ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Behavioral Intervention Scholars

Opportunity number: HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-PD-0126

Contents

Before you begin

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

SAM.gov registration (this can take several weeks)

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

See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

Grants.gov registration (this can take several days)

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

See Step 2: Get Ready to Apply

Apply by June 7, 2024

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 7, 2024.

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

Step 1:
Review the Opportunity

In this step

Basic information

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Behavioral Intervention Scholars awards build the body of research that applies a behavioral science lens to social services and support mentorship for, and scholarship of, advanced graduate students in the field.

Summary

Behavioral Interventions Scholars awards support dissertation research by advanced graduate students in the field of behavioral science. Behavioral science seeks to understand how individuals make decisions and what drives their behavior, drawing on the fields of behavioral, social, and cognitive psychology; economics; and other social sciences. Students' research supported through these awards must be related to programs and policies that affect children, adults, and families with low incomes. These awards build the body of research that applies a behavioral science lens to social services and support faculty mentorship of high-quality doctoral students.

Funding details

Type: Grant

Estimated total program funding: $100,000 in federal share (not including your cost-sharing contribution)

Total expected awards: 4

There are two possible structures for funding periods:

- 12-month project period with one 12-month budget period
- 24-month project period with two 12-month budget periods

Minimum award amount for the first budget period (award floor): $20,000

Maximum award amount for the first budget period (award ceiling): $25,000

Recipients will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports. Satisfactory performance depends on the progress made toward the proposed project goals, objectives, and activities within the stated timeline, as described in these reports.

Have questions? See Contacts and Support.

Key facts

Opportunity Name: Behavioral Intervention Scholars

Opportunity Number: HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-PD-0126

Federal Assistance Listing: 93.647

Key dates

Application deadline: June 7, 2024

Optional notice of intent deadline: April 24, 2024

Expected award date: August 30, 2024

Expected start date: September 30, 2024

See deadlines.

Although recipients should describe any challenges and changes from the approved proposal in the progress reports, recipients must talk with the Federal Project Officer as soon as possible when challenges and changes arise. Do not wait for the progress report to share these. Satisfactory progress is determined by whether the project seems likely to address the proposed goals and objectives within the period of performance.

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

Definitions of terms used throughout this NOFO

- Applicant – The organization applying to be the recipient. Different parts of the NOFO will need to be completed by different people within the organization (such as the grants office, student, Principal Investigator (PI)).

- Recipient – The organization that has been awarded the funding. A combination of the organization's administrative staff, grant office, the PI, and/or the student may be responsible for completing the recipient requirements mentioned in this NOFO.

- Principal Investigator (PI) – The faculty advisor who oversees the work proposed in this application and provides mentorship to the student who receives support throughout the life of the award.

- Student – The advanced graduate student (who will have an approved dissertation proposal by the time the award's period of performance begins) who is enrolled at a university and whose scholarship and mentorship are supported by this award. They are the "scholar" mentioned in the title of the award.

Eligibility

Who can apply

Eligible applicants

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

- Individuals, including sole proprietorships
- Foreign entities

Other eligibility criteria

Eligible U.S. entities may apply on behalf of a PI who will serve as a mentor for an advanced graduate student (students who are U.S. citizens or international non-U.S. citizens). Organizations must identify a PI who has committed to serve as a mentor to a doctoral-level student who will be funded for the life of the project. The project must be grounded in behavioral science. The student should work with their mentor (the PI) to develop the application.

See initial review for disqualification factors.

Cost sharing

This program's statute requires recipients to pay part of the cost of the project. 42 U.S.C. 1310(a)(1). As a result, we require recipients to contribute at least 1% of the project's total cost during the project period. See 42 U.S.C. 1310(a)(1).

You can calculate this cost-sharing requirement in one of two ways:

Method 1: Start with the amount of federal funds being requested (the federal share):

Calculation: Divide the amount of federal funds requested by 99.

For example: Divide $25,000 by 99. This equals a match of $253.

Method 2: Start with the total project cost

Calculation: Divide the total project costs by 100.

For example: Divide $25,253 by 100. This equals a match of $253.

Types of cost sharing

You can meet your match requirement through any combination of:

- Cash contributed by your organization
- Cash contributed by partners or other third parties (for example, community organizations)
- In-kind (non-cash) contributions from third parties

Cost-sharing commitments

You must follow through on your promise of cost-sharing funds, even if you promise more than required. We put these commitments in the Notice of Award (NoA). You will have to include these funds when you fill out your Federal Financial Reports.

If you don't provide your promised amount, we may have to decrease your award amount or use other enforcement actions.

Cost-sharing waiver

We waive cost-sharing up to $199,999 for awards to the governments of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, or the Northern Mariana Islands (except for consolidated awards under 45 CFR Part 97). You must meet any amount of cost-sharing over $199,999. See 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d), Congressional declaration of policy respecting "Insular Areas."

Program description

Behavioral Interventions Scholars awards support dissertation research by advanced graduate students in the field of behavioral science. Please note, behavioral science is a distinct field from behavioral health. Behavioral science is an academic area that draws on cognitive science, social psychology, economics, and other social sciences to study when and why individuals engage in specific behaviors. These awards build the body of research that applies a behavioral science lens to social services. They also support faculty mentorship and the scholarship of high-quality doctoral students.

The goal of this work is to learn how tools from behavioral science can be used to deliver programs more effectively to improve the well-being of children, adults, and families with low incomes.

These awards are part of OPRE's Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) portfolio. We encourage you to visit our website to learn more about this work and gain a deeper understanding of the kinds of topics the BIAS portfolio has explored.

The specific goals of the Behavioral Interventions Scholars awards are to:

- Support high-quality research projects on effective interventions that are grounded in behavioral science. We specifically focus on research that is relevant to issues that families with low incomes and other under-resourced groups face.

- Financially support graduate students who are doing behavioral science research related to ACF programs and populations, especially programs authorized by the Social Security Act (e.g., Title IV, Title V, Title XX).

- Foster mentoring relationships between faculty members or other experienced researchers and doctoral students who are doing research related to behavioral science.

- Encourage active communication, networking, and collaboration among the funded graduate student, their mentors, and other prominent researchers in the field to support students' training and professional development.

- Share information about effective behavioral interventions studied through these grants, especially with human services practitioners.

- Strengthen the capacity of next-generation researchers to do rigorous, policy-relevant research in the field of behavioral science.

Research topics of interest

We are particularly interested in funding students whose research projects focus on the following topics in connection with populations in the United States who have low incomes or are otherwise under-resourced:

- Behavioral science interventions within the domains of:
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the social safety net, and programs that provide public assistance
  - Employment and the labor market
  - Job training and education
  - Child welfare and foster care
  - Runaway and homeless youth
  - Housing and homelessness
  - Financial security and economic independence
  - Food assistance
  - Human trafficking
  - Refugee assistance
  - Teen pregnancy prevention and sexual risk avoidance
  - Positive youth development and transition to adulthood
  - Child care
  - Child support
  - Head Start and early childhood education
  - Early childhood home visiting
  - Family strengthening
  - Family violence prevention
  - Healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood
- Increasing eligible client participation or retention in programs and services
- Increasing eligible client uptake or maintenance of public assistance benefits
- Motivating behaviors related to compliance with program rules and participation in required activities
- Sustaining longer-term changes in habits and behaviors
- The respective impacts of interventions targeting clients versus those targeting caseworkers or service providers
- The respective impacts of interventions at different levels of intensity, from nudges to more systemic behaviorally informed changes

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Step 1: Review the Opportunity **10**

- The comparative effects of different types of behavioral interventions with the same goals
- The applicability to other contexts of behavioral interventions previously shown to work in one particular context
- Implementation studies to understand how participants experience and respond to behavioral interventions

For more information on projects previously funded by this program, visit our website.

Project requirements

Projects funded through these awards are required to meet the following criteria:

Research dissemination

Conferences and meetings

Participation in two conferences annually is mandatory.

The first is the required recipient meeting, which will be held virtually.

Additionally, students must participate for at least 2 days in OPRE's Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS), historically held in late May or early June, in Washington, DC. Students have reserved spots in the emerging scholars poster session of the conference. RECS is a biennial conference.

On the off years when RECS is not held, students are required to attend another relevant conference of their choice.

Research briefs and briefings

Twice during the project period, the student is expected to prepare a one- to two-page brief describing the objectives, hypotheses and/or findings (when available), and potential practice or policy implications of their research projects.

Approved dissertation proposal

Ideally, the graduate student should have an approved dissertation proposal before applying for this funding opportunity.

However, if the student does not have an approved dissertation proposal at the time of the application, the student must have approval prior to August 15, 2024. Additionally, if the proposal has not been approved at the time of the application submission, the scope and the research of the approved dissertation proposal cannot change substantially from what was proposed in the application.

Principal Investigator/mentor

The PI/mentor must regularly monitor the student's work for the duration of the project. Although the mentor is listed as the PI and must be committed to taking a central role in supporting the proposed dissertation research, funds are intended to support dissertation research of an individual student.

Mentors must provide substantial time and resources in mentoring doctoral-level student researchers to:

- Provide ethical oversight and quality control of students' research
- Develop students' expertise in applied research
- Help students establish their independent line of research that will provide the foundation for their professional career
- Foster student partnerships with and dissemination efforts to social services programs, policymakers, and the research community

Equity

In line with HHS's plan to advance equity in the delivery of health and human services, we welcome applications that will help ACF advance equity in the delivery of human services. Research might support this goal in ways including the following:

- Addressing equitable access to programs or services for populations with less access, systemically and historically
- Examining how differences in implementation of programs for different groups contribute to differences in outcomes
- Engaging individuals who are from populations of interest or who have lived experience with relevant issues in the research process

Flexibilities due to natural disasters

If, during the project period, OPRE and/or recipients are required to adjust project requirements due to a natural disaster or another emergency (like COVID-19), OPRE will exercise maximum flexibilities as needed. Requirements may be conducted virtually, or timelines may be modified in consultation with OPRE.

Funding policies and limitations

We do not allow the following costs under this funding opportunity:

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

See 45 CFR 75.420 – 75.475 for information on costs that are always unallowable or have restrictions.

Indirect costs

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

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

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

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

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

Learn more at 45 CFR 75.414, Indirect Costs. If your organization has a grants office, that office may help you identify and/or define any indirect costs.

Subawards

Recipients under this program may opt to carry out a portion of their award through subaward(s) (see 45 CFR 75.351 for discussion of the distinction between subawards and contracts for goods and services). The prime grant recipient must maintain a substantive role in the project. We define a substantive role as conducting funded activities and providing services that are necessary and integral to completing the project. Monitoring your subrecipient's activities alone is not a substantive role. See 45 CFR 75.352 for information on subrecipient monitoring.

We do not fund awards where the role of the applicant is primarily to serve as a conduit for passing funds to other organizations unless that arrangement is authorized by statute.

Subrecipients must meet the eligibility requirements of this funding opportunity.

Statutory authority

Section 1110 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1310).

Step 2:
Get Ready to Apply

In this step

Get registered

SAM.gov

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

To register, go to SAM.gov Entity Registration and click Get Started. From the same page, you can also click on the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register.

Grants.gov

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

Need Help? See Contacts and Support.

Find the application package

The application package has all the forms you need to apply. You can find it online. Go to Search Grants at Grants.gov and search for opportunity number HHS-2024-ACF-OPRE-PD-0126. Then, click the "Package" tab.

If you can't use Grants.gov to download application materials, you may request them from the Grants Management Contact.

If you are also unable to apply through Grants.gov, see exemptions for paper submissions.

Learn more

Visit Applying for an ACF Grant Award on the ACF Grants Page.

Step 3:
Prepare Your Application

In this step

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Application contents and format

Application components

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

File One: Project Narrative Attachment Form

Includes:

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

File Two: Other Attachments Form

Includes all attachments.

Other required forms

Includes other required forms.

Required format

Page limit for File One and File Two combined: 100 pages.

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

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

Paper Size: 8 ½ inches x 11 inches

Margins: 1 inch all around

Language: English

If possible, include page numbers.

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

Fonts

Font: Times New Roman

Size: 12-point font

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

Spacing

Table of contents: Must be single-spaced

Project summary: Must be single-spaced

Project narrative: Must be double-spaced

References: Can be single-spaced

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

Attachments: As needed; Can be single-spaced

Tables and footnotes throughout: Can be single-spaced

Table of contents

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

Project summary

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

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

Project narrative

The project narrative is where you describe all your proposed activities. It is a critical section of your application, which we evaluate and rank using the merit review criteria. Remember that substance and clarity are more important than length. We are particularly interested in project narratives that convey strategies for achieving intended performance.

In it, you must:

- Explain how the project will meet the purpose of the NOFO, as described in the [program description](#) section

- Make sure your narrative is clear, concise, and complete

- Use cross-referencing rather than repetition

- Be sure to include any required supporting documents noted. You generally provide these in your [attachments](#)

- Use the headings and order of the sections that follow

Approach

Outline your proposed research. Describe the scope and detail of how you will accomplish your proposed project. Account for all functions or activities you identify in your application.

Explain potential obstacles and challenges to accomplishing your project goals. Explain the strategies you will use to address them.

Be sure to include the following subsections in your application.

Relevance to behavioral science

Your application must:

- Demonstrate how your proposal will use approaches from behavioral science to address issues facing social services programs and/or issues of significance facing families in the United States with low incomes

- Discuss how the underlying theoretical framework of the study is grounded in behavioral science

- Situate the project goals and research questions within the context of behavioral science

- Explain how the project's research questions have the potential to advance the field of behavioral science

- Demonstrate completion of graduate-level coursework in behavioral science

Background, significance, and objectives

Your application must:

- Clearly describe the behavioral science theoretical framework, research goals, and research questions and demonstrate how they are logically connected to each other

- Contain a concise, yet comprehensive review of the current literature that does the following:

- ◦ Includes reference citations that are complete and consistent with a generally accepted citation format
  - ◦ Delineates gaps in the existing literature
  - ◦ Strongly supports the need and objectives for the study
  - ◦ Includes research questions that fill a gap in the behavioral science literature
- Reflect a sound description of the anticipated outcomes and benefits of the project, including:
  - ◦ The hypothesized results of the study
  - ◦ The anticipated outcomes, discussed in a way that reflects a solid understanding of issues relevant to populations in the United States who have low incomes or are otherwise under-resourced
  - ◦ A thorough description of the significance and implications for policymakers, program administrators, and social services programs
- Connect your research proposal to critical public policy questions. You are encouraged, though not required, to work in collaboration with social services programs

Research design and methodology

Your application must do the following:

- Clearly describe the research design and methodology, how the methods and design address the goals of the project, and appropriately link research issues, questions, variables, samples, and analyses
- Include a proposed sample size that is sufficient to answer the research questions for the study
- Demonstrate how you will gain access to the necessary organizations, participants, and data sources required for the project
- Reflect adequate protection of human subjects, confidentiality of data, and consent procedures, as appropriate
- Specify the measures you will use for the planned research and, if appropriate, their psychometric properties, and demonstrate that the measures are appropriate and sufficient for the questions and the population to be studied
- Reflect sensitivity to technical, logistical, and ethical issues that may arise
- Include a data analysis plan that is clearly described and appropriate for the project's specific research questions and types of data

Management and dissemination plans

The management plan must:

- Be sound and workable, and illustrate how you will carry out the project
- Demonstrate how the student and the mentor will ensure quality control during the project
- Describe how the mentor will mentor the student, including how often meetings between the mentor and the student will occur and how the mentor will supervise the student's research and any consultation or collaboration with program partners or policymakers
- Include a feasible timeline for when you expect to meet key project milestones, including when you expect the entire project to be finished and when findings will be disseminated to a wider audience

The dissemination plan must:

- Describe how the student will disseminate the proposed research in ways that are useful to the broader field, with feasible work plans and timelines
- Describe how the student will translate and disseminate the proposed research to various audiences (researchers, policymakers, and practitioners) using different types of research-, policy-, and program-oriented products

Equity and inclusion (optional)

We welcome a discussion of whether and how the proposed project will address or consider equity and inclusion. See the equity section for examples of how your project might do this. Bonus points will be awarded for applications with an equity focus.

References

You must include a list of references for any resources that are cited within the publication, using a generally accepted citation format (for example, American Psychological Association, Modern Language Association, etc.).

Organizational capacity

Applications should provide evidence that the student and PI have the relevant experience and expertise needed to carry out the project. Applications should also provide evidence that the PI has earned a doctorate or equivalent in a relevant field, conducts research as a primary professional responsibility, and has published or has been accepted for publication in at least one major peer-reviewed research journal as a first or second author.

Protection of sensitive or confidential information

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

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

See 45 CFR 75.303(e) for more information.

Line-item budget and budget narrative

The line-item budget and budget justification support the information you provide in the Budget Information Standard Form SF-424-A. See other required forms.

It justifies the costs you ask for and includes added detail, including detailed calculations for the "object class categories" in the Budget Information Standard Form. You will provide this information for each year of the period of performance. See funding periods.

As you develop your budget, consider:

- If the costs are necessary, reasonable, allocable, and consistent with your project's purpose and activities
- How you calculate your costs in ways that are clear and repeatable
- The restrictions on spending funds. See funding policies and limitations
- Travel costs for conferences and meetings (for example, flights, lodging, conference registration fees). Foreign travel is not allowed.

We encourage you also to review the Standard Form instructions.

To create your line-item budget and justification, see detailed budget instructions on our website.

In general, you must:

- Indicate the method you will use for your indirect cost rate. See indirect costs for further information.
- Include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated.

- For any cost-sharing, include a detailed listing of any funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance.
- For in-kind cost sharing, estimate the monetary value of the in-kind support and include it in the budget along with an explanation in the narrative of what the in-kind support is and how you generated the estimate.

You must incorporate the following in the budget justification:

- Expenses directly related to the student's dissertation research, which may include personnel costs/salary or a stipend, travel, and other directly related expenses
- Expenses related to travel for the student to attend at least two days of a conference (RECS when it is held, or another relevant conference in an off year)
- The need for a 12-month or 24-month project period

Proprietary or personally identifiable information

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

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

Attachments

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

Letter of commitment from mentor

All applications must include a letter of support from a mentor who will serve as the PI on the graduate student's research project. The letter must state that the mentor approves the application and describe how the mentor will regularly monitor the student's work.

The letter must also verify the following:

- The student's status in the doctoral program
- That the award will be used to support the student's dissertation research
- That the student is likely to be within two years or less of completing their dissertation

If the letter of support is not included, the project will be disqualified from review and from funding under this NOFO.

Indirect cost agreement

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

See indirect costs for more information.

Legal proof of nonprofit status

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

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

Legal proof of for-profit status

If your organization is a for-profit, including small businesses, you need to attach proof of your status and good standing.

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

Legal proof of small businesses

In addition to the proof that your organization is for-profit required above, small businesses must submit a certification signed by the chief executive officer or designee that states that the entity qualifies as a small business under 13 CFR 121.101-121.201.

Documentation of approved doctoral dissertation proposal

The graduate student is expected to have an approved dissertation proposal by the application due date. Evidence of this approval should be submitted with the proposal. Sufficient proof would include a departmental form signed by committee members or another departmental administrator attesting to the fact that the student's dissertation proposal has been approved.

Alternatively, a form or letter describing some other process that is equivalent to establishing this doctoral status would suffice.

If the student does not have an approved dissertation proposal (or have this status) at the time of application, the application should include a statement of assurance that the proposed research plan will be approved prior to August 15, 2024.

If ACF approves the application for award, the award will depend on ACF receiving written confirmation that the dissertation proposal has been officially approved and, if the proposal had not been approved at the time of the application, that the scope and approach of the research within the approved dissertation proposal has not changed substantively from what was proposed in the application.

Organizational capacity supporting information

You must attach the following information to support the information in your organizational capacity section:

- Curriculum vitae for student
- Curriculum vitae for mentor
- Official transcript for student, reflecting completed graduate courses, including those related to behavioral science, and status in the doctoral program

Third-party agreements

You must submit agreements with all third parties involved in the project, if any. Third parties include subrecipients, contractors, and other cooperating entities. Third-party agreements include letters of commitment, memoranda of understanding, and memoranda of agreement. We do not consider general letters of support to be third-party agreements.

Any such agreement must:

- Describe the third party's roles and responsibilities in project activities
- Describe the support and resources that the third party is committing to the proposed project

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- Be signed by the person in the third-party organization with the authority to make such commitments for the organization

Protection of human subjects certification

Not included in the page limit.

You must attach a Protection of Human Subjects: Assurance Identification / Certification / Declaration of Exemption form. You can find this form at the Office of Human Research Protections Forms website. If your project is funded but has not gone through Institutional Review Board (IRB) review by the time of award, you will need to produce this form before funds can be released.

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

Other required forms

You will need to complete some other forms. Upload the forms listed here at Grants.gov. You can find them in the application package or review them and their instructions at Grants.gov Forms.

Forms	Submission Requirement
Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	With the application
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	With the application
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)	If applicable, with the application or before award
Key Contacts	With the application
Grants.gov Lobbying Form	With the application or before award
Project/Performance Site Location(s) (SF-P/PSL)	With the application. Cite your primary location and up to 29 additional performance sites
Certificate of Good Standing	With the application. Required for all for-profit organizations
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certificate/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	With the application

Step 4: Learn About Review and Award

In this step

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Application review

Initial review

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

- Requests funding above the award ceiling
- Is submitted after the deadline
- Is from an individual, including a sole proprietorship or a foreign entity
- Is received in paper format that didn't have a previously approved exemption from ACF
- Does not include a letter of support from a mentor
- Does not demonstrate that the student has completed graduate-level coursework in behavioral science

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

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

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

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

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

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

Merit review

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

Our reviewers typically are not federal employees. See proprietary and personally identifiable information.

Criteria

Criterion	Total number of points = 100, plus 5 bonus points
1. Relevance to behavioral science	25 points
2. Background, significance, and objectives	20 points
3. Research design and methodology	25 points
4. Management and dissemination plans	10 points
5. Qualifications	10 points
6. Budget and budget justification	10 points
7. Equity and inclusion lens	5 bonus points

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

The 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. In addition to the evaluation criteria described below, each section will be evaluated based on the extent to which the application:

- Is clearly written and organized
- Provides appropriate details
- Has sections that are labeled with appropriate headers and sub-headers

You should address these criteria in your application materials, particularly in the approach and budget sections.

Relevance to behavioral science (maximum 25 points)

The extent to which the application:

- Demonstrates how you will use approaches from behavioral science to address issues facing social services programs and policies or issues facing populations in the United States who have low incomes or are otherwise under-resourced
- Discusses how the underlying theoretical framework of the study is clearly grounded in behavioral science
- Situates the project goals and research questions within the context of behavioral science

- Explains how the project's research questions that have the potential to advance the field of behavioral science

Background, significance, and objectives (maximum 20 points)

The extent to which the application:

- Clearly describes the behavioral science theoretical framework, research goals, and research questions and demonstrates how they are logically connected to each other
- Contains a concise yet comprehensive review of the current literature that does the following:
  - Includes reference citations that are complete and consistent with a generally accepted citation format
  - Delineates gaps in the existing literature
  - Strongly supports the need and objectives for the study
  - Includes research questions that fill a gap in the behavioral science literature
- Reflects a sound description of the anticipated outcomes and benefits of the project, including:
  - The hypothesized results of the study
  - Anticipated outcomes discussed in a way that reflects a solid understanding of issues relevant to populations in the United States who have low incomes or are otherwise under-resourced
  - A thorough description of the significance and implications for policymakers, program administrators, and social services programs
- Connects your research proposal to critical public policy questions. You are encouraged, though not required, to work in collaboration with social services programs.

Research design and methodology (maximum 25 points)

The extent to which the research design and methodology:

- Are clearly described, address the goals of the project, and appropriately link research issues, questions, variables, samples, and analyses
- Include a proposed sample size that is sufficient to answer the research questions for the study
- Demonstrate how you will gain access to the necessary organizations, participants, and data sources required for the project
- Reflect adequate protection of human subjects, confidentiality of data, and consent procedures, as appropriate

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- Specify the measures you will use for the planned research and, if appropriate, their psychometric properties, and demonstrates that the measures are appropriate and sufficient for the questions and the population to be studied

- Reflect sensitivity to technical, logistical, and ethical issues that may arise

- Include a data analysis plan that is clearly described and appropriate for the project's specific research questions and types of data

Management and dissemination plans (maximum 10 points)

The extent to which the management plan:

- Is sound, workable, and illustrates how you will carry out the project

- Demonstrates how the student and the mentor will ensure quality control during the project

- Describes how the mentor will mentor the student, including how often meetings between the mentor and the student will occur, and how the mentor will supervise the student's research and any consultation or collaboration with program partners or policymakers

- Includes a feasible timeline for when you expect to meet key project milestones, including when you expect the entire project to be finished and when findings will be disseminated to a wider audience

The extent to which the dissemination plan:

- Describes how the student will disseminate the proposed research in ways that are useful to the broader field, with feasible work plans and timelines

- Describes how the student will translate and disseminate the proposed research to various audiences (researchers, policymakers, and practitioners) using different types of research-, policy-, and program-oriented products

Qualifications (maximum 10 points)

The extent to which the proposal demonstrates that the student:

- Has the research expertise necessary to conduct the study, as demonstrated in the information contained in their biographical sketches and curriculum vitae, including relevant background, experience, and training on related research or similar projects

- Has completed graduate coursework in the behavioral sciences and is at the dissertation level

The extent to which the proposal demonstrates that the mentor:

- Has the research expertise necessary to advise the study, as demonstrated in the information contained in their biographical sketches and curriculum vitae,

including relevant background, experience, and training on related research or similar projects

- Has earned a doctorate or equivalent in a relevant field
- Conducts research as a primary professional responsibility
- Has published or has been accepted for publication in at least one major peer-reviewed research journal as a first or second author

Budget and budget justification (maximum 10 points)

The extent to which your proposed project costs:

- Are reasonable and sufficient to accomplish the research objectives, design, and dissemination plan
- Are appropriately allocated to accomplish the research objectives, design, and dissemination plan
- Reflect expenses directly related to the student's dissertation research
- Include adequate funds for the student to participate in two conferences annually. See the project requirements section for details
- Include adequate funds for the mentor to participate in the annual recipient meeting in Washington, DC, unless the budget justification indicates that funding for this will come from another source
- Include the commitment for non-federal resources that will contribute to the overall success of the project (see cost sharing for additional information on this requirement)

Bonus points: Equity and inclusion lens (maximum 5 points)

The extent to which the project:

- Incorporates an equity and inclusion lens in the proposed objectives, research questions, data sources, and/or methods. Examples might include:
  - Addressing equitable access to programs or services for populations that have had less access, systematically and historically
  - Examining subgroup variation with the objective of addressing inequities
  - Engaging populations of interest or with lived experiences in the research process
- Incorporates an equity and inclusion lens throughout the approach (e.g., in the relevance, background, objectives, and research design)
- Incorporates equity in the research questions and methodology

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Risk review

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

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

For more details, see 45 CFR 75.205.

Selection process

When making funding decisions, we consider:

- Merit review results. These are key in making decisions but are not the only factor
- Research designed with the purpose of serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations
- The larger portfolio of agency-funded projects by considering geographic distribution
- The past performance of the applicant

We may:

- Fund applications in whole or in part
- Fund applications at a lower amount than requested
- Decide not to allow a prime recipient to subaward if they may not be able to monitor and manage subrecipients properly
- Choose not to fund applicants with management or financial problems
- Designate your application as "approved but unfunded" if it was successful but there was not sufficient funding to make an award. You may receive funding if additional funds become available within the fiscal year
- Choose to fund no applications under this NOFO

We will not fund:

- An incomplete application
- A disqualified application

Award notices

How we make awards

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

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

If you want to know more about NoA contents, go to Notice of Award at ACF's website.

Step 5:
Submit Your Application

In this step

Application submission and deadlines

Deadlines

Optional notice of intent

Due on April 24, 2024.

Application

Due on June 7, 2024.

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

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

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

Submission methods

Grants.gov

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

For instructions on how to submit in Grants.gov, see the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password protect any files.

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

Issues with federal systems

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

Exemptions for paper submissions

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

To submit your application, mail it to:

Behavioral Interventions Scholars Grants
c/o ICF International
1902 Reston Metro Plaza
Reston, VA 20190

The requirements include:

- Print your application and all copies one-sided.

- Applicants must submit one original and two copies of the complete application, including all standard forms and OMB-approved forms.

- You must submit the original and both copies in a single package. If you plan to submit more than one application under this NOFO or others, you must submit them separately. Clearly label each package with the NOFO title and funding opportunity number.

- Your authorized organization official must sign the application. One application copy must include an original signature.

Other submissions

Intergovernmental review

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

Optional notice of intent

We ask that you let us know if you plan to apply for this opportunity. We do this to plan for the number of expert reviewers we will need to evaluate applications. You do not have to submit a notice of intent to apply.

Please email your notice to behavioralscholars@icfi.com. In your email, include:

- The notice of funding opportunity number and title

- Your organization's name and address

- A contact name, phone number, and email address

See the [deadline](#) for notices of intent.

Mandatory disclosure

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

Send written disclosures to ACF at:

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

And to:

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

Application checklist

Make sure that you have everything you need to apply:

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

Component	How to upload	Included in page limit
☐ Certificate of Good Standing		No
☐ Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certificate/Declaration Exemption (Common Rule)		No

Step 6:
Learn What Happens After Award

In this step

Post–award requirements and administration

Administrative and national policy requirements

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

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

Reporting

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

Performance report forms: Performance Progress Report (PPR), submitted in OLDC in GrantSolutions.gov

Performance report frequency: Semi-annually

Financial report forms: SF-425, submitted electronically on HHS Program Support Center, Payment Management Services

Financial report frequency: Semi-annually

Non-discrimination and assurance

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

Contacts and Support

In this step

Agency contacts

Program

Elizabeth Karberg

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

Mary E. Switzer Building

330 C Street SW, 4th Floor

Washington, DC 20201

202-240-3914

Elizabeth.Karberg@acf.hhs.gov

Grants management

Bridget Shea Westfall

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Administration for Children and Families

Office of Grants Management

Mary E. Switzer Building

330 C Street SW, 3rd Floor

Washington, DC 20201

202-401-5542

Bridget.Sheawestfall@acf.hhs.gov

Grants.gov

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

SAM.gov

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

Reference websites

- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)](#)

- [Administration for Children and Families (ACF)](#)

- [ACF Funding Opportunities Forecasts and NOFOs](#)

- [ACF How to Apply for a Grant](#)

- [ACF Property Guidance](#)

- [Grants.gov Accessibility Information](#)

- [Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)](#)

- [United States Code (U.S.C.)](#)

Paperwork Reduction Act disclaimer

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501-3521, the public reporting burden for the project description (project narrative, line-item budget, and justification) is estimated to average 60 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The project description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires March 31, 2026. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.