

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Application due May 20, 2024



Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE)

Secondary Analyses of Child Care and Early Education Data

Opportunity number: HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-YE-0195



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Before you begin

If you believe you are a good candidate for this funding opportunity, secure your [SAM.gov](#) and [Grants.gov](#) registrations now. If you are already registered, make sure your registration is active and up-to-date.

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

You must have an active Grants.gov registration. Doing so requires a Login.gov registration as well.

[See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply](#)

Apply by May 20, 2024

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 20, 2024.



To help you find what you need, this NOFO uses internal links. In Adobe Reader, you can go back to where you were by pressing Alt + Left Arrow (Windows) or Command + Left Arrow (Mac) on your keyboard.



Step 1:

Review the Opportunity

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Basic information

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE)



Have questions?
See [Contacts and Support](#).

This funding opportunity supports researchers conducting secondary analysis of data on child care and early education.

Summary

ACF, OPRE is soliciting applications for Secondary Analyses of Data on Child Care and Early Education projects. Analyzing existing data sets can provide researchers with an efficient and cost-effective way to answer critical research questions. This funding opportunity aims to support researchers conducting secondary analyses of data to address the goals and outcomes of programs administered by ACF, in particular the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Findings should inform policy, program administration, and future research.

For further information about OPRE, [visit our website](#). You can also learn more about the [Office of Child Care \(OCC\)](#) and the [Child Care and Development Fund \(CCDF\)](#).

Funding details

Type: Grant

Estimated total program funding: \$1,500,000

Total expected awards: 15

Minimum award amount (award floor): \$90,000 per project period

Maximum award amount (award ceiling): \$100,000 per project period

Funding periods: 18-month period of performance with one 18-month budget period

Funds will be made available for only one 18-month budget period that starts on September 30, 2024, and ending March 30, 2026.

Applicants must provide a budget for the entire 18-month period. There will be no supplemental or additional funding beyond the initial award.

Satisfactory performance is indicated by timely submission of progress reports detailing activities in line with the approved project.

Awards made under this funding opportunity are subject to federal funds availability.

Key facts

Opportunity Name:

Secondary Analyses of
Child Care and Early
Education Data

Opportunity Number:

HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-
YE-0195

Federal Assistance

Listing:

93.575

Key dates

Application deadline:

May 20, 2024

Expected award date:

August 30, 2024

Expected start date:

September 30, 2024

See [deadlines](#).

Eligibility

Who can apply

Eligible applicants

Eligibility is unrestricted. Any organization is eligible for an award with the following exceptions:

- Individuals, including sole proprietorships
- Foreign entities

Other eligibility criteria

Eligible U.S. entities may apply on behalf of researchers who hold doctorate or equivalent degrees in their respective fields, conduct research as a primary professional responsibility, and have been first or second author on publications in peer-reviewed research journals.

Organizations may submit more than one application to this opportunity, but multiple applications from the same organization must follow these rules:

- Each application must have a different Principal Investigator (PI)
- Each project submitted by an organization must be distinct in methods, data sets, and research questions

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

See [initial review](#) for disqualification factors.

Cost sharing

This program has no cost-sharing requirement. If you choose to include cost-sharing funds, we won't consider it during review. However, we will hold you accountable for any funds you add, including through reporting.

Program description

ACF supports the social and economic well-being of individuals, families, and communities through the delivery of human services programs that promote economic security, health and safety, and children's development. This includes child care and early education programs such as those funded with CCDF.

CCDF is administered as a block grant of more than \$9 billion that provides funding to states, territories, and tribes for child care and early education services for low-income families with children under the age of 13. CCDF is the primary federal funding source for child care subsidies that helps eligible low-income working families access child care and early education.

CCDF aims to improve the quality of child care and promote healthy development and learning for all children by supporting the following:

- Child care licensing
- Quality improvement systems to help programs meet higher standards
- Training and education for child care and early education workers

Secondary Analyses of Child Care and Early Education Data projects fund studies that are relevant to CCDF-funded programs. Findings from these studies inform policy, program administration, and future research.

Researchers may conduct secondary analyses using data sets that can include, but are not limited to:

- Data collected by ACF, including:
 - National Survey of Early Care and Education
 - ACF-801 Monthly Child Care data
 - ACF-218 Annual Quality Progress Report data
- Program evaluation or administrative data collected by local communities, states, or territories, such as:
 - Quality Rating and Improvement Systems
 - Workforce registries
 - Child care subsidies
 - Licensing
 - Monitoring
 - Child care resource and referral
- Preschool Development Grants Birth-5 data

- Developmental science research data

Many of the data sets listed above, as well as other potentially relevant data sets, are available through the [Child and Family Data Archive](#). Data sets may be used by themselves or linked.

The specific research goals of these projects are to:

- Produce new evidence related to CCDF goals and outcomes.
- Encourage active communication, networking, and collaboration among child care and early education researchers and policymakers.
- Build the capacity of child care and early education researchers to rigorously analyze existing data sets and effectively disseminate findings to multiple audiences.

We are especially interested in projects that use a strengths-based equity lens to address systemic inequalities that impact child care and early education programs, particularly those from communities that have been historically underserved or marginalized.

Specific topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Recruiting and retaining a qualified child care and early education workforce.
- Improving child care and early education provider competencies through professional development.
- Supporting the well-being of the child care workforce.
- Understanding consumer education efforts related to child care and early education programs.
- Understanding COVID-19 pandemic impact, response, and recovery in the child care and early education market.
- Building the supply of high-quality child care and early education programs.
- Understanding facilitators and barriers to the implementation of child care and early education programs.
- Understanding coordination and collaboration between child care and early education programs and state/territory systems.
- Engaging and supporting the health, mental health, and economic self-sufficiency of families who use child care and early education programs.
- Reaching, recruiting, enrolling, and sustaining underserved families including, but not limited to:
 - Families in underserved geographic areas
 - Families of infants and toddlers
 - Families of children with disabilities

- Families whose children receive care during nontraditional hours

Project requirements

Principal Investigator

Each project must have one PI who has research expertise (e.g, who hold doctorate or equivalent degrees in their respective fields, conduct research as a primary professional responsibility, and have been first or second author on publications in peer-reviewed research journals) to oversee the project. The PI will be required to attend the following meetings:

- Quarterly virtual meetings with other Secondary Analyses of Child Care and Early Education Data recipients
- The 2025 bi-annual meeting of the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC)
 - This meeting is typically held in the early spring or summer in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and lasts approximately two days.
 - The PI may be required to present a poster at this meeting.
- A meeting of all Secondary Analyses of Child Care and Early Education Data recipients, which will be held in conjunction with CCEEPRC and scheduled one to two days before or after the CCEEPRC meeting.

Content and scope

Recipients must conduct secondary data analyses to address key questions of relevance to the goals and outcomes of child care and early education (CCEE) programs that are funded, at least in part, by CCDF, and disseminate findings from those analyses.

For the purpose of this program, CCEE includes center-based and home-based child care programs serving children (birth through 12 years) where all or part of the revenue is generated through CCDF subsidies. In addition to CCDF subsidies, revenue sources may also include other publicly funded programs such as Head Start and public prekindergarten.

Funding policies and limitations

We do not allow the following costs under this NOFO:

- Construction
- Purchase of real property
- Major renovation
- Pre-award costs

See [45 CFR 75.420 – 75.475](#) for information on costs that are always unallowable or have restrictions.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs are those for a common or joint purpose across more than one project and that cannot be easily separated by project.

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

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

Method 2 — *De minimis* rate. Per [45 CFR 75.414\(f\)](#), if you have never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, you may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate. If you are awaiting approval of an indirect cost proposal, you may also use the *de minimis* rate. If you choose this method, costs included in the indirect cost pool must not be charged as direct costs.

This rate is 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). See [45 CFR 75.2](#) for the definition of MTDC. You can use this rate indefinitely.

Learn more at [45 CFR 75.414](#), Indirect Costs.

Subawards

The prime recipient must maintain a substantive role in the project. We define a substantive role as conducting funded activities and providing services that are necessary and integral to completing the project. Monitoring your subrecipient's activities is not a substantive role. See [45 CFR 75.352](#) for information on subrecipient monitoring.

We do 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.

Subrecipients must meet the [eligibility requirements](#) of this NOFO.

Statutory authority

Section 6580(a)(5) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9858m(a)(5)).



Step 2:

Get Ready to Apply

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Get registered

SAM.gov

Your entity must have an active registration with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier. SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. Begin that process today.

To register, go to [SAM.gov Entity Registration](#) and click “Get Started.” From the same page, you can also click on the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register.

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with [Grants.gov](#). You can see step-by step instructions at the Grants.gov [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#).

Need Help? See [Contacts and Support](#).

Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to [Search Grants](#) at [Grants.gov](#) and search for opportunity number HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-YE-0195. Then, click the “Package” tab.

If you can’t use Grants.gov to download application materials, you may request them from the [Grants Management Contact](#).

If you are also unable to apply through Grants.gov, see [exemptions for paper submissions](#).

Learn more

Visit [Applying for an ACF Grant Award](#) on the ACF Grants Page.



Step 3:

Prepare Your Application

In this step

Application contents and format

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Application contents and format

Application components

You will submit two files plus the standard forms in the application package.

File One: Project Narrative Attachment Form

Includes:

- Table of contents
- Project summary, one page
- Project narrative
- Line-item budget and budget narrative

File Two: Other Attachments Form

Includes all [attachments](#).

Forms

Includes [other required forms](#).

Required format

Page limit for File One and File Two combined: 75 pages

File Format: Portable Document File (PDF) is recommended, but not required. ACF supports the following file formats when you attach files to the Project Narrative Attachment Form and the Other Attachments Form:

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

Paper Size: 8.5 inches by 11 inches

Margins: 1 inch all around

Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

Do not include external links to information you want reviewers to assess.

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

Size: 12-point font

Footnotes and text in tables and graphics may be 10-point.

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced

Project summary: Must be single-spaced

Project narrative: Must be double-spaced

Line-Item budget and budget narrative: Can be single-spaced

Attachments: Curricula Vitae (CVs) must be single-spaced. Other attachments may be single-spaced or double-spaced, as needed.

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

Table of contents

At the beginning of File One, insert a table of contents that guides a reader through the contents of both files in your application. If possible, include links to the relevant content in File One.

Project summary

Provide a one-page summary of the project description. Do not cross-reference to other parts of the application. The summary must include:

- At the top, the project title, applicant name, address, phone numbers, email addresses, and any website URL
- A brief description of the project, including the needs and population you will address and your proposed services

Project narrative

The project narrative is where you address all your proposed activities. It is a critical section of your application, which we evaluate and rank against other applications using the [merit review criteria](#). Remember that substance and measurable outcomes are more important than length. We are particularly interested in project narratives that convey strategies for achieving intended performance.

In the project narrative, you must:

- Explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in the [program description](#) section.
- Make sure your narrative is clear, concise, and complete.
- Use cross-referencing rather than repetition.
- Be sure to include any required supporting documents noted. You generally provide these in your [attachments](#).
- Use the headings and order of the sections and subsections that follow.

Approach

Outline your action plan. Describe the scope of your proposed project and explain in detail how you will accomplish it.

In your action plan, be sure to do the following:

- Account for all functions or activities you identify in your application.
- Explain potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing your project goals. Note the strategies you will use to address them.
- Include clear links to child care and early education programs, including the policy implications of the proposed research, using a strengths-based equity lens.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the proposed data sets and an understanding of the methodology used to construct them.

Your action plan must include all of the information that follows.

Background, objectives, and significance

Your action plan must address the following topics:

- **Background:** Include a literature review that covers the most recent, relevant literature about your proposed topic. Your literature review must do the following:
 - Discuss previous studies related to the proposed study and identify gaps in the literature.
 - Justify the proposed research project and the outcomes of interest.
 - Describe disparate outcomes, if any, and discuss them in the context of existing societal structures and systems. This discussion should reflect a clear understanding of the systemic inequalities and cultural factors relevant to the proposed sample and analytic plan.
- **Objectives:** Identify and describe the objective(s) of the proposal. Additionally, discuss the underlying theoretical or conceptual framework of the research project and how it relates to the project goals and research questions. Your analysis should describe how the objectives and underlying theoretical framework

aim to address the systemic inequalities noted in the background section of the proposal.

- **Significance:** Describe the overall significance of the proposal, including an explanation of how it advances equity for those in the proposed sample who have been historically underserved or marginalized. Use a strengths-based approach to describing the proposed sample and the systemic and cultural factors affecting them. Be sure to discuss how the proposal will address issues relevant to:
 - The child care and early education field
 - The goals of the CCDF program (as outlined in the [program description](#) above)
 - Key gaps in the literature
 - Systemic and cultural factors affecting the proposed sample

Research design and methodology

Your action plan must describe the research design and methodology of the proposed analysis. You must discuss the connection between the research questions proposed and the research methodology that will be used and show that the methodology addresses the research questions of interest.

Be sure to include the following information:

- **Research questions:** List the research questions and describe how they relate to child care and early education programs.
- **Hypothesized results:** Describe the hypothesized results and use literature review findings to justify them.
- **Data sources:** Identify and describe the selected data set(s) and explain how it is appropriate for the proposed project. Include the following specific information:
 - Nature and scope of the data, including the sample or population of each data set
 - Original research or other purpose of the data, including any prior secondary analyses that have been conducted using the proposed data set. For applications that propose to link data sets, describe the procedures that will be used to link them
 - Procedures that will be used to clean and process the data
- **Sample:** Describe the proposed study sample, how it will be constructed, and how it relates to the population of interest. Your discussion must:
 - Demonstrate that the analytic sample size will be sufficient to find effects using the proposed analytic strategy.
 - Show that the proposed project will provide for adequate protection of human subjects.

- Describe the process by which Human Subjects Certification/Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval has or will be obtained prior to award. If IRB exemption has already been obtained at the time of application, you must include the IRB exemption.
- **Measures:** Describe the specific measures the study will use, how they will be constructed (if applicable), and the psychometric properties of each measure. Demonstrate that the measures are appropriate to answer the proposed research questions.
- **Analytic strategy:** Explain the analytic approach, statistical techniques, and methods of inference that you will use to analyze and interpret the data. Detail how missing data will be handled and how weights (if applicable) will be used.
- **Preliminary results:** Preliminary analyses/results are not required. When available, results of any preliminary analyses that have already been conducted for the proposed project, including tables of descriptive statistics, must be included. If no preliminary analyses have been performed yet, include a note saying so.
- **Data access plan:** Provide evidence of access to the proposed data sets.
 - This could include copies of licenses or approvals for restricted-use data sets, or copies of written agreements between you and the individuals or entities authorized to provide access to the data sets.
 - If data sets are not yet accessible at the time of application, describe the expected timeline and activities that would be necessary to obtain data set access prior to the grant award. This could include descriptions of communications with data owners or archivers.
- **Pre-registration:** Describe a plan to pre-register the project with an appropriate public registry. This pre-registration must include:
 - A detailed description of the data set
 - The proposed research questions, hypotheses, variables, exploratory and confirmatory analyses, and primary and secondary outcomes of interest
 - A description of how the pre-registration will be updated over the course of the project

Dissemination plan

Provide a detailed dissemination plan that explains how you will share the findings from the proposed study with a range of relevant audiences, including practitioners (for example, child care and early education staff), policymakers, and researchers. Include the following:

- **Dissemination product types:** List multiple ways that you will share your findings. Distribution channels can include, but are not limited to:

- Policy briefs
 - Practice briefs for practitioners
 - Journal articles
 - Webinars
 - Conference presentations
- **Audiences:** List the intended audience for each of the proposed dissemination products and explain how each will be tailored for the specified audience.

Project timeline and milestones

Provide a timeline for your project that includes milestones. To do so:

- Organize the information by task and subtask, showing related milestones.
- Provide monthly or quarterly quantitative projections for what you plan to accomplish and by when. For example, provide the number of people you plan to serve or the number of a certain activity you plan to complete.
- If you can't quantify some of your accomplishments, provide their target dates.
- Cover the full period of performance in your timeline.

Organizational capacity

Describe how your project staff will ensure that the final products are high-quality and prepared on the timeline indicated. Provide the following information for your full project team including the applicant organization and any cooperating partners, contractors, and subrecipients:

- Identify the proposed staff, including one PI, and the number of hours they will devote to the proposed research project.
- Demonstrate that the proposed staff have access to appropriate facilities to execute the proposed approach and ensure data security and confidentiality.
- Show that your team has the organizational capability to fulfill their roles and functions effectively.
- Demonstrate the PI and other key staff have:
 - Doctorate or equivalent degrees in their respective fields with evidence of lead authorship (first or second author) on publications in peer-reviewed research journals
 - Enough time to conduct the proposed project
 - An understanding of child care and early education programs and the diverse populations they serve
 - Skills and experience to conduct the proposed analyses
 - Skills and experience to implement the dissemination plan

- Experience with administering, developing, implementing, managing, and evaluating similar projects
- Provide CVs of all proposed staff in the [attachments](#) section.

Plan for oversight of federal award funds and activities

You must ensure proper award oversight. The regulation that governs this oversight is [45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D](#). It includes standards for:

- Financial and program management
- Property management
- Procurement
- Performance and financial monitoring and reporting
- Subrecipient monitoring and management
- Record retention and access
- Remedies for noncompliance
- Prior written approval

Describe your framework to ensure proper oversight of federal funds and activities. Include:

- A description of the governance, policies and procedures, and systems you use for record keeping and financial management
- A description of the procedures to identify and mitigate risks and issues. These might include audit findings, continuous performance assessment findings, and monitoring
- The key staff who will be responsible for maintaining oversight of program activities staff and any partners or subrecipients

Protection of sensitive or confidential information

Describe how you will collect and safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other information that is considered sensitive. Make sure your approach is consistent with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality. Provide:

- The methods and systems you will use to ensure that you properly handle confidential and sensitive information including any subrecipients or contractors
- A plan for the disposition of such information at the end of the period of performance

See [45 CFR 75.303\(e\)](#) for more information.

Line-item budget and budget narrative

The line-item budget and budget justification supports the information you provide in the Budget Information Standard Form, SF-424-A. See [other required forms](#).

It justifies the costs you ask for and includes added detail, including detailed calculations for the “object class categories” in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for the full period of performance. See [funding periods](#).

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project’s purpose and activities.
- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable.
- The restrictions on spending funds. See [funding policies and limitations](#)
- The proposed budget must include travel funds to attend the CCEEPRC meeting and corresponding grant recipient meeting, as described in [project requirements](#)

We encourage you also to review the Standard Form instructions.

To create your line-item budget and justification, [see detailed instructions on our website](#).

In general, you must:

- Provide sufficient information in the proposed budget and budget narrative to link all costs to proposed activities.
- Indicate the method you will use for your indirect cost rate. See [indirect costs](#) for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.
- For any cost-sharing, include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

In your application, you may identify salary or other proprietary information or personally identifiable information. We will remove this information from applications before they go to reviewers.

If you have an [exemption for paper submission](#), you can protect salary information and any proprietary information by placing that information only in the original application. You can remove the information from the copies, keeping summary information.

Attachments

You will upload attachments in Grants.gov using the Other Attachments Form. These attachments are included in the overall application page limit, unless it says otherwise below.

Indirect cost agreement

If you include indirect costs in your budget using an approved rate, include a copy of your current agreement approved by your [cognizant agency for indirect costs](#). If you use the *de minimis* rate, you do not need to submit this attachment.

See [indirect costs](#) for more information.

Legal proof of nonprofit status

If your organization is a nonprofit, you need to attach proof. We will accept any of the following:

- A reference to your listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations
- A copy of a current tax exemption certificate from the IRS
- A letter from your state's tax department, attorney general, or another appropriate state official saying that your group is a nonprofit and that none of your net earnings go to private shareholders or others
- A certified copy of your certificate of incorporation or similar document. This document must show that your group is a nonprofit
- Any of the above for a parent organization. Also, include a statement signed by an official of the parent group that your organization is a nonprofit affiliate

Legal proof of for-profit status

If your organization is a for-profit, including small businesses, you need to attach proof.

Include documentation establishing the power granted to the entity to enter into contractual relationships or accept awards. This might include your articles of incorporation or bylaws.

Organizational capacity supporting information

You must attach the following information to support the information in your [organizational capacity](#) section:

- CVs for all key personnel

Protection of human subjects certification

Not included in the page limit.

You must attach a Protection of Human Subjects: Assurance Identification / Certification / Declaration of Exemption Form. You can find this form at the [Office of Human Research Protections Forms](#) website.

For more on this topic, see [the Office of Human Research Protections](#) website. If you have questions, you can email them at OHRP@HHS.gov or call them at 240-453-6900.

Other required forms

You will need to complete some required forms. Upload the following forms at Grants.gov. You can find them in the NOFO [application package](#) or review them and their instructions at [Grants.gov](#).

Forms	Submission Requirement
Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Individual (SF-424)	With the application.
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With the application.
Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	With the application.
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable, with the application or before award.
Key Contacts	With the application.
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	With the application or before award.
Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	With the application. Cite your primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites.
Protection of Human Subjects / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	With the application. If the information is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.



Step 4:

Learn About Review and Award

In this step

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Application review

Initial review

We review each application to make sure it meets basic requirements. We won't consider an application that:

- Requests funding above the [award ceiling](#)
- Is submitted after the [deadline](#)
- Is from an individual, including a sole proprietorship or a foreign entity
- Is received in paper format that didn't have a previously approved exemption from ACF

We will let you know if your application is disqualified within 30 days of the application deadline. You won't receive notice from ACF if your application failed Grants.gov validation checks.

If you submit more than two files in addition to your forms, we will remove the extra files. We will let you know if this happens.

We will also remove blurred or illegible pages and any file formats that are not supported.

We will not review any pages that exceed the page limit.

If your application fails to adhere to ACF's NOFO formatting, font, and page limitation requirements, we will adjust your application by removing page(s) from the application. We will remove the pages before the merit review and will not send them to reviewers.

If we do so, we will send you a letter after we make awards to notify you that we amended your application.

Merit review

A panel reviews all applications that pass the initial review. The members use the criteria in this section.

Additionally, our reviewers typically are not federal employees. See [proprietary and personally identifiable information](#).

Criteria

Criterion	Total number of points = 100
1. Background, objectives, and significance	20 points
2. Research design and methodology	30 points
3. Dissemination plan	20 points
4. Organizational capacity	20 points
5. Project timeline and milestones	10 points

Please note: Reviewers must evaluate and score an application based on the documents that are presented in the application and must not refer to, or access, external links during the merit review.

The details for each criterion are described in the [project narrative](#) section of the funding opportunity. 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 addresses each of the criteria listed.

The merit review criteria are as follows:

Background, objectives, and significance (maximum 20 points)

This criterion evaluates the [background, objectives, and significance](#) portion of your action plan to assess how well the following factors are addressed:

- The proposed project is grounded in recent and relevant literature.
- The proposed research project and the outcomes of interest relate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of child care and early education programs.
- The application demonstrates an understanding of operational and policy contexts relevant to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the CCDF.

Research design and methodology (maximum 30 points)

This criterion evaluates the [research design and methodology](#) portion of your action plan to assess how well the following factors are addressed:

- The proposed project would link research issues, questions, measures, data sources, and analyses with a rigorous research design and data analysis plan.
- The research design and data analysis plan would address technical, logistical, and ethical issues that may arise.

- The research design and methodology reflect capability and expertise in the use of analytic techniques that are appropriate for the questions under consideration.

Dissemination plan (maximum 20 points)

This criterion evaluates the [dissemination plan](#) portion of your action plan to assess how well you describe a multifaceted approach to maximize the dissemination of findings to a range of relevant audiences.

Organizational capacity (maximum 20 points)

This criterion evaluates the [organizational capacity](#) section of your project narrative to assess how well the following factors are addressed:

- The organization's ability to implement the proposed project, including adequacy of organizational resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials).
- The application describes a management plan for achieving the project's objectives.
- The application explains who is responsible for accomplishing the proposed project tasks.
- The PI has a doctorate or equivalent degree in their respective field with evidence of lead authorship (first or second author) on publications in peer-reviewed research journals.
- The qualifications of the PI and key staff who will develop and carry out the project match the proposed project (e.g., topic, methods).

Project timeline and milestones (maximum 10 points)

This criterion evaluates the [project timeline and milestones](#) section of your project narrative to assess how feasible it is that the proposed project can be completed in the timeframe of this funding opportunity. Elements of the timeline considered include:

- Milestones for the full period of performance in your timeline
- How clearly the timeline is organized by task and subtask
- Monthly or quarterly projections about what you plan to accomplish and by when

Risk review

Before making an award, we review the risk that you will not prudently manage federal funds. If you had a past federal award, we need to make sure you've handled those awards well and demonstrated sound business practices. We use SAM.gov [Responsibility / Qualification](#) to check this history for all awards likely to be over \$250,000.

If we find a significant risk, we may choose not to fund your application or to place specific conditions on the award.

For more details, see [45 CFR 75.205](#).

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review results, which are key in making decisions but are not the only factor. Merit review scores and ranking are not binding
- Organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution
- The past performance of the applicant
- The number of applications received from a single state or organization

We will also consider the combination of projects that best meet the needs of the program goals (as described in the [program description](#) section) and the needs of ACF and the CCDF program. This may mean prioritizing applications that complement or fill gaps in ACF's current research portfolio and, for applications submitted by the same organization or PI under HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-YR-0093, Secondary Analyses of Head Start Data, prioritizing projects that do not have substantial duplication of scope.

OPRE will conduct an administrative review of the applications and results of the merit review.

We may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested
- Decide not to allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly
- Decide not to fund a project with high startup costs or unreasonably high operating costs

- Choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems
- Designate your application as “approved but unfunded” if it was successful but there was not sufficient funding to make an award. You may receive funding if additional funds become available within the fiscal year
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO

We will not fund:

- An incomplete application
- A disqualified application

Award notices

How we make awards

If you are successful, we will email or transmit through our grant systems a Notice of Award (NoA) to your authorized official.

We will email you if your application is disqualified or unsuccessful.

The NoA is the only official award document. The NoA tells you about the amount of the award, important dates, and the terms and conditions you need to follow. Until you receive the NoA, you have not received an award. Project costs that you incur before you receive a NoA are at your risk.

If you want to know more about NoA contents, go to [Notice of Award](#) at ACF’s website.



Step 5:

Submit Your Application

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Application submission and deadlines

Deadlines

Application

Due on May 20, 2024.

- For electronic submissions, the due time is 11:59 p.m. ET.
- If you receive an exemption from electronic submission, the due time is 4:30 p.m. ET. See [exemptions for paper submissions](#).

Grants.gov creates a date and time record when it receives the application. If you submit the same application more than once, we will accept only the last, on-time submission.

The grants management officer may extend an application due date based on emergency situations such as documented natural disasters or a verifiable widespread disruption of electric or mail service.

Submission methods

Grants.gov

You must submit your application through Grants.gov unless we give you an exemption for a paper submission. See [get registered](#).

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Make sure that your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks or we will not get it. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files. The link above will also help you learn how to create PDFs.

See [Contacts and Support](#) if you need help.

Issues with federal systems

If you experience a systems issue with Grants.gov or SAM.gov, please refer to ACF's [Policy for Applicants Experiencing Federal Systems Issues](#).

Exemptions for paper submissions

We need to give you an exemption before you can apply on paper. See the [ACF Policy for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission](#). Once we have approved your exemption, download your forms package under the “Package” tab in Grants.gov.

To submit your application, mail it to:

OPRE Review Team

Secondary Analyses of CCEE Data
c/o ICF International
1902 Reston Metro Plaza
Reston, VA 20190

The requirements include:

- Print your application and all copies one-sided.
- Applicants must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all standard forms and OMB-approved forms.
- You must submit the original and both copies in a single package. If you plan to submit more than one application under this NOFO or others, you must submit them separately. Clearly label each package with the NOFO title and funding opportunity number.
- Your authorized organization official must sign the application. One application copy must include an original signature.

Other submissions

Intergovernmental review

This NOFO is not subject to Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs. No action is needed.

Mandatory disclosure

You must submit any information related to violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award. See Mandatory Disclosures, [45 CFR 75.113](#).

Send written disclosures to:

ACF at 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:

The Office of Inspector General at grantdisclosures@oig.hhs.gov.

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

Component	How to Upload	Included in page limit
File One: Project Narrative Attachment Form ☐ Table of contents ☐ Project summary ☐ Project narrative ☐ Line-item budget and budget narrative	Use the Project Narrative Attachment form.	Yes Yes Yes Yes
File Two: Attachments ☐ Indirect cost agreement ☐ Legal proof of nonprofit status ☐ Legal proof of for-profit status ☐ Organizational capacity supporting information ☐ Protection of human subjects certification	Insert each in a single Other Attachments form.	Yes Yes Yes Yes No
Other required forms ☐ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) ☐ Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) ☐ Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B) ☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) ☐ Key Contacts ☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form ☐ Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Upload using each required form.	No No No No No No

Component	How to Upload	Included in page limit
☐ Protection of Human Subjects / IRB Certification / Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)		No



Step 6:

Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

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Post-award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

There are important rules you'll need to follow if you get an award. You must follow:

- All terms and conditions in the NoA
- The rules listed [45 CFR part 75](#), Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards in effect at the time of award and any updates
- The HHS [Grants Policy Statement](#) (GPS). This document has terms and conditions tied to your award. If there are any exceptions to the GPS, they'll be listed in your NoA
- All federal statutes and regulations relevant to federal financial assistance, including those highlighted in HHS Administrative and National Policy Requirements. See also ACF [Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#)
- [45 CFR Part 87 Appendix A, Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations](#)

Reporting

If you are successful, you will have to submit financial and performance reports. To learn more about reporting, see [Reporting](#) at the ACF website.

Performance report forms: Program Performance Reporting (PPR)

Performance report frequency: Semi-annual

Financial report forms: Federal Financial Report (SF-425)

Financial report frequency: Semi-annual

Non-discrimination and assurance

If you receive an award, you must follow all applicable non-discrimination laws. You agree to this when you register in SAM.gov. You must also submit an Assurance of Compliance ([HHS-690](#)). To learn more, see the [Laws and Regulations Enforced by the HHS Office for Civil Rights](#).



Contacts and Support

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Agency contacts

Program

Bonnie Mackintosh

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families
c/o ICF International

Email: CCDataAnalysis@icfi.com

Phone: (877) 350-5913

Grants management

Bridget Shea Westfall

Supervisory Grants Management Specialist, Administration for Children and Families

Email: bridget.shea@acf.hhs.gov

Phone: (202) 401-5542

Grants.gov

Grants.gov provides 24/7 support. You can call 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov. Hold on to your ticket number.

SAM.gov

If you need help, you can call 866-606-8220 or live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

Reference websites

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#)
- [Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\)](#)
- [ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs](#)
- [ACF How to Apply for a Grant](#)
- [ACF Property Guidance](#)
- [Grants.gov Accessibility Information](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#)
- [United States Code \(U.S.C.\)](#)
- [Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation \(OPRE\)](#)
- [Office of Child Care \(OCC\)](#)

- [Frequently Asked Questions about this NOFO](#)
 - In the event of a discrepancy between the FAQ and the NOFO, the NOFO takes precedence.
 - OPRE plans to post questions and answers on an ongoing basis up until 30 calendar days before the application due date. Applicants are strongly encouraged to check the FAQ website link periodically for updates.

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 (Project Narrative, Line-Item Budget and Justification) is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires on March 31, 2026. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.