

State Advisory Councils Application Content and Format

Background and Purpose

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) (P.L. 111-5) made funding available to improve coordination and collaboration among early childhood education and care programs and services. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announces the availability of \$100,000,000 total funds made available by ARRA to be awarded to eligible States, Commonwealths and Territories to enable States to develop and implement a plan established by their State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry (referred to as the State Advisory Council).

In the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Head Start Act, 42 USC 9801 et seq.), Congress authorizes the Governor of each State (to designate or establish such a Council. The definition of a State in the Act includes the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands of the United States, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Republic of Palau. The overall responsibility of the State Advisory Council will be to facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school readiness.

The State Advisory Council will work to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood programs in the State. The Council will conduct periodic statewide needs assessments on the quality and availability of programs and services for children from birth to school entry, identify opportunities for and barriers to coordination and collaboration among existing Federal and state-funded early childhood programs, and develop recommendations for: (1) increasing overall participation of children in existing Federal, State and local child care and early education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations (2) the establishment or improvement of core elements of the State early childhood system, such as a statewide unified data collection system, (3) a statewide professional development system and career ladder for early childhood educators, and (4) high-quality State early learning standards. The Council will also assess the capacity and effectiveness of institutes of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators.

Consistent with section 642B (b)(2)(A), the States shall also use the funds to carry out activities to facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school readiness through one or more of the following activities: enhance promote school readiness of children birth to five, supporting professional development, recruitment and retention initiatives for early childhood educators, enhancing existing early childhood and development programs and services in existence on the date of the grant award and carrying out other activities consistent with the State's plan.

The funded appropriated by ARRA to support the work of the State Advisory Council are for one-time startup grants to develop and implement the plans of the State Advisory Council. These funds can be used over a three-year period. Applications may be submitted through August 30, 2010.

In order to be eligible for a grant, the Governor must designate or establish a council to serve as the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care with the required membership to the maximum extent possible, designate an individual to coordinate activities of the Council, and submit an application meeting requirements in Section 642B (b)(2)(B) of the Act and outlined below.

The application, in line with the expectation and instructions detailed below, must include:

- the statewide strategic report addressing the responsibilities of the Council,
- a description of the how the State will make effective use of the funds to create an early childhood education and care system by developing or enhancing programs and activities consistent with that report, including the activities under Section 642B(b)(2)(A) that will be conducted,
- a description of the States early learning standards and the States goals for increasing the number of children entering kindergarten ready to learn,
- the agency or joint interagency office and individual designated to carry out the activities
- a description of how the State plans to sustain activities beyond the grant period.

The statewide strategic report to be submitted with this application must address the plan for conducting these activities and outlining the processes they have begun to identify the needs in their State. While it is not expected that all States will have conducted a comprehensive statewide needs assessments prior to completing the statewide strategic report, the Council must have begun on the responsibilities as outlined above to the extent it is possible for them to develop an application. The Council must hold public hearings and provide an opportunity for public comment on the strategic report before submitting the application.

Required Content and Format for the Application

Applicants are required to submit one original and one copy of all application materials. The original signature of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) is required only on the original application. Information on the required format, Standard Forms (SFs) and other forms, D-U-N-S Requirement, Project Description, Certifications, Assurances, and Hard Copy submission of applications is provided below.

The project description of the application must be double-spaced and single-sided on 8.5" x 11" plain white paper, with 1" margins on all sides. Applicants must use a 12 point font throughout the application. All sections of the application (including appendices, resumes, charts, references/footnotes, tables and exhibits) must be sequentially numbered, beginning on the first page after the table of contents.

The length of the narrative portion of the application must be limited to **70 pages** (including the abstract, budget and budget justification), with an additional limit of **20 pages** for all appendices and resumes. The narrative section must be double-spaced. Numerical tables included as part of the narrative may be single-spaced.

Each application should be submitted in the following order: SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, Table of Contents, Objectives and Need for Assistance, Approach, Staff and Position Data, Organizational Profiles, and Budget and Budget Justification. Additional supporting documentation should be placed in the appendices.

Please do not use or include colored paper, colored ink, separate covers, binders, clips, tabs, plastic inserts, over-sized paper, videotapes, or any other items that cannot be easily duplicated on a photocopy machine with an automatic feed. Do not bind, clip, staple, or fasten separate subsections of the application in any way, including the supporting documentation.

Forms

Submit an SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. For non-construction programs, applicants must also submit an SF-424A, Budget Information and an SF-424B, Assurances. All required Standard Forms are available at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html.

D-U-N-S Requirement

All applicants must have a D&B Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S) number. A D-U-N-S number is required for every application for a new award or renewal/continuation of an award, including applications or plans under formula, entitlement, and block grant programs. A D-U-N-S number may be acquired at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free D-U-N-S number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or you may request a number online at <http://www.dnb.com>.

Project Description

The project description should be concise and complete. It should address the activity for which Federal funds are being requested. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly.

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

Instructions for Preparing the Full Project Description

Include the following information in the project description:

- (a) Objectives and Need for Assistance

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance must be demonstrated and the

principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly stated. Any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments already conducted should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. In the absence of such data, describe the current status of the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry in the State; the existing need for coordination and collaboration among early childhood development programs and services for children birth to school entry in the State, as well as the existing status of State early learning standards, governance, professional development, and data systems. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as needed.

(b) Approach

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

Provide the name and agency affiliation of each member or proposed member of the State Advisory Council. If applicable, explain fully why membership on the State Advisory Council is not consistent with the requirements of The Head Start Act, Section 642B (b)(1)(C).

Address each of the three years of the grant period and describe goals, objectives, activities and timelines for accomplishing each responsibility of the State Advisory Council. Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

Provide a plan for conducting the required periodic needs assessment, for holding public hearings to provide opportunities for public input in the activities of the State advisory Council, and for holding State Advisory Council meetings for each year of the three-year grant period. Meetings are required for review of implementation status, updating the implementation plan and other reasons deemed necessary by the State Advisory Council.

If any data is to be collected, maintained, and/or disseminated, clearance may be required from OMB. This clearance pertains to any "collection of information that is conducted or sponsored by ACF."

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

Describe how the State plans to sustain a statewide, high-quality, comprehensive early childhood development system beyond the three years of the grant.

(c) Staff and Position Data

Provide a biographical sketch and job description for each key person appointed or assigned. Job descriptions for each vacant key position should be included as well. As new key staff is appointed, biographical sketches will also be required.

(d) Organizational Profiles

Identify the agency or joint interagency office responsible for management of the State Advisory Council and the individual designated by the Governor to coordinate the activities of the State Advisory Council. Include a letter signed by the Governor identifying the designated agency or joint interagency office responsible for the management of the State Advisory Council and the individual designated to coordinate the activities of the Council. Provide information such as: organizational charts; financial statements; audit reports or statements from Certified Public Accountants/Licensed Public Accountants; Employer Identification Number(s); contact persons and telephone numbers; names of bond carriers; child care licenses and other documentation of professional accreditation; information on compliance with Federal/State/local government standards; documentation of experience in the program area; and, other pertinent information.

(d) Third Party agreements

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

(e) Budget and Budget Justification

Provide a budget for each year of the three-year grant period which includes both Federal funding and non-Federal support for the proposed activities. Provide line-item detail and detailed calculations for each budget object class identified on the Budget Information Form (SF-424A or SF-424C). Detailed calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If matching is a requirement, include a breakout by the funding sources identified in Block 15 of the SF-424.

Provide a narrative budget justification that describes how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

General Information:

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

Personnel:

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

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

Fringe Benefits:

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

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

Travel:

Description: Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization. (This item does not include costs of consultant travel).

Justification: For each trip show: the total number of traveler(s); travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. Include travel and per diem for the coordinator of the State Advisory Council to attend an ACF sponsored meeting during the grant period.

Equipment:

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

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 disposal of the equipment after the project ends. An applicant organization that uses its own definition for equipment should provide a copy of its policy, or section of its policy, that includes the equipment definition.

Supplies:

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

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

Contractual:

Description: Costs of all contracts for services and goods except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include third-party evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contracts with secondary recipient organizations, including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Recipients and sub recipients, other than States that are required to use 45 CFR Part 92 procedures, must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold fixed at 41 USC 403(11), currently set at \$100,000. Recipients might be required to make available to ACF pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitation for bids, independent cost estimates, etc.

Note: Whenever the applicant intends to delegate part of the project to another agency, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each delegate agency, by agency title, along with the required supporting information referred to in these instructions.

Other Costs:

Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: non-contractual costs; professional services costs; space and equipment rentals; printing and publication; computer use; and administrative costs.

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

Indirect Charges:

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category should be used only when the applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant Federal agency.

Justification: An applicant that will charge indirect costs to the grant must enclose a copy of the current rate agreement. If the applicant organization is in the process of initially developing or renegotiating a rate, upon notification that an award will be made, it should immediately develop a tentative indirect cost rate proposal based on its most recently completed fiscal year, in accordance with the cognizant agency's guidelines for establishing indirect cost rates, and submit it to the cognizant agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposals may also request indirect costs. When an indirect cost rate is requested, those costs included in the indirect cost pool should not be charged as direct costs to the grant. Also, if the applicant is requesting a rate that

is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

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.

Justification: The firm commitment of these resources must be documented and submitted with the application so that the applicant is given credit in the review process. A detailed budget must be prepared for each funding source.

Certifications

Applicants must furnish, prior to award, an executed copy of the Certification Regarding Lobbying. Applicants must sign and return the certification with their application. If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the applicant shall complete and submit Standard Form (SF)-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions. The Certification Regarding Lobbying may be found at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html. When required for programs that involve human subjects, the Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption form must be submitted. All forms may be reproduced for use in submitting applications. Applicants must sign and return the appropriate standard forms with their application. The Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule) form may be found at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html.

Assurances

By signing and submitting the application, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. The Pro-Children Act of 1994, 20 U.S.C. 7183, imposes restrictions on smoking in facilities where federally funded children's services are provided. HHS grants are subject to these requirements only if they meet the Act's specified coverage. The Act specifies that smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children under the age of 18. In addition, smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility or portion of a facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of federally funded health care, day care, or early childhood development, including Head Start services to children under the age of 18. The statutory prohibition also applies if such facilities are constructed, operated, or maintained with Federal funds. The statute does not apply to children's services provided in private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment, or facilities where WIC coupons are redeemed. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in the imposition of a civil monetary penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity. Additional

information may be found in the HHS Grants Policy Statement at:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_related.html.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Grantees are subject to the administrative requirements in 45 CFR Part 92 (for governmental entities).

Direct Federal grants, sub-award funds, or contracts under this ACF program shall not be used to support inherently religious activities such as religious instruction, worship, or proselytization. Therefore, organizations must take steps to separate, in time or location, their inherently religious activities from the services funded under this program. Regulations pertaining to the Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, which includes the prohibition against Federal funding of inherently religious activities, can be found at the HHS web site at: <http://www.hhs.gov/fbci/waisgate21.pdf>.

A faith-based organization receiving HHS funds retains its independence from Federal, State, and local governments, and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs. For example, a faith-based organization may use space in its facilities to provide secular programs or services funded with Federal funds without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols. In addition, a faith-based organization that receives Federal funds retains its authority over its internal governance, and it may retain religious terms in its organization's name, select its board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in its organization's mission statements and other governing documents in accordance with all program requirements, statutes, and other applicable requirements governing the conduct of HHS funded activities.

Additional information on "Understanding the Regulations Related to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative" can be found at:
<http://www.hhs.gov/fbci/regulations/index.html>.

HHS Grants Policy Statement

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services new single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. Unlike previous HHS policy documents, the GPS is intended to be shared with and used by grantees. It became effective October 1, 2006 and is applicable to all Operating Divisions (OPDIVS), such as the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), except the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The GPS covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important OPDIV-specific requirements. Appendices include a glossary of terms and a list of standard abbreviations for ease of reference. The GPS may be accessed at http://www.hhs.gov/grantsnet/docs/HHSGPS_107.doc.

3. Reporting Requirements:

Grantees will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Frequency of reporting is listed later in this section.

Beginning with FY 2009 awards, All ACF grantees will begin using the Standard Form (SF) for required performance progress reporting (PPR). The SF-PPR is a standard government-wide performance progress reporting format consisting of a series of forms implemented by Federal agencies to collect performance information from award recipients. All ACF grantees will begin using the standard format implemented through ACF's Office of Grants Management (OGM), entitled the "ACF-OGM-SF-PPR." Use of the ACF-OGM-SF-PPR will begin for new awards and continuation awards made by ACF in FY 2009. At a minimum, grantees will be required to submit the ACF-OGM-SF-PPR, which consists of the ACF-OGM-SF-PPR Coversheet and the ACF-OGM-SF-PPR Appendix B Program Indicators.

ACF Programs that utilize other SF-PPR reporting formats, or other reporting forms or formats that differ from the new ACF-OGM-SF-PPR, have listed those forms or formats below. Grant award documents will inform grantees of the appropriate performance progress report form or format to use beginning in FY 2009.

Grantees will continue to use the Financial Status Report (FSR) SF-269 (long form) for required financial reporting.

The SF-269 (long form) and the ACF-OGM-SF-PPR may be found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html. Grantees should consult their award documents to determine the appropriate performance progress report format required under their award.

Frequency of Reporting:

Program Progress Reports: Semi-Annually, 30 days after the end of the reporting period

Interim Narrative Report: 18 months after receipt of grant

Financial Reports: Semi-Annually, 30 days after the end of the reporting period

Final Program and Financial Reports: 90 days after the close of the grant period

The regulations relevant to State Advisory Councils are:

- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-5)
<http://www.recovery.gov/>
- 45 CFR Part 92, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments
http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_03/45cfr92_03.html
- A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a087/a087-all.html>
- The Head Start Act and all relevant Head Start regulations
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs>