



**Administration for Children and Families**

Office of Family Assistance

Fatherhood - Family-focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential (Fatherhood FIRE)

HHS-2020-ACF-OFA-ZJ-1846

Application Due Date: 07/01/2020

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

<b>Funding Opportunity Title:</b>	Fatherhood - Family-focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential (Fatherhood FIRE)
<b>Announcement Type:</b>	Modification
<b>Funding Opportunity Number:</b>	HHS-2020-ACF-OFA-ZJ-1846
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<b>Due Date for Applications:</b>	<b>07/01/2020</b>

### Executive Summary

*Notice:*

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

**This announcement has been modified.**

*Section I. Program Description, Program Purpose and Scope, Organizational Capacity* funding range of smaller scope projects has been modified to align with the correct level of \$500,000 to \$749,999.

*Section III.3 Other, OFA Disqualification Factors* of this FOA has been modified to add a Limit on the Number of Application Submissions under this FOA to one application per organization. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the modified language in its entirety.

*Section V.1, Criteria, Project Approach* of this FOA has been modified to correct errors in the point values assigned to (1) the optional sub-criteria related to service provisions to incarcerated fathers; and (2) the optional sub-criteria related to job-driven employment services.” The point values assigned to those sub-criteria has been changed to read ‘...will remain 35 points.

*Appendix, Section D Organizational Capacity Summary Table* of this FOA has been modified to correct errors in the Large Scope Services and Moderate Scope Services, Intensity of Past Programming hours from 12 to 24 hours.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA) is announcing the solicitation of applications for the competitive award of demonstration grants that support responsible fatherhood promotion activities as authorized under 42 U.S.C. § 603(a)(2).

Under this FOA, ACF identifies these qualities of Fatherhood—Family-focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential (Fatherhood FIRE)—as representative of the passion,

warmth, vision, intensity, and love all fathers have for their families, and as the inspiration for the activities funded under this FOA. Grants will fund projects designed to provide a broad array of services to promote or sustain healthy marriage and relationships (including couple and co-parenting), strengthen positive father-child engagement, and improve employment and economic stability opportunities for adult fathers (ages 18 and older). Economic stability activities include employment, job-driven, and job skills development.

ACF expects applicants awarded grants under this FOA will propose and conduct activities within a scope that is commensurate with the funding level being requested and their demonstrated organizational capacity. Proposed activities may range in scope from large scope service provision, to moderate scope service provision, to smaller scope service provision. ACF expects that applicants will provide evidence of organizational capacity to implement their proposed service provision activities in accordance with the organizational capacity standards of this FOA.

Additionally, grantees will be expected, among other things, to implement at least 24 hours of workshops (unless a lower intensity is proposed with strong justification and submitted for post-award review and approval) and meet specified program completion rates. Applicants requesting funding from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 are expected to propose and conduct local impact evaluations (those requesting less than \$1,000,000 have the option of proposing to conduct local evaluations). ACF is also interested in projects that implement only one specific program model designed for a service population (e.g., community fathers or incarcerated fathers).

For organizations interested in designing projects that include parenting services for young, mid-adolescent fathers and/mothers (e.g., parents who are 14-17 years old), see the Relationship, Education, Advancement, and Development for Youth for Life (READY4Life) FOA (HHS-2020-ACF-OFA-ZD-1838).

ACF developed short- and long-term outcomes for all program models intended to strengthen program design and enhance program implementation and evaluation.

This is one of three Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) FOAs, with this FOA addressing responsible fatherhood for adult fathers.

The Healthy Marriage FOAs are:

- Family, Relationship, and Marriage Education Works (FRAMEWorks) Grants – Adults (HHS-2020-ACF-OFA-ZB-1817);
- Relationship, Education, Advancement, and Development for Youth for Life (Ready4Life)(HHS-2020-ACF-OFA-ZD-1838.)

Bonus points are available for eligible former HMRF grantees funded during the 2015-2019 project period that meet the criteria outlined at *Section V.1. Criteria, Bonus Points* of this FOA.

**Note:** Section 403(a) of the authorizing legislation uses the term "Responsible Fatherhood Grants." Therefore, throughout this FOA, ACF uses the terms "fatherhood" and "fathers." However, as described in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Requirements, Non-Discrimination in Program Eligibility*, projects funded under this FOA must offer services on an equal basis to eligible fathers and mothers. ACF emphasizes that these requirements do not

change the fact that all projects funded must be father-focused. This means that these requirements do not change the responsible fatherhood scope of the funded projects or father-focused grantee outreach efforts.

Additionally, note that under this FOA the terms "incarcerated fathers" or "incarcerated" refers to fathers who are within 9 months of release from incarceration and intend to return to their communities and families. (See also *Section I. Program Description, Glossary, Community Fathers and Incarcerated Fathers* for more information.)

## I. Program Description

### Statutory Authority

Section 403(a)(2) of the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. § 603(a)(2)].

### Description

#### BACKGROUND

#### History of Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Programs

In the last 15 years, ACF's Responsible Fatherhood (RF) funding has encouraged the design of fatherhood programs that help establish and strengthen relationships (children, spouse, co-parent or employer), improve long-term economic stability, and overcome obstacles and barriers that prohibit them from being the most effective and nurturing parents.

ACF's Fatherhood FIRE grants will continue to support healthy father engagement activities through the following three broad, "Promoting Responsible Fatherhood" categories specified under 42 U.S.C. § 603(a)(2): promote or sustain healthy marriage, responsible parenting, and economic stability. The following is a list of the specified activities. Each category contains a range of specific activities, which may be combined to accomplish the outcomes described in this FOA. Applicants are not required to implement all the listed activities under the three authorized categories, but must select one or more activities under each category.

**Promote or Sustain Healthy Marriage** - Activities to promote marriage or sustain marriage through activities, such as:

- Counseling, mentoring, disseminating information about the benefits of marriage and two-parent involvement for children;
- Enhancing relationship skills;
- Education regarding how to control aggressive behavior;
- Disseminating information on the causes of domestic violence and child abuse;
- Marriage preparation programs;
- Premarital counseling;
- Marital inventories;
- Skills-based marriage education;
- Financial planning seminars, including improving a family's ability to effectively manage family business affairs by means such as education, counseling, or mentoring on

matters related to family finances, including household management, budgeting, banking, and handling of financial transactions and home maintenance;

- Divorce education and reduction programs, including mediation and counseling.

**Responsible Parenting** - Activities to promote responsible parenting, such as:

- Counseling, mentoring, and mediation;
- Disseminating information about good parenting practices;
- Skills-based parenting education;
- Encouraging child support payments;
- Other methods.

**Economic Stability** - Activities to foster economic stability, such as:

- Helping fathers improve their economic status by providing activities such as work first services, job search, job training, subsidized employment, job retention, job enhancement, and encouraging education, including career-advancing education;
- Dissemination of employment materials;
- Coordination with existing employment services such as welfare-to-work programs and referrals to local employment training initiatives; and
- Other methods.

### **History of Research Base for Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Programs**

Studies have shown that involved fathers provide practical support in raising children and serve as models for their development (Amato, 1998). Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, and exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior compared to children who have uninvolved fathers (Yoder, Brisson, & Lopez, 2016; Cabrera, Karberg, Malin, & Aldoney, 2017).

In the United States, one out of every four children -- over 19 million in total -- lives in a home without their biological father (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The presence and involvement of a child's parents protects children from a number of vulnerabilities. More engaged fathers-- whether living with or apart from their children, can help foster a child's healthy physical, emotional, and social development (Cabrera & Tamis-LeMonda, 2012). While evidence shows that children benefit most from the involvement of resident fathers, research has also highlighted the positive effect that nonresident fathers can have on their children's lives (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006; Carlson, VanOrman, & Turner, 2017).

In view of the challenges and opportunities presented by these findings ACF, under this FOA, will continue to fund RF efforts designed to strengthen positive father-child engagement, improve social and economic outcomes for fathers and their families, improve healthy relationships (including couple and co-parenting), and promote or sustain healthy marriage. This program also reflects the priorities articulated in ACF's Information Memorandum from October 2018 entitled *Integrating Approaches that Prioritize and Enhance Father Engagement*.

### **Assuring Continued Commitment to Promoting Responsible Fatherhood**

ACF's decades-long investment in HMRF pilot projects, demonstration grant funding, rigorous

research and evaluation, and targeted programmatic technical assistance has helped to make its RF promotion efforts the lodestar—its guiding force—to create and sustain stronger families, foster or enhance vibrant communities, and build a strong society.

To ensure that these efforts remain on a strong trajectory to achieve HMRF goals and objectives, ACF considers it essential that applicant organizations' leadership, and all community partners and stakeholders supported under this grant, are made aware of the importance of being equally invested in and committed to achieving all programmatic goals and objectives outlined in this FOA. Additionally, applicants (and their community partners, based on their project role(s)) seeking funding under this FOA are expected to have a demonstrated and clearly articulated commitment to achieve the Promoting RF goals and objectives specified in this FOA and to ensure that funding is not being sought as add-on or gap funding to support other non-HMRF-related organizational priorities, goals, and objectives.

### **PROGRAM PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Projects funded under this FOA will identify strategies to recruit and provide services for adult fathers (ages 18 and older) who have children ages 24 and younger. Funds must be used to support and provide RF activities in all three authorized categories (i.e., Promote or Sustain Healthy Marriage, Responsible Parenting, and Economic Stability) to all eligible adult fathers, particularly those who are low-income. Applicants are not required to implement all of the *listed activities* under the three authorized categories, but must select one or more activities under *each* category. Over the past 15 years, previous RF programs have incorporated a combination of services designed to assist adult fathers in their roles and responsibilities as fathers, and ultimately, improve father-child relationships and child well-being.

ACF seeks to fund programs that proposals will also include activities and services intended to promote fathers as Family-focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential (FIRE) in the lives of their children, families, communities, and society.

#### **Organizational Capacity (Large Scope, Moderate Scope, and Smaller Scope Services)**

ACF is particularly interested in projects that unambiguously demonstrate commensurate capacity (based upon funding level) to effectively carry out projects of various scopes to address the needs of targeted participants and communities. The following sets forth the organizational capacity scopes and commensurate funding levels:

- Large scope services: funding requests from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000;
- Moderate scope services: funding requests from \$750,000 to \$999,999; and
- Smaller scope services: funding requests from \$500,000 to \$749,999

Factors considered in demonstrating commensurate capacity include program administration; development, implementation, and oversight of programming; and (as appropriate given the project proposed) evaluation. (See *Section IV.2 The Project Description, Organizational Capacity* for specific organizational capacity submission requirements.)

#### **Use of Funds**

Projects funded under this FOA may be used only for costs associated with the three authorized RF promotion activities listed in *Program Description, Background* of this section. Funds may also be used to support administrative costs associated with the listed authorized activities. In

addition to the prohibition against the use of funds for housing and child support payments, projects also may not be designed to incorporate the provision of other services or costs that are unallowable under this FOA, which include:

- Mental health treatment or substance abuse treatment;
- Developing or implementing an Abstinence Education or Sexual Risk Avoidance Education program; and/or
- Implementing a fee-for-service for proposed activities, which means that program participants must not pay for services received under this FOA.

### **Programmatic Objectives and Outcomes**

ACF has identified key objectives related to implementation of program models funded under this FOA, which are associated with short- and long-term outcomes. ACF has posted a link to proposed standardized performance measures at <https://www.famlecross-site.com/nForm/Content> (scroll down to the links listed at "Surveys"). The emphasis on specific programmatic objectives and outcomes is intended to strengthen program design and enhance implementation and evaluation.

The short-term participant outcomes that ACF is targeting under this FOA include:

- improved healthy relationship and marriage skills;
- improved parenting and co-parenting skills;
- Improved quality of father-child engagement;
- increased frequency of father/child engagement;
- increased financial responsibility of fathers;
- progress toward greater economic stability, including increased skill attainment and employment; and
- reduced recidivism (as appropriate).

The long-term participant outcomes that ACF is targeting under this FOA include:

- improved family functioning, including: improved couple relationships, marriage, and stability; and improved parenting and co-parenting);
- improved adult and child well-being;
- increased economic stability and mobility;
- reduced poverty; and
- reduced recidivism (as appropriate).

Performance data collection, continuous quality improvement, and local and national evaluations reflect ACF objectives of improving these short- and long-term programmatic outcomes. ACF is continuing to implement a learning agenda that focuses on expanding the knowledge base to continuously improve programming and increase positive outcomes for fathers, couples, families, and children.

### **PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

#### **Promote or Sustain Healthy Marriage**



Healthy marriage education programs that include relationship skills typically work with both members of a couple when they are still in a relationship together. Research suggests that fatherhood programs that incorporate healthy marriage and relationship education may ultimately increase fathers' long-term engagement with their children, the income available to the child, and child well-being (Knox, Cowan, Cowan, and Bildner, 2011).

ACF is particularly interested in programs that incorporate strategies to help fathers develop skills to strengthen and manage relationships with their children and other important individuals in their lives (co-parent, employer, and family members). Healthy relationships with spouses, partners, and children can also have positive effects on employment and earnings. Likewise, employment, earnings, and economic stability can positively affect the health of relationships with spouses, partners, and children.

The following are essential components of healthy marriage and relationship education and skills-building service provision.

- Communication skills (including expression, discussion, and negotiation skills);
- Conflict resolution, anger management, and problem-solving skills; and
- Knowledge of the benefits of marriage.

### **Responsible Parenting**

Responsible parenting activities include using skills-based fatherhood curriculum designed to help fathers learn and apply skills that assist them in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as fathers, reinforce parental practices that advance child well-being, and improve father-child relationships. ACF is also interested in strategies such as counseling and mentoring to reinforce parenting skills and advance child well-being. These strategies may be designed to address related issues and limitations that may affect father-child and/or family relationships.

The following are critical components of parenting education and father-child relationship enhancement service provision:

- Understanding child development and child behaviors;
- Teaching children to problem solve;
- Positive communication with children and other family members;
- Co-parenting;
- Setting limits and using non-violent discipline techniques;
- Child-director play skills;
- The importance of being an involved parent;
- Rebuilding and/or developing trust; and
- Reducing family conflict and enhancing family relationships.

The individual who supports the father in parenting the child (the supporting individual) may also be served through this program, though the father must be the primary target of service. This supporting individual may be a current or former romantic partner, or another person who is actively involved with the father to raise the child(ren), especially a relative of the child(ren) and/or the father. When a supporting individual and a father are served, they may be referred to as:

- "Couples" if the supporting individual and the participating father are romantically involved;
- "Co-parents" if the supporting individual and the participating father are the biological adoptive parents or were romantically involved in the past but the supporting individual and participating father are not romantically involved at the time of enrollment; or
- "Parenting pairs" if the supporting individual and the participating father were never romantically involved, but both are actively involved in raising the child(ren).

### **Economic Stability**

ACF has emphasized the importance of activities related to employment and economic stability in the previous RF grants. While economic pressures and instability may contribute to diminished financial support, and relationship (including father-child and couples) and marital dysfunction, recent work has found that such programs can increase earnings and contact between noncustodial parents and their children (Cancian 2019). Further, the Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation found that RF programs increased the length of time fathers were continuously employed (Avellar et al., 2018).

Economic stability activities range in scope from resume writing, job search (e.g., on-line or job fairs), job referral, or encouraging job training (including hard- and soft-skills), job placement, or job enhancement. Previously funded programs have implemented comprehensive economic stability activities that demonstrated how marketable job skills were imparted to participants and that were designed to assist the individual in obtaining permanent employment (where programs include temporary employment services) or sustaining employment and improving skills designed to help fathers move toward economic stability.

The following are examples of standard components of economic stability service provision:

- Career counseling/development (assessments of skills levels, aptitudes, abilities, competencies, and support services as needed);
- Encouragement of education, including career-advancing education;
- Job search, job training, job enhancement, job retention, and job placement assistance;
- Basic technology training;
- Pre-employment or soft-skills development that may include basic academic skills; and
- Workforce development.

### *Job-Driven Employment (Optional)*

Job-driven employment is an important consideration for RF implementation. For project designs that choose to incorporate job-driven employment, strategies must be guided by the following four principles: (1) to build from a solid understanding of local economic conditions and economic growth sectors; (2) to include connections to education and training opportunities aligned to these sectors; (3) to incorporate partnerships with employers in targeted sectors to increase the likelihood of placement and retention in work; and (4) use evidence-based or evidenced-informed programs and practices. Programs under this FOA are strongly encouraged to include other partners that can also provide resources or expertise.

Examples of strategies to include in the design of job-driven employment components include,

but are not limited to the following:

- Identifying in-demand occupations through the use of up-to-date, publicly available labor market information;
- Aligning education and training approaches and partnerships to growth sectors identified through labor market analysis;
- Partnering or networking with employers in growth industries, such as technology, health professions, construction, entrepreneurial opportunities, and other income-generating alternatives;
- Coordinating with local businesses, American Job Centers, or employment training agencies;
- Partnering with adult education agencies, community colleges, and other education service providers with the goal of participants receiving a General Education Diploma (GED), certificates, and/or other education- and career-advancing opportunities;
- Partnering with institutions that offer opportunities for advanced vocational training and certifications; and
- Collaborating with Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) and other employment agencies.

Projects may also include opportunities for permanent or temporary employment for fathers participating in their programs. Where employment is included as a part of the service provision, well-designed program models will ensure that fathers participate in RF classes or workshops, case management, follow-up, or program supports throughout the duration of the participant's enrollment in the employment program.

Job-driven employment and other economic stability services may be implemented directly or in collaboration with program partners. However, economic stability or job-driven employment activities **cannot be provided as stand-alone services**. These services **must** be provided in conjunction with other Promoting RF activities, including curriculum-based responsible parenting education workshops, curriculum-based marriage and relationship education workshops, follow-up, case management, or support services throughout the duration of the program.

## **CURRICULA**

Curricula being proposed for use in any of the three broad authorized Promoting RF category(ies) must be clearly identified, along with its intended purpose. Curricula proposed for use in workshops must be evidence-based or evidence-informed, must be skills-based, and must be designed to improve outcomes outlined in the *Programmatic Objectives and Outcomes* in this section. Additionally, critical components of applicable RF curricula include components that:

- Are father-focused;
- Promotes positive relationships, including father-child, father-spouse/partner, or father co-parent interactions;
- Is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the target population;
- Supports program goals and outcomes;
- Includes staff development and training components;

- Is age appropriate, particularly when serving young adult fathers between the ages of 18 and 24; and
- Uses technical support provided by the developer (to help support implementation fidelity).

Further, projects must include a justification for the selected curricula, describe how it aligns with the target population being proposed, and describe how it aligns with their overall program model.

Projects must deliver 24 hours or more of curriculum over time, in a primary workshop(s). A workshop is a set of structured classes; primary workshops are workshops which all participants are expected to attend and ultimately complete. For a curriculum(a) that is proposed as primary workshop(s), well-designed projects will describe how that primary workshop (if only one is proposed), or set of workshops together (if multiple workshops are proposed to be implemented with all participants), will be sufficiently intensive; that is, how the workshop(s) will be structured to include the following: (a) at least 24 hours long in total; (b) delivered in more than two sessions; (c) delivered over more than a single weekend; and (d) delivered over two weeks or more, meaning that the last class must not be offered sooner than 14 days after the first class.

Projects that do not meet these standards for intensity of primary workshops must provide strong justification for less intensive programming.

Participants may also be enrolled in optional (that is additional supplementary) workshops. Where optional workshops are proposed, a detailed description of those optional workshops and how they support the program goals and objectives must also be included in the proposal.

Following curriculum developers' guidelines for service provision is critical to ensure curriculum integrity in service provision. For example, if it is a group-based curriculum, then it cannot be used in a one-on-one setting without rationale and without written approval from the developer. Such requests will be reviewed by ACF, and if awarded, organizations may not proceed with the adaptation until they receive specific approval from ACF.

## **PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS**

### **General Expectations**

ACF seeks clear, well-designed projects that can thoroughly articulate their approach and implementation strategy. Important factors to consider include:

- reasonable plans for project marketing and outreach;
- a participant recruitment plan that aligns with the expected minimum/maximum client program participation limits and that accounts for attrition;
- an overarching structure for the activities and services to be offered, aligned with the project's logic model and its targeted objectives and outcomes;
- staffing and training plans, including refresher training;
- partnerships with other organizations as appropriate, for recruitment, programming, and referrals;
- well-developed oversight and monitoring plans for paid partners providing service delivery that include line-item budgets;
- an intake and assessment process;

- curriculum(a) that meet(s) standards for hours with an appropriate service delivery format (see *Curricula* in this section);
- appropriate tailoring to meet the needs of the target population, including especially for current or formerly incarcerated fathers and their families;
- case management and additional services, such as grant-funded participation supports and linkages to services that are not fundable under this FOA (as applicable);
- a plan for systematic data collection and protection of personally identifiable information; and
- a plan for continuous quality improvement and implementation of that plan.

Additionally, there is mounting evidence demonstrating the benefits of a cohort approach in fatherhood programming, where groups of fathers enter a program and proceed together for example, reports from the Parents and Children Together (PACT) study, which are linked at <http://www.hmrfgrantresources.info>. In such programming, fathers tend to bond with others in their cohort, thus promoting greater program participation and, it is anticipated, better outcomes. As a result, ACF strongly encourages proposals that employ a cohort-based design (including on-line cohorts, when appropriate, for example for incarcerated fathers).

ACF reviewed performance data from current grantees and found that grantee organizations more often meet enrollment targets and engage participants when they focus on implementing one program model. As a result, ACF is interested in projects that implement only one specific program model designed for one specific adult service population (e.g., rural community fathers, reentering fathers, or urban community fathers; each representing one population, but not multiple models for multiple populations).

Additionally, a well-designed program model will incorporate the following: (a) one or more curriculum-based workshops (particularly those related to healthy marriage and relationship education, responsible parenting, and where use of a curriculum is appropriate for economic stability) that address all requirements and target outcomes outlined in the FOA; and (b) additional services, which must include robust case management and may include additional program-related activities. Well-designed projects will have the demonstrated ability to incorporate a broad array of community-centered strategies in the implementation of their program model.

With regard to curriculum-based workshops, a project's primary workshop(s) (collectively, in the case of multiple workshops) are expected to comprehensively address all FOA objectives and outcome, as well as any project-specific goals and objectives. Primary workshops that do not address all FOA objectives and outcomes are insufficient. Primary workshops must be father-focused. Well-designed projects will include well-articulated strategies to recruit, enroll, and retain all participants in primary workshops, and are expected to be sufficiently intensive and to follow curriculum developers' guideline (see *Curricula* in this section).

Well-designed projects will include strategies designed to ensure that participants complete the program model, defined as participation in at least 90 percent of primary workshops. Additionally, well-designed programs will clearly describe an approach to ensure that participants are tracked throughout the service provision (including, enrollment, attendance, completion, and case management). For project Year 1, which includes a 6-month planning period, well-designed projects will include strategies to ensure that they will serve one-half (50

percent) of the clients noted for other years, per their selected funding level. (See *Participant Eligibility* and *Target Populations* in this section and *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Approach, Program Participation Targets*.)

### **Program Participation Targets**

To maximize efficiency and cost effectiveness of grant funds, ACF has established minimum and maximum limits on the number of clients that must be served. These limits are based on the application's funding level request. Funded organizations must propose to serve a number of clients within these limits, and to serve the numbers proposed in their applications (see *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Approach, Program Participation Targets and Organizational Capacity* for more information).

- Projects proposing smaller scope services with requested funding from \$500,000 to \$749,999 **must be designed** to service no fewer than 100 individuals, or 50 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year, who will complete at least 90 percent of primary workshops. Projects at this funding level that propose to serve from 100 to 750 individuals, or 50 to 375 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year (also with the 90 percent minimum primary workshop completion rate) must be designed to align the level of service provision with a clear, documented need from that specific level of intensity. Finally, projects at this funding level that propose to serve more than the specified maximum program participation targets (i.e., 750 individuals, or 375 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year with the 90 percent minimum primary workshop completion rate) must ensure that the project design represents a demonstrated organizational capacity to provide client services in numbers that exceed the specified maximum.
- Projects proposing moderate scope services with requested funding from \$750,000 to \$999,999, and those proposing large scope projects with requested funding from \$1,000,000 to \$1,249,999, **must be designed to** serve no fewer than 130 individuals, or 65 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year, who will complete at least 90 percent of primary workshops. Projects at this funding level that propose to serve from 130 to 1,000 individuals, or 65 to 500 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year, (also with the 90 percent minimum primary workshop completion rate) must be designed to align the level of service provision with a clear, documented need for that specific level of intensity. Finally, projects at this funding level that propose to serve more than the specified maximum program participation targets (i.e., 1,000 individuals, or 500 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year, with the 90 percent minimum primary workshop completion rate) must ensure that the project design represents a demonstrated organizational capacity to provide client services in numbers that exceed the specified maximum.
- Projects proposing large scope services with requested funding from \$1,250,000 to \$1,500,000 **must be designed to** serve no fewer than 166 individuals, or 83 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year, who will complete at least 90 percent of primary workshops. Projects at this funding level that propose to serve from 166 to 1,250 individuals, or 83 to 625 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year (also with the 90 percent minimum primary workshop completion rate), must be designed to align the level of service provision with a clear, documented need for that specific level of

intensity. Finally, projects at this funding level that propose to serve more than the specified maximum program participation targets (i.e., 1,250 individuals, or 625 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, per year, with the 90 percent minimum primary workshop completion rate) must ensure that the project design represents a demonstrated organizational capacity to provide client services in numbers that exceed the specified maximum.

### ***Addressing Client Needs***

#### *Intake, Enrollment, and Assessment of Needs*

Where appropriate, ACF is particularly interested in projects that are designed to incorporate rigorous intake and enrollment processes and strategies to assess an individual participant's needs, skills and interests, as well as a couple's/pair of co-parents'/parenting pair's needs, skills, and interests, where appropriate. Assessment processes or tools help project staff make decisions about the following: (a) the match between the program and the needs of each individual; (b) ways to reduce barriers to participation in the program; (c) any additional strategies for each individual, based on that individual's abilities and need; and (d) the individual's placement in training, education, and employment programs, when applicable.

Strategies for intake, enrollment, and assessment will include the following, as appropriate:

- Comprehensive intake tools that provide information about participants that will assist staff in determining the potential participant's or couple's needs;
- Training to help the intake staff and potential enrollees determine what program services will meet the participant's needs, or whether a referral to a more appropriate program is needed;
- Initial goal-setting (gathering information to determine how best to serve the participant- this information may be used to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP), when appropriate);
- Assessments (including, as appropriate, domestic violence screening, pre-test, barriers to participation, or family supports); and
- Discussion about post-enrollment next steps (including, assignment of a case manager, review of class/activity schedule, and/or addressing barriers to attendance).

#### *Case Management*

ACF is particularly interested in funding projects that include robust case management strategies that provide either direct services or link participants to a broad array of community-centered supportive services. Case management may range from regular participant contact to facilitate program retention, completion, and access to needed support services, to more intensive services related to employment and economic stability. Young adult fathers (e.g., ages 18-24) and adult expectant fathers with multiple concerns may particularly benefit from case management.

ACF also encourages the integrations of case management services, such as (non-therapeutic; or peer) counseling and/or mentoring. Counseling can provide an opportunity for fathers to discuss a variety of issues and receive guidance from trained staff in a group or one-on-one

setting. Mentoring offers another opportunity to provide guidance in the form of "role models" to help in character development and modeling behaviors when dealing with various challenges.

Well-designed projects are expected to include robust case management services, defined as at least eight individual service contacts per client throughout the course of the program, if not more (unless a lower intensity is proposed with strong justification and submitted for post-award review and approval). Under this FOA, an individual service contact is defined as a substantive interaction between a staff member and a participant, focused on programming (for example, to make-up a missed workshop session) or an issue(s) related to the participant's needs. Well-designed projects will also include strategies to ensure follow-up to participants on referral services outside of the program. Case management strategies also include services that are dependable and steady, and that provide sustained support. In describing case management, projects are expected to incorporate strategies that:

- Involve regular contact with participants to facilitate program retention, completion, and access to needed supports;
- Have an orientation process, risk and needs assessment, and intake and enrollment procedures;
- Chart the goals, objectives, progress and milestones and includes employment and education plans; and
- Provide follow-up support services to assist participants with job placement, retention, and advancement.

Where incarcerated or formerly incarcerated fathers are included in the proposed target population, project designs are expected to include strategies to assess and meet the transitional needs of that population. Project designs are expected to demonstrate that program services can be tailored to the needs of all potential service populations; for example, potential service populations can include both the general population (i.e., community fathers) and supportive services within the targeted community.

#### *Grant-Funded Participation Supports*

Well-designed projects will include participation support services designed to help reduce barriers to participation and improve program recruitment, retention, and outcomes. Services may include non-therapeutic or peer counseling, coaching, mentoring, transportation assistance, childcare, and other services, as applicable.

### **PARTNERSHIPS**

Partnerships are an important asset to consider in the design and implementation of a project and are encouraged. Strong partnerships are critical to maximizing the effectiveness of a program model through leveraging resources, building community support, and increasing access to eligible target population(s).

Partners may serve as the following: (a) sources for recruitment of program participants; (b) as implementers of programming itself; and (c) referral agencies for services that are needed but not available through the project (that is, agencies to which the staff may refer participants for additional services). Organizations are encouraged to use community mapping to scan for potential partnerships. Community mapping is a strategy to identify what services are available in a given community and what may be helpful for applicants to consider. It is an example of an



activity or tool that may be employed by applicants.

It is important that the project's assessment of the community needs and target population align with those of partnering organizations. Effective partnerships can contribute a wide array of knowledge and activities to each project, and partner organizations should work together to ensure that they use each other's expertise and resources. ACF encourages organizations to consider partnerships with federal initiatives, local agencies, and/or other community programs as part of the overall implementation plan and project design. Examples of key strategic partners include, but are not limited to:

- American Job Centers, WIBs, and other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-funded employment training programs;
- State, local, and tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agencies;
- State, local, and tribal child support agencies;
- Child welfare agencies and organizations;
- Domestic violence organizations;
- Legal aid and community action agencies;
- Criminal justice agencies (including prisons, jails, pre-release centers, courts, probation, parole);
- Head Start programs;
- Healthy Start programs;
- Local substance and mental health agencies; and
- Public health services, including health insurance navigators and enrollment specialists.

Additionally, organizations are expected to maintain substantial involvement in their program implementation and provide direct oversight and monitoring efforts of program partners, contractors, or other stakeholders paid under this grant. (See *Subawards* in this section for more information.)

### **Housing**

Stable housing is a key factor associated with increased parent-child contact, family stability, and the successful transition of formerly incarcerated fathers into the community. This is particularly true for projects whose target populations may include homeless, "doubled-up" (e.g., combined households with at least one additional adult person who is not enrolled in school or not a spouse or partner), and reentering fathers. Because grant funds may not be used to subsidize housing or to provide housing vouchers or rental assistance under this FOA, referral partnerships or non-paid partnership agreements are strongly encouraged. Applicants should consider engaging multiple in-kind partners within the community to address this objective and demonstrate the ability to connect participants to transitional, temporary, or permanent housing.

### **Child Support**

Many fathers served by RF projects are in the child support system or have child support obligations. There are potential benefits in establishing strong, positive referral or in-kind collaborations between funded organizations and local child support agencies, particularly since providing funding for child support payments is not an allowable use of grant funds under this FOA. These collaborations can ensure that fathers understand their rights and

responsibilities in the child support program.

## **SUBAWARDS**

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

In addition, the prime recipient must maintain a substantive role in the project. ACF defines a substantive role as conducting activities and/or providing services funded under the award that are necessary and integral to the completion of the project. Subrecipient monitoring activities alone as specified in 45 CFR § 75.352 do not constitute a substantive role. Furthermore, ACF does not fund awards where the role of the applicant is primarily to serve as a conduit for passing funds to other organizations unless that arrangement is authorized by statute. See *Section IV.6. Funding Restrictions* for more information.

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

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

Should a subrecipient perform unsatisfactorily, the prime recipient is responsible for remedying subrecipient issues. The prime recipient will be held accountable for cost disallowances regarding subawarded funds. Subrecipient performance will also be considered during review of applications for non-competing continuations. If requirements of the program cannot be met due to subrecipient issues, ACF may need to take one or more of the actions listed under 45 CFR § 75.371-375.

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

## **PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY AND TARGET POPULATIONS**

Eligible fathers may be married or unmarried biological fathers, expectant fathers, adoptive fathers, or stepfathers, for a dependent child or young adult child up to 24 years of age. Projects

may also enroll persons who live with children and who are acknowledged as father figures (e.g., grandfathers or foster fathers). Father figures must meet all other eligibility requirements and must be actively engaged in raising a minor child or actively engaged in the life of a young adult up to age 24, who is the child of a partner or relative.

Eligible fathers must be 18 years of age or older.

Eligible fathers will include those in the general population (i.e., “community fathers”), as well as fathers who are currently incarcerated and intend to return, or have returned, to their families and communities following incarceration. ACF continues to have an interest in projects that target the following:

- Low-income fathers;
- Non-custodial and custodial single fathers;
- Fathers receiving TANF assistance, as well as those who have previously received or are eligible to receive TANF assistance;
- Fathers participating in Head Start or Healthy Start programs; and
- Active-duty military and veteran fathers.

Under this FOA, ACF defines “general population” and “community fathers” as fathers across every demographic and socio-economic spectrum (and not exclusively fathers who are non-custodial, low-income, or have had contact with the criminal justice system) so that fathers from all walks of life may be served.

## **POST- AWARD REQUIREMENTS**

### **Non-Discrimination in Program Eligibility**

In providing services to eligible persons, grantee organizations may not discriminate based on the potential participant's race, gender, age, disability, or religion. Grantee organizations cannot discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, disability, or religion, discriminate in determining eligibility, benefits, or services provided, or applicable rules. The projects and activities assisted under these awards must be available to mothers and expectant mothers who are able to benefit from the activities on the same basis as fathers and expectant fathers.

Further, recruitment activities and materials promoting the availability of ACF-funded RF services must be carried out in a manner that is consistent with these non-discrimination requirements. Any materials designed to be individually distributed, posted, or expressed in order to promote the availability of ACF-funded RF services, such as fliers, pamphlets, advertisements, public service announcements (PSAs) and similar items, must include the following eligibility statement: “These services are available to all eligible persons, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or religion.”

Finally, ACF emphasizes that these requirements do not change the fact that all projects funded must be father-focused. This means that these requirements do not change the RF scope of the funded projects or father-focused grantee outreach efforts. (See *Participant Eligibility and Target Population* in this section for additional information.)

### **Domestic Violence**

Addressing domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and dating violence, are important

components of RF programs. Data from the National Survey of Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey in 2015 indicates that more than one in four women (25.1 percent) and about one in ten men (10.1 percent) in the United States have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime and reported an intimate partner violence-related impact during their lifetime (Smith et al., 2018). Given these high rates, it is likely that RF programs will serve one or more individuals who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. It is also possible that RF programs will serve one or more individuals who have committed or perpetrated violence against an intimate or dating partner.

Working collaboratively with domestic violence experts, RF projects can ensure the following: (1) all participants are provided accurate information about domestic violence/dating violence, including where to go for needed support or services; (2) all participants are provided appropriate and safe opportunities to disclose if they are or have been victims of domestic violence or dating violence; and (3) project staff and volunteers receive adequate training to respond appropriately to disclosures of domestic violence or dating violence by offering confidential referrals to domestic violence. Examples of strategies that may be considered as part of a comprehensive approach to address domestic violence may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Comprehensive training to staff on how domestic violence impacts their program participants and what to do if domestic violence is disclosed by either the perpetrator or the victim, either after initial screening or later in the program;
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a local domestic violence agency that describes the role(s) and responsibilities of each entity (including training, protocol development, and reporting) and identifies the resources that each will be responsible for bringing to the project;
- Safety planning to prepare for and respond to possible disclosed incidents of domestic violence or dating violence and crisis intervention, and referrals to other community-based domestic violence services;
- Comprehensive domestic violence screening and assessment as a first step in providing services and interventions. Those grantee organizations that lack the organizational expertise to respond to matters of domestic violence are expected to make referrals to appropriate community agencies;
- Development of domestic violence protocols in ongoing collaboration with domestic violence service providers, and consistent implementation of these protocols;
- Cross-agency referrals;
- Using a screening approach during the intake process and throughout the course of the program that focuses on the safety and support of domestic violence victims;
- Providing regular staff training on domestic violence;
- Integrating a domestic violence staff provider on site; or
- Providing cross-agency training that would include providing domestic violence program staff with training on RF programming.

Grantee organizations are required to consult with experts in domestic violence or relevant community domestic violence coalitions in developing the program model and activities.

## **Child Maltreatment**

As applicable, grantee organizations must ensure that employees stay abreast of, and are trained on their state's reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect. Grantee organizations must consult with expert or relevant organizations on the prevention, detection, and appropriate response to child maltreatment. Grantee organizations' program models must include instruction for participants on child maltreatment prevention throughout the child's age span.

## **Staffing Levels for Key Project Positions**

ACF expects grantee organizations to include, but not be limited to, the following key project positions: the Project Director, Project Manager, Data Manager, and Financial Officer. (The Project Director cannot be the Authorized Organizational Representative.) Grantee organizations must ensure that the key project positions are assigned appropriate levels of effort for each position listed in order to ensure the successful operation and compliance of the grantee project. Grantee organizations must make full time employee (FTE) allocations for key staff positions that are designed to ensure and maintain 100 percent overall project oversight, monitoring, fiscal, and day-to-day management of the funded program.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Grantee organizations are required to ensure that participation in programming is voluntary and that they will inform potential participants that their involvement is voluntary.

## **Geographic Location**

Grantee organizations must directly, or through their affiliates or project partners, have a physical presence in a community, city, or county where services are provided. For purposes of this FOA, ACF defines physical presence as a demonstrated ability to provide direct monitoring and oversight of the service provision; staff and facilitator training; and programmatic, legal, and regulatory compliance in the geographic area or areas an applicant proposes to serve. ACF reserves the right to conduct a post-award review and approval of any proposed alternative geographic service provision approach submitted with the application.

## **Entrance Conference, Biennial Peer Meeting, and Regional Meetings**

Grantee organizations must attend the entrance conference and biennial peer meetings in Washington, DC. ACF expects to conduct the entrance conference approximately 90 days from the date of grant award. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR); Project Director and/or Project Manager; Financial Officer; the project's local evaluator as applicable (see *Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements* later in this section), and Data Manager must attend the entrance conference.

ACF expects to conduct biennial training and technical assistance meetings in the 2nd and 4th years of the project period. The Project Director and Project Manager (i.e., both if neither is at least 90 percent FTE), and up to three additional key staff (as determined by ACF) must attend the biennial meetings.

Throughout the 5-year project period, ACF may also host regional events, including roundtables, learning academies, summits, or other meetings to provide peer-focused technical assistance and training. The Project Director and Project Manager (i.e., both if neither is at 90 percent FTE), and up to two additional key staff (as determined by ACF) must attend the

regional events.

### **Planning Period**

Grantee organizations will be given up to 6 months for intensive and comprehensive planning. Planning activities include, but are not limited to:

- Updating and refining the needs assessment;
- Finalizing MOUs, interagency and/or third-party agreements;
- Undertaking procurement activities;
- Hiring and training staff;
- Obtaining security clearances for project staff to work with correctional facilities (where applicable);
- Training staff and setting up operations for collection of Information, Family Outcomes, Reporting, and Management (nFORM) performance measurement data; and
- Refining the continuous quality improvement (CQI) plan and project flow chart ( that is, a pictorial representation of the sequence of a program from start to finish).

**Note:** For applicants that are required or that choose to conduct a local evaluation, post-award review and approval of local evaluation proposals will occur during the planning period. Applicants must not begin conducting any evaluation without having received post-award approval of their local evaluation plans from OFA. Once approved, applicants may use the remaining planning period to refine the local evaluation plans and obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (per 45 CFR 46.118; See also *Section IV.2., The Project Description, Funded Activities Evaluation Plan*), as applicable (to be conducted in coordination with a local evaluator).

All grantee organizations may pilot their program models, or portions of their program models, during the planning period, as early as January 2, 2021, if they meet specific readiness criteria. These criteria will be issued by OFA post award, and in accordance with this FOA. Grantees must receive direct post award approval from OFA before beginning pilot programs. (Participants served in a pilot during the planning period will not count towards year 1 program participation targets or be recorded in nFORM.)

Additionally, during the planning period, grantee organizations will develop a comprehensive implementation plan, per guidelines to be issued by OFA post-award, and in accordance with this FOA. The grantee organization must receive post award approval for their implementation plans prior to full implementation.

### **POST-AWARD PERFORMANCE MEASURES, CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS**

ACF is continuing to implement a learning agenda to increase understanding of what works and why in RF programming. The learning agenda activities will also provide valuable information to grantees on performance and outcomes that will facilitate continuous quality improvement. Activities include performance measure collection/reporting, continuous quality improvement efforts, and local and federal evaluations for a subset of (not all) grantees.

### **Performance Measure Data**

Grantees are required to collect, store, and report data on standardized performance measures in

a management information system designed specifically for this purpose: the Information, Family Outcomes, Reporting, and Management (nFORM) system. These measures fall in three overall areas: (1) services provided through the grant; (2) client characteristics and outcomes; and (3) program operations, to provide information on what the grantees are doing and who they are serving. Standardized measures and reporting across grantees will enable ACF to track programming outputs and outcomes across projects to inform current and future program design, operation, and oversight. Cross-site analyses will further describe programming and outcomes across the grant program. To view measures, please visit <https://www.famlecross-site.com/nForm/Contact> and scroll down to the links at "Surveys."

Please see further information describing the nFORM system and grantee expectations in *Appendix, Section E: nFORM - Further Detail*.

Through its contractors, ACF will provide technical assistance to grantees on using nFORM. Further information on nFORM may be found at <https://www.famlecross-site.com/nForm/Contact>.

*Note: Consistent with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, under this FOIA, OFA will not conduct or sponsor - and a person is not required to respond to - a collection of information covered by such Act, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. OFA has received approval of its performance measures and the "Information, Family Outcome, Reporting, and Management system," or, simply, "nFORM" Management Information System through the OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), OMB Control No.: 0970-0460. This expires on September 30, 2021. Prior to expiration, a new clearance will be sought.*

### **Continuous Quality Improvement**

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is the process of identifying, describing, and analyzing program strengths and problems, followed by testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). The activities described in the prior sections (e.g., data collection through nFORM) will provide valuable data that can facilitate CQI activities. In addition, ACF has created templates that grantees may use to develop a plan for, and carry out, CQI activities, which will be supplemented by technical assistance. Grantees will be expected to use the range of data and CQI resources available, including but not limited to, nFORM data and associated tip sheets, group-based and individual CQI technical assistance provided by ACF through its contractors, CQI tip sheets, and CQI templates to carry out effective and informative CQI activities.

Grantees must develop, implement, and regularly update a CQI plan that uses these data and resources to improve program performance and identify areas for further analysis and improvement. The initial plan must be developed within three months of grant award, and ACF will review the plan for approval. Grantees are also expected to show evidence of ongoing execution of the plan, and updates and refinements to the plan.

In addition to access to data tools and resources, successful CQI efforts should be guided by the program's mission, theory of change, and logic model; CQI efforts should also, as appropriate, be linked to certain evaluation activities and informed by consultations with relevant community and program stakeholders. CQI requires: organizational and leadership buy-in and support; capacity to collect, review, and use quality data to identify areas for potential

improvement; and commitment to conduct CQI processes to test potential changes and monitor data to assess improvement or further changes that may be needed.

### **Local Evaluations**

As another component of ACF's learning agenda, some grantees will be required to conduct grantee-specific evaluations, called "local evaluations," to answer one or more grantee-specific research questions; this is dependent on funding level. The purpose of these evaluations is to learn from projects in order to improve future programming. ACF is interested in supporting high-quality, well-designed descriptive and impact evaluations from which projects will learn and expand the evidence base, as well as help ACF learn more about how best to improve services and outcomes for program clients. Broadly, descriptive evaluations are those that generate knowledge or understanding about the programs and populations served. Impact evaluations generate evidence of efficacy or effectiveness of a program by providing estimates of the program's ability to achieve its intended outcomes. Impact evaluations include a comparison group that is randomly assigned or assigned using a quasi-experimental design (i.e., a design that approximates the conditions of random assignment using statistical or other methods).

- Grantees funded from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 per year must propose and conduct local evaluations to answer one or more grantee-specific research questions, pending post-award review and approval. Grantees funded at this level must propose a rigorous impact evaluation (i.e., randomized-controlled trial (RCT) or high-quality quasi-experimental design (QED) study) for post-award review and approval. Those requesting funding at this level must allocate at least 15 percent, but no more than 20 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation.
- Grantees funded from \$750,000 to \$999,999 per year may choose to propose and conduct either a descriptive or impact local evaluation to answer one or more grantee-specific research questions, pending post-award review and approval. Those proposing an impact local evaluation must allocate at least 15 percent, but no more than 20 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation. Those proposing a descriptive local evaluation must allocate at least 5 percent, but no more than 10 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation.
- Grantees funded from \$500,000 to \$749,999 per year may choose to propose and conduct a descriptive local evaluation to answer one or more grantee-specific research questions, pending post-award review and approval. Those who are approved to conduct a local evaluation must allocate at least 5 percent but no more than 10 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation.

The proposed research questions must relate to the grantee's specific programming approach and must contribute to expanding the evidence base. The following are examples of priority topic areas for research investigation:

- *Recruitment and program participation* - whether certain kinds of recruitment activities are linked to better participation (more engagement in the program's services);



- *Program content* - whether certain program components or program structures, choice of curricula, content of curricula, and/or fit of curricula to target populations are linked to better outcomes for participants;
- *Program implementation* – whether variations in the intensity and duration of programming, modifications to increase cultural competency, training, background/demographics, experience, and qualifications of facilitators are linked to better outcomes for participants;
- *Program supports* - whether transportation, child care during classes or sessions, employment-related clothing or tools (in addition to core services), or partnerships with other community organizations and resources are linked to better outcomes for participants; or
- *Overall program outcomes* – whether the overall program is associated with outcomes in the following areas for adult fathers: healthy marriage for married couples, or healthy relationships for co-parents or romantic partners; father development and well-being; economic stability; parenting skills and father involvement; and child well-being.

For the purpose of this FOA, descriptive evaluations on the topic areas listed would not include a comparison group. For example, a descriptive evaluation could describe outcomes for fathers who participate in a RF program using a pre-post design that would measure outcomes before participating in the program and after participating in the program. Impact evaluations on the topic areas listed above must include a comparison group created by either using random assignment, or using a quasi-experimental research design that adequately addresses the potential bias of non-random assignment. For example, an impact evaluation could randomly assign fathers to participate in an RF program, or to participate in a RF program plus supplemental workshops, and then analyze whether the groups have different outcomes.

Local evaluations must incorporate input from partner agencies, community partners, and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., program participants), both in the development of local evaluation plans and throughout their execution.

Local evaluations must be designed to help inform future programming and expand the evidence base. Analyses of data must clearly support final reported results, and descriptions of the results must clearly communicate the implications of the study to others in the field.

Local evaluations must be conducted by an independent evaluator, referred to as the “local evaluator.” Local evaluators may be universities, research organizations, evaluation consultants, or other institutions with experience in conducting rigorous evaluations. Safeguards must be in place to ensure true independence between the program model being evaluated and the evaluator. For example, if the grantee is a university, then the implementing and evaluating groups must hail from completely different schools within the university. Local evaluators must commit substantial time to the local evaluation; at ACF direction, grantees must require increased time commitment from the local evaluator. Grantees must have signed letters of agreement with their local evaluators, to be submitted with their applications; the letter must include the local evaluator's understanding of the willingness to commit both time and effort needed to meet the needs of the evaluation, and to adjust or increase this time and effort when determined by the grantee or ACF. To change the local evaluator, grantees must request the

change in writing to ACF, and must receive approval in advance.

Grantees' local evaluation plans, included in their applications, must address a number of factors, including:

- Research questions;
- Research design, including:
  - an appropriate design (that is, grantees that propose to conduct descriptive evaluations must use data and analysis to describe and explain the importance/implications of the program model's processes and/or the program's population; grantees that propose to conduct impact evaluations must plan to recruit a comparison group that does not receive the services of interest and that is comparable at baseline (i.e., before a program begins) to those who participate in the service program);
  - recruitment of participants;
  - planned sample size, including the size of each condition, as well as the timing of sample enrollment (that is, when sample enrollment will begin and end, and the monthly and annual sample enrollment targets);
  - measures (including any measures in addition to the required performance measures);
  - data collection methods; and
  - analyses methods to be used.
- Research implementation, that is, a work plan for executing the proposed research design.

If multiple waves of data collection will be conducted, plans must describe the timing of those waves, and how respondents will be tracked over time for later data collection. For impact evaluations, plans must clearly differentiate the programming for which each group (program/control/comparison) will be eligible, and specify how the groups will be formed or selected.

Grantees who propose to conduct local evaluations will be required to submit, for post-award approval, analysis plans that adhere to standards that ACF will distribute (See *Appendix, Section F: Local Evaluation Plan Development and Approval* for information on the process for local evaluation planning and approval, and *Section G: Standards for Local Evaluation Plans* for the standards for local evaluation plans).

During the planning period or afterwards, grantees or their local evaluators will be required to obtain a Federal-wide Assurance **per guidance from the federal Office of Human Research Protection** (for more information, see <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/register-irbs-and-obtain-fwass/fwas/fwa-protection-of-human-subject/index.html>) and submit their research projects to an IRB (per 45 CFR 46.118; See also *Section IV.2, The Project Description, Funded Activities Evaluation Plan*). Given this grant program's requirement for collecting and reporting data on performance measures and CQI, many grantees will either need IRB approval for collecting data or a waiver from an IRB stating that such approval is not needed. All grantees conducting local evaluations will need IRB approval for collecting data or a waiver from an IRB stating that such approval is not needed. Often grantee organizations use the IRBs of their local evaluators,

partner universities, or evaluation organizations to provide oversight. IRBs provide guidance regarding participant privacy and rights. General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/>. Applicants also may contact the Office for Human Research Protections by email at [ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov](mailto:ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov), or by phone at (240) 453-6900.

To promote transparency per [ACF's evaluation policy](#), ACF encourages grantees to pre-register studies. Examples of registries include:

- ClinicalTrials.gov: <https://clinicaltrials.gov/>
- American Economic Association: <https://www.socialscienceregistry.org/>
- Open Science Framework: <https://osf.io/>
- IES What Works Clearinghouse: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>
- Experiments in Governance and Politics (EGAP) Registry - <http://egap.org/content/registration>
- The Research Registry - <http://www.researchregistry.com/>

Please note that providing a link to a non-Federal website in this FOA does not constitute an endorsement by ACF or any of its employees of the sponsors of the site or the information or products presented on the site.

**NOTE:** *Consistent with the PRA of 1995, ( 44 U.S.C.§§ 3501-3521), under this FOA, ACF will not conduct or sponsor - and a person is not required to respond to - a collection of information covered by such Act, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. While local evaluations are designed and implemented by the grantee, and therefore not subject to PRA, if ACF requests specific information from grantees, ACF will obtain OMB approval under the PRA prior to requesting a collection of information from nine or more individuals or entities.*

### **Resources and Consultation**

In implementing performance measures, continuous quality improvement, and local evaluation plans, grantees are strongly encouraged to attend webinars that will be offered during the grant period, and to consult and coordinate with the proposed local evaluator, partner agencies, and community partners.

Technical assistance on aspects of performance measures, continuous quality improvement, and local evaluation will be provided to grantees by ACF contractors.

### **Federal Evaluation**

In addition to local evaluations, the federal government is sponsoring federally-led evaluations and other research efforts. The federal evaluations will be conducted by independent contractors with experience mounting small- and large-scale demonstrations, descriptive and impact evaluations, and a range of other research studies. For example, ACF has initiated two major federal evaluations that will partner with grantees to use rapid learning approaches to strengthen grantees' program implementation: the Strengthening the Implementation of Marriage and Relationship Programs (SIMR) project, and the Strengthening the Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs (SIRF) project. SIMR and SIRF will work with healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood grantees, respectively, to identify implementation challenges and test promising solutions using data-driven approaches. Both SIMR and SIRF

share the overall goals of improving participant recruitment, retention, and engagement in services and better preparing projects for participation in future impact studies.

In the event that a grantee who proposed a local evaluation is selected for a federally-led evaluation or research effort, the federal government may incorporate the local evaluation into, or replace the local evaluation with the federally-led evaluation. In all cases, grantees will still be required to collect performance measures and conduct CQI activities.

The federal evaluations may provide additional funds to grantees to support programming and full participation in evaluation activities— for example, to support enhancements to services or support any necessary staff – as well as technical assistance. Funds may be provided per a separate MOU between the grantee organization and the federal contractor.

**As a condition of acceptance of an award under this FOA, all grantees that are asked to participate in a federally led research and/or evaluation effort are required to engage fully and adhere to all research and evaluation protocols established by ACF to be carried out by its designee contractors.**

(Please see *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description* for the application requirements related to this FOA.)

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

ACF expects to host a webinar series on information contained in this FOA. Applicants may review additional resources listed in *Section VIII. Other Information, Reference Websites, Additional Resources*.

Applicants may review program-specific terminology listed in *Appendix, Glossary*.

## **II. Federal Award Information**

Funding Instrument Type:	Grant
Estimated Total Funding:	\$60,061,000
Expected Number of Awards:	68
Award Ceiling:	\$1,500,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	\$500,000 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	\$883,000 Per Budget Period
Anticipated Project Start Date:	09/30/2020

### **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.

Grants under this FOA will receive 1 year of funding based on currently available funds. ACF intends to continue successful projects through non-competitive continuation applications for a 5-year period, subject to the appropriation of additional funds not contained in the current authorizing legislation.

#### **Non-competitive Continuation**

Non-competitive continuation grants will be offered for each of years 2 through 5 of the project period. Funding levels for years 2 through 5 will not exceed the amount awarded in year 1 of the project. Continuation funding will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress, and a determination that continued funding is in the best interest of the federal government.

#### **Award Floor Disqualification**

Applications with funding requests that fall below the *Award Floor* on the amount of the individual awards will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for competitive review or funding under this announcement. (See also *Section III.3. Other, Award Floor Disqualification.*)

#### **Local Evaluation Costs**

- Applicants requesting funding from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 must propose and conduct a rigorous impact evaluation for post-award review and approval, and must allocate at least 15 percent, but no more than 20 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation.
- Applicants requesting funding from \$750,000 to \$999,999 per year may choose to propose and conduct either a descriptive or impact local evaluation for post-award review and approval. Those proposing an impact local evaluation must allocate at least 15 percent, but no more than 20 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation. Those proposing a descriptive local evaluation must allocate at least 5 percent, but no more than 10 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation.
- Applicants requesting funding from \$500,000 to \$749,999 per year may choose to propose and conduct a descriptive local evaluation for post-award review and approval, and must allocate at least 5 percent, but no more than 10 percent of their total annual

funding for evaluation.

(See also *Section I. Program Description, Description, Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements* for more information.)

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

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **III.1. Eligible Applicants**

##### **Eligible Organization Types**

Eligible applicants under this FOA are public governmental agencies or public and nonprofit community entities. Public governmental agencies are states, territories, Native American tribes and tribal organizations (including state, territorial, and tribal institutions of higher education). Public and nonprofit community entities also include religious organizations and public and private *nonprofit* institutions of higher education.

##### **Definition of Eligibility as a Public Institution of Higher Education**

For purposes of eligibility under this FOA, “public institutions of higher education” applying as states, territories, or tribes are defined as 2-year community colleges or 4-year colleges or universities that (1) are established by a state, territorial, or tribal government authority; (2) primarily receive funding from state appropriations (and/or local tax revenue in the case of community colleges); and (3) are legally authorized within a state to provide a program of education beyond secondary education.

##### **Definition of Eligibility as a Public or Private Nonprofit Community Entity (including private non-profit institutions of higher education)**

Also under this FOA, an applicant applying as a “nonprofit community entity” is defined as a public or private nonprofit organization that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and is engaged in meeting human, educational, child-welfare, family well-being, personal growth and improvement, social welfare, or economic growth and mobility needs for the disadvantaged. A public or private institution of higher education may choose to apply as a community entity and may be eligible to the extent that it can demonstrate that it is a “nonprofit community entity.” A public or private nonprofit organization, including institutions of higher education, may demonstrate that it is “representative of a community (or a significant segment)” by involving members of the community (e.g., elected public officials, private sector representatives, and low-income residents) in assessing and addressing local needs.

##### **Accreditation for Institutions of Higher Education**

Further, any public institution of higher education— or any public or private *non-profit* institution of higher education applying as a “nonprofit community entity” on the basis that it is meeting educational needs for the disadvantaged—must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Alternatively, it must have been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association (full accreditation must be attained by end

of the planning period described in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Requirements, Planning Period*).

See also *Section IV.2. Additional Eligibility Documentation* for information on documentation required to support eligibility as a public institution of higher education and public and private nonprofit community entity.

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 a recipient or subrecipient and are accepted by ACF. Non-federal cost sharing will be included in the approved project budget so that the recipient will be held accountable for proposed non-federal cost-sharing funds as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to provide voluntary cost sharing of non-federal resources that have been accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that have been shown as part of the approved project budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

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

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

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

### **OFA Disqualification Factors**

#### *Limit on the Number of Application Submissions*

An applicant organization may submit only one application in response to this announcement. ACF will accept only the last, on-time application submitted for the competitive review.

#### *Award Floor Disqualification*

Applications with funding requests that fall below the *Award Floor* on the amount of the individual awards will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for competitive review or funding under this announcement (see also *Section II. Federal Award Information, Additional Information on Awards*).

#### *Project Design Disqualification (Participant Age)*

Applications must be designed to target adult fathers (age 18 and older). Projects that are designed to include minors (ages 17 and younger) will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for competitive review or 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**

Grant Operations Center  
HHS-2020-ACF-OFA-ZJ-1846  
1401 Mercantile Lane  
Suite 401  
Largo, MD 20774  
Phone: (855) 776-3895  
Email: [OFATech@f2.solutions.com](mailto:OFATech@f2.solutions.com)

### **Electronic Application Submission:**

The electronic application submission package is available in the FOA's listing at

[www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov).

### **Applications in Paper Format:**

For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" available in the FOA's Grants.gov Synopsis under the Package tab at [www.Grants.gov](http://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](http://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](http://www.gsa.gov/fedrelay).

## **IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission**

### **FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS**

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

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

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

#### **Accepted Application Format**

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

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

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

#### **PAGE LIMITATIONS AND CONTENT FOR ALL SUBMISSION FORMATS:**

In accordance with the two-file requirement for this FOA, applications must be submitted in two files and must not exceed a combined total of 100 pages.

The first file must be titled Project Description and must include the following items:

- Table of Contents
- One page Project Summary/Abstract (must include a Project Design Statement confirming that the project is designed for adult fathers ages 18 and older)
- Additional Eligibility Information
- Project Description
  - Need for Assistance
  - Outcomes Expected
  - Approach

- Program Participation Targets, Including Program Model, Target Population, and Age Range for which the project is designed
- Project Timetable and Milestones
- Legal Status of the Applicant Entity
- Logic Model
- Organizational Capacity
- Plan for Oversight of Federal Award of Funds
- Geographic Location
- Line-item budget and budget justification, including line-items and justification for performance measure data, local evaluation (if proposed/expected), and staffing levels for key staff
- Protection of Sensitive and Confidential Information

The second file must be titled Appendices and must include the following items:

- Program Performance Evaluation Plan
- Funded Activities Evaluation Plan
- Project Sustainability Plan
- Third-Party Agreements and/or MOUs
- Organizational Capacity: Resumes (of key staff, including curriculum vitae for local evaluator, and organizational charts)
- Signed Letter of Agreement with a local evaluator
- Indirect Cost Rate Letter (if applicable)
- Organizational Capacity: Job Descriptions (if key staff not yet hired)
- **Executed** Leases, draft leases, unsigned leases, or a letter of intent for each proposed property(ies). **Note:** The lease documentation **will not** count towards the page limitation.

## **ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

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

Electronic applications will only be accepted via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). **ACF will not accept applications submitted via email or via facsimile.**

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

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

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

### **Adherence to the Two-File Requirement**

No more than two files will be accepted for the review. Applications with additional files will

be amended and files will be removed from the review. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

### **Application Upload Requirements**

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

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

Applicants must ensure that the version of Adobe Acrobat Reader they are using is compatible with Grants.gov. To verify Adobe software compatibility please go to Grants.gov and click on "Applicants" at the top bar menu and select "Adobe Software Compatibility", which is listed under "Applicant Resources." The Adobe verification process allows applicants to test their version of the software by opening a test Workspace PDF form. Grants.gov also includes guidance on how to download a supported version of Adobe, as well as troubleshooting instructions for use, if an applicant is unable to open the test form.

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

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

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

### **Naming Application Submission Files**

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

### **Use only file formats supported by ACF**

It is critical that applicants submit applications using only the supported file formats listed here. While ACF supports all of the following file formats, **we strongly recommend that the two application submission files (Project Description and Appendices) are uploaded as PDF**

**documents in order to comply with the two file upload limitation.** Documents in file formats that are not supported by ACF will be removed from the application and will not be used in the competitive review. This may make the application incomplete and ACF will not make any awards based on an incomplete application.

**ACF supports the following file formats:**

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

**Do Not Encrypt or Password-Protect the Electronic Application Files**

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

**FORMATTING FOR PAPER APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS:**

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

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If it is not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit the SF-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
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.
Certification Regarding Lobbying	Submission required of all applicants with the	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.



(Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	application package. If it is not submitted with the application package, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Submission of the required information and forms is due with the application package by the due date listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.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.	Form is available at <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html</a> .  General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/</a> . Applicants may also contact OHRP by email ( <a href="mailto:ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov">ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov</a> ) or by phone (240-453-6900).
Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Required of all applicants. To obtain a DUNS number, go to <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a> .  Active registration at the Systems Award Management (SAM) website must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.  SAM registration is available at <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a> .	See <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> for more information.
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.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.

## **Mandatory Grant Disclosure**

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

Disclosures must be sent in writing to:

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

### **And to:**

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

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

**Email:** [MandatoryGranteeDisclosures@oig.hhs.gov](mailto: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**

#### **General Expectations and Instructions**

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

The Project Description must be clear, concise, and complete. ACF is particularly interested in Project Descriptions that convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project

Descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting documents designated as required must be included in the Appendix of the FOA.

### **Table of Contents**

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

### **Project Summary**

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

Please place the following at the top of the Project Summary:

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

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

### **Geographic Location**

Describe the precise physical 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 application submission.

### **Additional Eligibility Documentation**

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

### **Public Institutions of Higher Education**

Public institutions of higher education (including community colleges) that apply as a public governmental agency (e.g., states, territories, or tribal entities) must submit a written statement or documentation that affirms that the applicant:

- Is established by a state, territorial, or tribal government authority;
- Primarily receives funding through state, territorial, or tribal appropriation;
- Is legally authorized by the state, territory, or tribal authority to provide post-secondary education;
- Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree, or a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor's degree (e.g., associate's degree), or admission to a graduate or professional degree program; and
- Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or that it has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association.

Applicants with pre-accreditation status must submit written affirmation or documentation that full accreditation will be attained by the end of the planning period described in this FOA.

### **Public and Private Nonprofit Community Entities (including Public or Private Non-Profit Institutions of Higher Education)**

Any applicants that are applying as public or private nonprofit community entities must submit a written statement or documentation that the applicant:

- Is a nonprofit community entity or organization and is recognized as such by the state (See 45 CFR 87.1(h)(1)-(4));
- Is representative of a community, or a significant segment of a community, by involving members of the community (e.g., elected public officials, private sector representatives, or low-income residents) in assessing and addressing local needs; and
- Is engaged in meeting human, educational, child-welfare, family well-being, personal growth and improvement, social welfare, or economic growth and mobility needs for the disadvantaged.

Further, an institution of higher education that is applying as a “nonprofit community entity” on

the basis that it is meeting educational needs for the disadvantaged must submit a written statement or documentation that the applicant is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Alternatively, it must have been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association and full accreditation must be attained by end of the planning period described in this FOA.

### **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. Supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned parties, may be included in the Appendix. Any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments should be included or referred to in the endnotes or footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as available.

More specifically, applicants must conduct a systematic needs assessment of their communities, for example, through surveys of community members or through analysis of local demographic data. Applicants must describe the methods of their needs assessment, and must justify how the resulting data are systematic and representative. Applicants must also detail plans to update and refine their needs assessment within the first 90 days of award.

Applicants must also detail plans to update and refine their needs assessment within the first 90 days of award.

### **Approach**

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

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

In addition to the preceding paragraphs, all of the following sections—up to and including the ***Voluntary Participation*** header—are considered as elements of the Approach. (See *Appendix, Section C: Approach Summary Table* for a quick summary reference).

Applicants must design an approach and implementation strategy for each year of the 5-year project period, assuming continued appropriation of funding. The approach must be comprehensive, addressing all of the applicable requirements.

Applicants must identify and propose a program model(s) intended to be implemented. A program model is defined as an intervention that targets and is tailored to one specific population and that incorporates the following: (a) one or more curriculum-based workshops that address all FOA requirements and target outcomes outlined in the FOA; and (b) additional services that must include robust case management and may include additional program-related activities. (See *Section I. Program Description, Participant Eligibility and Target Populations, and Program Participation Targets* later in this section). The applicant's program model must describe an approach that is designed to concurrently implement specified activities from among all three Promoting RF authorized categories: Promoting or Sustaining Marriage; Responsible Parenting; and Economic Stability. The approaches must be designed to help

strengthen, establish, or reestablish—if necessary—relationships between an adult father and his children, or a father and his spouse/partner and their children, soon after the father is accepted into the program. The children of the participating father must be 24 years of age or younger.

Applicants must describe how their proposed projects align with desired programmatic objectives and outcomes identified in *Section I. Program Description, Program Purpose and Scope, Programmatic Objectives and Outcomes*. Examples of outcome measures can be taken from the Entrance and Exit Surveys, which may also found at <https://www.famlecross-site.com/nForm/Contact> (scroll down to the links listed at "Surveys"). Additionally, the applicant's approach must include all of the factors identified in *Section I. Program Description, Program Purpose and Scope, Overall Program Design*.

Applicants must describe the extent to which the proposed approaches (for each component of their program model) are based on some evidence of effectiveness.

In describing their approach, applicants may use performance data or data from completed or ongoing evaluations. Former HMRF grantees may also use performance and evaluation data collected under their previous HMRF grants.

Applicants must describe any design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and/or community involvement in the project.

Using activities from among those specified under the three broad RF categories of the authorizing legislation (Promoting or Sustaining Healthy Marriage; Responsible Parenting; and Economic Stability), the applicant's proposals must address the following:

#### ***Promoting or Sustaining Healthy Marriage***

All applicants must identify an evidence-based or evidence-informed curriculum that is skills based and is designed to promote healthy marriage (with current or future spouse) and healthy relationships (romantic and interpersonal). These activities must be designed to improve skills among fathers that will enable them to form and sustain healthy relationships with their current or future spouse/partner, improve communication between the child's parents, and strengthen the father's or couple's commitment to the well-being of the child.

Additionally, applicants must describe how they will incorporate the three specified skills-building components listed under *Section I. Program Description, Program Activities, Promoting or Sustaining Healthy Marriage*.

#### ***Responsible Parenting***

All applicants must identify an evidence-based or evidence-informed curriculum that is skills based and is designed to help fathers learn and apply skills that assist them in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as fathers, reinforce parental practices that advance child well-being, and improve father-child relationships. Applicants must describe how all of the critical components specified under *Section I. Program Description, Program Activities, Responsible Parenting* will be incorporated into proposed skills-based parenting education and father-child relationship enhancement activities.

Applicants must describe strategies to reinforce parenting skills and advance child well-being, and enhance father-child and/or family relationships. Strategies must include counseling and/or mentoring (to address factors including the effects of toxic stress, early adverse child experiences, and trauma; impact of father absence; and implications of risky behaviors) and

relationship skill building, including interpersonal communication skills, coping and self-management skills, and building support networks.

### ***Economic Stability***

All applicants must describe an approach to economic stability that incorporates multiple activities. Applicants must describe how their comprehensive economic stability approach will impart marketable job skills that will assist the individual in obtaining permanent employment (where programs include temporary employment services) or sustaining employment and improving skills designed to help fathers move toward economic stability. In developing a comprehensive employment approach, applicants must also include elements that are designed to enhance the employability skills and/or career advancement of participating fathers. Applicants' descriptions must incorporate three or more of the standard components of economic stability service provision listed under *Section I. Program Description, Program Activities, Economic Stability*.

### ***Job-Driven Employment (Optional)***

Applicants that choose to incorporate job-driven employment approaches must describe a strategy(ies) that also clearly and directly align with the four (4) strategies listed in *Section I., Program Description, Program Activities, Economic Stability, Job-Driven Employment*.

Applicants that incorporate job-driven employment approaches must describe how they will incorporate one or more strategies for employment listed in *Section I., Program Description, Program Activities, Economic Stability, Job-Driven Employment*.

Applicants must also include a description of post-employment supports and follow-up case management activities to help participants gain and retain employment as they move toward economic self-sufficiency.

Finally, all applicants must clearly describe how they will ensure that economic stability and job-driven employment services are not stand-alone activities and that eligible participants engaged in those activities will remain enrolled in other RF promotion activities, including curriculum-based marriage and relationship education workshops, skills-based responsible parenting; and follow-up, case management, or support services throughout the duration of the program.

For applicants working with partner organizations for economic stability and job-driven employment activities, the proposal must include a detailed, signed MOU or other third-party agreement with each partner that outlines the specific roles and responsibilities of partnering organizations.

### ***Curricula***

All applicants must propose and include a description of an evidence-based or evidence-informed curriculum(a) that clearly and directly aligns with all the provisions listed under *Section I Program Description, Program Purpose and Scope, Programmatic Objectives, and Outcomes and Program Activities, Curricula*. All applicants must also identify other skills-based curriculum(a) they will use, for example, for parenting education, or where use of a curriculum is appropriate for economic stability or for financial planning activities.

Further, applicants must include a justification for their selection of curriculum, describe how it aligns with the target population that they propose to serve, and describe how it aligns with their

overall program model. The applicant must describe a reasonable rationale and/or research base for the program model(s) and curriculum(a) proposed, including a rationale for why the proposed program model(s), chosen curriculum(a), and the method of implementation would create positive change.

Where curriculum adaptations are proposed, applicants must do the following: (a) describe any proposed adaptations from the original curricula (e.g., practice exercises framed in life experiences of lower-income individuals and families; activities tailored to address low education levels; added content on complex family relationships; or modifications to increase relevance for different ethnic/racial population); (b) provide a rationale for the adaptations; and (c) provide an explicit written approval from the curriculum developer for the adaptation with your application, or state that written approval will be sought post-award.

### ***Program Participation Targets***

Applicants must clearly describe their target population, including demographic and geographic information (as applicable). For example, an applicant may propose to target service provision to community fathers in specific zip codes, married fathers and fathers who are interested in marriage, or fathers reentering from specific correctional facilities.

Applicants must describe how they will recruit and retain all participants in primary workshops. Applicants must propose and describe a sufficiently intensive primary workshop, or set of workshops together (if multiple workshops are proposed to be implemented with all participants), that align with all of the specifications described in *Section I. Program Description, Program Activities, Curricula*.

Applicants must detail their strategies for engaging participants so that they complete the program. **Program completion is defined as participation in at least 90 percent of primary workshops.** Applicants must also describe strategies to engage participants in make-up sessions, in order to provide 90 percent of programming.

Applicants must identify their program participation targets for each full project year (i.e., Years 2-5) that align with the funding levels being requested. The applicant must submit a description of its proposed program participation targets that clearly and unambiguously align with their proposed funding range as specified in *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectations, Program Participation Targets*, including robust justification for project designs that exceed specified maximum program participation targets.

In addition, for project Year 1, which includes a 6-month planning period, applicants **must** describe how they will serve one-half (50 percent) of the clients, per their selected funding level.

Applicants must provide a table that includes, at a minimum, year-by-year numbers of clients who enroll, who attend at least one primary workshop, who attend at least 50 percent of primary workshops, who attend at least 90 percent of primary workshops, and who attend 100 percent of primary workshops. For programs serving couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, this table should count the number of couples/co-parents/parenting pairs where both members enroll (as well as the number of couples/co-parents/parenting pairs who attend at least one class, 50 percent of primary workshops, 90 percent of primary workshops, and 100 percent of primary workshops), not the number of individuals. (See *Section I. Program Description, Program Activities, Responsible Parenting* for definitions of "couples, co-parents, and parenting pairs".)



(See *Appendix, Section B: Program Participation Targets - Table Shell* for a sample table shell for detailing program participation targets.) In completing the table, applicants must note that the number of clients in the 90 percent primary workshop completion column **must not be less than** the minimum client service provision level based on the funding level requested. For example, if in Year 2 an applicant proposes to serve 300 clients, then it must set 300 clients as the number of clients who attend at least 90 percent of primary workshops. (This number of clients must be equal to or greater than the minimum noted above, per funding level.) The applicant must then calculate how many clients must enroll, must attend at least one workshop, and must attend at least 50 percent of primary workshops, in order to have 300 clients who attend at least 90 percent of primary workshops (it must also calculate the number of clients who will attend 100 percent of primary workshops). Again, under this scenario, this organization will be expected to engage 300 clients who attend at least 90 percent of primary workshops.

Applicants proposing more than one program model must submit a separate table for each program model. In the title, the applicant must specify the unique name of the program model and the population to be served.

**Applicants proposing more than one program model must provide a justification of sufficient capacity to adequately implement each model, meet program participation targets, and achieve outcomes.**

Applicants must also describe plans to track case management services.

### ***Large Scope Services***

Applicants requesting funding from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 must describe how the large scope of services proposed will be high impact, defined as services impacting a high number of participants or providing high intensity services for participants:

- Applicants who propose to both enroll and serve large numbers of clients must specify the number of clients expected to be served and provide justification for the targeted number chosen, including a cost per client summary and a summary explaining how the applicant can feasibly recruit the expected numbers from the targeted geographic location over the course of the 5-year grant. (See *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectation, Program Participation Targets* for more information on minimum and maximum client program participation targets.)
- Applicants who propose to provide high intensity services must describe the full scope of services planned for each client, including a cost per client summary. Applicants must specify how the intensive services will be provided, that is, either by the applicant organization itself or through services provided by a combination of the organization itself and other organizations with which the applicant is partnering.

As discussed in *Section I. Program Description, Subawards*, applicants proposing to delegate portions of service provision to other entities via subawards must describe how they will ensure that they remain substantially involved over the life of the project and how they will ensure that contracted service provision is not effectively a pass-through of grant funds, which is prohibited under this FOA.

Applicants who wish to both serve large numbers of clients and provide high intensity services

must provide significant justification that includes, among other things, supportive documentation of the need for large scope services within the community, and the capacity to provide intensive services and to serve large numbers of participants.

Applicants must clearly detail both the need for and expected effects of their large scope services on their communities. Applicants must highlight, at a minimum, higher expected impacts on key outcomes in their proposed program model. (See *Section I. Program Description, Program Purpose and Scope, Programmatic Objectives and Outcomes.*)

Applicants must highlight efficiencies in their approach, that is, that the resources available under this FOA will be leveraged in order to make services higher impact.

The applicant's proposed service provision targets must align with those specified in *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectations, Program Participation Targets.*

### ***Intake, Enrollment, and Assessment of Needs***

Applicants must describe a thorough intake and enrollment process that includes baseline assessments designed to capture a potential individual participant's needs, skills, and interests as well as a couple's/pair of co-parents'/parenting pair's needs, skills, and interests, where appropriate. The description must specifically and directly align with all of the provisions of *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectations, Addressing Clients Needs and Working with Partners, Intake, Enrollment, and Assessment of Needs*, including describing the degree to which the listed components will be incorporated into the intake and enrollment process.

### ***Case Management***

Applicants must include a clear, comprehensive description of its case management strategies for individual participants (as well as for couples/pairs of co-parenting/parenting pairs) that specifically and directly align with the provisions in *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectations, Addressing Clients Needs and Working with Partners, Case Management*, including those specifically related to incarcerated or formerly incarcerated fathers as applicable.

### ***Grant-Funded Participation Supports***

Applicants must describe a plan for providing program support services funded under this grant designed to help reduce barriers to participation and improve program recruitment, retention and outcomes. Services may include non-therapeutic or peer counseling, coaching, mentoring, transportation assistance, childcare, and other services, as applicable.

### ***Partnerships***

Applicants must describe any federal, state, local, tribal, and/or community-based collaboration and partnership efforts designed to meet the needs of program participants effectively.

Applicants must specify, for each partner, whether it is (a) a source for recruitment of program participants; (b) an implementer of programming itself; and/or (c) a referral agency for services (that are needed but not available through the program, that is, an agency to which the program may refer participants for additional services).

Applicants must include a signed performance-based MOU between the applicant and each partner agency in accordance with *Third-Party Agreements* later in this section. A statement regarding the applicant and all partner agencies' intent to enter into an agreement post-award

can be submitted in lieu of an MOU or other third-party agreement, if neither has been entered into by the time the application is submitted. A statement of intent must provide a timeline for completion of an MOU or other third-party agreement.

For projects that include services to incarcerated and reentering fathers, applicants must document partnerships (e.g., MOUs or other third-party agreements described previously) with state, county, and local criminal justice agencies (such as, probation and parole, prisons, jails, and halfway houses). Applicants must demonstrate how they will ensure access to potential participants prior to their release from confinement and for referrals of potential participants who have been recently released into the community. Applicants must show evidence of, or describe how they will gain, access to prisons, jails, halfway houses, and other similar institutions to recruit and serve participants prior to their release. Applicants must describe their plan to partner with probation and parole to support post-release case management services, if applicable.

### ***Domestic Violence Requirement***

Applicants must describe how the programs or activities in the application will address, as appropriate, issues of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and dating violence.

Applicants must also include evidence of consultation with experts in domestic violence or relevant community domestic violence coalitions in developing the proposed programs and activities.

Evidence of consultation also may be demonstrated in the same manner as evidence of other partnership relationships (e.g., MOUs or other third-party agreements described previously), including a discussion of benchmarks, timelines, oversight and monitoring, and other factors, as applicable. The applicant must demonstrate that they have, or will have, collaborative partnerships with providers of domestic violence services that will provide support throughout the duration of the program. (See *Third-Party Agreements* later in this section for more information.)

### ***Child Maltreatment***

Applicants must describe how they will ensure staff familiarity with their state's reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect, and how they will provide training and refresher training on child abuse and neglect. Applicants must describe the strategies they will use to help prevent, detect, and respond to child maltreatment among program participants. Applicants must describe how their programs will include instruction for participants on child maltreatment prevention throughout the child lifespan.

### ***Voluntary Participation***

Applicants must clearly describe how they will ensure that participation in programs is voluntary and how they will inform potential participants that their involvement is voluntary.

### **Project Timeline and Milestones**

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

### **Organizational Capacity**

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

- Organizational charts;
- Resumes;
- Curricula Vitae (CV);
- Financial statements adhering to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), if available, submit statements for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years (this requirement does not apply to start-up organizations);
- Audit reports or statements from Certified Public Accountants/Licensed Public Accountants, if available, submit statements for up to the two most recently completed fiscal years (this requirement does not apply to start-up organizations);
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's fiscal control and accountability procedures;
- Evidence that the applicant organization, and any partnering organizations, have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs similar to that offered under this announcement;
- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.
- Copy or description of the applicant organization's personnel policies;
- Information on compliance with federal/state/local government standards;
- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

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

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

Additionally, applicants must provide the following documentation as evidence of whether their organization – including any partnering organizations or contractors, per their role in the proposed project – have the relevant organizational capacity to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively implementing the proposed project. Applicants must demonstrate commensurate capacity to effectively carry out the proposed project with regard to: program administration; development, implementation, and oversight of programming; and (as appropriate, given the project proposed) evaluation.

## Standards for Demonstrating Organizational Capacity

### *Capacity for Large Scope Services*

Applicants requesting funding from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 must submit evidence of, demonstrated capacity to implement large scope service provisions under this FOA (See also *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectations, Program Participation Targets, and Large Scope Services* in this section.)

Applicants must demonstrate this capacity by:

- (1) Ensuring that the Financial Statements, Audit Reports, or Statements submitted with this application clearly reflect an operational budget of at least \$900,000 per year for the two most recent years;
- (2) Describing the organization's past service provision, and verifying:
  - (a) That the applicant organization has relevant experience and expertise implementing marriage or fatherhood programming for at least four of the last five years including its accomplishments in providing the services. The applicant must describe how the marriage or fatherhood programming previously or currently being provided: is one or more of the eight specified Healthy Marriage promotion activities (or one or more of any element under these activities), per Section 403(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act; or (ii) integrates at least two of the three broad RF promotion categories (or any activities under two or more of these categories), per Section 403(a)(2)(C)(ii)(I)(II) and (III) of the Social Security Act;
  - (b) The target number of programming hours previously or currently provided, and describing how this target meets or exceeds the standard outlined in *Section I. Program Description, Curricula*, (or, in cases where existing programming does not meet the specified standard level, describing how the applicant organization has the capacity to provide services at the standard level specified in *Section I. Program Description, Curricula*); and
  - (c) The applicant organization's success in having enrolled and served sufficient numbers of clients so that at least 100 individuals or 50 couples completed at least 50 percent of primary workshops for each of the two most recent years; and
- (3) Describing or demonstrating the applicant organization's evaluation capacity:
  - (a) **(For applicants requesting \$1,000,000 to \$1,249,000)** The applicant organization must describe its previous success in partnering with an independent evaluation firm or a federally led evaluation team to plan and successfully implement an evaluation (that was either an impact, descriptive, or other design) of its marriage or fatherhood program, or a portion of it. The description must also explain and that the evaluation has not been, or was not, terminated prior to analysis.

In cases where evaluation has not been conducted, applicants must provide a description of: (i) the roles and responsibilities proposed for the application organization and the local evaluator in the proposed evaluation, and why that division of labor will lead to a strong impact evaluation; (ii) the criteria the applicant organization used to assess the capacity of its local evaluator, to determine its ability to carry out its portion of the local evaluation; and (iii) the safeguards the applicant

organization will put in place to ensure the impact evaluation is a fair test of its program, or a portion of it.

(b) **(For applicants requesting \$1,250,000 or more)** The applicant must include a clear, brief description of the applicant's current or most recently conducted (within the past four years) impact evaluation. The description must demonstrate that the applicant and the independent evaluator or federally-led evaluation team planned and successfully implemented an **impact** evaluation of their program model, or a portion of it. The description must also explain and confirm that the impact evaluation was a fair impact test of their program model (or portion of it), and that the impact evaluation has not been or was not terminated (nor shifted from an impact design to a non-impact design, e.g., from impact to descriptive) prior to analysis.

#### Capacity for Moderate Scope Services

Applicants requesting funding from \$750,000 to 999,999 must submit evidence of, demonstrated capacity to implement moderate scope service provision under this FOA (See *Section IV. 2 The Project Description, Approach, Program Participation Targets* for more information.)

Applicants must demonstrate this capacity by:

- (1) Ensuring that the Financial Statements, Audit Reports, or Statements submitted with this application clearly reflect an operational budget of at least \$500,000 per year for the two most recent years;
- (2) Describing the organization's past service provision and verifying:
  - (a) That the applicant organization has experience and expertise implementing marriage or fatherhood programming for at least two of the last three years, including its accomplishments in providing the services. The applicant must describe how the marriage or fatherhood programming previously or currently being provided is, or is similar in content and implementation to, one or more of the eight specified Healthy Marriage promotion activities (or one or more of any element under these activities), per Section 403(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act; or is, or is similar in content and implementation to, at least two of the three broad RF promotion categories (or any activities under two or more of these categories), per Section 403(a)(2)(C)(ii)(I)(II) and (III) of the Social Security Act;
  - (b) The target number of programming hours provided, and how this target meets or exceeds the standard outlined in *Section I Program Description, Curricula* (or, in cases where existing programming does not meet the specified standard level, a description of how the applicant organization has the capacity to provide services at the standard level specified in *Section I. Program Description, Curricula*); and
  - (c) The applicant organization's success in having enrolled and served sufficient numbers of clients so that at least 50 individuals or 25 couples completed at least 50 percent of primary workshops for each of the two most recent years; and
- (3) **(For applicants that propose to conduct an impact evaluation)** Describing the applicant organization's evaluation capacity. The applicant organization must describe its previous success in partnering with an independent evaluation firm or federally led

evaluation team to plan and successfully implement an evaluation (that was either an impact, descriptive, or other design) of its marriage or fatherhood program, or a portion of it. The description must also explain and confirm that the evaluation has not been, or was not, terminated prior to analysis.

In cases where evaluation has not been conducted, applicants must provide a description of the following: (a) the roles and responsibilities proposed for the application organization and the local evaluator in the proposed evaluation, and why that division of labor will lead to a strong impact evaluation; (b) the criteria the applicant organization used to assess the capacity of its local evaluator, to determine its ability to carry out its portion of the local evaluation; and (c) the safeguards the applicant organization will put in place to ensure the impact evaluation is a fair test of its program, or a portion of it.

#### *Capacity for Smaller Scope Services*

Applicants requesting funding from \$500,000 to \$749,999 must submit evidence of, demonstrated capacity to implement moderate scope service provision under this FOA (See also *Section I. Project Description, Program Expectations, Program Participation Targets* for more information.)

Applicants must demonstrate this capacity by:

- (1) Ensuring that the Financial Statements, Audit Reports or Statements submitted with this application clearly reflect an operational budget of **at least \$100,000 per year for the two most recent years**;
- (2) Describing the organization's past service provision, and verifying:
  - (a) **(For smaller scope applicants with previous family-focused human service, marriage and fatherhood service provision)** The applicant organization has:
    - (i) Relevant knowledge, experience or expertise implementing marriage, fatherhood, or other family-focused human service programming and describes its accomplishments in providing the services. The applicant must describe how their past service provision of marriage, fatherhood, or other family-focused human service programming: 1) is, or is similar in content and implementation to, one or more of the eight specified Healthy Marriage promotion activities (or one or more of any element under these activities), per Section 403(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act; or 2) is, or is similar in content and implementation to, one or more of the broad RF promotion categories (or any activity under these categories), per Section 403(a)(2)(C)(ii)(I)(II) and (III) of the Social Security Act; and
    - (ii) The capacity to provide services at the standard outlined in *Section I. Program Description, Curricula* and *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectations, Program Participation Targets* or
  - (b) **(For smaller scope applicants without previous family-focused human service, marriage, or fatherhood service provision only)** A clear and feasible description of how the applicant organization has the current capacity to provide services at the standard level specified in *Section I. Program Description, Curricula* and *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectations, Program Participation Targets*.

### **Additional Instruction on Organizational Capacity**

For each organizational capacity standard, applicants may choose to refer to portions of its application (rather than reproducing).

See *Appendix, Section D: Organizational Capacity Summary Table* for a summary table of the organizational capacity standards included as a quick reference.

### **Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities**

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

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

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

### **Program Performance Evaluation Plan**

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

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

Additionally, applicants must describe expected program performance activities in four key



areas:

(1) *Performance Measures*. Applicants must describe their data collection plan, which aligns with all aspects of performance measure data described in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements*. Additionally, applicants must address their readiness to collect performance measurement data, including staff qualifications and training; specific staff who will be responsible for performance measurement data collection; and any intention to designate staff as data manager(s) or intention to hire a data manager. Applicants must also include with their applications letters of agreement with partner agencies and/or subcontracted evaluators, per the terms described in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements*. In the rare case where applicants and/or partners do not have access to the internet because of systemic lack of connectivity, the proposal must clearly describe potential avenues for collecting performance measurement data through the internet, as well as indicate a willingness to work with ACF to find ways to implement internet data collection through these other avenues.

(2) *Information, Family Outcomes, Reporting, and Management (nFORM) Management Information System (MIS)*. Applicants must describe their plan to implement the nFORM MIS to collect, store, monitor, and report the full set of standardized performance measures.

(3) *Monitoring and Reporting*. Applicants must describe how they will use performance measures, monitor program services, and submit reports using these data. Applicants must include details reflecting readiness and capacity to regularly review performance data, and to aggregate, generate, and submit quarterly performance reports (QPR) and semi-annual Performance Progress Reports (PPRs).

(4) *Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)*. Applicants must describe their approach to implementing CQI activities, including the development and execution of a continuous quality improvement plan, as well as an organizational commitment to data-driven approaches to identify areas for program performance, test potential improvements, and cultivate a culture and environment of learning and improvement (for a template for a CQI plan and other resources, see *Section VIII. Other Information*).

### **Funded Activities Evaluation Plan**

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

***The language in the previous paragraph only refers to applicants proposing local evaluations - not all applicants are required to propose local evaluations.***

More specifically, applicants that are either required or elect to conduct local evaluation must submit a local evaluation plan for post-award review and approval that clearly and directly

aligns with the provisions of *Section I. Program Description, Description, Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements*.

- **Research question(s).** Applicants must precisely state the research question(s) of interest and describe how they relate to the applicants' specific programming approach(es). Applicants must provide justification for the research question(s) by linking them to the applicant's proposed logic model.
- **Research design.** Applicants must propose an appropriate research design, must include a justification for why the proposed research design is best suited to answer the research question(s), and must discuss any potential limitations and biases in the research plan.
- **Research implementation.** Applicants must propose details including staffing (e.g., who will collect data -- staff, partner agencies, and/or local or other subcontracted evaluators); timeline for key activities; and infrastructure and materials (e.g., computers or tablets).
- **Importance for the field.** Applicants must clearly describe how the local evaluation will inform future programming and expand the evidence base, as designed.

Applicants that propose local evaluations must identify the local evaluator or local evaluator organization and include a signed letter of agreement with this local evaluator. Applicants must include curriculum vitae for the leader of research project (i.e., Principal Investigator or Research Project Director). For every organization involved (including local evaluator and partners), applicants must include signed letters of agreement that support the plan and outline roles and responsibilities. All curricula vitae, resumes, and letters of agreement must be submitted in the application's Appendices File. (See *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, Page Limitations and Content for All Submission Formats* for additional information on application submission file placement.)

Applicants that propose local evaluations must identify the Internal Review Board (IRB) they expect to use and must demonstrate a familiarity with that IRB's procedures and review requirements. 45 CFR 46.118 states:

"Certain types of applications for grants ... are submitted to Federal departments or agencies with the knowledge that subjects may be involved within the period of support, but definite plans would not normally be set forth in the application or proposal..."

In such cases, the application or proposal need not be reviewed by the IRB prior to an award. However, the IRB identified must have in place mechanisms to ensure that any research supported under the award receives IRB review and approval prior to the involvement of human subjects. Under this FOA with regard to "definite plans," human subjects' (that is, participants') involvement may not have been fully defined in the proposals (though their involvement will be fully defined during the planning period). Note: IRB requirements may differ for grantees participating in a federal evaluation.

### **Logic Model**

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their project. A logic model is a diagram that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the links among program elements. Logic models must target the identified objectives and goals of

the grant program. While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this announcement, the logic model may include connections between the following items:

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

Applicants must demonstrate how they will monitor their projects' implementation with the logic model.

### **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 outcomes.

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

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

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

### **Third-Party Agreements**

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

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

### **The Project Budget and Budget Justification**

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

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

**Special Note:** *The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020 and Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, (Division A, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$197,300. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.*

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

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

For applicants proposing to use subaward(s), if the total amount budgeted for subawards exceeds 50 percent of total direct costs for the budget period, the applicant must provide a justification for subawarding that portion of the project and must explain how the prime recipient plans to maintain a substantive role in the project. Applicants must explain why the participation of the subrecipient is necessary, and why the applicant cannot achieve the

objectives without the subrecipient(s)' participation.

**Note:** Applicants' line-item budget and budget justification must include all program-related costs, including travel for all staff required to attend the entrance conference and biennial meetings in Washington, DC, and regional meetings. (See *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Requirements, Entrance Conference, Biennial Peer Meeting, and Regional Meetings* for more information.)

### **Budgeting for Performance Data Operations**

The applicant's overall line-item budget and budget justification must also include detailed allocations for the range of required performance measure data and evaluation activities, including the following:

- Collection of performance data, including costs of staff training, and time to collect data;
- Storage of performance data, including:
  - Essential desktop/laptop computer or tablet purchase for ACASI on-line applicant characteristics and pre- and post-tests, including headphones and maintenance;
  - Costs for staff to conduct regular activity such as data entry, quality checks, and reliability training for coding; and
- Monitoring and reporting performance data, including costs for staff to analyze data, create and review reports, and plan and monitor adjustments.

### **Local Evaluation Costs**

As applicable, the applicant's overall line-item budget and budget justification must also include detailed allocations for local evaluation activities that clearly and directly align with the Local Evaluation Cost provisions specified in *Section II. Federal Award Information, Local Evaluation*.

### **Staffing Levels for Key Project Positions**

The applicant's overall budget justification, including the budget narrative and line-item detail, must also specify allocations for a Project Director and/or Project Managers to ensure and maintain 100 percent overall project oversight, monitoring, and day-to-day management. These allocations must directly align with the provisions under *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Requirements, Staffing Levels for Key Project Positions*.

### **Facilities**

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

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

real property and equipment) and 45 CFR § 75.436 (Depreciation).

In the list of properties, include a detailed breakdown of **all proposed costs**. It must be clear which costs are related to which property. In the budget justification, include a corresponding detailed narrative explanation of the purpose and need for each proposed cost under this grant award to determine reasonableness, allocability, and allowability of costs. Each property must include a breakdown of proposed costs and narrative, including all of the following, if applicable: the allocable percentage and total dollar amount; the depreciation amount with type of method and calculation used; rent amount with calculation; terms of lease; tax amount; insurance amount and what it covers; maintenance and repair amounts with details on each type of expense proposed and its associated cost; minor Alterations & Renovations with specifics for each type of proposed expense and its associated cost.

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

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

### **Personnel**

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

**Justification:** For each position, provide: the name of the individual (if known), their title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application.

### **Fringe Benefits**

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

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

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

### **Travel**

**Description:** Costs of project-related travel (i.e., transportation, lodging, subsistence) by

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

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

### **Equipment**

**Description:** "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in, or excluded from, acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.) See 45 CFR § 75.439 for more information.

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

### **Supplies**

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

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

### **Contractual**

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

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

provide, to the maximum extent practical, open, and free competition. Applicants must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold stated in [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Memorandum M-18-18: Implementing Statutory Change to the Micro-Purchase and the Simplified Acquisition Thresholds for Financial Assistance](#) and 48 CFR Subpart 2.1 (when amended accordingly). Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., available to ACF.

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

### **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 (non-personnel), professional service costs (including audit charges), space and equipment rentals, printing and publications, computer use, training costs (such as tuition and stipends), staff development costs, and administrative costs. Please note costs must be allowable per 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E.

**Justification:** Provide a breakdown of costs, 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.

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

2. Per 45 CFR § 75.414(f) Indirect (F&A) costs, "any non-Federal entity [i.e., applicant] that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, ... may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described in Section 75.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs, but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both.



If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as the non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time."

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

### **Commitment of Non-Federal Resources**

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

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

**For awards that require matching or cost sharing by statute**, recipients will be held accountable for projected commitments of non-federal resources (at or above the statutory requirement) in their application budgets and budget justifications by budget period, or by project period for fully funded awards. **A recipient's failure to provide the statutorily required matching or cost sharing amount (and any voluntary committed amount in excess) may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

**For awards that do not require matching or cost sharing by statute**, recipients are not expected to provide cost sharing or matching. However, recipients are allowed to voluntarily propose a commitment of non-federal resources. If an applicant decides to voluntarily contribute non-federal resources towards project costs and the costs are accepted by ACF, the non-federal resources will be included in the approved project budget. The applicant will be held accountable for all proposed non-federal resources as shown in the Notice of Award (NOA). **A recipient's failure to meet the voluntary amount of non-federal resources that was accepted by ACF as part of the approved project costs and that was identified in the approved budget in the NOA, may result in the disallowance of federal funds. Recipients will be required to report these funds in the Federal Financial Reports.**

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

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

contribution(s). In-kind contributions must be accompanied by a justification of how the stated valuation was determined. Matching or cost sharing must be documented by budget period (or by project period for fully funded awards).

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

### **Paperwork Reduction Act Disclaimer**

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C §§ 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the Project Description is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 02/28/2022. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

## **Application Submission Options**

### **Electronic Submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/acf_policy_for_requesting_an_exemption_from_required_electronic.pdf).

### **Paper Format Application Submission**

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

Applicants with exemptions that submit their applications in paper format, by mail or delivery,

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

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

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

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

Obtaining a DUNS Number may take 1 to 2 days.

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

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

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

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

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

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

complied with these requirements, ACF:

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

#### **IV.4. Submission Dates and Times**

Due Date for Applications: **07/01/2020**

##### **Explanation of Due Dates**

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

##### **Electronic Applications**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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](http://www.Grants.gov)**

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

Applicants will 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](http://www.Grants.gov) for more information.

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

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

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

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

#### **IV.5. Intergovernmental Review**

This program is not subject to Executive Order (E.O.) 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs," or 45 CFR Part 100, "Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities." No action is required of applicants under this announcement with regard 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.

ACF does not fund awards where the role of the applicant is primarily to serve as a conduit of funds to other organizations, unless that arrangement is authorized by statute. In the absence of such statutory authority, each prime recipient's primary role must be to ensure the delivery of the statutorily authorized services, whether provided directly or through collaborative involvement with their subrecipient(s).

#### **Local Evaluation Costs**

- Applicants requesting funding from \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 per year must propose and conduct a rigorous impact evaluation, and must allocate at least 15 percent, but no more than 20 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation.
- Applicants requesting funding from \$750,000 to \$999,999 per year may choose to propose and conduct either a descriptive or impact local evaluation. Those proposing an impact local evaluation must allocate at least 15 percent, but no more than 20 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation. Those proposing a descriptive local evaluation must allocate at least 5 percent, but no more than 10 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation.
- Applicants requesting funding from \$500,000 to \$749,999 per year may choose to propose and conduct a descriptive local evaluation, and must allocate at least 5 percent but no more than 10 percent, of their total annual funding for evaluation

### **Linkages to Services That Are Not Fundable under this FOA**

Some support services that address needs of program participants cannot be funded under this FOA. ACF expects that program designs will include strategies to provide participants with linkages to services that are not fundable under this grant. For example, legal assistance (including criminal record expungement and restorative justice programs), health care, mental health treatment, child support payment, rent or housing subsidies, and substance abuse treatment are not allowable uses of grant funds. (See *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission, Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications, Use of Funds.*) As such, funded organizations are encouraged to partner with public and community-based organizations to provide participants with access to these services.

### **Construction, Alteration and Renovation**

Cost for purchasing, construction and/or major alteration and renovation are not statutorily authorized under this grant. However, minor alteration and renovation costs to meet a specific programmatic requirement may be allowable with the prior written approval of ACF. Minor alteration and renovation may not exceed \$150,000 or 25 percent of the total approved budget (direct and indirect) for the budget period, whichever is less.

### **Non-Supplanting**

Applicants who are current recipients of federal, state, or local financial assistance are required to submit a written assurance or certification that they will not supplant other federal, state, or local funds that otherwise have been made available and that describes how they will ensure that any award of federal funds under this FOA will not supplant other federal, state or local funding.

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

## **IV.7. Other Submission Requirements**

Submit paper applications to one of the following addresses. Also see *ACF Policy on Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission*

at [www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6).

### **Submission By Mail**

Grant Operations Center  
ATTN: HHS-2020-ACF-OFA-ZJ-1846  
1401 Mercantile Lane  
Suite 401  
Largo, MD 20774

### **Hand Delivery**

Grant Operations Center  
ATTN: HHS-2020-OFA-ZJ-1846  
1401 Mercantile Lane  
Suite 401  
Largo, MD 20774

### **Electronic Submission**

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

The number of bulleted statements under each review criterion does not necessarily reflect an equal distribution of points among corresponding point values. The entire application will be reviewed and evaluated. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the strengths and weaknesses

of the application's correlation to the FOA's *Section I. Program Description* and *Section IV.2. The Project Description* and *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification*.

**PROJECT APPROACH**

Maximum Points:35

**The applicant's overall proposed project design and approach will be reviewed and assessed by the following criteria.**

- (1) The applicant demonstrates a clear, consistent understanding of the stated over-arching purpose of promoting RF, including the specified three broad categories and activities under them.
- (2) The applicant clearly describes the target service area (the physical location or proposed alternative geographic service provision approach) that aligns with the provisions of *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Geographic Location* and the compelling need for services (related to the objectives of the FOA) for the target population in the target service area aligns with the provisions of *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Need for Assistance*, and describes how the proposed program will meet these needs.
- (3) The applicant provides a clear, detailed description and justification of the proposed project. The description includes a thorough description of the program model(s) and all curriculum(a) to be implemented, and a clear indication that curriculum(a) are in line with all standards. (See *Section I Project Description, Program Activities, Curricula.*)
- (4) The applicant includes a clear description of how the services and activities to be provided in the project and in the program model(s) align with the objectives of the FOA, especially the required areas of promoting and sustaining marriage, responsible parenting, economic stability, as well as case management.
- (5) The applicant provides a reasonable rationale and/or research base for the program model(s) and curriculum(a) proposed, including a clearly articulated, justified, and well-documented rationale for why the proposed program model(s), chosen curriculum(a), and the method of implementation would create positive change.
- (6) The applicant clearly describes how participants will be recruited and engaged, including how the program will meet the requirements related to non-discrimination in program eligibility in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Requirements, Non-Discrimination in Program Eligibility* for more information). Additionally, the applicant clearly describes how they will ensure that participation in programs is voluntary and how, during the recruitment process, potential participants will be informed that their involvement is voluntary. The processes described are thorough, sound, and appropriate.
- (7) The applicant's approach to intake, enrollment, and assessment of individual participant needs, including specification of screening and assessment tools, is comprehensive, appropriate, and logical. The approach described includes the following: (a) a well-articulated discussion of how the applicant will address grant-funded participation supports and linkages to services that are not fundable under this FOA; and (b) a clear understanding of the barriers to participation the target population may encounter, and a clear plan for how they will be addressed, including cultural appropriateness.
- (8) The applicant presents a clear summation of primary workshop participation hours, and a

complete table(s) outlining program participation targets (that directly align with the provisions of *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Approach, Program Participation Targets*). The applicant's table(s) includes and clearly identifies the proposed number of clients who will complete at least 90 percent of primary workshops that aligns with the program participation targets.

(9) The applicant proposes programming appropriate to the proposed age of the target population. (See *Section III.3. Other, Project Design Disqualification*.)

(10) The applicant clearly describes a comprehensive approach to economic stability that adheres to *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Approach, Economic Stability* of this FOA. The approach is clear, feasible, and is designed to achieve specific economic stability outcomes for fathers.

(11) The applicant clearly documents its extensive knowledge and broad experience working in the community(ies) that will be served by the program and includes a thorough description of how the proposed project design incorporates a comprehensive approach that is tailored to the target population.

(12) The applicant provides a logic model for the project that clearly aligns with the provisions of *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Logic Model*, and links proposed activities to intended, project-specific, short- and long-term outcomes that are clear and measurable, including an explanation of how the proposed logic model aligns with the stated ACF short- and long-term programmatic outcomes.

(13) The applicant includes a clear, thorough description or chart of the project timeline and milestones per *Section IV. 2. Content and Form of Application Submission, Project Timeline and Milestones*, detailing all activities for the full 5-year project period, including a timeline of the activities to be carried out during the 6-month planning period. The description or chart, and timeline are detailed and follow a logical sequence.

**Applicants' plan, capacity, and strategy to adequately provide case management will be reviewed and assessed by the following criteria:**

(14) The applicant provides a well-thought-out, feasible, and robust strategy for providing effective case management to program participants, including a planned number of individual service contacts aligned with the FOA (see *Section I. Program Description, Description, Program Purpose and Scope, Case Management*).

**The thoroughness, feasibility, documented consultation, collaboration/partnership, and capacity of all applicants to address issues of domestic violence and child maltreatment will be reviewed and assessed by the following criteria:**

(15) The applicant provides well-documented evidence of initial consultation with domestic violence experts to assist in the development of appropriate protocols tailored to the program. The evidence provided is comprehensive and clearly demonstrates that the applicant has, or will have, collaborative partnerships with providers of domestic violence services throughout program implementation, including a process for service referrals.

(16) The applicant provides a plan for comprehensive and regular training to staff related to domestic violence. The plan is feasible and includes a timeline that is clear and follows a

logical sequence.

(17) The applicant clearly and thoroughly describes how the program or activities will address, as appropriate, issues of domestic violence (including intimate partner and dating violence).

(18) The applicant describes how they will develop strategies to help prevent, detect, and respond to child maltreatment among program participants, including a clear, reasonable, and feasible approach to ensuring staff familiarity with their state's requirements for child abuse and neglect.

(19) The applicant describes a comprehensive approach to project sustainability beyond the period of federal funding, including a detailed plan for execution that fully aligns with each provision described in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Project Sustainability Plan* under this FOA. The applicant specifically describes the key individuals, organizations, and/or other stakeholders whose support will be required for project sustainability and describes a strategy for acquiring stakeholder support. The applicant's approach to project sustainability is clear, effective, and feasible.

**Applicants that propose to provide services to incarcerated fathers (i.e., fathers who are within 9 months of release from incarceration) will have the thoroughness of that plan reviewed and assessed under the following criterion. (Reviewers will not deduct any points if this option is not selected. The maximum points under Project Approach if the option is proposed will remain 35 points.)**

(20) The applicant clearly and thoroughly describes how it will gain and sustain access to participants (e.g., access to prisons, jails, and halfway houses), and its strategy to build and maintain partnerships with appropriate institutions, including probation and parole services. The description and strategy are feasible and follow a logical sequence.

**In addition to the general economic stability criterion, applicants that propose to provide job-driven employment services will have the thoroughness of that plan reviewed and assessed under the following criterion. (Reviewers will not deduct any points if this option is not selected. The maximum points under Project Approach if the option is proposed will remain 35 points.)**

(21) The applicant presents a feasible strategy to provide job-driven employment services designed to improve participants' knowledge, understanding, skills and employability. The applicant explains the following: (a) how the proposed services are suited to the target population; (b) how the proposed services will be integrated into the overall program; (c) how the applicant will ensure that the proposed services do not stand alone and how they will ensure participant engagement throughout their program enrollment; (d) how the proposed services are clearly linked the four job-driven employment approaches specified under *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Approach, Economic Stability, Job-Driven Employment*; and (e) how the post-employment supports and case management will help participants gain and retain employment. The explanation is clear, reasonable, and feasible.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND EXPERIENCE

Maximum Points:25

**The applicant's organizational capacity and experience (including that of proposed**

**partner agencies or contractors) to adequately develop and manage a project under this FOA will be reviewed and assessed using the following criteria, including the standards outlined in *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Approach, Program Participation Targets and Standards for Demonstrating Organizational Capacity of this FOA.***

(1) The applicant's Financial Statements, Audit Reports, or Statements submitted with this application clearly reflect an operational budget appropriate to the project scope proposed and funding level requested (i.e., large scope, moderate scope, or smaller scope services) per year for the two most recent years.

(2) The applicant clearly describes and verifies the organization's past service provision, including years of service provision, appropriate to the project scope proposed and funding level requested. Specifically, the applicant (a) clearly demonstrates the relevant experience and expertise implementing marriage or fatherhood programming (or family-focused human service provision --or relevant knowledge, experience, or expertise --for smaller scope services **only**, with no marriage or fatherhood programming experience) and describes its accomplishments in providing the services; (b) clearly outlines the target number of programming hours previously provided and thoroughly describes how this target meets or exceeds the standard outlined in *Section IV.2 Project Description, Demonstrating Organizational Capacity* of the FOA; and (c) clearly describes their prior success in having enrolled and served sufficient numbers of individuals or couples (appropriate for their services provision scope) who completed at least 50 percent of primary workshops for each of the two most recent years; or (d) (for smaller scope applicants without previous family-focused, marriage, or fatherhood service provision **only**) a clear and feasible description of how the applicant organization has the current capacity to provide services at the standard level specified in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Approach, Program Participation Targets.*

(3) The applicant demonstrates the organizational capacity necessary to oversee federal grants through a clear description of the organization's fiscal controls and an explanation of the organization's governance structure, including an organizational chart that demonstrates the relationship between all positions (including consultants and/or sub-contractors).

(4) The applicant demonstrates past experience and current capacity to provide high-quality programming, especially including established success in achieving short- or long-term outcomes outlined in *Section I. Program Description, Description, Program Purpose and Scope, Programmatic Objectives and Outcomes.*

#### **Organizational Capacity for Applicants Required or Electing to Conduct Local Evaluation with Impact Designs**

(5) **(For applicants requesting \$750,000 to \$1,249,000)** The applicant clearly and thoroughly describes or demonstrates their capacity to conduct a local impact evaluation (i.e., randomized control trial design or quasi-experimental design). Specifically, the applicant describes its previous success in partnering with an independent evaluation firm to plan and successfully implement an evaluation of its marriage or fatherhood program, or a portion of it. The description clearly and affirmatively demonstrates that the evaluation was successfully completed and was not terminated prior to analysis, and the evaluation was not shifted from an impact design to a non-impact design.

**(For applicants requesting funding in this range, but who have not previously conducted an impact evaluation)** The applicant clearly states that no evaluation was conducted, and describes the following: (a) why the roles and responsibilities proposed for the applicant and the local evaluator will lead to a strong impact evaluation; (b) the criteria used to assess the capacity of its local evaluator; and (c) the safeguards to be put in place to ensure a fair test of its program, or a portion of it.

**(6) (For applicants requesting \$1,250,000 to \$1,500,000)** The applicant clearly describes the applicant's current or most recently conducted (within the past four years) impact evaluation, demonstrating that the applicant and the independent evaluator planned and successfully implemented an **impact** evaluation of their program model, or a portion of it; that the impact evaluation was a fair impact test of their program model (or portion of it); and that the impact evaluation has not been or was not terminated prior to analysis.

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

Maximum Points: 15

**The applicant's capacity and experience to adequately develop, oversee, manage, staff, and comply with all requirements of a project under this FOA will be reviewed and assessed using the following criteria.**

(1) The applicant includes an organizational chart and clearly describes, in the project management approach, the intended leadership structure and lines of accountability, including a dedicated project director. The structure and lines of accountability are clear and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project. Proposed senior staff has documented experience with project management and decision-making processes. The qualifications and responsibilities of the applicant's key project staff and its partners are specifically stated and aligned with the project's goals and objectives.

(2) The applicant clearly identifies each staff member proposed to be funded under the grant, including those responsible for direct program oversight (including oversight of partners), management, implementation, local evaluation (as applicable), performance management, and continuous quality improvement of the proposed project. The applicant clearly includes all key project positions and unambiguously describes the commitment of those key staff in accordance with *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Requirements, Staffing Levels for Key Project Positions*. The applicant clearly notes whether any positions are vacant, includes job descriptions for vacant positions, and proposes a reasonable and clear approach to filling them.

(3) The applicant includes detailed information about collaborations, partnerships, and MOUs or other third-party agreements with organizations and stakeholders that the applicant indicates will be responsible for aspects of the project, per the requirements in *Section I. Program Description, Program Expectations, Addressing Client Needs and Working with Program Partners, Partnerships*. The MOUs are clear and define specific roles and responsibilities of all parties, including benchmarks for partner performance.

(4) The applicant demonstrates that proposed personnel have sufficient expertise required for their positions funded under this grant, includes key staff resumes indicating the requisite qualifications, and illustrates how the proposed staff will be integrated into the project per an



organizational chart.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT, CONTINUOUS  
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, AND EVALUATION

Maximum Points: 10

**All applicants' plan, strategy, and capacity to adequately address the performance measurement, continuous quality improvement, and local evaluation (as applicable) requirements will be reviewed and assessed using the following criteria.**

**Performance Measurement**

- (1) The applicant sufficiently describes comprehensive processes planned or in place to collect data in a uniform, systematic manner, while maintaining participant privacy. The plan is clear, feasible, and follows a logical sequence.
- (2) The applicant adheres to the scope of the data collection effort, including satisfactorily addressing all components as described in the FOA with regard to staff readiness and training; the process for involving partners; a rigorous process for completing Applicant Characteristics, Entrance, and Exit surveys; and monitoring and reporting on all components described in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements, Performance Measure Data, and Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, Project Description, Program Performance Evaluation Plan.*
- (3) The applicant describes a process of consultation with key stakeholders, including community stakeholders, in developing the performance management data collection plan. The description is clear, comprehensive, and aligns with project goals and objectives.

**Continuous Quality Improvement**

- (4) The applicant includes a Continuous Quality Improvement Plan and clearly describes the organizational commitment to data-driven approaches to identify areas for program performance, test potential improvements, and cultivate a culture and environment of learning and improvement. The plan is thorough, feasible, and follows a logical sequence.

**Local Evaluation**

**Applicants that are required or that choose to propose local evaluations will have their local evaluation approach assessed under the following criteria. (The maximum points under Performance Measurement, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation will remain 10 points.)**

- (5) The applicant proposes a local evaluation plan with adequate detail on how the local evaluation will accomplish a successful study related to a specific research question(s) that is consistent with all components described in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements, Local Evaluations, and Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission, Project Description, Funded Activities Evaluation Plan.*
- (6) The applicant sufficiently describes the research question(s), research design, sample and sample size, and data collection (including measures and training of data collectors) that is consistent with all components described in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements, Local*

*Evaluations, and Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, Project Description, Funded Activities Evaluation Plan.* The description is clear, comprehensive, and aligns with the research and programmatic goals and objectives.

(7) The applicant thoroughly addresses all components related to a local evaluator, including submitting a signed letter of agreement with a local evaluator in which the local evaluator commits to conduct the local evaluation independently; indicates an understanding of potential federal evaluation; and indicates an understanding of the need for IRB oversight.

(8) The applicant includes a sound plan for securing informed consent and working with an IRB for approval of the proposed design and processes. If the applicant has already obtained IRB approval, the approval documentation has been submitted with the application. The applicant names the specific IRB to which it expects to apply.

(9) The applicant documents sufficient existing and planned input from partners that is consistent with all components described in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Performance Measure, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Evaluation Requirements, Local Evaluations.*

(10) The applicant clearly describes how the local evaluation, as designed, will inform future programming and expand the evidence base, how analyses of data will clearly support final reported results, and describes targets for dissemination.

(11) The applicant clearly and specifically demonstrates a commitment to comply with all of the collecting, documenting, and reporting requirements related to the Funded Activities Evaluation Plan.

## BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Maximum Points: 15

**The applicant's line-item budget and budget justification will be reviewed and assessed for thoroughness, soundness, and accountability under the following criteria.**

### General

(1) The applicant includes a line-item budget and budget justifications for all operating expenses that are consistent with the proposed project objectives and activities. The narrative budget justification clearly states how each line item will be used. The applicant provided information about how the funds will be allocated among the program activities proposed, including all required items, such as travel to attend the entrance conference and biennial meetings in Washington, DC, and any roundtable meetings.

(2) The applicant's line-item budget and budget justifications detail the specific FTE allocations for key staff positions that directly and accurately align with those specified in *Section I. Program Description, Post-Award Requirements, Staffing Levels for Key Project Positions* and *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification, Staffing Levels for Key Project Positions.*

(3) The applicant clearly explains and details how the project costs are allowable, reasonable, allocable, necessary, and are commensurate with the types and scope of activities and services to be conducted; the minimum and maximum client program participation levels, any evaluation plans; if applicable; and the expected goals and objectives. The proposed project activities, services, and client participation levels clearly align with the funding level requested

and as stated in the SF-424A submitted with this application.

(4) The applicant describes a plan for overall fiscal management, that addresses the terms of *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission, Project Description, Plan for Oversight*, as well as internal and third-party financial monitoring systems that demonstrate structure and accountability for applicant and any sub-contractors. The plan is clear, comprehensive, and aligns with general fiscal management and accounting principles.

(5) The applicant describes a budget that is consistent with the proposed plan for the applicant organization as well as for the partner agency(ies), evaluator(s), contractor(s), and other stakeholders' funded involvement in performance measure data collection and/or storage and/or reporting. The description is clear, sound, feasible, and comprehensive.

(6) The applicant's budget adequately reflects costs related to the ACASI online Applicant Characteristics, Entrance, and Exit surveys, including costs for the purchase of computers or tablets appropriate to the technical requirements for the online survey and communication with the identified MIS system. The description is detailed, reasonable, and appropriate.

(7) The applicant's budget includes costs associated with nFORM, including appropriate costs for staffing, essential initial and maintenance training, training, and resources for monitoring and reporting. The budget costs are clear, specific, and appropriate.

(8) The applicant's budget specifies and allocates costs related to all planning period tasks associated with performance measurement data. The costs described are adequate and align with the program period's goals and objectives.

**In addition to the above criteria, applicants that are required or that choose to propose to conduct a local evaluation will also have their line-item budget and budget justification reviewed and assessed under the following criteria. (The maximum points under Budget and Budget Justification will remain 15 points.)**

(9) The applicant clearly details a local evaluation budget, with costs identified for staffing and subcontract agreements and other direct costs that are consistent with the identified plan and timeline.

(10) The applicant's budget allocates funding for local evaluation in accordance with the level of federal funds being requested and for costs related to all planning period tasks associated with the local evaluation.

Bonus Points Maximum Points:5

**Following the objective peer review, applicants who were previously awarded a Healthy Marriage or Responsible Fatherhood grant under the 2015-2019 project period will have their eligibility to receive bonus points assessed in accordance with the following criteria. OFA will assess and confirm eligibility of previously funded grantees against these criteria and award points accordingly (post review):**

**0 or 3 points.** Applicants whose post-review assessment does not confirm their eligibility in view of *all* of the following bonus point criteria will not receive any of the 3 points available. **No partial points will awarded.**

In assessing and confirming the applicant's eligibility to receive bonus points under this criteria, OFA will use data from years 3 and 4 of the project period. In conducting the bonus point

eligibility review, OFA will:

- (1) Use grant award data from the former grantee's 2017 and 2018 Notice of Award to confirm that the applicant was indeed a previous grant recipient in years 3 and 4 of the project period (i.e., that the grant was not terminated or non-continued);
- (2) Review the former grantee's enrollment and participation date from the nFORM system to confirm whether the former grantee meets all past service provision organizational capacity qualification requirements under *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Organizational Capacity*, and in accordance with the requested funding level;
- (3) Review the former grantee's semi-annual monitoring statements to determine whether it received two or more consecutive acceptable ratings during each of years 3 and 4 of the project period; and
- (4) Review performance data from the compliance and performance reviews (CAPstone) to ascertain whether the former grantee was not subject to Corrective Action during year 3 and/or 4 of the project period.

**For those previously funded applicants who receive the above 3 points, an additional 0 or 2 points will be awarded for the extent to which the previously funded Healthy Marriage or Responsible Fatherhood grantee (during the 2015-2019 project period) clearly and unambiguously:**

- (5) Successfully implemented, through to the end of 2019, an impact evaluation of their Healthy Marriage or Responsible Fatherhood program model, or portion of the model, and that the impact evaluation was a fair impact test of their model and that it was not terminated prior to analysis; or
- (6) Successfully participated in a federally led impact evaluation and the applicant was not terminated from that evaluation prior to analysis.

## 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](http://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.I. Criteria* of this announcement. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include three reviewers and one chairperson.

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process. ACF reserves the right to evaluate applications in the larger context of the overall portfolio by considering geographic distribution of federal funds (e.g., ensuring coverage of states, counties, or service areas) in its pre-award decisions.

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 does not fund awards where the role of the applicant is primarily to serve as a conduit of funds to other organizations unless that arrangement is authorized by statute. In the absence of such statutory authority, each prime recipient's primary role must be to ensure the delivery of statutorily authorized services, whether provided directly or through collaborative involvement with their subrecipient(s). Prime recipients of an award under this FOA will be legally accountable to ACF for performance of the project or program. Prime recipients will be held solely responsible in the event of non-compliance by a subrecipient. Applicants proposing to use subrecipient(s) to complete the proposed project will be reviewed by ACF for any management or financial problems. ACF may elect to not allow a prime recipient to subaward if the prime recipient displays an inability to properly monitor and manage subrecipients.

## **Post-Review Debriefing of Unfunded Applications**

Additionally, an organization whose application will not be funded will have an opportunity to request a debriefing of that funding decision with OFA. The letter notifying unfunded organizations of the funding decision will include contact information to submit a written request for a debriefing. OFA will prepare a written response to address the applications strength and weaknesses. The applicant may request that the written response be either a letter or email. The debriefing period will begin within 30 days of the issuance of the funding decision notice and will conclude by December 18, 2020. While unfunded organizations may request a debriefing, all funding decisions are final and are not subject to appeal.

## **Federal Financial Review**

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

## **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/](http://www.fapiis.gov/), before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000) over the period of performance. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency has previously entered into FAPIIS. ACF will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR § 200.205 Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants ([http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=se2.1.200\\_1205&rgn=div8](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 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](http://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](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements).

### **HHS Grants Policy Statement**

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

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

## **VI.3. Reporting**

Performance Progress      Quarterly  
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-](http://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: Quarterly

### **Quarterly Progress Reports (QPR)**

In addition to PPRs, grantees will be required to submit quarterly progress reports (to alternate with PPRs – that is, a QPR after month 3, and PPR after month 6, a QPR after month 9, and a PPR after month 12), approved under OMB Control No.: 097-0460, Expiration Date September 30, 2021. Further information may be found at <https://www.famlecross-site.com/nForm/Contact> (scroll down to the links listed at "Quick Reference").

## **VII. HHS Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

### **Program Office Contact**

Tanya R Howell  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Family Assistance  
3rd Floor  
330 C Street, SW.  
Washington, DC 20201  
Phone: (202) 205-8714  
Email: [Tanya.Howell@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Tanya.Howell@acf.hhs.gov)

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

Bridget Shea Westfall  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Grants Management  
3rd Floor  
330 C Street, SW.  
Washington, DC 20201  
Phone: (202) 401-5542  
Email: [bridget.sheawestfall@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:bridget.sheawestfall@acf.hhs.gov)

### **Federal Relay Service:**

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



Service (FedRelay) at [www.gsa.gov/fedrelay](http://www.gsa.gov/fedrelay).

## VIII. Other Information

### Reference Websites

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

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

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecast [www.grants.gov/](http://www.grants.gov/).

ACF Funding Opportunity Announcements [ami.grantsolutions.gov/](http://ami.grantsolutions.gov/).

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

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

Grants.gov Accessibility Information [www.grants.gov/web/grants/accessibility-compliance.html](http://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/>.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following are additional resources that may be useful to applicants and grantees as they design and implement their programs. Applicants and grantees are not required to use these resources.

#### Webinar Series

The OFA anticipates conducting a pre-application webinar series within 15 business days of publication of this FOA. The webinar link and specific logistics (e.g., date, time, and accessibility information) may be found at <http://www.hmrfgantresources.info>. The goal of the webinar series is to provide prospective applicants with programmatic information on all three FOAs, as well as information on the nFORM Management Information System and local evaluation requirements discussed in the FOA. Pre-application webinar materials may be accessed on the ACF website at <http://www.hmrfgantresources.info>. Joining and participating in the webinars is voluntary. Only the information provided in this FOA will be presented. No question and answer portion will be conducted during the session. **Participants will remain anonymous.** Opting not to participate in the webinars will not affect eligibility, application scoring, or the selection process. Applicants unable to attend can access the archived webinars posted to <http://www.hmrfgantresources.info> after the webinars have concluded.

**Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood Resource Site for 2020 Grant Applicants.**

For a range of resources that can be helpful to applicants – including resources on program design, evaluation design, CQI, and reports from other ACF projects – click on <http://www.hmrfgrantresources.info/>.

## Application Checklist

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

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
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 <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> .	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> .
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications</i> .  This form is available in the FOA's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> .	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application.  If it not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Table of Contents	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .	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> .
Project Summary/Abstract	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description</i> .  The Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one single-spaced page.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i> .
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-	Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances,</i>	Submission is due by the application due date found in the <i>Overview</i> and in

<p>Construction Programs and SF-424B - Assurances - Non- Construction Programs</p>	<p><i>and Certifications.</i></p> <p>These forms are available in the FOA's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> in the Mandatory section.</p> <p>They are required for applications that include only non-construction activities.</p>	<p><i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.</i></p>
<p>Proof of Non-Profit Status</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity.</i></p>	<p>Proof of non-profit status should be 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.</p> <p>If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
<p>Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)</p>	<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 <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a>.</p>	<p>Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.</p>
<p>SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance</p>	<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 <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a> in the Mandatory section.</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>
<p>Mandatory Grant Disclosure</p>	<p>Requirement, submission instructions, and mailing addresses are found in the "Mandatory Grant Disclosure" in <i>Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances and Certifications.</i></p>	<p>If applicable, concurrent submission to the Administration for Children and Families and to the Office of the Inspector General is required.</p>

<p>The Project Description</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Description.</i></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>
<p>The Project Budget and Budget Justification</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification.</i></p>	<p>Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C.</p> <p>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></p>
<p>Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.</i> See <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html</a> for additional information.</p> <p>This form is available in the FOA's forms package at <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a></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>
<p>Unique Entity Identifier (DUNS) and Systems for Award Management (SAM) registration.</p>	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)</i> in the announcement.</p> <p>To obtain a DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier), go to <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a>.</p> <p>To register at SAM, go to <a href="http://www.sam.gov">http://www.sam.gov</a>.</p>	<p>A DUNS number (Unique Entity Identifier) and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants.</p> <p>Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.</p>
<p>SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)</p>	<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 <a href="http://www.Grants.gov">www.Grants.gov</a>.</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>

Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (IDR)	<p>Referenced in <i>Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification</i>.</p> <p>The IDR must be submitted with the application package.</p>	<p>If the IDR is available by the application due date, it must be submitted with the application package.</p> <p>If it is not available by the application due date, listed in the <i>Overview</i> and <i>Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times</i>, it may be submitted prior to the award of a grant.</p>
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## Appendix

This Appendix is divided into seven sections:

- Section A     Glossary
- Section B     Program Participation Targets ? Table Shell
- Section C     Approach Summary Table
- Section D     Organizational Capacity Summary Table
- Section E     nFORM ? Further Detail
- Section F     Local Evaluation Plan Development and Approval
- Section G     Standards for Local Evaluation

### APPENDIX SECTION A - GLOSSARY

The following definitions are applied to terminology used under this FOA.

**Client.** Refers to both program enrollees and program participants. Used in the context of measuring program inputs and outputs in measuring program participation, for example.

**Community fathers.** Fathers across every demographic and socio-economic spectrum (and not exclusively fathers who are non-custodial or low-income), including fathers who have returned from incarceration (those who have reentered) or have had contact with the criminal justice system (see also **General population** in this Glossary).

**Evidence-based practices.** Replicates practices that have been evaluated using rigorous evaluation design such as randomized controlled or high-quality quasi-experimental trials and that have demonstrated positive impacts for fathers, families, and communities.

**Evidence-informed practices.** Brings together the best available research, professional expertise, and input from fathers and families to identify and deliver services that have promise to achieve positive outcomes for fathers, families, and communities.

**Funded organization** and **Grantee organization.** These terms are used interchangeably and are defined as an applicant whose project is awarded funds under this FOA.

**General population.** Fathers across every demographic and socio-economic spectrum (and not exclusively fathers who are non-custodial or low-income), including fathers who have returned from incarceration (those who have reentered) or have had contact with the criminal justice

system (see also **Community fathers** in this Glossary).

**Incarcerated fathers.** Fathers who are within 9 months of release from incarceration and who intend to return to their communities and families.

**Pass-through.** A grantee organization's distribution of funds to third-party partners or contractors without retention of substantial involvement in the design, implementation, guidance, oversight, and monitoring of the funded project.

**Primary workshop.** A curriculum-based workshop that all participants are expected to attend, and ultimately complete. A project's primary workshop(s) must (collectively, in the case of multiple workshops) address all FOA requirements and outcomes (see also **Workshop** in this Glossary).

**Project.** The grantee's funded program in its entirety, including the program model and the mechanisms to implement it, such as staffing, oversight, and data collection.

**Program.** The authorized federal funding under this FOA.

**Program completion.** The enrolled clients' participation in a least 90 percent of primary workshops.

**Program model.** An intervention that targets one specific population and that incorporates the following: (a) one or more curriculum-based workshops (particularly those related to promoting or sustaining healthy marriage and responsible parenting, and where curriculum is appropriate to economic stability) that address all FOA requirements and target outcomes outlined in the FOA; and (b) additional activities, that may include services to identify and address individual participant needs, case management, job-driven employment (if offered), and additional program-related activities.

**Workshop.** A set of structured, classes focused on a topic(s) related to the FOA (see also **Primary workshop** in this Glossary).

**APPENDIX SECTION B: PROGRAM PARTICIPATION TABLE - TABLE SHELL**

Program Participation Tables may appear as follows:

[INSERT TITLE] (Applicants must include a title for the table, and the title must note the following: (a) the name of the program model to be implemented; and (b) the population to be served. If the population is couples/co-parents/parenting pairs, please note this in the title, too. For example, a title could be 'Comprehensive Father Program, for Young Adult Fathers Ages 18-24 in the XYZ Community of ABC City')

	Number of clients (or couples/ co-parents/ parenting pairs) enrolled	Number of clients (or couples/ co-parents/ parenting pairs) who attend at least one primary workshop	Number of clients (or couples/ co-parents/ parenting pairs) who attend at least 50% of primary workshops	Number of clients (or couples/ co-parents/ parenting pairs) who attend at least 90% of primary workshops	Number of clients (or couples/ co-parents/ parenting pairs) who attend 100% of primary workshops
Year 1					

(Apr 1 2020-Sept 29 2020)					
Year 2 (Sept 30 2020-Sept 29 2021)					
Year 3 (Sept 30 2021-Sept 29 2022)					
Year 4 (Sept 30 2022-Sept 29 2023)					
Year 5 (Sept 30 2023-Sept 29 2024)					
Total					

In completing the table, applicants must note that the number of clients in the 90 percent primary workshop completion column **must not be less than** the minimum client service provision level based on the funding level requested. For example, if in Year 2 an applicant proposes to 'serve' 300 clients, then it must set 300 clients as the number of clients who attend at

least 90 percent of primary workshops. (This number of clients must be equal to or greater than the minimum noted above, per funding level.) The applicant must then calculate how many clients must enroll, must attend at least one workshop, and must attend at least 50 percent of primary workshops, in order to have 300 clients who attend at least 90 percent of primary workshops (it must also calculate the number of clients who will attend 100 percent of primary workshops). Again, under this scenario, this organization will be expected to engage 300 clients who attend at least 90 percent of primary workshops.

Applicants proposing more than one program model must submit a separate table for each program model. In the title, the applicant must specify the unique name of the program model and the population to be served

**APPENDIX SECTION C: APPROACH SUMMARY TABLE**

Applicants **may choose** to use the following table as a quick-reference and checklist of standards associated with different levels of scope.

**Note.** This table is not intended as a substitute for the specific submission requirements in the FOA. Applicants' approach will be assessed based on the extent to which their project descriptions align with all requirements of *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description* of this FOA.

Types of Services		Project Approach			
Service Provision Scope	Funding Requested	Program Participation Targets	Primary Program Hours	Evaluation	Age
Large Scope Services	\$1,250,000 to \$1,500,000	No fewer than 166 individuals (or 83 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs); up to 1,250 individuals (or 625 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs), proposal to serve more require documentation of capacity and robust justification	At least 24 hours (unless lower intensity is proposed with justification)	Must propose impact evaluation	18 and older
	\$1,000,000 to \$1,249,999	No fewer than 130 individuals (or 65 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs); up to 1,000 individuals (or 500 couples/co-			
Moderate Scope Services	\$750,000 to \$999,999			May propose impact or	



		parents/parenting pairs), proposal to serve more require documentation of capacity and robust justification		descriptive evaluation
<b>Smaller Scope Services</b>	<b>\$500,000 to \$749,999</b>	No fewer than 100 individuals (or 50 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs couples); up to 750 individuals (or 375 couples/co-parents/parenting pairs), proposal to serve more require documentation of capacity and robust justification		May propose descriptive evaluation

**APPENDIX SECTION D: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY SUMMARY TABLE**

Applicants may choose to use the following table as a quick-reference and checklist for the *Standards for Demonstrating Organizational Capacity*.

**Note.** This table is not intended as a substitute for the specific Organizational Capacity submission requirements. Applicants' organizational capacity will be assessed based on the extent to which their project descriptions align with all requirements of *Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission, The Project Description, Project Approach, Organizational Capacity* of this FOA.

Types of Services		Organizational Capacity				
Service Provision Scope	Funding Requested	Operational Budget	Past Service Provision			Evaluation Capacity
			Similarity of past programming	Intensity of past programming	Clients served in past programming	
<b>Large Scope Services</b>	<b>\$1,250,000 to \$1,500,000</b>	At least \$900,000 for two most recent years	Relevant marriage or fatherhood programming experience at least four of last five years	Target number programming hours is 24 hours or more (or description of capacity)	At least 100 individuals (or 50 couples) completed at least 50 percent of primary workshops for	Description of successfully conducted impact evaluation
	<b>\$1,000,000</b>					Description

	<b>to \$1,249,999</b>				each of two most recent years	of previous success in partnering, or description of approach to strong evaluation
<b>Moderate Scope Services</b>	<b>\$750,000 to \$999,999</b>	At least \$500,000 for two most recent years	Relevant marriage or fatherhood programming experience at least two of three years	Target number programming hours is 24 hours or more (or description of capacity)	At least 50 individuals (or 25 couples) completed at least 50 percent of primary workshops for each of two most recent years	(For those proposing impact evaluation) description of previous success in partnering, or description of approach to strong evaluation
<b>Smaller Scope Services</b>	<b>\$500,000 to \$749,999</b>	At least \$100,000 for two most recent years	Relevant marriage, fatherhood, or other family-focused human services programming experience at least two of three years	Description of capacity to provide services		

#### **APPENDIX SECTION E: NFORM ? FURTHER DETAIL**

All grant-funded programmatic activities (except any activities conducted in a pilot during the planning period) must be recorded in nFORM. nFORM is secure and accessible, and it is provided free to each grantee. It is web-based and does not require users to download any applications or program any code; users can access the system anywhere with Internet coverage. The system is Section 508 compliant and works on multiple platforms including desktop computers, laptops, and tablets.

Grantees are required to administer to program participants (i.e., clients) three surveys that are recorded in the nFORM system: (1) the Applicant Characteristics Survey; (2) the Entrance Survey; and (3) the Exit Survey. Grantee staff are required to provide and enter additional data

into nFORM, such as attendance at workshops and individual service contacts. Different versions of the Entrance and Exit Surveys are provided for different client populations to focus on the most relevant topics, such as parenting, relationships, or expectations for the future. Client surveys are available in English and Spanish, and clients may choose to use audio computer-assisted self-interview technology (ACASI) for the web-based surveys. ACASI gives clients the option to listen to a recording of the questions and response options with headphones, rather than having to read them on the screen (a paper and pencil version of the three surveys will be available in the rare case of technology failure or unavailability, e.g., absence of sufficient connectivity or power outage).

To administer the ACASI surveys, grantees must budget for and use sufficient computers (laptops, desktops, tablets) that use the latest versions of the Chrome or Internet Explorer web browsers. With regard to tablets, grantees will be informed, post-award, which tablets have been tested for optimal performance of nFORM.

Grantees must develop and implement a coherent, comprehensive data collection plan. The plan must address an approach to collect data in a uniform, systematic manner, and a way that protects personally identifiable information. The plan must address how data will be collected - for example, whether by grantee staff, partner agencies, and/or subcontracted evaluators. If applicable, grantees must establish letters of agreement with partner agencies and/or subcontracted evaluators that outline the responsibilities of each agency, and that confirm the agencies' agreement to collect and submit performance measurement data.

nFORM will be used for grantee reporting and analysis and for monitoring and program improvement; grantees will be required to report their progress quarterly to ACF through semiannual PPRs and QPRs. nFORM generates all necessary calculations for the quantitative data for these reports. To inform decision making, grantees can also view and analyze their nFORM data using built-in client profiles, operational reports designed to support day-to-day grant management, a dynamic data dashboard, and a data export.

During development of the system and the performance measures, information was drawn from existing measures and research literature, and feedback was incorporated from the general public and grant applicants. Since then, enhancements have been made to respond to the evolving needs of ACF and grantees. Currently, ACF is undergoing a process to further update and refine the performance measures and data collection system. This process includes the collection of public, grantee, and other expert and stakeholder input on potential improvements to the system. Grantees will be required to collect and report data according to these changes and updates.

## **APPENDIX SECTION F: LOCAL EVALUATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL**

The first 6 months of the grant will be a planning period during which grantees who propose to conduct a local evaluation (either descriptive or impact) and their local evaluators will be required to work with OFA to refine, improve, and make necessary changes to the evaluation design/methods, develop or select assessments and data collection instruments, and pilot and pre-pretest methods and instruments (if possible). See the standards for local evaluation plans in *Appendix, Section G: Standards for Local Evaluation Plans*.

During the 6-month planning period, grantees and their local evaluators must submit a final evaluation plan and budget that demonstrates a strong research design, timelines for each stage

in the research process, anticipated challenges, clearly defined research questions and analysis plan, and adequate staffing plans to accomplish the needs of the evaluation. OFA approval will be required prior to initiation of a proposed evaluation plan. A federal contractor may review the evaluation plan and funding for each of the evaluation activities and recommend an adjustment to the plan and proposed level of funding.

Following the 6-month planning period, OFA (and its designated federal contractor(s)) will continue to review and assess progress for grantees that propose and initiate either a descriptive or an impact evaluation.

During the 12 months immediately following the 6-month planning period (i.e., the "evaluation start-up period?"), grantees that propose an impact evaluation must demonstrate readiness for proceeding with an impact evaluation. During this evaluation start-up period, these grantees will collect data for the implementation evaluation without engaging participants in random assignment, and demonstrate that they have the capability to enroll sufficient sample sizes for a subsequent impact evaluation. Grantees who are able to demonstrate readiness after this evaluation start-up period will receive OFA approval to proceed with the proposed impact evaluation. Local impact evaluations must begin random assignment and enrollment no later than the beginning of Year 3 of the grant period. Grantees will be subject to an evaluation review process every 12 months thereafter to assess for progress, and OFA approval will be required for continued execution of a proposed evaluation plan; without approval, the local evaluation will be halted.

OFA will conduct annual evaluation reviews to determine whether sufficient progress has been made in executing the local evaluation plan. Where OFA determines that sufficient progress has not been made, OFA will require that the local evaluation be halted.

After local evaluation research plans have been approved, grantees must implement robust evaluations lasting throughout the grant period, including data collection, analysis, drafting of reports, and multiple dissemination efforts to inform many audiences.

#### **APPENDIX SECTION G: STANDARDS FOR LOCAL EVALUATIONS (to be developed during the planning period)**

**Note:** Consistent with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3521, under this FOA, OFA will not conduct or sponsor - and a person is not required to respond to - a collection of information covered by such Act, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OFA will seek approval of a local evaluation design template through the OMB OIRA. OFA will not request this information if this template is not approved at the time that reports are due.

During the planning period, grantees and their local evaluators are required to work with ACF to refine, improve, pilot/pre-test, and make necessary changes to the evaluation design/methods proposed. Grantees will draft and propose a final evaluation design during this planning period. This Appendix specifies the areas that grantees will address in their final evaluation designs, at a minimum.

1. Research question(s). State the research question(s) that the evaluation intends to answer, specifying the inputs (e.g., program components, program supports, implementation features, etc.) and the outcomes (e.g., participant outcomes) that will be

- examined to answer the research question(s).
2. Background. Describe previous literature or existing research that informs the stated research question(s) and how the evaluation will expand the evidence base. Explain why the research question(s) are of specific interest to the program and/or community.
  3. Relation to program logic model. Clearly demonstrate how the research question(s) (and the related implementation features and/or participant outcomes) link to the proposed logic model and the theory of change for the program.
  4. Hypotheses. For each specific research question, state the hypothesized result(s) and briefly describe why these results are anticipated.
  5. Research design. Describe the research design proposed to answer the research question(s). State whether the proposed evaluation is a descriptive or impact evaluation and justify why the proposed research design is best suited to answer the research question(s). If the design will include a program and control or comparison group(s), specify how the group(s) will be formed or selected, and describe the programming for which each will be eligible and how they differ. If the evaluation will collect multiple waves of data, describe the timing of these waves. When describing follow-up periods, specify whether the follow-up period will be post-baseline or post-program completion. Describe how respondents will be tracked over time for later data collection. Grantees are required to collect performance measures at program entry and exit; performance measure data collection may be considered part of the data collection plan. If proposing a process or implementation study to accompany an impact study, describe specific framework(s) or approach(es) that will be used (e.g., implementation science frameworks).
  6. Ongoing grantee and local evaluator coordination. Describe how the grantee and local evaluator collaboratively worked together to identify the research question(s) and research design to ensure its feasibility and relevance. Describe how the grantee and local evaluator will continue to work together throughout the evaluation to proactively address unforeseen challenges as they arise and ensure the rigor and relevance of the evaluation and its findings. Describe how the grantee and local evaluator will coordinate dissemination efforts. Describe how these processes will occur while maintaining the independence of the evaluation.
  7. Methods to develop study groups. If the research design includes the comparison of two or more groups (e.g., a program group and a comparison group), describe how the groups will be formed. The control/comparison group and the program/treatment group should be assigned using a systematic approach appropriate to the research design. Note: If the research question(s) and study design do not necessitate comparisons, this issue does not need to be addressed.
    - a. Random assignment to develop study groups. If groups will be constructed by random assignment, describe how, when, and by whom random assignment will occur. Describe how random assignment will be monitored to prevent crossover of those assigned to specific study groups. Describe methods to monitor the comparability of the study groups.
    - b. Matching to develop study groups. If a comparison group(s) will be constructed using an approach other than random assignment, describe how and when the program and comparison group will be formed. Detail steps that will be taken to increase the likelihood that participants in the program/treatment and comparison

groups of the project are similar, and on what metrics. Describe methods to monitor the comparability of the research groups, and include justification that the proposed design is the most rigorous possible for addressing the research question(s) of interest.

- c. Other method(s). If another type of evaluation research design is proposed, such as a regression discontinuity, single case, or other (non-matching) quasi-experimental designs; include an adequate description of the approach. Include justification that the proposed design is the most rigorous design possible for addressing the research question(s) of interest.
8. Lead staff. Clearly define the roles of lead staff for the evaluation, especially the Principal Investigator and/or Research Project Director. Articulate the experience, skills, and knowledge of the staff (including whether they have conducted similar studies in this field), as well as their ability to coordinate and support planning, implementation, and analysis related to a comprehensive evaluation plan. Include curriculum vitae for the Principal Investigator/Research Project Director and up to four additional staff to be involved in the local evaluation in application appendices.
9. Sample.
  - a. Target population(s) and unit of analysis. Describe the target population(s), and explicitly state whether the population(s) differs from those who will be broadly served by the grant. Describe how the target population will be identified. Explicitly state the unit of analysis (e.g., non-residential father, unmarried couple).
  - b. Sample size. If an impact evaluation is proposed, state the intended sample size (overall and by year), estimated attrition, and the anticipated size of the analytic sample (for both program/treatment and control/comparison groups). Provide power analyses demonstrating that proposed sample sizes will be able to detect expected effect sizes for the outcomes targeted. Include intended sample sizes and power analyses for any subgroups of central interest to the evaluation. Refer to previous studies of similar interventions for estimates of the required sample to inform power analyses. Note: If an impact evaluation is not proposed, this issue does not need to be addressed.
  - c. Methods to promote sufficient program participation. Detail methods to ensure sufficient sample is recruited, enrolls, and participates in the program. Describe who will be responsible for recruiting the evaluation sample, and specify whether the same staff will recruit for both the program and comparison groups. Describe any incentives to be offered for program participation/completion and/or data collection.
10. Data collection.
  - a. Constructs and measures/data collection instruments. Clearly articulate the constructs of interest, measures to evaluate those constructs, and specific data collection instruments. Provide any information on the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments. If measures and data collection instruments will be determined during the course of the evaluation planning, describe the process to determine the measures and instruments, including any pre-testing of data collection instruments.
  - b. Consent. Describe how and when program applicants will be informed of the

- study and will have the option of agreeing (i.e., consenting to) or declining to participate in the study.
- c. Methods of data collection. Describe how data will be collected (including required performance measure data). Include a table detailing which data collection measures/instruments will be collected by which persons, and at what point in the programming or at what follow-up point. Describe any incentives to be offered to participants for completing surveys or other data collection efforts.
  - d. Ensuring and monitoring high-quality data collection. Describe plans for training data collectors and for updating or retraining data collectors about procedures. Detail plans to regularly review data that have been submitted and to assess and swiftly address problems.
  - e. Tracking participants and reducing attrition. If participants will complete post-program and/or follow-up surveys, describe plans for tracking participants in order to conduct follow-up surveys with as many participants as possible. Outline a plan for monitoring both overall and differential attrition. Note: If no post-program or follow-up surveys are proposed, this issue does not need to be addressed.
11. Privacy. Specify how the methods for data collection, storage, and transfer (e.g., transfer of performance data to the federal government) will ensure privacy for study participants.
  12. IRB/Protection of human subjects. Include a description of the process for protection of human subjects, and IRB review and approval of the proposed program and evaluation plans. Name the specific IRB to which you expect to apply. Additionally, include a federal-wide assurance in the Appendices of the application.
  13. Data. Describe the database into which data will be entered (i.e., nFORM and/or other databases), including both performance measure data and any additional local evaluation data. Describe the process for data entry (i.e., who will enter the data into the database).
    - a. Data reporting and transfer. Indicate the ability to produce reports (e.g., for OFA) and to export individual level data (with all of the above variables) to Excel or a comma-separated format.
    - b. Ability to link. Indicate an ability to maintain individual identifying information to facilitate linking to data from other sources (e.g., administrative data systems such as unemployment insurance).
    - c. Current security and confidentiality standards. Indicate the ability to be able to encrypt data access during transit (for example, accessed through an HTTPS connection); be able to encrypt data at rest (that is, when not in transit), have in place a data backup and recovery plan; require all users to have logins and passwords to access the data they are authorized to view; and have current anti-virus software installed to detect and address malware, such as viruses and worms.
  14. Data Analysis. Briefly describe the planned approach for data analysis. If an impact analysis is proposed, name the key dependent and independent variables, and describe any methods to minimize Type I error (i.e., finding positive impacts by chance) such as limiting the number of impacts to be analyzed and/or multiple comparison correction. Describe proposed approach(es) for addressing missing data.
  15. Data Archiving and Transfer. Describe a data archiving plan that establishes procedures

and parameters for all aspects of data/information collection (e.g., informed consent, data maintenance, de-identifying data, etc.) necessary to support archiving information and data collected through the evaluation. Describe how the collection methods for all types of proposed data collection will support the archiving and transfer of each type, and how consent form language accurately represents plans to store data for sharing and/or transferring to other researchers. Describe methods of data storage that will support archiving and/or transferring data, and explain how data and analyses file construction and documentation will support data archiving and/or transferring.

16. Dissemination. Briefly describe the planned dissemination efforts associated with the local evaluation, including any dissemination that will occur while the evaluation is ongoing (rather than after the evaluation is completed), and any plans for study registration with an appropriate registry (e.g., [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov), [socialscienceregistry.org](http://socialscienceregistry.org), [osf.io](http://osf.io), etc.).