Administration for Children and Families

Administration on Children, Youth, and Families-Family and Youth Services Bureau

National Communication System for Runaway and Homeless Youth Program
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CY-0009
Application Due Date: 06/09/2023

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Funding Opportunity Title:
National Communication System for Runaway and Homeless Youth Program

Announcement Type:
Initial

Funding Opportunity Number:
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CY-0009

Primary CFDA Number:
93.623

Due Date for Applications:
06/09/2023

Executive Summary

Notice:

- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) 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/how-apply-grant.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) will award one cooperative agreement for a period of 3 years to operate the National Communication System (NCS) for Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program. The NCS Program assists youth who are contemplating running away, youth who have run away, and youth experiencing homelessness in communicating with their families and, when necessary, connecting them with shelters and other critical services and providers. The NCS Program also provides information, referral services, technical support, crisis intervention, and prevention resources to families and legal guardians, service providers, and other youth-serving organizations. The NCS Program also leads runaway and youth homelessness prevention efforts across the country with the goal of increasing the visibility of NCS services and resources available to young people, especially those at risk of running away or experiencing homelessness, and their families.

I. Program Description

Statutory Authority
The RHY Act authorizes the award of grants for the NCS for RHY Program (34 U.S.C. 11231).

Description
Program Purpose and Background
Every day, in communities across the country, young people face overwhelming situations that may lead them to running away, sleeping in unsafe places (i.e., couch, cars), or living in the

streets. In many cases, youth are leaving homes that are characterized by physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; family dynamics challenges; neglect; rejection; or parental drug and alcohol use. Once on the streets, these young people often lose touch with their families, caring adults, schools, and communities that can support them. As a result, they are at increased risk of multiple types of victimization, such as sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, physical or sexual assault, human trafficking, weapons assault, robbery, and gang activity. These youth also experience mental health, substance abuse, and other health-related challenges. The longer they are exposed to the streets, the more likely they are to fall into dangerous situations and experience several health and behavioral problems.

Since 1975, the RHY Program has worked to establish and strengthen community-based programs to address the immediate needs of youth experiencing homelessness. FYSB's Division of RHY, which administers the RHY Program, aims to increase young people's safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency. The FYSB RHY-funded programs support youth in building permanent connections with families and caring adults with the goal of reuniting them with their families (as appropriate). Youth in crisis or those who have left home receive emergency shelter, counseling, and aftercare services. In addition, projects work to strengthen family relationships, and, in the absence of family reunification, assist youth in finding safe and appropriate alternative living arrangements where they can become independent, self-sufficient, and contributing members of society.

The NCS Program assists young people in communicating with their families and service providers. The NCS also provides crisis-interventions to youth who may be considering leaving home, youth who have left home, and youth experiencing homelessness. The NCS Program provides confidential, safe, and inclusive crisis services, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year throughout the United States and its territories to ensure youth and families have a place to reach out for assistance when needed. The NCS Program focuses on the following:

- Providing youth in crisis, youth who have run away, or youth who are experiencing homelessness, and their families, with a no-cost communication system to exchange messages or have conference calls with one another.
- Identifying resources for youth contemplating running away, youth who have run away, and youth experiencing homelessness in areas where the youth are located.
- Delivering crisis intervention to youth and families, when appropriate, to address problems and issues that surface during contact, via telephone, chat, email, and/or text.
- Providing prevention counseling and referrals to youth in crisis and youth contemplating running away.
- Facilitating access to transportation services, when appropriate, or to shelters, housing, counseling, medical assistance, and other vital services for youth who have run away from home or are experiencing housing instability, or homelessness.
- Providing families or guardians with support and referrals to organizations and agencies that may be able to assist them with preventing their youth from running away or becoming homeless. This may include information about shelters, counseling, medical assistance, and other critical services.
- Maintaining and building the database of services and resources available for youth and families reaching out to the NCS crisis services.

- Conducting outreach (online and off-line) to young people, including those at risk of running away or becoming homelessness, and youth from historically marginalized populations.
- Designing and disseminating resources and information on running away and youth homelessness prevention.
- Increasing the visibility of the NCS Program through collaboration; partnerships; and engagement with young people, service providers, youth-serving organizations, schools, and other key and diverse stakeholders nationwide.
- Expanding opportunities for supported youth engagement, through listening sessions, product development, marketing, and other leadership opportunities.
- Ensuring services are inclusive and accessible to all young people and their families, including, but not limited to, individuals and families from multiple racial and ethnic groups, youth who identify as LGBTQIA2S+; people with disabilities, youth and families with lower incomes; youth and families who live in rural areas; and other historically marginalized and underserved youth and families.

Ensuring the Well-Being of Vulnerable Children and Youth

Children and youth who have experienced maltreatment, exposure to violence, and/or trauma are impacted along several domains, each of which must be addressed in order to foster social and emotional well-being and promote healthy, positive functioning. The NCS Program recipient will ensure the service delivery design is responsive to the following:

Impact of Trauma: Trauma can have a profound effect on the overall functioning of children and youth. Understanding and responding to the symptoms of chronic, interpersonal trauma and traumatic stress, socio-economic inequalities, inter-generational trauma, and adverse childhood experiences can have behavioral health consequences if not appropriately addressed; therefore, the recipient must incorporate strategies that are trauma-informed and youth-centered. More information about implementing a trauma informed care approach can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm.

Understanding Experiences: A fundamental aspect of the human experience is the development of a world view through which one's experiences are understood. Whether that perspective is generally positive or negative impacts how experiences are interpreted and integrated. For example, one is more likely to approach a challenge as a surmountable, temporary obstacle if his or her frame includes a sense that the situation's outcome will be positive. On the contrary, negative experiences can color how future experiences are understood. Ongoing exposure to family violence might lead one to believe that relationships are generally hostile in nature and affect their ability to foster and stay engaged in safe and healthy relationships; therefore, the recipient must incorporate strategies to address how youth frame what has happened to them in the past and shape their beliefs about the future. These practices must include the perspective of young people with lived experience to ensure approaches and interventions reflect their experiences of young people. More information about children and youth development and the impact of adversity can be found at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/early-adversity.

Developmental Tasks: People grow physically and psycho-socially along a fairly predictable course, encountering normal challenges and establishing competencies as they pass from one developmental stage to another. Adversity does, however, have a marked effect on the trajectory of normal social and emotional development, delaying the growth of certain capacities, and, in many cases, accelerating the maturation of others; therefore, the recipient must incorporate strategies that consider the developmental impact of negative experiences and address related strengths and deficits to ensure youth develop along a healthy trajectory.

Coping Strategies: The methods that children and youth develop to manage challenges, both large and small, are learned in childhood, honed in adolescence, and practiced in adulthood. Those who have been presented with healthy stressors and opportunities to overcome them with appropriate encouragement and support are more likely to have an array of positive, productive, coping strategies available to them as they go through life. For children and youth who grow up in unsafe, unpredictable environments, the coping strategies that may have been protective in that context may not be appropriate for safer, more regulated situations; therefore, the recipient must incorporate strategies to help youth transform maladaptive coping methods into healthier and more productive strategies in decision-making and life skills. More information about helping children and youth with mental health coping strategies can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping/help-children-cope/index.html.

Protective Factors: A wealth of research has demonstrated that the presence of certain contextual factors (e.g., supportive relatives, involvement in after-school activities) and characteristics (e.g., self-esteem, relationship skills) can moderate the impacts of past and future negative experiences. These protective factors are fundamental to resilience; building them is integral to successful intervention with children, youth, and families. Therefore, the recipient must incorporate strategies for developing and increasing resiliency in youth. More information about protective factors can be found at https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/

Positive Youth Development (PYD): PYD utilizes strengths-based approaches to engage youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive. PYD enhances youth strengths and promotes positive outcomes for young people by encouraging skill development, a sense of belonging, leadership strengths, opportunities to exercise decision-making, connection with caring adults and other positive relationships, connection to school and/or employment, and other skills that promote positive outcomes for young people. Therefore, the recipient must incorporate PYD into its service delivery model. More information about PYD can be found at https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development.

Please note that definitions are provided in the *Appendix* section of this NOFO (Please see *Appendix* section for more information).

Program Components
The recipient of this cooperative agreement is expected to carry out the following components of the NCS Program:

The NCS Program Hotline (telephone and online services)
The NCS Program Hotline, which includes telephone and multiple online/digital services, will

serve a wide range of expected contacts from youth, parents, legal guardians, and others. The NCS Program recipient will operate an electronic communication system to assist youth (e.g., youth in crisis, youth contemplating running away, youth who have left home, and youth experiencing homelessness) and/or families requesting support, referrals services, and assistance related to their experiences and situations (45 CFR § 1351.15(d)).

The communication system includes telephone, internet, mobile applications, and other technology-driven services to ensure the program is aligning with the way young people communicate and reach out for support. The NCS Program Hotline also must be prepared to deal with multiple intersectional issues associated with youth who may be contemplating running away or are experiencing homelessness situations (e.g., mental health, family dynamics, human trafficking, dating violence, sexual assault) to make effective service referrals for youth and families, when needed.

The NCS Program recipient must design and maintain a plan for operating an NCS address short-term services, such as crisis intervention/counseling, referral services, and information. Additionally, the recipient is expected to engage in collaborative efforts with other national hotlines, such as the National Domestic Violence Hotline, Child Help, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Hotline, National Maternal Mental Health Hotline, National Dating Abuse Helpline, and the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

The recipient must ensure that NCS Program staff and volunteers responding to calls, e-mails, chat, and other forms of online/digital communications receive up-to-date training in how to effectively engage with youth. These trainings may include effective crisis intervention; PYD; trauma-informed service delivery; trauma-response; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The recipient must fulfill this last requirement before a staff person or volunteer responds to calls or any online/digital communications involving a youth or their families. The recipient must employ, train (including technology training), and supervise personnel responding to incoming online and offline contacts. Staff interacting with young people must be fully trained for the broad range of situations that occur while communicating and engaging with these youth. The staff training must include making effective service referrals and directly connecting youth to service providers and families. Furthermore, the staff training should include strategies to serve and build rapport with youth who have been historically marginalized or underserved, including LGBTQIA2S+, youth with disabilities, youth from rural areas, and others.

Referral Database
The NCS Program recipient must create, expand, and sustain an up-to-date nationwide, state-by-state, and U.S. territories referral database to ensure the NCS Program can effectively refer youth and their families to local organizations and agencies. Potential contacts may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Local and statewide hotlines serving young people;
- Existing national hotlines and other organizations;
- Tribal organizations;
- Shelter programs;
- Drop-in Centers;
- Culturally specific community-based organizations;

- Transitional housing programs, including maternity group homes, and long-term housing providers;
- Department of Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care funded projects;
- Emergency services;
- Legal advocacy;
- Medical services;
- Child welfare agencies;
- Programs for LGBTQIA2S+ youth;
- Behavioral health services;
- Substance abuse programs; and
- Domestic violence shelters.

The database must contain up-to-date contact information, along with details regarding expertise, services, and capacity of each agency, organization, and/or individuals. The recipient is required to maintain and expand the database under the cooperative agreement.

NCS Web Portal
The NCS Program recipient must implement and manage the NCS Web portal, which will operate separately from the recipient's website to provide information on:

- NCS Program and its services;
- NCS toll-free number and online/digital available to ensure youth, families, and others learn how to contact the NCS services;
- Trends and relevant data related to youth in crisis, runaway prevention, and youth experiencing homelessness;
- Information on runaway prevention and educational materials; and
- Additional services available for youth in crisis, youth contemplating running away, youth who have left home, and those experiencing housing instability and homelessness.

The NCS Web Portal must be designed to convey information to multiple audiences, such as young people, services providers, youth-serving organizations, families, and the general public. Additionally, it must provide digital channels of communication, including online, chat, texts, and e-mails.

Prevention and Community Education
Prevention plays a key role in minimizing runaway incidents and youth homelessness. The NCS Program recipient is expected to, in coordination and partnership with FYSB, develop and disseminate a range of prevention resources and activities to prevent incidents of running away and youth homelessness. The recipient must promote prevention and community education by:

- Providing technical assistance to those seeking to increase awareness on runaway and homeless youth issues (state, local, national level);
- Ensuring that youth and key stakeholders are aware of services and resources available through the NCS;
- Identifying and implementing strategies for engagement with a various national and local youth advisory boards;
- Increasing partnerships and collaboration with multiple and diverse national stakeholders;

- Delivering and hosting online and in-person training and presentations to multiple audiences;
- Participating in regional, state, and national conferences, meetings, roundtable, and other appropriate outreach/prevention events;
- Identifying strategies to enhance brand recognition among youth and communities nationwide, including exploring opportunities for rebranding of the NCS;
- Developing and executing a strategic plan to lead National Runaway Prevention Month campaign;
- Assisting in the development of prevention resources as requested by the FYSB project officer;
- Disseminating briefings and infographics highlighting latest and current trends of those who contacted the NCS;
- Increasing the awareness of the NCS and RHY services in school settings, including delivering curriculum-based resources in school settings nationwide;
- Utilizing the NCS Web Portal to host and disseminate training and webinars to educate the public on running away and youth homelessness issues;
- Designing and disseminating digital outreach and marketing materials and a social media strategy to successfully target multiple and diverse audiences, such as youth at risk of running away or becoming homeless, youth experiencing homelessness, youth who identify as LGBTQIA2S+, parents/families, service providers, educators, law enforcement, educators, and child welfare representatives;
- Developing training materials and resources to increase the capacity of RHY grant recipients to improve educational outcomes of youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Materials might include education-focused webinars, toolkits, tips sheets, or other resources;
- Developing a strategy for increased coordination with partner hotlines. Develop a resource highlighting various hotline numbers and services for dissemination across youth- and family-serving organizations and agencies. Examples of increased coordination include joint convenings to discuss issues faced by youth and families receiving services by other hotlines and organizing cross-training on ways of supporting youth through hotline services; and
- Developing, planning, and hosting a convening to highlight best practices and strategies to develop and national youth homelessness prevention framework.

Program Requirements

The successful applicant is expected to meet the following requirements of the NCS Program:

Scope of Services

FYSB requires the provision of services and strategies to operate an NCS to assist vulnerable youth in addressing a crisis and/or communicating with their families and with service providers. The NCS Program recipient is expected to use a crisis intervention model focused on empowering the contact to identify specific issues and develop solution-focused options and action plans to address their presenting problem(s). This may require identifying local community-based resources to meet the immediate critical needs; identifying resources; and sharing links and referrals to assist the youth with planning for long-term solutions, such as

individual/family counseling and substance abuse treatment. This crisis intervention model principles include:

- Establishing a rapport with individuals seeking assistance in order to create a sense of trust, which allows more effective communication in a non-judgmental manner and provides a safe environment for the youth;
- Determining the precipitating event in such a way that the youth is likely to talk about everything negative that has happened in his/her lives prior to what actually brought them to a state of crisis and asking questions to determine what caused the break in coping or what immediate situation caused the crisis;
- Encouraging the youth and/or family member to focus on the problem or issue at hand that is creating the crisis;
- Assisting the youth and/or family member with appropriate resources to support them during the crisis, immediately after the crisis, or as a means to actually address the issue bringing them to crisis;
- Offering options and support for independent decision-making based on specific individuals needs and circumstances; and
- Building on the strengths and resources of youth and their families when establishing rapport; discussing potential solutions; and connecting to local community service providers, when appropriate.

Capacities
The NCS Program recipient must have capacities to operate at a nationwide level, including Native American tribes and Alaska Native villages, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands, and:

- Train personnel (staff and volunteers) to respond 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week to urgent phone calls and online communications (emails, texts, and chat).
- Train staff and volunteers in crisis intervention, information and referrals, advocacy safety planning, and counseling skills. In addition, staff and volunteers must be trained on the multiple challenges impacting young people, such as dating violence, mental health, online sexual exploitation, peer-pressure, human trafficking (sex and labor trafficking), and substance abuse.
- Make toll-free services available 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week, 365 days-a-year for those contacting the NCS.
- Connect contacts directly to local programs, resources, and services, when appropriate.
- Assist the young people with securing free or low-cost transportation home or to local programs and services, when appropriate.
- Provide contacts with direct access to English- and Spanish-speaking personnel at all times, and make services available to other contacts with limited English proficiency and persons who are hard of hearing.
- Develop and maintain an emergency response protocol for contacts in immediate danger.
- Assemble and maintain a database of information relating to services for youth and their families/legal guardians to which youth or families may be referred throughout the United States and U.S. territories. The database shall include information on the availability of runaway and homeless youth shelter/housing and other supportive service

providers that can provide advocacy case management, assistance in accessing related federal and state assistance programs, mental health, child welfare, legal advocacy, medical services, and other prevention services.

- Collect and analyze data from those contacting the NCS Program.
- Establish appropriate confidentiality safeguards to protect personal identification information.
- Develop and implement contingency plans for the continuity of the NCS crisis and referral services in the event of inclement weather, public health crisis, or other unforeseen circumstances potentially impacting services.
- Publicize the NCS to targeted audience (i.e., youth and families) throughout the United States; District of Columbia; Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; and the territories of Guam, American Samoa, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Northern Mariana Islands. Publicity will include efforts to ensure promotion through a website, the national media, and through targeted outreach to underserved populations including American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- Develop a strategic plan to lead and implement the National Runaway Prevention Month Campaign.
- Provide assistance and referrals to meet the needs of populations that include, but are not limited to, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, young males, youth victims of human trafficking, youth with mental and physical disabilities, youth living in rural areas, LGBTQIA2S+ youth, and racial and ethnic minority populations.
- Understand federal, state, and local laws affecting youth who run away and youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive disaster preparedness and recovery plan that includes contingencies for continuity of services.
- Provide a plan and outline the agencies' policies ensuring that all employees, contractors, volunteers, and consultants who have regular and unsupervised private contact with youth served by the grantee has a state or tribal criminal history records check, including fingerprint checks, sex offender registry check, and any other checks required under state or tribal law. The policy should describe whether the applicant currently collects Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history records and child abuse and neglect state registry check information. If the applicant does not currently require these two background checks, explain why and what barriers, if any, the applicant foresees in meeting this requirement.
- Describe the procedure to document the justification of any hire where an arrest, pending criminal charge or conviction is present.

Ensuring Equity

RHY projects must ensure equitable treatment of all youth receiving services under RHY-funded programs. According to research conducted by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, youth of color, notably Black and Latino youth, are at greater risk of experiencing housing instability and youth homelessness. Roughly 11 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native youth and young adults are over-represented in the homeless youth population relative to 4 percent of White, non-Hispanic youth. [1] Additional data from FYSB's RHY-Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), on gender identity or sexual orientation of youth served in the RHY

program reveals roughly 26 percent of youth and young adults who participated in RHY programs in fiscal year 2021 identified as LGBTQIA2S+ or being uncertain of their sexual orientation. To this end, FYSB is committed to awarding grants to organizations who address these disparities in the prevalence and severity of experiences faced by youth related to ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. As such, the NCS must have a plan to address services for all youth, including youth of color, youth who identify as LGBTQIA2S+, and other underserved populations. All NCS services must reflect policies and practices that are sensitive to people of color and other underserved populations as well as the gender identity or sexual orientation   Furthermore, the NCS must be inclusive of language access needs of youth and families of youth served.

Reporting
The grantee must have a system for collecting and analyzing data to report the following: (see *Section IV.2.The Project Description* and *Section VI.3. Reporting* for more information).

- Number of calls received, answered, and missed;
- Number of chats and texts received and answered;
- Number of visits and unique visitors to the NCS web portal;
- Non-identifying information about callers or web portal users;
- Number and types of assistance provided by the NCS; and
- Information on calls and contacts received from youth in crisis, attempting to leave their homes and/or communities.

Deliverables
The NCS Program recipient will deliver and participate in the following post-award requirements:

1. Semi-annual Program Progress Reports and Federal Financial Reports documenting progress on activities and amount of grant funds expended (see *Section VI.3. Reporting* for more information).
2. Final report (due 90 days after the end of the 3-year project period) outlining the implementation of the project, including challenges, successes, and lessons learned. The report should include final versions of documents and resources used during the implementation of the project, such as policies, protocols, procedures, and data on calls, online communications, and website usage.
3. Meeting FYSB to discuss project activities, plans, upcoming activities (including travel and media efforts), opportunities, challenges, and solutions.
4. Implementation and management of the NCS Web Portal, which will be used to provide information, resources, and services to young people and their families within 4 months of the start date of the award.
5. System is available to process non-urgent requests for service referrals and information within 15 business days of the start date of the award.
6. Creation and maintenance of an up-to-date nationwide, state-by-state, and U.S. territories database of at least 700 contact referrals within 6 months of the start date of the award.
7. Develop (in collaboration with FYSB) a comprehensive outreach and communications strategic plan to increase the visibility of the NCS and expand outreach to youth

contemplating running away, youth who have run away, and youth experiencing homelessness within 3 months of the grant award.

8. Participate in RHY Program Network quarterly meetings to coordinate efforts across the RHY Program.
9. Quarterly, fiscal, annual, and ad hoc reports showing details of trends and website usage, including, but not limited to, the items listed under *Section VI.3. Reporting*.

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 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.

Subrecipient(s) must meet the eligibility requirements identified in the NOFO, Section III.1. Eligible Applicants. Additionally, all subrecipient(s) must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) assigned by the System for Award Management (SAM), if they do not already have one. Prime recipients are required to check SAM to verify that the subrecipient(s) is/are not debarred, suspended, or ineligible.

Please reference the Award Term and Condition on subawards on the ACF Administrative and National Policy Requirements website for further requirements involving subawards.

Response to Nationally Declared Emergency

During the project period, if the NCS recipient is required to adjust program and/or recipient requirements due to nationally declared emergency, the NCS recipient will exercise maximum flexibilities, as needed. Requirements may be conducted virtually and/or timelines modified in consultation with FYSB.

Definitions
Please note that definitions are provided in the Appendix section of this NOFO (Please see *Appendix* section for more information.)

[1] Berger Gonzalez, S., Morton, M., Patel, S., & Samuels, B. (2021). *Centering racial equity in youth homelessness*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

II. Federal Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:
CA (Cooperative Agreement)
Estimated Total Funding:
$1,800,000
Expected Number of Awards:
1

Award Ceiling:
$1,800,000
Per Budget Period

Award Floor:
$1,000,000
Per Budget Period

Average Projected Award Amount:
$1,800,000
Per Budget Period

Anticipated Project Start Date:
09/29/2023

Length of Project Periods:
36-month project period with three 12-month budget periods

Additional Information on Project Periods and Explanation of 'Other'

Additional Information on Awards:

Awards made under this funding opportunity 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 funding under this funding opportunity. 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.** For more information on these requirements, see *Section III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching.*

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

This award will be a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement is an award instrument used when substantial involvement is anticipated between the awarding office and the grantee during performance of the contemplated project and extends beyond normal oversight and stewardship responsibilities and functions.
FYSB Federal Project Officer will collaborate with the grantee by:

1. Providing consultation, and approval for enhancements and changes to the work plan and budget during the project period;
2. Being actively involved in the development of long-term strategies for the implementation of the project;

3. Participating in grantee-hosted or grantee-sponsored meetings and conferences;
4. Participating in focus groups and/or listening sessions regarding NCS services, partner participation, and youth input/feedback, as appropriate;
5. Communicating changes to expectations for performance or changes in FYSB policies and providing appropriate technical assistance to implement the changes;
6. Supporting efforts to evaluate NCS services; and
7. Consulting on current and proposed new data collection elements.

In addition, ACF/FYSB will review and approve:

1. Resumes for key project staff;
2. List of names, expertise, and locations (city, county, state) of individuals, organizations, and agencies in database of referrals;
3. All policies, procedures, and protocols used or created for handling both urgent and non-urgent calls, emails, and online communications to the NCS;
4. Guidelines regarding required training for NCS staff;
5. Content on the NCS Program Web Portal; and
6. Plan describing regarding the number of volunteer and how these volunteers will contribute to the NCS Program (if applicable). The plan shall include recruitment processes, volunteer protocols (including expected time to be donated to the NCS Program), and volunteer's required training.

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

III. Eligibility Information

III.1. Eligible Applicants

Public (state and local) and private non-profit entities, and coordinated networks of such entities are eligible to apply for a RHY Program grant unless they are part of the juvenile justice system. (45 CFR § 1351.11).

In accordance with section 331 of the RHY Act, priority will be given to applicants that have experience in providing telephone services to vulnerable youth, at-risk youth, and runaway and homeless youth. Telephone services include calls, emails, texts/short message services (SMS), and chat.

Applications from individuals (including sole proprietorships) and foreign entities are not eligible and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. 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. Faith-based organizations may apply for this award on the same basis as any other organization, as set forth at and, subject to the protections and requirements of 45 CFR Part 87 and 42 U.S.C. 2000bb *et seq.*, ACF will not, in the selection of recipients, discriminate against an organization on the basis of the organization's religious character, affiliation, or exercise.

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement:

Yes

Recipients are required to meet a non-federal share of the project cost, in accordance with Section 383 of the RHY Act, 34 U.S.C. § 11274 and 45 C.F.R. § 1351.13.

Recipients must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF (federal) share and the non-federal share. The non-federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although recipients are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. For example, in order to meet the match requirements, a project requesting $1,800,000 in ACF (federal) funds must provide a non-federal share of the approved total project cost of at least $ 200,000 , which is 10 percent of total approved project cost of $ 2,000,000 .

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 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 funding under this funding opportunity.

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 funding under this funding opportunity. 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.

Required Electronic Application Submission

ACF requires electronic submission of applications at 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 funding under this funding opportunity.**

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](#)."

Missing the Application Deadline (Late Applications)

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

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

Each time an application is submitted via 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 pm ET on the due date listed in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times*. Paper applications received after 4:30 pm ET on the due date will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity. **Paper applications received from applicants that have not received approval of an exemption from required electronic submission will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.**

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 NOFO.

IV. Application and Submission Information

IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

FYSB Operations Center c/o F2 Solutions
Attn: National Communication System NOFO
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CY-0009
1401 Mercantile Lane
Suite 401
Largo
MD
20774
TechAssist@fysb.net
Application Packages

Electronic Application Submission:

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

Applications in Paper Format:
For applicants that have received an exemption to submit applications in paper format, Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications are available in the "Select Grant Opportunity Package" available in the NOFO's Grants.gov Synopsis under the Package tab at 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 Grants.gov.

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

IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

FORMATTING APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS
Each applicant applying electronically via Grants.gov is required to upload only two electronic files, excluding SFs and Office of Management and Budget (OMB)-approved forms. No more than two files will be accepted for the review, and additional files will be removed. SFs and OMB-approved forms will not be considered additional files.

FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

Authorized Organization 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 extra pages removed, and those 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, 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 NOFO Formatting, Font, and Page Limitation Requirements
Applications that fail to adhere to ACF's NOFO 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 and 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 NOFO 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. Other, 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 SFs 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 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 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:

With the exception of SFs and forms approved by OMB, the application submission is limited to 95 pages in its entirety. The two files applicants must submit are as follows:

File 1: The Project Description file must include the following items:

- Table of Contents
- Project Summary/Abstract
- Need for Assistance
- Objectives
- Expected Outcomes
- Approach
- Project Timeline and Milestones
- Organizational Capacity
- Program Performance Evaluation Plan
- Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities
- Dissemination Plan
- Logic Model
- Budget

File 2: The Appendices file must include the following items:

- Organizational Capacity (i.e., organizational charts, documentation of experience in the program area, personnel policies, any other pertinent information the applicant deems relevant)
- Third-Party Agreements
- Letters of Support
- Proof of Legal Status (if applicable)
- Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically unless they have 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 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 SFs and OMB-approved Forms
SFs and OMB-approved forms 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 SFs, OMB-approved forms, and required assurances and certifications.

Naming Application Submission Files
Carefully observe the file naming conventions required by Grants.gov. Limit file names to 50 characters (characters and spaces). Please also see

Use only file formats supported by ACF
Applicants must 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 PDFs 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)
- 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 for Requesting an Exemption from Required Electronic Application Submission'*" at *www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/howto#chapter-6*.

Format Requirements for Paper Applications
All copies of mailed or hand-delivered paper applications must be submitted in a single package. If an applicant is submitting multiple applications under a single NOFO, or multiple applications under separate NOFOs, each application submission must be packaged separately. The package(s) must be clearly labeled with the NOFO title and Funding Opportunity Number.

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

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 an award under this funding opportunity must submit the listed SFs, assurances, and certifications with the application. All required SFs, assurances, and certifications are available in the Application Package posted for this NOFO at Grants.gov.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Required of all applicants. Applicants must have a UEI and maintain an active SAM registration throughout the application and project award period. Obtain a UEI and SAM registration at: http://www.sam.gov.	See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)* for more information.
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Submission is required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Submission required of all applicants with the application package. If it is not submitted with the application package,	Submission of the certification is required for all applicants.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes/Description
	it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.	
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-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.

Additional Required Assurances and Certifications

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: grantdisclosures@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 applications are submitted electronically, ACF will omit the same specific salary rate information from copies made for use during the review process.

The Project Description

The Project Description Overview

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

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

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.

Legal Status of Applicant Entity
Applicants must provide the following documentation:

Non-Profit Organizations

Proof of Non-Profit Status Options:

Option 1: 501(c)(3) and non-501(c)(3) non-profit organizations are eligible
Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

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

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

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.

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

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

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.

The NCS Program is a critical component of the nationwide response to running away episodes and youth homelessness, which has an immediate impact on the health, safety, and the well-being of children, youth, their families, and the community. It is imperative that the organization selected for this project has the institutional capacity to handle the demand for services; to respond professionally to children, youth, and their families; and to operate without interruption. Hence, applicants must demonstrate and provide specific plans that reflect an understanding of the scope and nature of services; the demand for service; the capacity to provide high-quality responses to youth, families, and those seeking support from the NCS as well as to the provision of uninterrupted services in all circumstances. The applicant's proposal must address the following:

1. A plan describing how items described in *Section I. Project Description (i.e., NCS Hotline, Referral Database, NCS Web Portal, Prevention and Community Education and, under Specific Program Requirements, Scope of Services, Capacities, Reporting and Deliverables)* will be delivered and accomplished.
2. Knowledge of the field, including the range of services and the resources available for youth contemplating running away, youth who have run away, and youth experiencing homelessness, and their families. The applicant must demonstrate the knowledge of services and resources relating to multiple challenges face by young people, such as substance abuse, mental health, human trafficking, dating violence, and domestic violence. The applicant must provide evidence of existing data, research, and demographics on how disparities impact the population served by the NCS Program and strategies for addressing these disparities through the NCS services and resources.
3. A comprehensive approach describing the capacity to serve those from American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages, those with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQIA2S+, and young people who have experienced multiple victimizations, such as commercial sexual exploitation, labor trafficking or sex trafficking, and dating violence.
4. Description of the quality assurance system that will be used to regularly assess the quality of services provided by the NCS Program, the extent to which the goals and objectives of the service are being met, and the methods to ensure that the referrals are appropriate. The quality assurance system must also include actions to address identified problems, such as unanswered calls, wait time, data corruption, as well as past and potential technological problems.
5. An outreach and communication plan to increase the visibility of the NCS Program across the United States and the territories. The plan must describe agency efforts to reach out to youth at risk of running away or homelessness, expand national partnerships, as well as strategies to reach young people from historically marginalized populations.
6. A strategy to recruit and incorporate the perspectives and opinions of current and/or former young people who have experienced homelessness into the design and delivery of all NCS services, prevention resources, and products.
7. A plan to ensure services and resources under the NCS Program are accessible to youth and families from historically marginalized populations. The plan should describe how the NCS program will increase and enhance services and resources to these populations

8. A strategy on how, within 15 business days of the start date of the award, the applicant will respond to urgent calls on a 24 hour-a-day, 7 days-a-week basis and collect non-identifying data on phone calls.
9. A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received information about the services and resources, and how they have utilized such information.
10. A plan that explains realistic and satisfactory target numbers for calls and digital contacts (including potential missed contacts), response time for emergency contacts, service referrals, and non-urgent requests that is linked to the Expected Outcomes of the project.
11. A plan describing innovative approaches to: a) effectively reach out to youth, especially those from underserved and underrepresented communities and their families across the country and U.S. territories; b) increase the national visibility of NCS program; c) integrate youth with lived experience in service planning, prevention, service delivery, and evaluation d) reduce inequities in accessibility to services and community education materials, and e) monitor and improve the NCS Program performance. This plan must include the background check policy, confidentiality policy, and language access plan.

The applicant must provide a detailed description of:

1. The telecommunications and computer technology that is, or will be, employed to establish and support NCS, including all management functions, referral functions, resource database management functions, reporting requirements, monitoring functions, and overall project administration and quality control.
2. The design and operation of the system that will be used to provide services, along with its capacity and limitations. The description must include the capacity to respond to the number of online and offline contacts, call conferencing, automatic referral to local providers, and service integration with new technology.
3. The methods planning to be used to ensure confidential crisis intervention and the specific provisions that will be in place to safeguard the confidentiality of those contacting the NCS, as well as strategies to ensure the proper handling of confidential or sensitive information.
4. The personnel recruitment, hiring, and training program planned to ensure the delivery of quality crisis intervention, information, and referral assistance, and counseling services to contacts (i.e., youth and families) representing diverse populations.
5. The specific emergency response and crisis protocol to be used; the ability to conference call (or "patch") or connect a young person to a local runaway and homeless youth shelter, or other resource when appropriate; and the plans for minimizing potential issues, such as prank or obscene calls and busy signals.
6. The approaches for the development, maintenance, and update of a comprehensive resource database (distributed to the maximum extent appropriate); the technical capacity to link with other state and local databases in order to maintain an extensive and current resource locator or directory; and the ability to facilitate communication among service providers to assist in the provision of services.

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.

- 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 funding opportunity.

- Evidence that each participating organization, including partners, contractors and/or subrecipients, possess the organizational capability to fulfill their role(s) and function(s) effectively.

- Job descriptions for each vacant key position.

1. Experience in providing electronic communications services to young people, including those contemplating running away, youth who have runaway, and youth experiencing homelessness, including telephone, internet, mobile applications, and other technology-driven services. (45 CFR § 1351.12(d)).
2. Proven experience providing high-quality crisis intervention, safety planning, information and referral, counseling services, and support to youth contemplating running away, youth on-the-run, and youth experiencing homelessness and their families, and the general public through a toll-free hotline and web-based/digital communications system.
3. Capacity to respond to the anticipated demand (at least 100,000 contacts per year). Provide estimates of the expected volume of calls in service areas such as crisis response, immediate referrals to shelters and other runaway and homeless youth services, referrals for additional services such as mental health or substance abuse counseling, and sexual assault victim services. Indicate the strategies for responding to contacts (i.e., youth and families) with limited English proficiency, and those from historically marginalized communities.
4. Capacity to operate at a nationwide level, including Native American tribes and Alaska Native villages, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands.
5. Capacity to continue or begin providing full-scale hotline services at the beginning of the project period with no lapse in services. If applicable, the plan must describe how services would be continued seamlessly during the transition between existing recipient and new recipient.
6. Details regarding the length and time the organization has provided these services as well as an organizational mission statement, organizational chart, and management plan for the project.

7. A strategy for hiring staff with relevant skills and knowledge, including the criteria used for hiring and training personnel on nationwide resources, technological systems used by NCS, and NCS policies and protocols. The applicant must demonstrate in staffing plans the capacity to respond to surges in demand for NCS services in response to major media campaigns and/or national media coverage, and identify strategies to address contingencies, such as national disasters, while ensuring uninterrupted service. The applicant must also provide a staff training plan to ensure personnel are prepared to respond effectively to those contacting the NCS crisis services and represent the diverse populations served by the NCS Program

8. 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).

Plan for Oversight of Federal Award Funds and Activities

Recipients are required to ensure proper oversight in accordance with 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart D.

These regulations set forth the following standards for effective oversight:

- Financial and Program Management
- Property (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.

Logic Model

Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their projects. 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 funding opportunity, 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).

Dissemination Plan

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

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

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).

Letters of Support

Provide statements from community, public, and/or commercial leaders that support the project

proposed for funding. All submissions must be included in the application package. At minimum, each letter of support must identify the individual writing the letter, the organization they represent, the date, and reason(s) for supporting the project.

The Project Budget and Budget Justification

All applicants are required to submit a project budget and budget justification with their application. The project budget is entered on the Budget Information SF, 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 cost sharing or matching is a requirement, applicants must include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance). See the table in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* listing the appropriate budget forms to use in this application.

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

Provide a budget for the initial budget period only (typically the first 12 months of the project) using the SF-424A and/or SF-424C, as applicable. Provide a budget justification, which includes a budget narrative and a line-item detail, for only the first budget period of the proposed project. The budget narrative should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

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 the 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.

General

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 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/recipient 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 48 CFR § 2.101(b). 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 qualifies 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 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.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity.

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 03/31/2025. 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 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 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.

Organizations must have an active System for Award (SAM) registration which provides a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), and Grants.gov account to apply for grants.

Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but SAM registration may take several weeks. Therefore, an organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact the entities ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

> ***Register with SAM*:** All organizations (entities) applying online through Grants.gov must register with SAM. Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. For detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html
>
> ***Create a Grants.gov Account*:** The next step in the registration process is to create an account with Grants.gov. Follow the on-screen instructions provided on the registration page.
>
> ***Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account*:** A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant). If you work for or consult with multiple organizations, you can have a profile for each organization under one Grants.gov account. In such cases, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all your grant profiles. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the UEI for the organization in the UEI field. For detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html
>
> ***EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles:*** After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC is then expected to 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 the organization. You will be able to submit

your application online any time after you have been assigned the AOR role. For 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 commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role; this step is often missed and 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 NOFO, you can create individual instances of a workspace.

For an overview of applying on Grants.gov using Workspaces, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.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 to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

*Adobe Reader***:** If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. 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***:** These forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and SAM UEI. 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 application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

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

Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific funding 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 and understanding background information on the issue.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

All applications must be received by 11:59 pm 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 acknowledgment 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 connections should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Therefore, applicants should allow enough time to prepare and submit the application before the package closing date.

Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received submission message in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role.

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.

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.

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. Other Submission Requirements* of this funding opportunity for address information for paper format application submissions. Applications submitted in paper format must be received by 4:30 pm 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 funding opportunity.

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

All applicants must have a UEI and an active registration with SAM (https://www.sam.gov) prior to applying to a funding opportunity.

All applicants are required to maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete. If a grant is awarded, the SAM registration must be active throughout the life of the award. Your SAM registration must be renewed every 365 days to keep it active.

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 request a UEI, register for, or renew a registration, at SAM.

Please see the "Help" tab at https://sam.gov/content/help for more information and assistance with this process.

HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for, and ultimately receive, federal grant funds from any HHS Agency to:

- Be registered in 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;
- Provide its UEI in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV; and

- Ensure any proposed subrecipient(s) have obtained and provided to the recipient their UEI(s) prior to making any subawards (**Note:** Subrecipients are not required to complete full SAM registration.).

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

The LOI date will generate once the Synopsis is published if Days or a Date are entered. Number of Days from Publication 60

Due Date for Applications
06/09/2023

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 Grants.gov is 11:59 pm ET on the due date. Electronic applications submitted at 12:00 am ET on the day after the due date will be considered late and will be disqualified from competitive review and funding under this funding opportunity.

Applicants are required to submit their applications electronically via 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 Grants.gov are available at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

Applications submitted to 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 pm 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 funding under this funding opportunity.

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
Hand-delivered applications 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 am ET and 4:30 pm 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 funding under this funding opportunity.

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 Grants.gov are considered late when they are dated and time-stamped after the deadline of 11:59 pm ET on the due date.
- Paper format applications received by mail or hand-delivery after 4:30 pm 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 of Received Application

Acknowledgement from Grants.gov

Applicants will receive an initial email upon submission of their application to 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 the 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.

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 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 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 funding opportunity 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)

Pre-award costs are not allowable.

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

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

Costs for renovation of existing structures are authorized but may not exceed 15 percent of the grant amount awarded. Costs for acquisition is not allowable by statute.

Applicants are advised that no grant funds may be used for any program of distributing sterile needles or syringes for the hypodermic injection of any illegal drug. Prospective recipients are advised that entities receiving RHY grant funds and operating a program to distribute sterile

needles or syringes for hypodermic injections of illegal drugs must account for all funds used for such programs separately from any expenditure of RHY grant funds.

HHS funds may not be spent for an abortion. The prohibition on using HHS funds for abortion has an exception for cases of rape, incest, or danger of death to the pregnant woman. See Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Public Law. No. 117-328, Div. H, tit. V, §§ 506-507.

For further funding restrictions, please see the HHS Grants Policy Statement reference in *Section VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements*.

IV.7. Other Submission Requirements

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

Submission by Mail
FYSB Operations Center F2 Solutions
Attn: National Communication System for Runaway and Homeless Youth Program
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CY-0009
1401 Mercantile Lane
Suite 401
Largo
MD
20774

Hand Delivery
Same as Above

Electronic Submission
See *Section IV.2.* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via 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 notice of funding opportunity and relevant statutes and regulations, reviewers must 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 must 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 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 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. The Project Description* of this funding opportunity.

1. Approach   **Maximum Points:** 40

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

1. The applicant demonstrates how it will accomplish all the program requirements for the NCS Program described in Section I. Program Description. (0-10 points)
2. The applicant describes how it will accomplish all the requirements for the referral database described in Section I. Program Description. (0-5 points)
3. The applicant clearly describes how it will accomplish all requirements for the NCS Web Portal, reporting, deliverables, and prevention and community education described in *Section I. Program Description*. The applicant describes how the NCS program will address these disparities through service delivery, data collection, workforce, and prevention activities. (0-5 points)
4. The applicant provides a description of existing data, research, and demographics on how disparities impact the population served by the NCS Program. (0-5 points)
5. The applicant demonstrates the ability to within 15 business days of the award date, respond to urgent calls and online requests from young people and their families on a 24-hour-a-day basis, as well as to collect non-identifying data from contacts.(0-2 points)
6. A preliminary plan to evaluate the extent to which target audiences have received information about the services and resources, and how they have utilized such information.(0-5 points)
7. A plan describing innovative approaches to: a) effectively reach out to youth, especially those from underserved and underrepresented communities and their families across the country and U.S. territories; b) increase the national visibility of NCS program; c) integrate youth with lived experience in service planning, prevention, service delivery, and evaluation d) reduce inequities in accessibility to services and community education materials, and e) monitor and improve the NCS Program performance. This plan must include the background check policy, confidentiality policy, and language access plan. (0-3 points)
8. The applicant describes its capacity and commitment to provide services to youth without regard to sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race ethnicity, nationality, physical or cognitive ability, language, belief, or religion; and their capacity and commitment to serve those from Native American tribes and Alaska Native villages, and those with limited English proficiency. (0-5 points)

2. Expected Outcomes   **Maximum Points:** 15

In reviewing the Outcomes Expected, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant identifies the results and benefits to be derived, and the extent to which they are consistent with the program objectives. The applicant should identify the results and benefits for target groups to be derived from implementing the proposed project. (0-5 points)
2. The applicant provides and explains realistic and satisfactory target numbers for calls and digital contacts (including potential missed contacts), response time for emergency contacts, service referrals, and non-urgent requests as described in *Section I. Program Description, Reporting.* (0-5 points)
3. The applicant describes a system for collecting and analyzing data on telephone calls, emails, text, and chat. The applicant's plan includes the frequency and methods for data collection and monitoring performance, how the data will inform program activities and services delivery, as well as expand accessibility to services and resources, especially for young people and families from historically marginalized communities as described in *Section I. Program Description, Reporting.* (0-5 points)

3. Organizational Capacity/Third Party Agreements, Project Timeline and Milestones, Logic Model, Dissemination Plan, and Program Performance Evaluation Plan   **Maximum Points:** 30

In reviewing these sections, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant describes the organization's experience in providing high-quality crisis intervention, safety planning, information and referral services, and support to youth contemplating running away, youth who have left home, youth experiencing homelessness, their families, and the public. The application must specify the length and time the organization has provided these services. (0-5 points)
2. The applicant demonstrates organizational capacity and ability to effectively implement and manage the programmatic and financial aspects of the project. The application includes a clear organizational mission statement, organizational chart, and management plan for the project. (0-5 points)
3. The applicant demonstrates, in detail, the professional qualifications of project staff who will be responsible for assisting individuals who contact the NCS, providing service referrals, sharing tips with law enforcement, and coordinating with child welfare agencies. The applicant must provide resumes of key project staff who demonstrate appropriate professional background, work experience, and capacity to assist those who contact NCS. (0-3 points)
4. The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the program components as described in *Section I. Program Description,* including the technological requirements of this project in its proposed approach to the project. (0 - 5 points)
5. The applicant demonstrates the capacity to respond to surges in demand for NCS services in response to major media campaigns and/or national media coverage and identifies strategies to address contingencies, such as national disasters, while ensuring uninterrupted services. (0-2 points)
6. The applicant's plan addresses how confidential or private information is to be properly handled and safe guarded. (0-2 points)

7. The applicant's plan identifies appropriate staffing, effective data management systems, and organizational processes that will successfully utilize data to inform and improve program quality. (0-3 points)
8. The application describes the applicant's ability to lead the RHY field and collaborate with a diverse network of allied organizations, as demonstrated by a proven track record of working on similar hotline or telephone resource in varied size and scope. The applicant describes the roles, responsibilities, resources, contributions and commitments of any partners, collaborators, or third-party agreements. The applicant includes a project timeline and milestones, logic model, and dissemination plan in the *Section IV.2. Program Description.* (0-5 points)

4. Budget   **Maximum Points:** 15
In reviewing the Budget, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant provides a clear, logical, accurate, and complete budget. The line-item budget narrative is understandable and justifies the costs proposed. The applicant shows how categorical costs are derived. The applicant demonstrates the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of proposed costs in relation to the proposed activities and outcomes. (0 - 5 points)
2. The applicant's budget narrative describes how categorical costs are derived and provides a clear understanding of how the project activities will be supported by the budget. This includes budget allocated to meet background check requirements.(0-5 points)
3. The applicant is able to demonstrate that all funds received under the NCS Program will be used to establish and operate an NCS to provide information and assistance to young people and their families; and those seeking information on issues related to runaway prevention, service referrals, crisis intervention, and youth homelessness. (0-3 points)
4. The applicant includes a clear and comprehensive plan for overall fiscal and program management accountability of awarded funds. The extent to which the application demonstrates how the funds requested are necessary and essential to accomplish the scope of services as required by the authorizing RHY legislation and the program requirements in *Section I. Description.* (0-2 points)

V.2. Review and Selection Process

No grant award will be made under this funding opportunity on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant that does not have a UEI and an active SAM registration. See *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) 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

NOFO.

Objective Review and Results
Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in *Section V.1. Criteria* of this funding opportunity. 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. If identified in *Section I. Program Description*, ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. In addition, 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. In addition, ACF may elect to not allow a prime recipient to subaward if there is any indication that they are unable to properly monitor and manage subrecipients.

Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested.

Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

ACF is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), www.fapiis.gov/, before making any award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold 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 45 CFR § 75.205(a)(2) Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants.

Non-Federal Reviewers Reference
Please refer to *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications* of this funding opportunity 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 in the current Fiscal Year. 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 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 email or by GrantSolutions, 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.

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

Recipients 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 recipient's employees who are working on the Federal award are not fluent in English, the recipient 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 funding opportunity are subject to 45 CFR Part 75 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards currently in effect or implemented during the period of award, other Department regulations and policies in effect at the time of award, and applicable statutory provisions. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is available at www.ecfr.gov. Unless otherwise noted in this section, administrative and national policy requirements that are applicable to discretionary grants are available at: www.acf.hhs.gov/administrative-and-national-policy-requirements.

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.

Please review all HHS regulatory provisions for Termination at 2 CFR § 200.340.

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 NoA. The HHS GPS is available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/discretionary-post-award-requirements#book_content_0.

Equal Treatment of Faith-Based Organizations

A faith-based organization that participates in this program will retain its independence from the federal government and may continue to carry out its mission consistent with religious freedom, nondiscrimination, and conscience protections in federal law, including the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (42 U.S.C. 2000bb *et seq.*), the Coats-Snowe Amendment (42 U.S.C. 238n), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e–1(a) and 2000e–2(e)), Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12113(d)(2), section 1553 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18113), the Weldon Amendment (e.g., Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020, Public Law 116–94, 133 Stat. 2534, 2607, div. A, sec. 507(d) (Dec. 20, 2019)), or any related or similar federal laws or regulations. Religious accommodations may also be sought under many of these religious freedom and conscience protection laws.

Consistent with 45 CFR § 87.3(b), a faith-based organization that receives direct financial assistance from HHS may not engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the HHS awarding agency. Such an organization, whether faith-based or not, also shall not, in providing services funded by HHS, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice, as provided in 45 CFR § 87.3(d).

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Final Rule

On December 20, 2016, FYSB published a new rule to improve performance standards and program requirements for runaway and homeless youth programs. This new rule builds upon existing policies and guidance to better support runaway and homeless youth by strengthening training and professional development for service providers, defining safe and appropriate exits to homelessness, requiring aftercare planning for all youth-exiting programs, and improving nondiscrimination protections for youth. The rule also clarifies statutory changes made to the RHY Act of 2008. All RHY grantees must comply with the new rule, and this NOFO reflects the new requirements in the rule (45 CFR Part 1351).

For a complete version of the RHY Act Final Rule please visit:
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/12/20/2016-30241/runaway-and-homeless-youth

Post-Award Requests Involving Real Property

All real property costs, including supporting documentation, are subject to ACF administrative review. Recipients, and if applicable, subrecipient(s), will be required to provide detailed listings of all real property addresses and their associated costs (45 CFR §75.436, §75.439, §75.462, and §75.465) used and claimed under this federal award. This includes all real property owned or leased by the recipient, and if applicable, subrecipients. Information on facilities, administrative buildings and offices must be provided. Information for any and all real property costs claimed under the award must be provided. For more information, see ACF Property Guidance pages, including, Rent/Lease Arrangement Guidance, Real Property Documentation, and Unallowable Property Costs.

After the initial award, if there are any modifications, budget revisions, and/or additional requests for funding, and they impact any of the original approved real property or real property-related costs, the real property listing and related costs documentation requested must be updated.

Stevens Amendment

When issuing statements, press releases, publications, requests for proposal, bid solicitations and other documents such as tool-kits, resource guides, websites, and presentations (hereafter "statements") describing the projects or programs funded in whole or in part with HHS federal funds, the recipient must clearly state:

1. the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program or project funded with federal money; and,
2. the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the project or program funded by non-governmental sources.

When issuing statements resulting from activities supported by HHS financial assistance, the recipient entity must include an acknowledgement of federal assistance using the following or a similar statement:

If the HHS Grant or Cooperative Agreement is funded with other non-governmental sources:

"This [project/publication/program/website, etc.] [is/was] supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling $XX with XX percent funded by ACF/HHS and $XX amount and XX percent funded by non-government sources(s). The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACF/HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, Administrative and National Policy Requirements".

VI.3. Reporting

Performance Progress Reports:
Semi-Annually

Reporting Requirements
Recipients under this funding opportunity will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. Information on reporting

requirements is available on the ACF website at www.acf.hhs.gov/discretionary-post-award-requirements#chapter-2.

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

Financial Reports:
Semi-Annually

VII. HHS Award Agency Contact(s)

Program Office Contact
Christopher
Holloway
Administration for Children and Families
Family and Youth Services Bureau
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CY-0009
Mary E. Switzer Building
330 C Street S.W.
Washington
DC
20201
(202) 205-9560
Christopher.Holloway@acf.hhs.gov

Office of Grants Management Contact
Katrina
Morgan
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Grants Management
HHS-2023-ACF-ACYF-CY-0009
330 C Street S.W.
Washington
DC
20201
(202) 401-5127
katrina.morgan@acf.hhs.gov

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

VIII. Other Information

Reference Websites

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

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

ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs www.grants.gov/.

ACF "How To Apply For A Grant" https://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/how-apply-grant.

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.

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

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

FYSB https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb

RHY Program https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/runaway-homeless-youth

National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth and Families (NCHYF) https://rhyclearinghouse.acf.hhs.gov/

National Runaway Safeline (NRS) https://www.1800runaway.org/

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (RHYTTAC) https://www.rhyttac.net/

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 - Application for Federal Assistance	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov in the Mandatory section.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM) registration.	Referenced in *Section IV.3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)* in the funding opportunity.	A UEI and registration at SAM.gov are required for all applicants. Active registration at SAM must be maintained throughout the application and project award period.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
	To obtain a UEI and SAM registration, go to http://www.sam.gov.	
SF-424 Key Contact Form	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due with the application by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Certification Regarding Lobbying (Grants.gov Lobbying Form)	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due with the application package or prior to the award of a grant.
SF-Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	Referenced in *Section IV.2.Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	"Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying" is referenced in *Section IV.2. Required Forms, Assurances, and Certifications.* This form is available in the NOFO's forms package at www.Grants.gov.	If submission of this form is applicable, it is due at the time of application. If not available at the time of application, it may also be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
Letter of Intent	Referenced in *Section IV.2. Project Description.*	Submission is due by the Letter of Intent due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4.*

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Table of Contents	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.*	Submit with the application by the due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description, Legal Status of Applicant Entity.*	Proof of non-profit status should be submitted with the application package by the application due date and time listed in the *Overview* and *Section IV.4.* of the NOFO. If it is not available at the time of application submission, it must be submitted prior to the award of a grant.
The Project Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Budget and Budget Justification.*	Submission is required in addition to submission of SF-424A and / or SF-424C. Submission is required with the application package by the due date in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*
The Project Description	Referenced in *Section IV.2. The Project Description.*	Submission is due by the application due date found in the *Overview* and in *Section IV.4. Submission Dates and Times.*

Appendix

Definitions
The following definitions may be found at section 387 of the RHY Act, 42 U.S.C § 5732a, as amended, and in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Final Rule (45 CFR §1351.1).

AFTERCARE-The term 'after care' means additional services provided beyond the period of residential stay that offer continuity and supportive follow-up to youth served by the program (45 CFR § 1351.1).

HOMELESS YOUTH-The term 'homeless youth' means an individual who cannot live safely with a parent, legal guardian, or relative, and who has no other safe, alternative living arrangement (45 CFR § 1351.1).

JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM - The term 'juvenile justice system' means agencies that include, but are not limited to, juvenile courts, correctional institutions, detention facilities, law

enforcement, training schools, or agencies that use probation, parole, and/or court ordered confinement (45 CFR § 1351.1).

RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH PROJECT - The term 'runaway and homeless youth project 'means a community-based program outside the juvenile justice or child welfare systems that provides runaway prevention, outreach, shelter, or transition services to runaway, homeless, or street youth or youth at risk of running away or becoming homeless (45 CFR § 1351.1).

RUNAWAY YOUTH - The term 'runaway youth 'means an individual under 18 years of age who absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her family (45 CFR § 1351.1).

STREET YOUTH - The term 'street youth' means an individual who is a runaway youth or an indefinitely or intermittently homeless youth who spends a significant amount of time on the street or in other areas that increase the risk to such youth for sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, prostitution, or drug and/or alcohol abuse (45 CFR § 1351.1).

STREET-BASED SERVICES - The term 'street-based services' means services provided to runaway and homeless youth, and street youth, in areas where they congregate. These services are designed to assist such youth in making healthy personal choices regarding where they live and how they behave. These services may include identification of and outreach to runaway and homeless youth, and street youth; crisis intervention and counseling; information and referral for housing; information and referral for transitional living and health care services; advocacy, education, and prevention services related to alcohol, and drug abuse; sexual exploitation, human trafficking, sexually transmitted diseases, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV); and physical and sexual assault (Section 387 of the RHY Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5732a).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - The term 'technical assistance' means the provision of expertise or support for the purpose of strengthening the capabilities of grantee organizations to deliver services (45 CFR § 1351.1).

TEMPORARY SHELTER - The term 'temporary shelter' means all Basic Center Program shelter settings in which runaway and homeless youth are provided room and board, crisis intervention, and other services on a 24-hour basis for up to 21 days. The 21-day restriction is on the use of RHY funds through the Basic Center Program, not a restriction on the length of stay permitted by the facility (45 CFR § 1351.1).

TRANSITIONAL LIVING YOUTH PROJECT - The term 'transitional living youth project 'means a project that provides shelter and services designed to promote a transition to self-sufficient living and to prevent long-term dependency on social services (Section 387(7) of the RHY Act, 34 U.S.C. 11279(7)).

YOUTH AT RISK OF SEPARATION FROM THE FAMILY - The term youth at risk of separation from the family means an individual who is less than 18 years of age; and who has a history of running away from the family or such individual whose parent, guardian, or custodian is not willing to provide for the basic needs of such individual; or who is at risk of entering the child welfare system or juvenile justice system as a result of the lack of services available to the family to meet such needs (Section 387 of the RHY Act, 34 U.S.C. 11279(8).

Other terms for the purpose of this NOFO:

AREA -The term 'area' means a specific neighborhood or section of the locality in which the runaway and homeless youth project is or will be located.

CALLER - The term 'caller' means a person who contacts the NCS by dialing 1-800-RUNAWAY.

CONTACT - the term 'contact' means a call, chat, or text.

COORDINATED NETWORKS OF AGENCIES - The term 'coordinated network of agencies' means an association of two or more private agencies whose purpose is to develop or strengthen services to runaway or otherwise homeless youth and their families.

COUNSELING SERVICES - The term 'counseling services' means the provision of guidance, support, and referrals for services including, but not limited to, mental health services, and advice to runaway or otherwise homeless youth and their families, as well as to youth and families when a young person is at risk of running away, as appropriate. These services are provided in consultation with clients and are designed to alleviate the problems that have put the youth at risk of running away or being homeless. Any treatment or referral to treatment that aims to change someone's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression is prohibited.

DEMONSTRABLY FREQUENTED BY OR REACHABLE - The term 'demonstrably frequented by or reachable' means located in an area in which runaway or otherwise homeless youth congregate, an area accessible to such youth by public transportation, or by the provision of transportation by the runaway and homeless youth project itself.

LAW ENFORCEMENT STRUCTURE - The term 'law enforcement structure' means any police activity or agency with legal responsibility for enforcing a criminal code, including police department and sheriff's office.

LOCALITY - The term 'locality' refers to a unit of general government. For example, a 'locality' may be a city, county, township, town, parish, village, or a combination of such units. Additionally, federally recognized Indian tribes are eligible to apply for grants as local units of government.

STATE - The term 'state' includes any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States.

STREET-BASED OUTREACH AND EDUCATION - The term 'street-based outreach and education' includes education and prevention efforts directed to the youth with the intent to get them into shelter.

TELEPHONE - the term 'telephone' is a communications device that permits two or more callers or users to engage in transmitted analog, digital, short message service (SMS), cellular/wireless, laser, cable/broadband, internet, voice-over internet protocol, or other communications, including telephone, smartphone, chat, text, voice recognition, or other technological means that connect callers or users together.

THROWAWAY YOUTH - The term 'throwaway youth' in its broadest definition includes all youth who are rejected, ejected, or abandoned by their parents and guardians. Many end up on the streets or temporarily in the homes of other family members, friends, or even strangers.

TRAINING - The term 'training' means the provision of local, state, or regionally based instruction to runaway and homeless youth providers that will directly strengthen service delivery.

USER - The term 'user' means a person who makes a contact with the NCS through any communication means.