application submission.

Logic Model

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their project. A logic model is a one-page diagram that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the links among program elements. While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this announcement the logic model should summarize the connections between the:

- Goals of the project (e.g., objectives, reasons for proposing the interventions, if applicable);
- Assumptions (e.g., beliefs about how the program will work and its supporting resources. Assumptions should be based on research, best practices, and experience);
- Inputs (e.g., organizational profile, collaborative partners, key staff, budget);
- Target population (e.g., the individuals to be served);
- Activities (e.g., approach, listing key intervention, if applicable);
- Outputs (i.e., the direct products or deliverables of program activities); and
- Outcomes (i.e., the results of a program, typically describing a change in people or systems).

Project Sustainability Plan

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

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

Organizational Capacity

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

- Resumes (no more than two single-spaced pages in length);
- Biographical Sketches (short narrative description);
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures;
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners and/or subcontractors, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively;
- Information on compliance with federal/state/local government standards;
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

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.

Dissemination Plan

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

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

Third-Party Agreements

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

organization with the authority to make such commitments on behalf of their organization.

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

Collaboration/consortia applicants must provide letters of commitment or MOU identifying the primary applicant that is responsible for administering the grant. The primary applicant must provide documentation of the commitments made by partnering organizations and describe in detail their roles and responsibilities as partners in the collaboration/consortia.

Letters of Support

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

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds

Provide a plan describing how oversight of federal funds will be ensured and how grant activities and partner(s) will adhere to applicable federal and programmatic regulations. Applicants must identify staff that will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities, staff, and partner(s). Applicants must describe procedures and policies used to oversee staff and/or partners/contractors.

Describe organizational records systems that relate financial data to performance data by identifying the source and application of federal funds so that they demonstrate effective control over and accountability for funds, compare outlays with budget amounts, and provide accounting records supported by source documentation.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is entered on the Budget Information Standard Form, either SF-424A or SF-424C, according to the directions provided with the SFs. The budget justification consists of a budget narrative and a line-item budget detail that includes detailed calculations for "object class categories" identified on the Budget Information Standard Form. Applicants must indicate the method they are selecting for their indirect cost rate. See Indirect Charges for further information.

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

Special Note: *The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, (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 announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II*

salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$189,600. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

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

Applicants must allocate sufficient funds in their budgets to support required travel: a) Within 3 months after the award, the project director, child welfare liaison (if different from the project director), evaluator, and/or other key staff must attend a 2-day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC; and b) The project director, the child welfare agency liaison (if different from the project director), and the evaluator and/or other key staff must attend the annual grantee meeting, in Washington, DC.

Funds for evaluation must appear in the budget. Applicants must state the percentage and the amount of the total budget that will be allocated to evaluation. Applicants must provide a rationale showing that the budgeted amount is sufficient to conduct the proposed evaluation.

General

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

Personnel

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

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

Fringe Benefits

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

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit

costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, retirement insurance, and taxes.

Travel

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

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

Equipment

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

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

Supplies

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

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

Contractual

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

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to

provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Recipients and subrecipients are required to use 45 CFR 75.328 procedures and must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold fixed by 41 U.S.C. § 134, as amended by 2 CFR Part 200.88, and currently set at \$150,000. Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

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

Other

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

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

Indirect Charges

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category has one of two methods that an applicant can select. An applicant may only select one.

- 1) The applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant federal agency.

Note: An applicant must enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. If the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

- 2) Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f) Indirect (F&A) costs, “any non-Federal entity [i.e., applicant] that has never received a negotiated indirect costs rate, ... may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in § 75.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may

apply to do at any time.”

Justification: This method only applies to applicants that have never received an approved negotiated indirect cost rate from HHS or another cognizant federal agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposal may request the 10 percent de minimis rate. When the applicant chooses this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs to the grant.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

Description: Amounts of non-federal resources that will be used to support the project as identified in Block 18 of the SF-424.

For all federal awards, any shared costs or matching funds and all contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind contributions, must be accepted as part of the recipient’s cost sharing or matching when such contributions meet all of the criteria listed in 45 CFR § 75.306.

For awards that require matching by statute, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards, even if the projected commitment exceeds the amount required by the statutory match. **A recipient’s failure to provide the statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute, where “cost sharing” refers to any situation in which the recipient voluntarily shares in the costs of a project other than as statutorily required matching, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards . These include situations in which contributions are voluntarily proposed by an applicant and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the applicant will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient’s failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

Justification: If an applicant is relying on match from a third party, then a firm commitment of these resources (letter(s) or other documentation) is required to be submitted with the application. Detailed budget information must be provided for every funding source identified in Item 18. "Estimated Funding (\$)" on the SF-424.

Applicants are required to fully identify and document in their applications the specific costs or contributions they propose in order to meet a matching requirement. Applicants are also

required to provide documentation in their applications on the sources of funding or contribution(s). In-kind contributions must be accompanied by a justification of how the stated valuation was determined. Matching or cost sharing must be documented by budget period (or by project period for fully funded awards). **A recipient's failure to provide a statutorily required matching amount may result in the disallowance of federal funds.**

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

Paperwork Reduction Disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description and Budget/Budget Justification is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description and Budget/Budget Justification information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, expiration date is 01/31/2019. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Application Submission Options

Electronic Submission via www.Grants.gov

This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for ACF program applications. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Electronic Delivery

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

How to Register and Apply through Grants.gov

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

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

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

Obtain a DUNS Number: All entities applying for funding, including renewal funding, must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). Applicants must enter the DUNS number in the data entry field labeled "Organizations DUNS" on the SF-424 form.

For more detailed instructions for obtaining a DUNS number, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

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

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

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

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>

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

For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>

Track Role Status: To track your role request, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>

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

How to Submit an Application to ACF via Grants.gov

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

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

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

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

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

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

Issues with Federal Systems

For any systems issues experienced with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's "Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues" document for complete guidance at www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/systems_issue_policy_final.pdf.

Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission

To request an exemption from required electronic submission please refer to ACF's "Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission" document for complete guidance at:

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/acf_policy_for_requesting_an_exemption_from_required_electronic.pdf.

Paper Format Application Submission

An exemption is required for the submission of paper applications. See the preceding

section on "*Request an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission.*"

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the AOR, and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.7.* of this announcement for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date.

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times* in this announcement.

IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

All applicants must have a DUNS Number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov/SAM, <https://www.sam.gov>).

Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, registration at SAM must be active throughout the life of the award.

Plan ahead. Allow at least 10 business days after you submit your registration for it to become active in SAM and at least an additional 24 hours before that registration information is available in other government systems, i.e. Grants.gov.

This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application through Grants.gov or prevent the award of a grant. Applicants should maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register for, or renew a registration, at SAM. User Guides are available under the "Help" tab at <https://www.sam.gov>.

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

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

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

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

IV.4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Letter of Intent

Due Date for Letter of Intent: **06/03/2018**

Due Dates for Applications

Due Date for Applications: **07/18/2018**

Explanation of Due Dates

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

Electronic Applications

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

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

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

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

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

Mailed Paper Format Applications

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

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

from Required Electronic Application Submission.

Hand-Delivered Paper Format Applications

Applications that are hand-delivered by applicants, applicant couriers, by overnight/express mail couriers, or other representatives of the applicant must be received on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section. These applications must be delivered between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., ET, Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays). Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.7. Other Submission Requirements*.

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

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

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

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

Emergency Extensions

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

Acknowledgement from www.Grants.gov

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

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

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of an electronic application's submission:

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

Acknowledgement from ACF of receipt of a paper format application:

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

IV.5. Intergovernmental Review

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

Applicants should go to the following URL for the official list of the jurisdictions that have elected to participate in E.O. 12372 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, 330 C St. SW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20201.

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

IV.6. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions are unallowable. Fund raising costs for the purposes of meeting the Federal program objectives are allowable with prior written approval from the Federal awarding agency. (45 CFR §75.442)

Proposal costs are the costs of preparing bids, proposals, or applications on potential Federal and non-Federal awards or projects, including the development of data necessary to support the non-Federal entity's bids or proposals. Proposal costs of the current accounting period of both successful and unsuccessful bids and proposals normally should be treated as indirect (F&A) costs and allocated currently to all activities of the non-Federal entity. No proposal costs of past accounting periods will be allocable to the current period. (45 CFR §75.460)

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

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

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

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

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

Submission By Mail

CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209

Hand Delivery

CB Operations Center c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209

Electronic Submission

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

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

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Criteria

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

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

Objectives and Need for Assistance

Maximum Points:30

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

1. The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the relevant legislation and this FOA.
2. The applicant presents a clear description of the proposed project, including a clear statement of the goals (i.e., the intended end products of an effective project) and objectives (i.e., measurable steps for reaching these goals) of the proposed project.
3. The applicant demonstrates a sound rationale for choosing the identified target population(s), including presentation and analysis of relevant data on the targeted population within the child welfare agency's jurisdiction.
4. The applicant clearly identifies the CFSR outcome(s) that the project will target, which must include P1 and one or more systemic factors, along with an analysis of the agency's performance on targeted outcomes (including S2, P2, and/or WB1, as applicable).
5. The applicant clearly describes and justifies the relationship between the child welfare agency's performance on S2, P2, or WB1 on the agency's ability to prevent entry and re-entry into care and improve adoption-related outcomes.
6. The applicant clearly identifies the barriers (agency, judicial, and legal practice related) and challenges to permanent placement and safety and/or well-being outcomes (as applicable) that are specific to the identified jurisdiction(s) and population(s) to be targeted in its project.
7. The applicant presents a clear description of how the proposed project will take into consideration the applicant's final report, PIP, and CIP-Self Assessment and Strategic Plan.
8. The applicant demonstrates the understanding of the use the planning period as an

opportunity to amplify and fine-tune their proposed project plan, laying a solid foundation for implementation activities.

Approach

Maximum Points:20

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

1. The applicant clearly defines the geographic and demographic characteristics of the agency's service population and the target population to be affected by the implementation of this cooperative agreement.
2. The applicant describes sound practices, strategies, and activities (including core components) that will be implemented to overcome current challenges and barriers to achieving the targeted CFSR outcomes. These strategies include one or more of the basic social work, legal, or judicial practices listed in *Section IV.2 The Project Description, Approach, Project Strategies and Activities*.
3. The plan includes appropriate strategies for working with adoption agencies, courts, and other key entities to develop, implement, and sustain policies and practices that will lead to improved adoption outcomes.
4. The applicant describes clear TA needs (e.g., coaching, mentoring, supervision improvements) for implementing the proposed project, and for ensuring that sites successfully adopt, implement, and sustain the proposed programs.
5. The applicant describes the process that will be used to develop and fine-tune the implementation plan during the planning period, including timeframes.
6. The applicant describes the process that will be used to verify the appropriateness of the strategies, practices, and activities to be implemented, expanded and/or enhanced and incorporated into the agency's ongoing functioning by Year 2 of the project. This plan addresses the requirements listed in *Section IV.2 The Project Description, Approach, Planning Period* of this FOA.
7. The applicant describes the factors that could speed or hinder project implementation and explains how these factors would be managed.
8. The applicant describes a feasible plan for collaborating and coordinating with current child welfare agency initiatives, AOC, CIP, or local courts and other partnering organizations to support the planning and infrastructure needed for the development, implementation, and continued assessment of proposed programs and practices.
9. The applicant describes a plan that includes strategies to promote parent and youth involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed project.
10. The proposed services would involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of service delivery.
11. The applicant proposes a sound plan to disseminate findings and support knowledge transfer to the field, including the integration of lessons learned into policy and practice as appropriate.
12. The proposed project would be integrated into the child welfare agency's ongoing practices with the goal of continuous data-informed decision-making that will improve outcomes for the target population.
13. There is a sound plan for continuing this project beyond the period of federal funding under this FOA.

Organizational Capacity**Maximum Points:30**

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

1. The applicant and any partnering organizations have relevant experience and expertise in conducting case reviews, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of similar projects related to improving permanency outcomes and in supporting collaboration between the child welfare agency, courts, and other relevant agencies.
2. Each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) possesses the organizational capability to fulfill its assigned roles and functions effectively.
3. The proposed project director and key project staff demonstrate sufficient relevant subject matter knowledge, experience, and capabilities (e.g., resume) to effectively institute and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity.
4. The roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors, and/or partners, is clearly defined (e.g., job description) and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project.
5. The proposed project includes a sound management plan for ensuring that staff and partnering organizations are achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality.
6. The applicant includes strong letters of commitment or MOU from the AOC and/or CIP, participating local courts, organizations, agencies, and consultants that will be partners, subcontractors, or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents describe the role of the agency, organization, or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed, and are signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments on behalf of their organization.
7. The applicant provides a sound management plan that clearly describes the effective management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants, including the coordination of internal and external TA providers, if applicable.
8. If the primary applicant is not the relevant child welfare agency, there is documentation (such as an appropriately signed MOU) of a strong partnership with the child welfare agency with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s) and courts having jurisdiction over the targeted child welfare population.
9. The applicant demonstrates that efforts for collaborative service delivery have already been undertaken prior to responding to this FOA, or it demonstrates that there is considerable community interest and commitment to developing these practices.
10. The applicant and key partners demonstrate capacity to develop, implement and sustain policies and practices that will lead to improved adoption outcomes.

Evaluation**Maximum Points:15**

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

1. The applicant proposes a clear and convincing plan for working with the designated evaluator to evaluate the project, guided by the project's logic model.

2. The applicant proposes a logic model that is clearly described; proposed activities are well-conceived, reasonable, linked to the results and benefits expected; and all aspects of the model are appropriately measured within the timeframe of the grant.
3. The evaluation would measure achievement of project objectives, changes in practices, the fidelity of the program implementation, organizational readiness, and linkages between services/practice changes and the impact of the project.
4. The applicant provides a clear description of a case review plan that is feasible and includes a proportion of cases that reflect different age groups, permanency goals, and other considerations, as appropriate.
5. The applicant's evaluation plan addresses the research questions listed in *Section IV.2 The Project Description, Program Performance Evaluation Plan* as well as additional relevant and specific questions that may be investigated; discusses a range of appropriate approaches to assessing these questions; and the range of limitations foreseen.
6. The plan includes development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound evaluation. Data collection procedures (including access to data sources) and instruments (including information on reliability and validity) are described.
7. The applicant's evaluation plan outlines an appropriate sampling approach that ensures sample sizes sufficient to detect significant effects and improvements on the targeted CFSR outcomes.
8. The plan describes appropriate data analysis methods for conducting the process and outcome evaluations.
9. The evaluation plan includes an appropriate comparison group for determining the influence of the project activities on outcomes, if applicable.
10. The applicant proposes appropriate process and outcomes measures and sufficiently justifies their selection. The applicant identifies measures to assess P1, P2, S2, and/or WB1 that align with CB's measurement indicators, describes how the measures will be tracked, and proposes reliable sources for obtaining data.
11. The applicant provides a rationale for the selection of measures, which are realistic and flow from the proposed plan as demonstrated in the applicant's logic model.
12. The applicant will work with the designated evaluation TA provider during the planning period to establish targets for the identified outcomes, and throughout the project period to participate in site-specific evaluation activities.
13. The proposed evaluation would be culturally sensitive to the target population of the identified program.
14. The applicant clearly demonstrates the ability to access relevant child welfare data for the purposes of its evaluation. If appropriate, a copy of a data sharing agreement is provided.
15. The applicant describes a well-functioning CQI system with the five essential elements listed in *Section IV.2 The Project Description, Approach, Organizational Readiness and Capacity* of this FOA.
16. There is an appropriate plan for working with the designated evaluator in securing informed consent and implementing an IRB review and tribal review, if applicable.
17. The applicant presents a realistic plan for using evaluation findings to produce ongoing documentation of project activities and results. The plan includes performance feedback

and periodic assessment of program progress that can be used to modify the program, as necessary, and serve as a basis for program adjustments.

Budget and Budget Justification

Maximum Points:5

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

1. There is a detailed narrative budget justification for each year of the project. The costs of the proposed project are reasonable, in view of the activities to be conducted and expected results and benefits.
2. The budget includes the costs associated with travel for the project director, child welfare liaison (if different from the project director), evaluator, and/or other key staff or collaborating partners to attend annual grantees conferences and required meetings in Washington, DC.
3. There is a sufficient percentage of the budget that is allocated to the evaluation and adequate rationale supporting the percentage allocation.
4. The applicant describes fiscal controls and accounting procedures for ensuring prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this FOA.

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 (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration at SAM (www.sam.gov). See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)*.

Initial ACF Screening

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

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

Objective Review and Results

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

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores

and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process.

ACF 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.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

As required by 2 CFR Part 200, the Uniform Guidance, effective January 1, 2016, ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), www.fapiis.gov/, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$150,000) over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR § 200.205 Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants (http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200_1205&rgn=div8).

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

Approved but Unfunded Applications

Applications recommended for approval in the objective review process, but were not selected for award, may receive funding if additional funds become available or may compete for funding during the next review cycle (if one occurs in the next fiscal year). Applications designated as “approved but unfunded” typically cannot be kept in an active status for more than 12 months. For those applications determined as “approved but unfunded,” notice will be given of the determination by email.

V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Announcement of awards and the disposition of applications will be provided to applicants at a later date. ACF staff cannot respond to requests for information regarding funding decisions prior to the official applicant notification.

VI. Federal Award Administration Information

VI.1. Federal Award Notices

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

Project costs that are incurred prior to the receipt of the NoA are at the recipient's risk and may be reimbursed only to the extent that they are considered allowable as approved pre-award costs. Information on allowable pre-award costs and the time period under which they may be incurred is available in *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions*.

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

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

HHS Grants Policy Statement

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services' single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. ACF grant awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS GPS, which covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. The general terms and conditions in the HHS GPS will apply as indicated unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary that are specified in the Notice of Award (NOA). The HHS GPS is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-1>.

An application funded with the release of federal funds through a grant award does not constitute, or imply, compliance with federal regulations. Funded organizations are responsible

for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable federal regulations.

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Semi-Annually
Reports:

Recipients under this FOA will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting requirements is available on the ACF website at www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-2.

For planning purposes, the frequency of required reporting for awards made under this announcement are as follows:

Financial Reports: Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact

Serena L. Williams
Children's Bureau
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Administration for Children and Families
c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Office of Grants Management Contact

Bridget Shea Westfall
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Administration
Office of Grants Management
c/o LCG, Inc.
1400 Key Blvd, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209
Email: CB@grantreview.org

Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay

Service (FedRelay) at www.gsa.gov/fedrelay.

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

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

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

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecast www.grants.gov/.

ACF Funding Opportunity Announcements ami.grantsolutions.gov/.

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

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

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

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

ACYF-CB-IM-12-07 Information Memorandum on Establishing and Maintaining Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Systems in State Child Welfare Agencies <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/im1207.pdf>

ACYF-CB-IM-17-02 High Quality Legal Representation for All Parties in Child Welfare Proceedings <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/im1702.pdf>

Child and Family Services Reviews. (Round 3 Findings 2015-2016) Retrieved from [https://training-cfsrportal.cw-dev.jbsinternational.com/resources/3105#CFSR Round 3 Findings](https://training-cfsrportal.cw-dev.jbsinternational.com/resources/3105#CFSR_Round_3_Findings)

“Using Continuous Quality Improvement to Improve Child Welfare Practice – A Framework for Implementation.” Casey Family Programs and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, May 2005 Retrieved from <https://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/CQIFramework.pdf>

Additional Resources:

Achieving and Maintaining Permanency <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/>

A Framework to Design, Test, Spread, and Sustain Effective Practice in Child Welfare http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/pii_ttap_framework.pdf

Child and Family Services Reviews Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-round3-onsite-review-instrument>

Continuous Quality Improvement <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/ntaec/soctoolkits/continuous-quality-improvement/#phase=pre-planning>

Permanency Innovations Initiative Approach: Building Implementation and Evaluation Capacity

in Child Welfare <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pii-implementation-and-evaluation-capacity>

Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/resource/the-program-managers-guide-to-evaluation-second-edition>

Technical Assistance Documents on Evaluation Topics <http://www.jbassoc.com/reports-publications/evaluation-briefs>

Video Series on Data Driven Decision Making <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/data-driven-decision-making-series>

Application Checklist

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

| What to Submit | Where Found | When to Submit |
|---|---|---|
| The Project Budget and Budget Justification | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification.</i> | Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C. Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i> |
| SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i> This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i> |
| The Project Description | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i> | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i> |
| SF-LLL - Disclosure | "Disclosure Form to Report | If submission of this form is applicable, |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| of Lobbying Activities | <p>Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.</p> | <p>it is due at the time of application.</p> <p>If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p> |
| Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form) | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.</p> | <p>Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.</p> |
| Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule) | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i> See http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html for additional information.</p> <p>This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov</p> | <p>Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. 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.</p> |
| Project Summary/Abstract | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></p> <p>The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.</p> | <p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p> |
| Table of Contents | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></p> | <p>Submit with the application by the due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p> |
| SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL) | <p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i></p> <p>This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov.</p> | <p>Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p> |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Letter of Intent | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Project Description.</i> | Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4.</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> These forms are available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section. They are required for applications that include only non-construction activities. | Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i> |
| SF-424 Key Contact Form | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i> This form is available in the FOA's forms package at www.Grants.gov . | Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i> |
| Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration. | Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the announcement. To obtain a DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier), go to http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform . To register at SAM, go to http://www.sam.gov . | A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period. |
| Mandatory Grant Disclosure | Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications.</i> | If applicable, concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required. |
| Proof of Non-Profit | Referenced in <i>Section IV.2.</i> | Proof of non-profit status should be |

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| Status | <i>The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity.</i> | submitted with the application package by the application due date and time listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4</i> of the FOA. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant. |
|--------|---|--|

Appendix

Organizational Capacity and Readiness Information and Tools

The Capacity Building Center for States compiled this list based on relevance, utility, and accessibility. This is not a comprehensive list of all resources on the topic. Inclusion does not reflect endorsement by the Center or the Children's Bureau.

Organizational Readiness

Organizational readiness is a critical part of good implementation (Scaccia et al., 2015). "Readiness" refers to the extent an organization is "willing and able" to change or implement a particular practice or intervention (Dymnicki, Wandersman, Osher, Grigorescu, & Huang, 2014, p. 1). When organizational readiness is high, successful implementation is more likely, whereas lack of readiness can contribute to failed implementation (Dymnicki et al., 2014; Weiner, 2009).

Implementation frameworks generally suggest that organizations assess readiness as part of their change and implementation process (Dymnicki, et al., 2014; Meyers, Durlak, & Wandersman, 2012). This assessment can help identify where training, technical assistance, tools, or other capacity building supports are needed (Wandersman, Chien, & Katz, 2012). While readiness is important as a precursor to implementation, it also can influence other phases of the change and implementation process (Aarons, Hurlburt, & Horwitz, 2011; Scaccia et al., 2015). As a dynamic construct, it is helpful to monitor readiness over time.

The following resource list provides links to a variety of resources that can help audiences understand and assess organizational readiness. First are a selection of articles and products that provide general information about organizational capacity and readiness. Following is a selection of assessment tools.

Select Articles and Information

Aarons, G. A., Glisson, C., Green, P. D., Hoagwood, K., Kelleher, K. J., Landsverk, J. A. (2012). The organizational social context of mental health services and clinician attitudes toward evidence-based practice: A United States national study. *Implementation Science*, 7, 56.
Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/57v8d1sg#page-2>

In this study, the authors examined the relationships between attitudes toward evidence-based practice and organizational culture, climate, and other characteristics among a nationally representative sample of mental health organizations. The study found that more proficient organizational cultures and more engaged and less stressful organizational climates were associated with positive attitudes toward adopting evidence-based practice.

Bertram, R. M., Blase, K. A., & Fixsen, D. L. (2015). Improving programs and outcomes: Implementation frameworks and organizational change. *Research on Social Work Practice, 25*, 477-487. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1049731514537687>

This article presents refinements to implementation constructs and frameworks. It updates and clarifies the frequently cited study conducted by the National Implementation Research Network that introduced these frameworks for application in diverse endeavors. Within this presentation, two studies alternate as examples of how these frameworks can be used as a practical guide for more effective implementation of human service programs.

Capacity Building Center for States. (2017). *A guide to five dimensions of organizational capacity: Realizing your agency's potential*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Retrieved from <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/capacity-building/organizational-capacity-guide/>

This guide introduces a framework for understanding organizational capacity used by the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative. It also describes key capacity building concepts and provides information and links to resources on different aspects of organizational capacity.

Dymnicki, A., Wandersman, A., Osher, D., Grigorescu, V., & Huang, L. (2014). *Willing, able, ready: Basics and policy implications of readiness as a key component for implementation of evidence-based interventions* (ASPE issue brief). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Retrieved from http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/14/IWW/ib_Readiness.pdf

An emerging body of scholarly work identifies three components of readiness that organizations should address when implementing new evidence-based interventions (EBIs): (a) motivation of people within the organization to adopt new EBIs; (b) general organizational capacities; and (c) intervention-specific capacities. This brief establishes the basics of readiness using the $R=MC^2$ (Readiness = Motivation \times General Capacity and Intervention-Specific Capacity) heuristic and examines some of the program and policy implications of readiness.

Holt, D., Achilles, A., Armenakis, A., Hubert S., Field, H., & Harris, S. G. (2007). Readiness for organizational change: The systematic development of a scale. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 43*, 232. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0021886306295295>

Using a systematic item-development framework as a guide (i.e., item development, questionnaire administration, item reduction, scale evaluation, and replication), this article discusses the development and evaluation of an instrument that can be used to gauge readiness for organizational change at an individual level.

Horner, R., Blitz, C., & Ross, S. (2014). *The importance of contextual fit when implementing evidence-based interventions* (ASPE Issue Brief.) Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Retrieved from https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/77066/ib_Contextual.pdf

Contextual fit is a construct that has gained attention from those who implement evidence-

based interventions across education and human services domains. Contextual fit is based on the premise that the match between an intervention and local context affects both the quality of the intervention implemented and whether the intervention actually produces the desired outcomes for the children and families receiving the intervention. This brief encourages current implementers to incorporate efforts to assess and adapt contextual fit into the interventions they intend to adopt.

Kaye, S., DePanfilis, D., Bright, C. L., & Fisher, C. (2012). Applying implementation drivers to child welfare systems change: Examples from the field. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 6(4), 512-530. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15548732.2012.701841>

Using an implementation framework from the National Implementation Research Network, this article reviews the relevance of core drivers to child welfare and describes selected examples to illustrate how public agencies can apply and adapt concepts from implementation science to drive and sustain their system reforms.

Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project. (2016). *Development, implementation, and assessment (DIA) toolkit: Overview and examples of ongoing readiness*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Retrieved from https://diatoolkit.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/Overview_Example_Ongoing_Readiness.pdf

This publication defines the components of the equation $R=MC^2$, that is, readiness, motivation, general capacity, and intervention-specific capacity, and provides *examples* of what readiness looked like for Permanency Innovations Initiative grantees and the strategies they used for achieving readiness throughout their projects. The publication helps illustrate how readiness has been operationalized in various organizations, how to continuously assess readiness, and why readiness is important.

Plath, D. (2013). Organizational processes supporting evidence-based practice. *Administration in Social Work*, 37(2), 171-188. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03643107.2012.672946?mobileUi=0&journalCode=wasw20>

This paper reports on research examining organizational processes that support an evidence-based practice (EBP) approach in a large Australian human service organization. A case study illustrates the implementation of EBP as an organizational change process, and EBP implementation is presented as a systemic process reliant on executive leadership and organizational culture. Qualitative findings suggest that effective EBP implementation requires engagement of staff across the organization. Strategies for staff engagement are identified, including the development of communities of practice. The paper presents a model for organizational analysis to assist preparation for EBP implementation.

Scaccia, J. P., Cook, B. S., Lamont, A., Wandersman, A., Castellow, J., Katz, J., & Beidas, R. S. (2015). A practical implementation science heuristic for organizational readiness: $R=MC^2$. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 43(4), 484-501. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4676714/>

There are many challenges when an innovation (i.e., a program, process, or policy that is new to an organization) is introduced into an organization. One critical component for successful implementation is the organization's readiness for the innovation. This article

proposes a practical implementation science equation, abbreviated as $R = MC^2$. It proposes that organizational readiness involves (a) the motivation to implement an innovation, (b) the general capacities of an organization, and (c) the innovation-specific capacities needed for a particular innovation. $R=MC^2$ can be used by organizations to assess readiness to implement and by training and technical assistance providers to help build organizational readiness.

Simpson, D. D. (2009). Organizational readiness for stage-based dynamics of innovation implementation. *Research on Social Work Practice, 19*(5), 541-551. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1049731509335589>

This article discusses training, adoption, implementation, and practice as sequential elements of a conceptual framework for effective preparation and implementation of evidence-based innovations. However, systems need to be prepared for change in terms of organizational readiness and functioning in addition to their service delivery infrastructure. The author emphasizes practical methods for advancing innovation implementation through collection and applications of better information about staff perceptions of need, organizational climate and resources, leadership commitments to change, and anticipated barriers. The author further presents measurement tools for these constructs, along with evidence of their applications in field studies.

Weiner, B., Amick, H., & Lee, S. D. (2008). Conceptualization and measurement of organizational readiness for change: A review of the literature in health services research and other fields. *Medical Care Research & Review, 65*(4), 379-436. Retrieved from <https://uncch.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/review-conceptualization-and-measurement-of-organizational-readin>

This article assesses how organizational readiness for change has been defined and measured in health services research and other fields. The article provides an analysis of 106 peer-reviewed articles and 43 instruments for measuring organizational readiness for change.

Weiner, B. (2009). A theory of organizational readiness for change. *Implementation Science, 4*. Retrieved from <https://implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1748-5908-4-67>

In this article, the author defines organizational readiness for change and develops a theory of contributing factors and outcomes. The article focuses on organizational analysis and systems redesign.

Assessment Tools

Barwick, M. (2011). *Checklist to assess organizational readiness (CARI) for EIP implementation*. Toronto, ON: Hospital for Sick Children Toronto. Retrieved from http://www.effectiveservices.org/downloads/Checklist_to_Assess_Organisational_Readiness_for_Implementation.pdf

Blase, K., Kiser L., & Van Dyke, M. (2013). *The hexagon tool: Exploring context*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, FPG Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Retrieved from <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/sites/implementation.fpg.unc.edu/files/NIRN-TheHexagonTool.pdf>

California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC). (n.d.). *Implementation toolkit: Assessment tools*. Retrieved from <http://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits/implementation-toolkits/assessment->

tools

- Organizational Readiness Self-Assessment Tool
- Initiative, Program, or Intervention Readiness Assessment Tool

Fixsen, D., Blase, K., Naoom, S., & Duda, M. (2015). *Implementation drivers: Assessing best practice*. Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, FPG Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Retrieved from <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/sites/implementation.fpg.unc.edu/files/NIRN-ImplementationDriversAssessingBestPractices.pdf>

Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice. (2010). *Florida's integration of services capacity instrument* (adapted from the National Center on Substance Abuse & Child Welfare Collaborative Capacity Instrument). Tampa, FL: Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida. Retrieved from https://ncsacw.samhsa.gov/files/Integration_of_Services_Capacity_Instrument.pdf

Institute of Behavioral Research.(2002). *Organizational (staff) assessments: Organizational readiness for change (TCU ORC-D4)*. Forth Worth, TX: Texas Christian University. Retrieved from <https://ibr.tcu.edu/forms/organizational-staff-assessments>

- Motivational factors <https://ibr.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ORC-D4-Aug09-rev.pdf>
- Structure and operations <http://ibr.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/sso.pdf>
- Organizational functioning <http://ibr.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/SOF.pdf>
- Transformational leadership <http://ibr.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/tcom-STL-S.pdf>

National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools. (2013). *Organizational readiness to change assessment (ORCA) tool*. Hamilton, ON: McMaster University. (Updated September, 2017).

- Tool: https://static-content.springer.com/esm/art%3A10.1186%2F1748-5908-4-38/MediaObjects/13012_2008_170_MOESM1_ESM.pdf
- Article and supporting information <http://www.nccmt.ca/knowledge-repositories/search/187>

Permanency Innovations Initiative Training and Technical Assistance Project. (2016). *Development, implementation, and assessment (DIA) toolkit: Implementation supports: Assessing best practices survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.

- Assessing Best Practices Survey: https://diatoolkit.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/resources/9.2_Implementation_Supports_Tool_Responders.pdf
- Administrator's Guide: https://diatoolkit.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/resources/9.2_Implementation_Supports_Tool_Admin.pdf

References

- Aarons, G. A., Hurlburt, M., & Horwitz, S. M. (2011). Advancing a conceptual model of evidence-based practice implementation in public service sectors. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 38, 423.
- Dymnicki, A., Wandersman, A., Osher, D., Grigorescu, V., & Huang, L. (2014). *Willing, able, ready: Basics and policy implications of readiness as a key component for implementation of evidence-based interventions* (ASPE issue brief). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.
- Meyers, D. C., Durlak, J. A., & Wandersman, A. (2012). The quality implementation framework: A synthesis of critical steps in the implementation process. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(3/4), 462-480. doi:10.1007/s10464-9522-x
- Scaccia, J. P., Cook, B. S., Lamont, A., Wandersman, A., Castellow, J., Katz, J., & Beidas, R. S. (2015). A practical implementation science heuristic for organizational readiness: $R = MC^2$. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 43(4), 484-501. doi:10.1002/jcop.21698
- Wandersman, A., Chien, V. H., & Katz, J. (2012). Toward an evidence-based system for innovation supports for implementing innovations with quality: Tools, training, technical assistance, quality assurance/quality improvement. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(3/4), 445-449.
- Weiner, B. J. (2009). A theory of organizational readiness for change. *Implementation Science*, 4, 67. doi:10.1186/1748-5908-4-67