



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201 | [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)

April 22, 2025

Re: Payment Management System (PMS) - Updated payment processing steps

Dear ACF Grant Award Recipients,

As part of the implementation of [Executive Order 14222 - Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Cost Efficiency Initiative](#), a new process has been created to enhance transparency and accountability for federal funding.

In accordance with Section 3 of E.O. 14222, PMS introduced a new mandatory field in the payment request screen at the grant subaccount level on March 17, 2025. This field, limited to 1,000 characters, requires a justification from your organization explaining the purpose of the payment at the subaccount level. You are encouraged to include detailed justifications.

Federal awarding agencies will review these payment request justifications and either approve them or request clarification (more detail) from your organization. If clarification is needed, your organization will receive an email from [defendthespend@hhs.gov](mailto:defendthespend@hhs.gov) to submit a revised justification. This communication will direct you to a website that is hosted on doge.gov. Both hhs.gov and doge.gov are valid U.S. government domains that may be interacted with for award-related matters.

As a result of this change, we have seen that processing times for new payment requests may be different than those experienced previously. We encourage your organization to plan accordingly. Please consider the following to facilitate the expedient processing of your payment requests:

- Increase the “lead time” between your organization’s need and payment request;
- Structure payment requests to include only one awarding agency; minimize the number of grant subaccounts; and group subaccounts to those within the same program area;
- **Provide a strong justification for your payment request to include details such as the program name, time period covered by the payment request, a clear description or summary of approved expenses or activities and, as applicable, the approved budget line categories for expenditures** (e.g., Personnel, Fringe, Supplies, Travel, Contractual, Other);
- Ensure your justifications **do not include** any names or other personally identifiable, sensitive, or proprietary information; and
- Respond promptly and thoroughly to any requests for clarification received from [defendthespend@hhs.gov](mailto:defendthespend@hhs.gov).

Please share this guidance with any staff responsible for submitting payment requests in PMS. Thank you for your efforts to ensure that taxpayer dollars are utilized to support the purposes for which they were awarded.