



Commissioner
Stephanie Muth

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Stephanie Muth, Commissioner

**Request for Applications (RFA)
For
Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support
(HOPES)
RFA No. HHS0013385**

Date of Release: January 16, 2024

**Deadline for Submission of Applications:
March 5, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLE I. INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, AND AUTHORITY	5
1.1 Introduction	5
1.2 Definitions	6
1.3 Authority	12
ARTICLE II. SCOPE OF GRANT AWARD	12
2.1 Program Background	12
2.2 Grant Overview	13
2.2.1 Available Funding	13
2.2.2 Period of Performance	14
2.2.3 Service Delivery Area (SDA)	14
2.3 Eligible Applicants	16
2.4 Program Objectives	16
2.5 Scope Of Grant	16
2.5.1 Proposed Programming & Services	16
2.5.2 Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)	16
2.5.3 Logic Model	17
2.5.4 Eligible Service Population	17
2.5.5 HOPES Participant Requirements	18
2.5.6 Organizational Qualifications and Requirements	19
2.5.7 Organizational Competence	19
2.5.8 Staffing Requirements and Qualifications	20
2.5.9 Program Staff Responsibilities and Requirements	20
2.5.10 Program Director Staffing Requirements	21
2.5.11 Organizational Training Requirements	22
2.5.12 Programming Requirements	23
2.5.13 Recruitment and Outreach	25
2.5.14 Service Authorization and Enrollment	26
2.5.15 Required Record Keeping	26
2.5.16 Community and Systems Support Requirements	28
2.5.17 Collaborating with PEI (FSS) Grantees	29
2.5.18 Performance Measures	29
2.5.19 Background Checks	30
2.5.20 Required Reports	31
2.5.21 Required Personnel Records	31
2.5.22 Financial Requirements	31
2.5.23 Billing Requirements	32
2.5.24 Additional Program Requirements	32
2.5.25 Use of Subawards	32
2.5.26 Transition Plan	33

2.6	Prohibitions	33
2.7	Standards	33
2.8	No Guarantee of Volume, Usage, or Compensation	34
ARTICLE III. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION		35
3.1	Schedule of Events	35
3.2	Changes, Amendment or Modification to RFA	36
3.3	Irregularities	36
3.4	Inquiries	36
3.4.1	Sole Point of Contact	36
3.4.2	Prohibited Communications	36
3.4.3	Questions and Requests for Clarification	36
3.4.4	Clarification Request Made by Applicant	37
3.4.5	Responses To Questions or Requests for Clarification	37
3.4.6	Applicant Webinar Conference	37
3.5	RFA Application Requirements	37
3.6	RFA Application Submission and Delivery	38
3.6.1	Deadline	38
3.6.2	Labeling	38
3.6.3	Delivery for Individual Submission Options	38
3.6.4	Alterations, Modifications, and Withdrawals	39
ARTICLE IV. GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS		40
4.1	Generally	40
4.2	Eligibility Screening	40
4.3	Evaluation	40
4.3.1	Specific Selection Criteria	40
4.4	Final Selection	41
4.5	Negotiation and Award	41
4.5.1	Negotiations	41
4.5.2	Exceptions	41
4.5.3	Posting Awards	42
4.6	Questions or Requests for Clarification by DFPS	42
ARTICLE V. NARRATIVE APPLICATION		42
5.1	Narrative Application	42
5.1.1	Executive Summary	42
5.1.2	Program Narrative	42
5.1.3	Project Work Plan (PWP)	43
5.1.4	Subawards	43

ARTICLE VI. REQUIRED APPLICANT INFORMATION	43
6.1 Administrative Entity Information	43
6.1.1 Applicant Information	43
6.1.2 Governmental or Non-Profit Information	43
6.1.3 Administrative Information	43
6.2 Litigation and Contract History	44
6.3 Conflicts	44
6.4 Internal Control Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ)	44
6.5 Affirmations and Certifications	45
6.6 Texas Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs)	45
ARTICLE VII. EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL	45
7.1 Expenditure Proposal	45
ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS	46
8.1 General Conditions	46
8.1.1 Amendment	46
8.1.2 Costs Incurred	46
8.1.3 Grant Responsibility	46
8.1.4 Texas Public Information Act – Application Disclosure Requirements	46
8.1.5 Applicant Waiver – Intellectual Property	48
8.1.6 News Releases	49
8.1.7 Additional Information	49
ARTICLE IX. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST	50
ARTICLE X. LIST OF EXHIBITS ATTACHED TO RFA	52

ARTICLE I. INTRODUCTION, DEFINITIONS, AND AUTHORITY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The State of Texas, by and through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) on behalf of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and pursuant to its Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) Program, seeks Applications from qualified entities within the State of Texas to provide services to support and strengthen Families with Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age in select Texas counties.

This Request for Applications (RFA) contains standardized requirements that all Applicants must meet to be considered for a Grant Agreement under this RFA. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of the Application without further consideration. Each Applicant is solely responsible for the preparation and submission of an Application in accordance with instructions contained in this RFA.

Information regarding DFPS and the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division is available online and can be accessed at:

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention_and_early_intervention/.

To be considered for award, Applicants must execute **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v.2.4**, of this RFA and provide all other required information and documentation as set forth in this RFA. Successful Applicants must comply with all requirements outlined in **Exhibit B, DFPS Grant Uniform Terms and Conditions**, and **Exhibit C, DFPS Grant Supplemental and Special Conditions**.

Applicants should reference **Article II, Scope of Grant Award**, for further detailed information regarding the purpose, background, eligible population, eligible activities, and requirements.

Grant Name:	Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES)
RFA No.:	HHS0013385
Deadline for Submission of Applications:	March 5, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarifications:	January 26, 2024, by 2:00 p.m. Central Time

Estimated Total Available Funding:	\$4,000,000 annually
Estimated Total Number of Awards:	Multiple Awards
Estimated Max Award Amount:	\$2,000,000 annually
Match Required, if any:	Match is encouraged but not required.
Anticipated Project Start Date:	July 1, 2024
Length of Period of Performance:	July 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025, with renewal options through August 31, 2029.
Eligible Applicants:	Refer to Section 2.3, Eligible Applicants.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the following terms and conditions used in this RFA have the meanings assigned below:

[Addendum](#) or [Addenda](#) is a written clarification or revision to this RFA issued by HHSC.

[Amendment](#) is a formal revision or addition to a Grant Agreement.

[Applicant](#) is any person or legal entity that submits an Application in response to this RFA. The term includes the individual submitting the Application who is authorized to sign the Application on behalf of Applicant and to bind Applicant under any Grant Agreement that may result from the submission of the Application. May also be referred to in this RFA or its exhibits as [Respondent](#).

[Application](#) is all documents the Applicant submits in response to this RFA, including all required forms and exhibits. Used interchangeably with the terms [Response](#) and [Grant Application](#).

[Base Term](#) is the initial term of this grant without any renewals.

[Business Days](#) is any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or day in which Texas State offices are authorized or obligated by law or executive order to be closed.

[Calendar Days](#) means every day on the calendar, including weekends and public holidays.

[Caregiver](#) is an individual who attends to the needs of a Child or Youth.

Case Record is any documentation and materials in both the electronic file and external file associated with a Participant.

Child(ren) or Youth is a person under eighteen (18) years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.

Community Strengths and Needs Assessment or (CSNA) is an evaluation developed and utilized by the Applicant to identify community strengths, needs, assets, characteristics, challenges, and available resources.

Confidential Information is any communication or record (whether oral, written, electronically stored, or transmitted, or in any other form) that consists of:

- A. Confidential Participant information, including Protected Health Information;
- B. All non-public budget, expense, payment, and other financial information;
- C. All privileged Work Product;
- D. All information designated by HHS or any other State Agency as confidential, including all information designated as confidential under the Texas Public Information Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 552;
- E. Unless publicly disclosed by HHS or the State, the pricing, payments, and terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement;
- F. Information that is utilized, developed, received, or maintained by HHS, the Grantee, or DFPS to fulfill a duty or obligation under this Grant Agreement and that has not been publicly disclosed; and
- G. Any other information deemed confidential under State or federal confidentiality laws.

Contact is to get in touch with or communicate with via face-to-face, electronic communication (telephone, text, email, computer, or webcam), or letter.

Contiguous County(ies) is a county or counties whose boundary touches at any point with that of another eligible county.

Cross Cultural is a term that refers to differences in backgrounds and experiences; recognizes that people are multi-dimensional and have their own experiences of their respective culture or cultures; and encompasses efforts to build healthy partnerships among people, organizations, and systems.

Curriculum is a specific written program of instruction and planned experiences for individual or Family skill and effectiveness development such as encouraging Family unity, communication, improved decision-making, and improved Family functioning.

Data Source is the system or process from which information about a Performance Measure will be gathered.

Deliverable is a written, recorded, or otherwise tangible work product prepared, developed, or procured by the Grantee that is to be provided as part of the Grantee's obligations under the Grant Agreement. A discrete type or increment of work. The work may involve the delivery of goods or services.

DFPS is the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, its officers, employees, or authorized agents.

Effective Date means the date upon which the parties agree the Grant Agreement shall take effect as indicated in the Grant Agreement.

Evidence-Based Program is a Program Model that:

- A. Is research-based and grounded in relevant, empirically based knowledge and program-determined Outcomes;
- B. Has comprehensive standards ensuring the highest quality service delivery with continuous improvement in the quality-of-service delivery;
- C. Has demonstrated significant positive short-term and long-term Outcomes;
- D. Has been evaluated by at least one rigorous randomized controlled research trial across heterogeneous populations or communities, the results of at least one of which has been published in a peer-reviewed journal. For Youth-serving curricula, a rigorous quasi-experiment may be substituted for a randomized control trial, at PEI's (FSS) discretion;
- E. Substantially complies with a program manual or design that specifies the purpose, Outcomes, duration, and frequency of the program services; and
- F. Employs well-trained and competent Program Staff and provides continual relevant professional development opportunities to the staff.

Evidence-Informed Program is a Program Model that uses the best available research and practice knowledge to guide program design and implementation. An allowable solution that allows for performance and success in all conditions. Components of an Evidence-Informed Program Model have been tested using a randomized control trial or rigorous quasi-experimental design.

Family or Families is a specific group of people that may be made up of Caregivers, partners, Children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents, related to the Index Child served through this RFA.

Grant Agreement is a promise or a set of promises, for breach of which the law gives a remedy, or the performance of which the law in some way recognizes as a duty. It is an agreement between two or more parties creating obligations that are enforceable or otherwise recognizable at law. The term also encompasses the written document that describes the terms of the agreement. For State contracting purposes, it describes the terms of a purchase of services from a Grantee. Grant Agreement may be used interchangeably with the term Contract.

Grant Opportunity is this Request for Applications and includes all exhibits and Addenda, if any.

[Grantee](#) is an entity awarded a Grant Agreement pursuant to this RFA to provide services. Used interchangeably with the terms [Grant Recipient](#), [Successful Applicant](#), and [Provider](#) for this RFA.

[HHS](#) includes both the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

[HHSC](#) means the Health and Human Services Commission.

[Home Visiting Program](#) is an Evidence-Based or Promising Practice Program that requires service delivery of the program in the home or residence of a Caregiver.

[HOPES](#) is the Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support program as funded through PEI (FSS).

[Index Child](#) or [Index Youth](#) is the Child or Youth on whom a Family's eligibility for PEI (FSS) services is based, whether they themselves are receiving services. This RFA uses Index Child to indicate the Child receiving services.

[Intake](#) is the act of receiving, logging, and creating an individual Family record at the Grantee's site and indicates acceptance of the Service Authorization.

[Invoice](#) is a Grantee's bill or written request for payment under the Grant Agreement for services performed.

[Local Coalition](#) is a community-based collaborative, coalition, committee, or group.

[Match](#) is the non-federal and/or non-State share of costs the Grantee is required to contribute to accomplish the purpose of the Grant Opportunity.

[Memorandum of Understanding](#) or [MOU](#) is a non-financial agreement between two (2) or more parties to memorialize an agreement to cooperate or coordinate with each other for a specific purpose.

[Nonresponsive](#) is when the Application's noncompliance with a material aspect of the RFA results in the Application's exclusion from grant award consideration.

[Outcome](#) is a measure that demonstrates the effect a service has on Participants, typically related to improvements in the lives of Participants regarding safety, permanency, and well-being.

[Output](#) is an indicator referring to activities, methods, or approaches and the immediate results generated because of program efforts (e.g., number of Families served).

[Participant](#) is a member of the priority population to be served by the Applicant's organization. For the purposes of this RFA, a Participant is a member of a Family or household eligible to receive PEI (FSS) services and who will receive services under this RFA. Used interchangeably with the term [Client](#) for this RFA.

PEI is the Prevention and Early Intervention Division of DFPS. Also referred to as Family Support Services (FSS).

PEI (FSS) Program Staff are employees who work for PEI (FSS).

Performance Measure is a service Output, Outcome, or Deliverable used to assess the performance of the Grantee.

Period of Performance is the period beginning with the commencement date or Effective Date of a Grant Agreement and ending when the Grant Agreement expires in accordance with its terms, or when it has been terminated. Period of Performance may be used interchangeably with Grant Term.

Prevention and Early Intervention Reporting System or PEIRS is the data reporting system used by PEI (FSS) Grantees and PEI (FSS) Program Staff to capture and report program and grant-related information.

Primary Caregiver is the parent or Caregiver of the Index Child and is the person who is the primary Participant in PEI (FSS) services.

Primary County is a county proposed in this RFA to receive HOPES services, to include regular outreach activities.

Priority Characteristics are traits that identify the Index Child, Caregivers, and Families who may receive services.

Program Model is the Curriculum, Promising Practice Program, Evidence-Informed Program, or Evidence-Based Program the Grantee implements.

Program Staff are employees working under the auspices of HOPES Grantees, including Subawards and volunteers who will be providing support and services to Families.

Project Work Plan or PWP is the documentation of how the Grantee will implement and operate the program to achieve the Performance Measures outlined in the Grant Agreement.

Promising Practice Program is a Program Model that:

- A. Has an active impact evaluation program or demonstrates a schedule for implementing an active impact evaluation program;
- B. Has been evaluated by at least one Outcome-based study demonstrating effectiveness or random, controlled trial in a homogeneous sample;
- C. Substantially complies with a program manual or design that specifies the purpose, Outcomes, duration, and frequency of the program services;
- D. Employs well-trained and competent Program Staff and provides continual relevant professional development opportunities;

E. Is research-based and grounded in relevant, empirical knowledge, and program-determined Outcomes.

Protective Factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, Families, communities, or society that mitigate or eliminate risk in Families and communities, thereby increasing the health and well-being of Children and Families.

Referral is the process whereby the Grantee provides Families with recommendations and support connecting with external services or resources that extend beyond the services the Grantee is required to provide through this RFA.

Reflective Practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions to engage in a process of continuous learning. It involves paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining practice reflectively and reflexively.

Reflective Supervision is the regular collaborative reflection between a Program Staff member (clinical or other) and supervisor that builds on the supervisee's use of their thoughts, feelings, and values within a service encounter. It is a necessary, supportive process within the supervisor-staff relationship.

Responsive means the Applicant has complied with all material aspects of the RFA, including submission of all required documents.

Safe means secure from maltreatment or the risk of danger or harm.

Statement of Work is a summary of the Grantee's programming, service delivery area, eligible population, Performance Measures, reporting requirements, and additional grant requirements incorporated into the Grant Agreement. Any changes to the Statement of Work requires an Amendment.

Service Authorization is the process whereby the Primary Caregiver consents to participation in services by completing an enrollment form and any other documentation required by PEI (FSS) or the Grantee.

Service Delivery Area or SDA is the geographical area designated by DFPS, within which grant services are to be provided.

State is the State of Texas and its instrumentalities, including HHS, DFPS, and any other State Agency, its officers, employees, or authorized agents.

State Agency is an agency of the State of Texas as defined in Texas Government Code §2056.001.

Subaward is a written agreement that assigns portions of the obligations of a Grantee to a third party selected by the Grantee. The third party assumes some of the obligations of the Grantee while the Grantee remains completely responsible for all actions carried out by the

Subawardee. Subaward may be used interchangeably with the terms [Subcontract](#) or [Subgrant](#) for this RFA.

[Subawardee](#) is any entity that has entered into a Subaward with the Grantee to assume some of the obligations of the Grantee. Used interchangeably with the terms [Subcontractor](#) or [Subgrantee](#).

[Trauma](#) means the results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning or the individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

[Trauma-Informed](#) means an individual, program, organization, or system that fully integrates knowledge about Trauma into policies, procedures, and practices by:

- A. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of Trauma in Clients, Families, staff, and others involved with the system;
- B. Maximizing physical and psychological safety and responding to the impacts of structural inequities on individuals and communities;
- C. Building healthy, trusting relationships that create mutuality among Children, Families, Caregivers, and professionals at an individual and organizational level; and;
- D. Striving to avoid re-traumatization.

[Uniform Terms and Conditions \(UTCs\)](#) are the terms and conditions that govern any Application to this RFA or any Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA.

1.3 AUTHORITY

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is requesting Applications under its authority in [Texas Human Resources Code Section 40.058](#).

Pursuant to [Senate Bill 24 of the 88th Legislature](#), Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) will be called the Family Support Services (FSS) and will transfer to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) on September 1, 2024. All grants issued under this RFA will move to HHSC as required by law.

ARTICLE II. SCOPE OF GRANT AWARD

2.1 PROGRAM BACKGROUND

PEI (FSS) partners with and provides funding for organizations across the State to deliver free, voluntary programs for Families, offering a variety of services that help promote

positive outcomes for Children and support the well-being of Families in Texas. PEI (FSS) provides the Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) program as part of its overall service array to support young Children and their Families in Texas.

The HOPES program is a community-based program providing a range of services and supports to expecting Families and Families with young Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age. HOPES programs have provided parent education and support through home visiting, parenting workshops, Caregiver support groups, and service coordination. In addition, HOPES Grantees offer community-level approaches and coordinate coalitions to raise awareness about early childhood development, promote Child and Family well-being, and advance positive outcomes for Families.

The HOPES program addresses community needs through its programming and services and promotes collaboration among community providers and stakeholders in high-risk counties to increase Protective Factors of Families across the State.

This Request for Applications (RFA) will expand services to Texas counties not currently served by HOPES where there is high risk for child maltreatment.

2.2 GRANT OVERVIEW

2.2.1 Available Funding

A. The total amount of funding anticipated annually for this Grant Opportunity is \$4,000,000. DFPS anticipates making multiple awards. Anticipated annual awards may range between \$100,000 and \$2,000,000. The average amount currently funded for HOPES grants is \$1,000,000 annually. To account for potential increases to available funding, DFPS estimates this RFA to potentially increase to \$28,000,000 for the Period of Performance.

DFPS and HHSC estimate the value of the RFA at the annual amount multiplied by five (5) years plus 40 percent to allow for additional funding during the Period of Performance. DFPS may not fully fund Applications to ensure that funds are available for the broadest possible array of communities.

B. Grants awarded from this RFA are on a cost reimbursement basis. Under the cost reimbursement method of funding, Grant Recipients are required to finance operations with their own funds. DFPS will reimburse Grant Recipients for actual cash disbursements supported by adequate documentation. DFPS will only reimburse allowable expenses that occur within the Period of Performance.

C. HOPES services are funded with State general revenue. The exact amount of State funding is determined by DFPS at the end of the fiscal year. DFPS will notify the Grantee in writing of the exact amount of State dollars used to fund the grant upon written request from the Grantee. The Grantee will be considered a sub-recipient.

- D. DFPS or HHSC reserves the right to increase funding for Grantees through supplemental Amendments if PEI (FSS) identifies additional funds at any time during the Period of Performance. Alternatively, DFPS or HHSC may reduce awards or cancel a Grant Agreement if funding is decreased during the Period of Performance. Any increase or decrease in number of awards or funding amounts are at DFPS's or HHSC's discretion.

2.2.2 Period of Performance

- A. The Base Term for this grant is expected to begin **July 1, 2024**, and be effective through **August 31, 2025**.
- B. Following the Base Term, HHSC, at its sole option, may extend any resulting Grant Agreement for up to four (4) additional years, through **August 31, 2029**.

2.2.3 Service Delivery Area (SDA)

- A. Under this RFA, DFPS will award grants to provide HOPES programming and services in eligible counties that do not currently have a HOPES grant.
- B. Eligible counties include counties not currently served by HOPES where there is high risk for child maltreatment as listed in **Table 1: HOPES Eligible Counties**.
- C. Under this RFA, Applicants may propose to serve a single eligible county or multiple contiguous eligible counties as Primary Counties.
 - 1. Contiguous eligible counties include any eligible county whose boundary touches at any point with that of another eligible county.
 - 2. Primary Counties are counties that will be identified in the Grant Agreement Statement of Work that must be served under this award; they are the focus of any outreach, grant activity, and grant initiatives.
 - 3. Identified services must be available to the entire Primary County or Counties. Services may not be denied to any Family that meets the eligibility requirements if capacity and funding allow for service provision.
- D. If an Applicant would like to serve multiple eligible counties that are not Contiguous Counties, the Applicant must submit a separate Application for each eligible county that the Applicant proposes to serve.
- E. Applicants may identify Contiguous Counties that are not eligible counties as Secondary Counties.
 - 1. Secondary Counties are not included in outreach and recruitment efforts, routine grant activity, or other grant initiatives.
 - 2. Secondary Counties are counties in which Families may only be served on a limited, individual, as-needed basis.

F. Under this RFA, DFPS will award grants to provide HOPES programming and services in one or more of the following eligible counties:

Table 1. HOPES Eligible Counties			
1. Anderson	25. Foard	47. Jim Hogg	70. Randall
2. Angelina	26. Franklin	48. Jim Wells	71. Robertson
3. Aransas	27. Freestone	49. Jones	72. Rockwall
4. Atascosa	28. Frio	50. Kaufman	73. Rusk
5. Bee	29. Galveston	51. Lamar	74. Shackelford
6. Borden	30. Garza	52. Lamb	75. Swisher
7. Bowie	31. Gillespie	53. Lampasas	76. Trinity
8. Brazoria	32. Glasscock	54. Lavaca	77. Tyler
9. Brooks	33. Gonzales	55. Limestone	78. Upshur
10. Burleson	34. Gray	56. Live Oak	79. Uvalde
11. Burnet	35. Grayson	57. Madison	80. Val Verde
12. Calhoun	36. Guadalupe	58. Martin	81. Van Zandt
13. Callahan	37. Hale	59. Matagorda	82. Victoria
14. Cass	38. Hardin	60. Medina	83. Walker
15. Coleman	39. Harrison	61. Milam	84. Wharton
16. Coryell	40. Hockley	62. Mills	85. Wilbarger
17. Dawson	41. Hopkins	63. Montague	86. Wilson
18. Dewitt	42. Houston	64. Morris	87. Wood
19. Dimmit	43. Howard	65. Nacogdoches	88. Young
20. Duval	44. Hunt	66. Newton	89. Zapata
21. Falls	45. Jack	67. Orange	90. Zavala
22. Fannin	46. Jackson	68. Panola	
23. Fisher	47. Jasper	69. Polk	

2.3 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be awarded a grant from this RFA, an Applicant must be a nonprofit corporation as described by [Texas Business Organization Code Chapter 22](#) or a governmental entity.

2.4 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

DFPS will award grants to qualified eligible Applicants to provide effective Family support services to expecting Families and Families with young Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age in select counties.

Applications must include plans that provide intervention and promote safety, stability, and well-being for Children and Families. HOPES objectives include promoting healthy Outcomes; strengthening systems in which Families with young Children interact; increasing Protective Factors for Families; assisting Families in achieving self-sufficiency and stability; promoting workforce participation; promoting school readiness and supporting healthy, nurturing, and Safe homes for Children; and reducing the risk of child abuse, neglect, and other negative Outcomes in accordance with specifications contained in this RFA.

Grantees will provide services demonstrating impact to support and strengthen Families with young Children in eligible counties across Texas.

2.5 SCOPE OF GRANT

The Applicant agrees to adhere to the requirements outlined in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award** in providing services to Participants and communities under this grant.

2.5.1 Proposed Programming & Services

- A. Applicants must propose to implement HOPES programming and services in an eligible county or counties as identified in **Section 2.2.3, Service Delivery Area (SDA)**.
- B. Applicants must propose programming and activities for the eligible county or counties to address program objectives described in **Section 2.4, Program Objectives**; address eligible populations as defined in **Section 2.5.4 Eligible Service Population**; and meet community needs and priorities identified in **Section 2.5.2. Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)**.

2.5.2 Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)

- A. The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) is an assessment the Applicant develops and utilizes to identify community strengths, needs, assets, characteristics, challenges, and available resources in the proposed eligible county or counties.

- B. Applicants must conduct a CSNA for their proposed eligible county or counties.
- C. Applicants must utilize information and recommendations from the CSNA to identify and support the use of proposed services and activities that address needs and priorities of the eligible service population and the community.
- D. Applicants must provide a summary of the CSNA as part of **Exhibit D, Program Narrative**.

2.5.3 Logic Model

- A. A logic model is a graphic depiction (road map) that shows the relationship between the resources, activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and impact of a program. It demonstrates the relationship between the program's activities, intended effects, and impact. A logic model shows the impact the program's efforts will have in a measurable format.
- B. As part of the Application, each Applicant must submit a logic model for its proposed programming and activities. The logic model must be submitted as an attachment to **Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan**, labeled as Exhibit E-1, Logic Model.
- C. Applicants may use any logic model format. There are a variety of logic model formats but generally all have the same components, which include resources, activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and impact. Suggested sources for more information in developing a logic model include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. W.K. Kellogg Foundation, [Kellogg Foundation-Logic Model Development Guide](#).
 - 2. Family Resource Information, Education, and Network Development Service, <https://friendsnrc.org/evaluation/logic-models/>.
 - 3. The University of Kansas, <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/models-for-community-health-and-development/logic-model-development/main>.
- D. The Applicant's logic model resources, activities, and outputs should inform and be reflected in **Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan**.

2.5.4 Eligible Service Population

- A. The eligible service population is comprised of Families that include a Primary Caregiver expecting a Child or who has at least one Child zero (0) through five (5) years of age.
- B. For each participating Family, the Grantee must identify an Index Child; however, the entire Family should benefit from the services provided.
- C. Grantees will also identify two (2) or more of the following Priority Characteristics for each Participant enrollment, as applicable:
 - 1. Behavioral concern;

2. Childcare or childcare access concerns;
 3. Current or former military connection;
 4. Current or past alcohol abuse – Caregiver;
 5. Current or past Child maltreatment or Child welfare involvement;
 6. Current or past domestic or interpersonal violence;
 7. Developmental delay or disability – Caregiver;
 8. Developmental delay or disability – Index Child;
 9. Family dynamics or structure concern;
 10. Family or household conflict;
 11. High stress level;
 12. Homeless, runaway, or housing instability;
 13. Household has a Child with developmental delays or disabilities;
 14. Household has a history of alcohol abuse or a need for alcohol abuse treatment;
 15. Household has a history of substance use or needs substance use treatment;
 16. Low school attainment – Caregiver;
 17. Low-income household;
 18. Mental health concern – Caregiver;
 19. Mental health concern – Index Child
 20. Parenting skills concern;
 21. Social support concern;
 22. Someone in the household has attained low school achievement or has a Child with low student achievement; and
 23. Someone in the household uses tobacco products in the home; or household contains an enrollee who is pregnant and under 21.
- D. Grantees also may plan to serve and target outreach and recruitment efforts toward pregnant and parenting current and former foster Youth who meet HOPES eligibility criteria. DFPS may refer pregnant and parenting foster Youth directly to Grantees. Grantees must prioritize services for these eligible Families and follow PEI (FSS) data collection and reporting requirements.

2.5.5 HOPES Participant Requirements

If selected for a HOPES grant, Grantees agree to adhere to the following conditions while providing HOPES services:

- A. Participants must be Primary Caregivers expecting a Child or who have a Child or Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age.

- B. All Participants must enter and participate in the program voluntarily. Voluntarily means that the Family must not be coerced, court-ordered, or mandated to participate in HOPES.
- C. Grantees cannot charge Participants any fees to participate in programming and cannot charge Participants for any participation-related costs.

2.5.6 Organizational Qualifications and Requirements

- A. The Applicant must indicate how they meet organizational qualifications in **Exhibit D, Program Narrative**.
- B. Applicant should meet all the following qualifications:
 - 1. Should have experience working with expectant and parenting individuals, as well as vulnerable Families or overseeing services to these populations;
 - 2. Should have experience providing services in the proposed county(ies) prior to submission of the Application;
 - 3. Should have experience managing budgets and grants or contracts for social services;
 - 4. An Applicant that has been on monitoring reports from any Texas State Agency or federal funding entity or audits performed on Applicant's organization during the past three (3) years, should be able to demonstrate that the organization is competent in managing and budgeting its programs and operations;
 - 5. Should have a financial manager responsible for fiscal oversight of the Grantee's organization. Applicant may decide to assign these duties to an existing role, or create a dedicated role, depending on the size and scope of the overall HOPES program; and
 - 6. These same organizational qualifications must be met by any Subawardees performing services under this award.

2.5.7 Organizational Competence

- A. The Applicant must indicate how they meet organizational competencies in **Exhibit D, Program Narrative**.
- B. Applicants must demonstrate preparedness to implement HOPES programming. Applicants must address the following ability to:
 - 1. Strategically hire and retain direct service staff and supervisor(s) to ensure successful program implementation and quality service provision;
 - 2. Make support available to Participants through accessible service hours, service delivery methods, and schedules;
 - 3. Ensure staff are competent in connecting with and serving Participants who have acute Trauma exposure or history or other adverse experiences;

4. Promote the program and utilize recruitment materials in a manner that is relevant and compelling to Families with Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age and those who support them; and
 5. Reach and engage varied high-need Caregivers across proposed communities.
- C. Any Subawardee must meet these organizational competencies, qualifications, and requirements.
- D. Applicants may propose to use the [National Support Network's Standards of Quality](#), or Applicants may propose another quality framework to assess the Applicant's organization and services for responsiveness to the needs of Participants and the community and to enhance their approach and services for the Period of Performance.

2.5.8 Staffing Requirements and Qualifications

- A. The Applicant must provide a staffing plan that includes processes to recruit, hire, and train qualified Program Staff as part of **Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan**, to include direct service staff, supervisors, program director, administrative staff, and Subaward staff as applicable.
- B. The staffing plan should ensure ability to provide quality programming and service delivery and to meet required Performance Measures and achieve intended program impact.
- C. The Applicant must provide detailed position descriptions for all positions under the grant to include:
1. Minimum educational and licensing requirements;
 2. Required experience and skills;
 3. Position responsibilities.
- D. Any changes to the staffing plan after award must have approval from PEI (FSS).

2.5.9 Program Staff Responsibilities and Requirements

- A. Program Staff provide assessment, education, and support as they assist Caregivers and their Families in attaining identified goals.
- B. Program Staff must adhere to standards of social work or other human services practice as well as any relevant agency or Program Model requirements, policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- C. Staff experience, education, and qualifications are ultimately at the discretion of the Grantee but should be sufficient to ensure quality programming and service delivery as well as the ability to meet service Outputs and achieve intended program impact. It is recommended that direct service Program Staff who are primarily responsible for delivering any core services have an associate degree or higher in a health and human services field, along with two (2) or more years of direct service experience in a health and human services field. A bachelor's degree is preferred, along with two (2) or more years of direct service experience in a health and human services field. If any proposed

Program Models have more stringent requirements or qualifications, the Grantee must meet those requirements rather than the minimum requirements cited in this section.

D. Program Staff must:

1. Complete all required training specified by PEI (FSS) and any relevant Program Models;
2. Employ strengths-based methods; and
3. Employ Reflective Practice and Reflective Supervision in program operations and service delivery.

E. If the Grantee elects to enter into a Subaward any services, the same minimum staffing qualifications and requirements will apply to Subaward staff, including direct service staff.

2.5.10 Program Director Staffing Requirements

A. The program director role (or equivalent position, such as program coordinator, program manager, program supervisor) is the primary program contact and is responsible for program oversight, services, and supervision.

B. It is recommended that any person holding the program director position or performing program director responsibilities should have at least a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, with relevant work experience, and a minimum of five (5) years of relevant program management and supervisory experience or a master's degree in a relevant field, along with a minimum of three (3) years program management and supervisory experience.

C. The program director must have experience with performance evaluation, data analysis, reporting, budget oversight, and social service programming.

D. The following responsibilities and activities are required of the program director role or must be integrated into other appropriate manager roles where qualifications are met. Clear organizational structure is required, with program director responsibilities clearly accounted for and assigned to the qualified FTE(s). The program director will:

E. Serve as the primary program contact and liaison;

1. Provide program oversight, to include managing operations, supporting, and monitoring performance related to the project, and planning for improvements where needed;
2. Ensure program operations and activities adhere to all applicable policies, procedures, and guidelines pertaining to the Grant Agreement, organization, selected Program Model(s), and services;
3. Ensure program goals are met, especially related to Deliverables, Performance Measures, and processes;

4. Coordinate budget planning, ensuring budget is aligned with program goals and operations;
 5. Hire, train, and supervise project employees; and
 6. Provide for regular administrative, clinical, and Reflective Supervision of direct service staff, to include twice monthly Reflective Supervision for any direct service staff.
- F. These activities and responsibilities are required of the identified program director or must be integrated into other appropriate manager roles where qualifications are met. Clear organizational structure is required, with the program director responsibilities clearly accounted for and assigned to the qualified FTE(s).

2.5.11 Organizational Training Requirements

- A. The Applicant must submit a training plan as part of **Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan**, for all HOPES Program Staff, including direct service staff, volunteers, and anyone else working on the grant that includes both initial and ongoing training.
1. Grantee must develop and follow a process to track all required training in personnel files.
 2. All training must be noted in the regular program quarterly reports.
 3. The same minimum training requirements must be met by any Subawardee performing services under this award.
- B. The Grantee's organization must implement any required and proposed training.
- C. Program Staff training must include the following competencies:
1. New employee orientation;
 2. Mental Health First Aid Training; and
 3. Program Model trainings (as applicable).
- D. Additional training topics that may be incorporated in staff training could include but are not limited to:
1. Adolescent development (especially as relevant to adolescent parents);
 2. Adverse childhood experiences;
 3. Brain development;
 4. Breastfeeding and lactation consultation;
 5. Case management;
 6. Child development and developmental milestones;
 7. Community collaboration and community impact;
 8. Family engagement;

9. Motivational interviewing;
10. National Family Support Network Standards of Quality;
11. Parent advisory groups;
12. Professional ethics;
13. Referrals and service connections;
14. Reflective Practice and Reflective Supervision;
15. Safe sleep;
16. Service documentation;
17. Service planning and coordination;
18. Substance use; and
19. Trauma-Informed approaches.

2.5.12 Programming Requirements

- A. Grantees must implement quality programming and services to meet program goals and objectives, ensuring competent and effective delivery of programming and services and promoting Family well-being, positive parenting strategies, and healthy child development.
- B. Applicant's proposed programming should be based on the needs and gaps in the proposed county or counties as identified in the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment and the program's intended effects and impact as identified in the Logic Model.
- C. Applicant should propose programming options to build comprehensive support for Families with Children zero through five (5) years of age.
- D. Applicant must identify one or more services or approaches.
- E. The following are potential approaches and programming options to consider:
 1. Caregiver education and support by using Curriculum-based approaches designed to promote healthy Families, build parenting skills, enhance Protective Factors, and In-home, individual or group programming.
 2. Service planning and coordination by working with parents and Caregivers to identify and document Family needs and goals and arranging, connecting, and linking the delivery of services and supports. May include collaborating with other providers to ensure successful connections and coordination.
 3. Using A Family Resource Center (Early Childhood) implementation which is a Family Resource Center (FRC) community or school-based hub of support, programming, and opportunities for Families using a multigenerational, responsive, strengths-based, and family-centered approach. An FRC must reflect and be responsive to community needs and interests as well as increase Protective Factors

and support Children's well-being. FRC implementation under HOPES must be tailored to serve Families with young Children.

4. Facilitating parent navigation by Connecting Parents and Caregivers to early childhood information, community-based resources, supports, and services through centralized, community navigation, assisting with service navigation, resolving barriers to services, and following up on linkages. Child development staff through parent navigation may provide education and support to families around developmental or behavioral questions, help families recognize typical developmental milestones, conduct relevant screenings and assessments, and complete Intakes for programming and services. Centralized navigation could be supported through call center and virtual service, providing information, support, and referrals for Families with young Children in the community.
5. Facilitating parenting groups where parents and Caregivers talk about topics like raising a family, navigating challenges, enhancing well-being, co-parenting, their Children's development, etc. This could include parent and Caregiver peer-to-peer learning, learning about Protective Factors, exploring strengths, social connections, and learning from parenting experiences. This also could include non-curriculum-based format.
6. Caregiver wellness screening, and mental health supports which could include parent and Caregiver counseling, perinatal depression treatment, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for parents and Caregivers, or other mental health services. Also could include Mental health supports to include parent and Caregiver depression screening, perinatal depression prevention, stress management and mindfulness training, trauma-sensitive parenting support, or other types of support.
7. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) is a prevention-based approach that pairs a mental health consultant with adults who work with infants and young children in different settings such as childcare, preschool, home visiting, early intervention, and their homes. IECMHC can be implemented with parents, Caregivers, care providers, and/or teachers to build adults' capacity and skills to support children's healthy social and emotional development.
8. Basic needs support is assistance to meet basic needs that are essential for a Family to function and care for young children. Assistance could include but is not limited to food, housing, utility assistance, clothing, household items, and diapers. Typically provided in conjunction with other supports and services.
9. Caregiver Support Groups are facilitated support groups to provide a Safe space for parents and Caregivers to share about parenting experiences, grow as a new parent, promote social connection, and build community.
10. Family Activities or Workshops provide parenting activities or events providing parenting workshops, seminars, or other to support healthy child development, parent-child interactions, and the parent-child relationship. These activities could include activities to learn about and support developmental milestones, parenting strategies, early literacy, or other focus areas.

11. Fatherhood programming or services with a focus on fathers or father-figures. This may include Caregiver Education or Caregiver Support Groups, and mental health supports for fathers, but is not limited to these.
 12. Financial wellness and literacy programming and services that could include financial wellness and literacy workshops, individual planning and coaching, financial wellness apps, and support materials.
 13. Childcare or respite care which offers supervised childcare and activities during any HOPES programming or respite care that provides parents and other Caregivers with short-term childcare services that offer temporary relief, improve family stability, and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect. Respite could be planned or offered during emergencies or times of crisis.
 14. Applicants may propose other programming, services, support, and initiatives that may not be listed above.
- F. Applicants must address any proposed programming, services, and initiatives in **Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan**, and in the Applicant’s Attachment E-1, Logic Model.
- G. If proposing Program Model(s), Applicant must submit **Exhibit F, Program Model Review Tool**, for each proposed Program Model.
- H. If including Program Model(s), the Grantee must implement the selected Program Model(s) with fidelity.
- I. The following are additional references for Program Model information and selection:
1. [California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare](#)
 2. [Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness](#)
 3. [Results First Clearinghouse Database](#)
 4. [SAMHSA Practices Resource Center](#)
 5. [Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#)
- J. To support programming and services, Grantees must:
1. Incorporate intentional, ongoing efforts to support and make resources available to Caregivers and Families.
 2. Meet requirements and qualifications of any selected Program Models. Provide Reflective Supervision for Program Staff, especially direct service staff, a minimum of two times per month.
 3. Provide supervision that includes case discussion and review, ongoing education, and professional development.

2.5.13 Recruitment and Outreach

- A. Applicants should develop and provide an outreach plan to connect to eligible Families, including recruitment strategies. In addition to standard means such as dissemination of brochures and attending community events, outreach to eligible individuals within the

community should include innovative and targeted approaches as well. Innovative approaches could include, but are not limited to, use of social media, establishing relationships with pediatric and family care providers, establishing relationships with businesses that cater to Families, connecting with foster Youth service providers etc.

- B. Applicants should describe how they will alleviate barriers to engagement and participation. Outreach and retention plans should include consideration of community context, geographic location, and other relevant factors. The Applicant should elaborate on proposed incentives, how they were chosen, and how they will benefit the Participants. For information on effective incentive types and strategies, please consult the field guide and webinar for using incentives in human services, available here: <http://www.buildingbetterprograms.org/2016/12/14/using-incentives-in-human-services-field-guide-literature-review-and-webinar/>.
- C. Efforts must be made by the Grantee to ensure that eligible Families are not denied or delayed services due to a wait list. The Grantee must have Referral policies and procedures in place that provide alternative service options either through the Grantee or through other community resources when the Grantee is at capacity.
- D. Grantee must add their services to the 2-1-1 Area Information Center for the Region in which the Grantee's Service Delivery Area is located and must update information provided to the 2-1-1 Area Information Center within thirty (30) Calendar Days of any changes in the scope of their program. Grantee information must also be available on the Texas 2-1-1 website.

2.5.14 Service Authorization and Enrollment

- A. Grantees must have a process for enrolling Participants and assessing Families' strengths and needs for services to be provided.
- B. Grantees Intake process must ensure the program is suitable to meet the Participant's needs.
- C. Any Intake process undertaken must be documented in each Participant's Case Record.
- D. The enrollment process must include completion of the PEI (FSS) enrollment form, which includes a review of eligibility criteria, authorization, and any additional Participant surveys and assessments as required by PEI (FSS) or the selected Program Model(s).

2.5.15 Required Record Keeping

Participant Case Records and Grantee service documentation must be maintained by Grantees to maintain details of services requested by DFPS and to support programming efforts and improvements.

- A. Applicant will track all services provided in accordance with the Applicant's approved Project Work Plan (PWP) and by using the appropriate PEI (FSS), Grantee, and Program Model documentation forms.
- B. The Applicant must maintain individual Participant records.

- C. Applicant must maintain records in a manner which protects the confidentiality of the Families being served.
- D. Applicant must ensure that all service documentation is complete, accurate, and maintained in an organized fashion.
- E. All records must be maintained in a central location and made available and accessible to DFPS without limitations.
- F. Records may be maintained electronically; however, Applicant must be able to promptly produce a complete and legible copy of any records, if requested by DFPS.
- G. The Applicant must ensure compliance with all record keeping requirements stated in this document.
- H. Grantee must develop and maintain a referral tracking system to record participants referred to the Grantee for program services and track when services are not provided or that a Participant does not engage in program or was determined to be ineligible to include:
 - 1. Date of Referral;
 - 2. Origin of the Referral;
 - 3. Participant eligibility for services; and
 - 4. Date Participant began program.
- I. Grantee must maintain Participant Case Record and Service Documentation and must maintain the following forms in the Participant record or file.
 - 1. Enrollment form;
 - 2. Annual Data Authorization form;
 - 3. Valid documentation consenting to HOPES participation;
 - 4. Required PEI (FSS) assessments and surveys;
 - 5. Assessments and surveys required by agency and Program Model;
 - 6. Service plans;
 - 7. Service activity documentation i.e., case notes documenting service activity;
 - 8. Basic needs assistance documentation;
 - 9. For Participants in group services, like Curriculum-based groups or support groups, documentation should include dated service notes with a general description of topics covered as well as any achievements or issues on which to follow up; and
 - 10. Service Referrals.
- J. Surveys
 - 1. Prior to service delivery, the Grantee must provide a pre-service Protective Factors survey to the Primary Caregiver. The Grantee may provide this survey to any

secondary Caregivers who are participating in program services. The survey must be provided either shortly before or at the beginning of the first service session. Grantee must enter the survey data into the Prevention and Early Intervention Reporting System (PEIRS) database within the required data entry timeframe.

2. The Grantee must complete a post-service Protective Factors survey with the Primary Caregiver when the Family meets the timeframe for completing the program or on an annual basis from the time that services began. It is expected that the Grantee makes a concerted effort to have the Primary Caregiver complete a post-survey if they leave the program prior to completion. Secondary Caregivers participating in the program may also complete the survey. The Grantee must enter the survey data into PEIRS within the required data entry timeframe.
3. It is expected that the Grantee will complete a program experience survey with the Primary Caregiver when exiting the program, including those Participants who have completed the program and those who are exiting early.

K. Case Closure Procedure

1. The process for closing Participant files must include the collection of any required PEI (FSS) or Program Model surveys.
2. The Grantee must document closure of the case through the Participant discharge form and in PEIRS or other data reporting tools when services are complete.
3. Any Referrals made for additional services to other local social service providers must be entered into PEIRS within 30 Calendar Days of discharge.

2.5.16 Community and Systems Support Requirements

A. Local Coalitions

1. Each Grantee must engage with a local or regional coalition of community organizations, businesses, area residents, and service Participants who share a common goal of supporting healthy early childhood development, promoting maternal health, preventing child abuse and neglect, or any related area.
2. PEI's (FSS) intent is that this coalition and community coordination will lead to improved community conditions, services, and Outcomes related to families of young Children and early childhood health and wellbeing.
3. It is recommended an Applicant engage with an existing coalition to meet Local Coalition goals where possible. Coalitions may be population- or issue-focused or have a subcommittee or task force to promote awareness and address goals.
4. Grantee must be actively involved in a coalition. Grantee will document coalition meetings in the "events" section of PEIRS and report on efforts and Outcomes in the quarterly report.

B. Examples of coalition activities include:

1. Improving coordination of existing services and resources and advocating for additional services or resources to improve systems and Outcomes for pregnant individuals and Families with young Children.
 2. Engaging the Participant population in early childhood service planning or community development efforts.
 3. Developing a subcommittee to assess and improve service availability and coordination for pregnant individuals and Families with young Children in the community.
- C. A community coalition that is an appropriate fit for a Grantee under this RFA should include the following:
1. Integrate proposed Family support systems within the community;
 2. Encourage collaboration among area agencies to ensure a range of the needs of Families with young Children are met;
 3. Identify barriers to service delivery and find solutions to those barriers.

2.5.17 Collaborating with PEI (FSS) Grantees

- A. Grantee must work with other PEI (FSS) Grantees within their identified county(ies) in addition to PEI (FSS) Grantees in the region to plan for partnerships.
- B. Through partnership and awareness of other Grantees’ service arrays, Applicant will avoid duplication of services and create a continuum of services in the community.

2.5.18 Performance Measures

- A. Outputs and Outcomes related to service provision will be confirmed through the negotiation process.
- B. Some identified Outputs and Outcomes will be required by every Grantee.
- C. DFPS reserves the right to make the final determination on the Outcomes and Outputs for grants awarded under this RFA.
- D. Additional Outputs or Outcomes may be added during the Performance Period.
- E. Required Outputs and Outcomes will be tracked through PEIRS, and other Data Sources developed and maintained by DFPS.
- F. Performance Measures incorporated into all HOPES grants may include, but are not limited to, those included in **Table 2: Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes**, below:

Table 2 Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes	
Outputs Grantee will meet the following Outputs.	Target Output

Output 1: Services are provided to the designated number of Families each month.	<i>Applicant shall propose the number of Families served monthly based on direct service FTEs and program duration. *</i>
Output 2: Services are provided to the designated number of Families by the end of each fiscal year.	<i>Applicant shall propose the number of Families served annually based on direct service FTEs and program duration. *</i>
Output 3: Pre-service and post-service Protective Factors surveys are completed by the Primary Caregivers served.	60%
Output 4: Completed program experience surveys are obtained from eligible Primary Caregivers.	50%
Output 5: Grantee will participate in or lead a local early childhood coalition.	Demonstrated regular coordination or participation through quarterly reporting.
Outcomes Grantee will meet the following Outcomes.	Target Outcomes
Outcome 1: An absolute increase in the score for a minimum of one Protective Factor is reported by unduplicated Families served.	75%
Outcome 2: Primary Caregivers are satisfied with HOPES services received.	80%
Outcome 4: Children will remain Safe.	100%

**Outputs are subject to negotiation based on available funds and PEI (FSS) requirements.*

2.5.19 Background Checks

Grantee must ensure background checks are completed as directed by PEI (FSS) before Program Staff can complete any of the activities below:

- A. Have direct Contact with a Participant;
- B. Access PEIRS; or.
- C. Access Participant records or Participant related data.

Grantee must complete background checks every two (2) years for all staff members who complete any of the activities above.

2.5.20 Required Reports

In addition to required PEIRS data entry, Grantees are required to submit quarterly reports to provide information regarding program implementation efforts, achievements, challenges, and other issues relevant to performance. These quarterly reports are required during each year of the grant. Quarterly reports are due as follows:

REPORT	DUE DATE
Quarter 1 - September, October, November	December 15 th
Quarter 2 - December, January, February	March 15 th
Quarter 3 - March, April, May	June 15 th
Quarter 4 - June, July, August	September 15 th

2.5.21 Required Personnel Records

To support and maintain for monitoring purposes, evidence of the Grantee's minimum requirements for employees, Subawardees, and volunteers with regards to qualifications, individual files for each employee, Subawardee, and volunteer must include at a minimum the following documentation:

- A. Documentation clearly establishing that the Applicant's Program Staff meet the minimum qualifications as required*;
- B. Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9);
- C. Background checks;
- D. Business files to support compliance with insurance requirements; and
- E. Completed training.

*An employee's, Subawardee's, or volunteer's qualifications are substantiated through records that include, but are not limited to, the job description, transcripts or degree certifications, and a resume.

2.5.22 Financial Requirements

To support and maintain for monitoring purposes, evidence of payments (Invoices) and adjustments related to services provided by the Grantee and billed to DFPS, Grantee must create and maintain reliable and accurate records to support all actions related to invoicing, payments, and adjustments for services provided to Participants. Records must include at a minimum, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Copy of all Invoices submitted by the Grantee;

- B. Signed Form 4116, State of Texas Purchase Voucher;
- C. Form 2030, monthly mileage log, basic needs support receipts and log, monthly Participant activity log, incentives log; and
- D. Any other documentation requested by DFPS to support an expense billed to the grant.

2.5.23 Billing Requirements

- A. DFPS or HHSC will pay Grantee monthly in response to an Invoice and purchase voucher.
- B. Grantee will submit an Invoice and purchase voucher in PEIRS monthly, no later than the last day of the month following that in which the expenditure occurred. If the last day falls on a weekend or holiday, the documents are due the next Business Day.
- C. Grantee shall submit a final close-out Invoice in PEIRS not later than 45 Calendar Days following the end of the term of the grant. Reimbursement requests received more than 45 Calendar Days following the end of the term of the grant may not be paid.
- D. PEI (FSS) will pay Grantee from available funds for services rendered in accordance with the terms of this grant upon receipt of a proper and verified statement and after deduction of any known previous overpayment made by DFPS or HHSC.

2.5.24 Additional Program Requirements

- A. Grantee is responsible for remaining current with and following all policy updates and clarifications issued by DFPS during the Period of Performance.
- B. Grantee must participate in webinars, trainings, and conference calls as scheduled by DFPS. Grantee must ensure at least one Program Staff member who is knowledgeable about the program and is authorized to make decisions attends these webinars, trainings, or conference calls.

2.5.25 Use of Subawards

- A. Grantee will provide direct Participant services or enter into a Subaward for the provision of direct Participant services as described within the RFA.
- B. Subawardees providing services under this RFA must meet the same requirements and levels of experience as that required of the Applicant.
- C. No Subaward under the RFA shall relieve the Applicant of the responsibility for ensuring the requested services are provided according to required standards.
- D. Grantee will award Subawards based on their own internal policies and processes. Applicant will clearly identify work to be performed by Subawardees and include proposed Subawardee budget or budgets in the Application.
- E. Grantee will notify DFPS in writing of any Subawardee changes.

2.5.26 Transition Plan

At the end of the Grant Term, including grant renewals, other grant termination, or cancellation, the Grantee shall in good faith and in reasonable cooperation with PEI (FSS), aid in the transition to any new arrangement or service provider.\

2.6 PROHIBITIONS

Grant funds must not be used to support the following services, activities, and costs:

- A. Inherently religious activities such as prayer, worship, religious instruction, or proselytization;
- B. Lobbying;
- C. Any portion of the salary of, or any other compensation for, an elected or appointed government official;
- D. Vehicles or equipment for government agencies that are for general agency use;
- E. Weapons, ammunition, tracked armored vehicles, weaponized vehicles, or explosives;
- F. Admission fees or tickets to any amusement park, recreational activity, or sporting event unless such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- G. Promotional gifts;
- H. Food, meals, beverages, or other refreshments, except for eligible per diem associated with grant-related travel, where pre-approved for working events, or were approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- I. Membership dues for individuals except were approved by the grantor and required for program implementation;
- J. Any expense or service that is readily available at no cost to the grant project;
- K. Any use of grant funds to replace (supplant) funds that have been budgeted for the same purpose through non-grant sources;
- L. Fundraising;
- M. The acquisition or construction of facilities; and
- N. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, State, or local law.

2.7 STANDARDS

Grantees must comply with the requirements applicable to this funding source cited in the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements* for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200), the *Texas Grant Management Standards (TXGMS)*, and all statutes, requirements, and guidelines applicable to this funding.

Grantees are required to conduct project activities in accordance with federal and State laws prohibiting discrimination. Guidance for adhering to non-discrimination requirements can be found on the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Civil Rights Office website at: [HHSC Civil Rights Office](#).

Upon request, a Grantee must provide the HHSC Civil Rights Office with copies of all the Grantee's civil rights policies and procedures. Grantees must notify HHSC's Civil Rights Office of any civil rights complaints received relating to performance under the grant no more than ten (10) Calendar Days after receipt of the complaint. Notice must be directed to:

Civil Rights Office
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
701 W. 51st Street, Mail Code W206
Austin, TX 78751
Phone Toll Free: (888) 388-6332
Phone: (512) 438-4313
TTY Toll Free: (877) 432-7232
Fax: (512) 438-5885
Email: HHSCivilRightsOffice@hhsc.state.tx.us

A Grantee must ensure that its policies do not have the effect of excluding or limiting the participation of persons in the Grantee's programs, benefits, or activities on the basis of national origin, and must take reasonable steps to provide services and information, both orally and in writing, in appropriate languages other than English, in order to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency are effectively informed and can have meaningful access to programs, benefits, and activities.

Grantees must comply with Executive Order 13279 and its implementing regulations at 45 CFR Part 87 or 7 CFR Part 16, which provide that any organization that participates in programs funded by direct financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture or U.S. Department of Health and Human Services must not, in providing services, discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion or religious belief.

2.8 NO GUARANTEE OF VOLUME, USAGE, OR COMPENSATION

DFPS makes no guarantee of volume, usage, or total compensation to be paid to any Applicant under any awarded grant, if any, resulting from this RFA. Any awarded grant is subject to appropriations and the continuing availability of funds.

DFPS reserves the right to cancel, make partial award, or decline to award a grant under this RFA at any time at its sole discretion.

There should be no expectation of additional or continued funding on the part of the Grant Recipient. Any additional funding or future funding may require submission of an Application through a subsequent RFA.

ARTICLE III. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

3.1 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT	DATE/TIME
Funding Announcement Posting Date Posted to HHS Grants RFA and Texas eGrants websites	January 16, 2024
Applicant Webinar Conference Attendance is Optional	January 24, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification	January 26, 2024, by 2:00 p.m. Central Time
Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Requests for Clarification Posted	February 9, 2024
Deadline for Submission of Applications NOTE: Applications must be <u>RECEIVED</u> by HHSC by this deadline if not changed by subsequent Addenda to be considered eligible.	March 5, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Anticipated Notice of Award	June 1, 2024
Anticipated Project Start Date	July 1, 2024

Note: These dates are a tentative schedule of events. DFPS reserves the right to modify these dates at any time upon notice posted to the [HHS Grants](#) website. Any dates listed after the Grant Application deadline will occur at the discretion of DFPS and may occur earlier or later than scheduled without notification on the [HHS Grants](#) website.

3.2 CHANGES, AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION TO RFA

DFPS reserves the right to change, amend, or modify any provision of this RFA, or to withdraw this RFA, at any time prior to award, if it is in the best interest of DFPS and will post such on the [HHS Grants](#) website. It is the responsibility of Applicant to periodically check the [HHS Grants](#) website to ensure full compliance with the requirements of this RFA.

3.3 IRREGULARITIES

Any irregularities or lack of clarity in this RFA should be brought to the attention of the sole point of contact listed in **Section 3.4.1, Sole Point of Contact** as soon as possible so corrective Addenda may be furnished to prospective Applicants.

3.4 INQUIRIES

3.4.1 Sole Point of Contact

All requests, questions, or other communication about this RFA must be made in writing addressed to the HHSC Sole Point of Contact listed below. All communications between Applicants and other DFPS or HHSC staff members concerning the RFA are strictly prohibited unless noted elsewhere in this RFA. **Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of Applicant's Response.**

Name: Amy Pearson, CTCD
Title: Grants Specialist
Address: HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS)
1100 West 49th Street; Mail Code 2020
Building S, Austin, TX 78756
Phone: 512-406-2638
Email: amy.pearson@hhs.texas.gov

Applicants must not use this e-mail address to submit Applications. Follow the instructions for submission as outlined in **Section 3.6, RFA Application Submission and Delivery**.

However, if expressly directed in writing by the Sole Point of Contact, Applicant may communicate with another designated HHSC or DFPS representative for instance during any negotiations.

3.4.2 Prohibited Communications

Potential Applicants should address all communications regarding the application process or submission requirements of the RFA to the Sole Point of Contact.

3.4.3 Questions and Requests for Clarification

DFPS will allow written questions and requests for clarification of this RFA. Questions must be submitted in writing and sent by U.S. first class mail or email to the Sole Point of Contact listed in **Section 3.4.1, Sole Point of Contact** above. Applicants' names will be

removed from questions in any responses released. Applicants must submit questions in the following format, and submissions that deviate from this format may not be accepted:

- A. Identifying RFA number;
- B. Section number;
- C. Paragraph number;
- D. Page number;
- E. Text of passage being questioned; and
- F. Question.

Note: The Sole Point of Contact must receive questions or other written requests for clarification by the deadline set forth in Section 3.1, Schedule of Events above. However, DFPS, at its sole discretion, may respond to questions or other written requests received after the deadline. Please provide entity name, address, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, and name of contact person when submitting questions.

3.4.4 Clarification Request Made by Applicant

Applicants must notify the sole point of contact of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specifications, omission, or other error in the RFA in the manner and by the deadline for submitting questions in **Section 3.4.3, Questions and Requests for Clarification.**

3.4.5 Responses To Questions or Requests for Clarification

Responses to questions or other written requests for clarification will be posted on the [HHS Grants](#) website. DFPS reserves the right to amend answers prior to the deadline for submission of Grant Applications. Amended answers will be posted on the [HHS Grants](#) website. It is Applicant's responsibility to check the website or Contact the sole point of contact for updated responses. DFPS also reserves the right to provide a single consolidated response of all similar questions in any manner at DFPS's sole discretion.

3.4.6 Applicant Webinar Conference

DFPS will conduct an **optional** Applicant Webinar Conference on January 24, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time.

Applicants may register for this optional webinar by accessing the following link at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3987522285387054172> or dial +1 (562) 247-8422 and enter access code 227-543-143.

3.5 RFA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

All Applications must be:

- A. Clearly legible;
- B. Sequentially page-numbered and include the Applicant’s name at the top of each page;
- C. Organized in the sequence outlined in Article IX, Submission Checklist;
- D. In Arial or Times New Roman font, size 11 or larger for normal text, no less than size
- E. 10 for tables, graphs, and appendices;
- F. Blank forms provided in the attachments must be used (electronic reproduction of the forms is acceptable; however, all forms must be identical to the original form(s) provided);
- G. Correctly identified with the RFA number and submittal deadline;
- H. Responsive to all RFA requirements; and
- I. Signed by an authorized official in each place a signature is needed.

3.6 RFA APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND DELIVERY

3.6.1 Deadline

HHSC must receive and time stamp Applications at the address in **Section 3.6.3, Delivery for Individual Submission Options** no later than the date and time specified in **Section 3.1, Schedule of Events**.

3.6.2 Labeling

Applications submitted via USB by mail or hand delivery will be placed in a sealed box and clearly labeled as follows:

RFA NO.: RFA HHS0013385
 RFA NAME: Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES)

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS: March 5, 2024, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
 PURCHASER NAME: Amy Pearson
 APPLICANT’S NAME: _____

HHSC and DFPS will not be held responsible for any Application that is mishandled prior to receipt by HHSC. HHSC will not be responsible for any technical issues that result in late delivery, inappropriately identified documents, or other submission error that may lead to disqualification (including substantive or administrative) or nonreceipt of the Applicant’s application.

3.6.3 Delivery for Individual Submission Options

Applicant must correctly deliver Application by one of the methods below. Applications submitted by any other method (e.g., facsimile, telephone, email) will NOT be considered.

Submission Option #1: Applicant may submit the following through the Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures in **Exhibit G, HHS Online Bid Room**:

- A. One file named “Original Application” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in searchable portable document format (PDF).
- B. One copy of the completed **Exhibit H-1, FY24 Expenditure Proposal, and Exhibit H-2, FY25 Expenditure Proposal**, in original Excel format.
- C. In accordance with **Section 8.1.4, Texas Public Information Act – Application Disclosure Requirements**, one file named “Public Information Copy” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in searchable PDF, if applicable.

Submission Option #2: Applicant may submit responsive applications via USB on two USB drives, one labeled “Original” and one labeled “Copy,” to the correct mailing address as determined by the mailing method identified in this section:

- A. Each USB must contain one file named “Original Application” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in searchable PDF.
- B. The USB must also contain **Exhibit H-1, FY24 Expenditure Proposal, and Exhibit H-2, FY25 Expenditure Proposal** in original Excel format.
- C. In accordance with **Section 8.1.4, Texas Public Information Act – Application Disclosure Requirements**, if applicable, one additional file named “Public Information Copy” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in searchable PDF.

Overnight/Express/Priority Mail	Hand Delivery
Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: Response Coordinator Tower Building, Room 108 1100 W. 49 th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756	Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: Response Coordinator Procurement & Contracting Services Building 1100 W. 49 th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756

NOTE: All Applications become the property of HHSC after submission and will not be returned to Applicant. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to appropriately mark and deliver the Application to HHSC by the specified date. A U.S. Postal Service (USPS) postmark; a mail receipt with the date of mailing, stamped by the USPS; a dated shipping label or invoice of receipt from a commercial carrier; or any other documentation in lieu of the on-site time stamp by submission deadline may render an Application ineligible under this RFA.

3.6.4 Alterations, Modifications, and Withdrawals

Prior to the RFA submission deadline, an Applicant may:

- A. Withdraw its Application by submitting a written request to the Sole Point of Contact identified in **Section 3.4.1, Sole Point of Contact**; or
- B. Modify its Application by submitting a written amendment to the Sole Point of Contact identified in **Section 3.4.1, Sole Point of Contact**. DFPS may request RFA Application modifications at any time.

ARTICLE IV. GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

4.1 GENERALLY

Those Applicants selected through the evaluation process will be invited to submit additional information and to participate in a negotiation process which will determine final selection. The specific dollar amount awarded to each Successful Applicant will depend upon the merit and scope of the Application and negotiations and available funds. Funded amounts may differ from those requested. Not all Applicants who are deemed eligible to receive funds are assured of receiving an award.

The final funding amount and the provisions of the grant will be determined at the sole discretion of DFPS.

4.2 ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

HHSC will review Applications for minimum qualifications and completeness. All complete applications meeting the minimum qualifications will move to the Evaluation stage.

4.3 EVALUATION

Applications will be evaluated and scored in accordance with the factors required by the HOPES grant and other factors deemed relevant by DFPS.

DFPS will select Applicants to receive awards based on eligibility criteria, planned service delivery, geographical distribution, staffing, scores, and the best interest of the State.

4.3.1 Specific Selection Criteria

Grant Applications shall be evaluated based on and using **Exhibit I, Evaluation Tool**:

1. Applicant's Background and Experience (35%)
2. Project Delivery (45%)
3. Administrative and Financial Capacity (10%)
4. Reasonable Project Cost (10%)

4.4 FINAL SELECTION

DFPS intends to make multiple awards. After initial screening for eligibility, Application completeness, and initial scoring of the elements listed above in **Section 4.3, Evaluation**, a selection committee will look at all eligible Applicants to determine which Applications should be awarded to most effectively accomplish State priorities. The selection committee will recommend Applicants for negotiations to the DFPS Commissioner, who will approve those Applicants selected for negotiation and, if successful, award.

DFPS will make all final funding decisions based on eligibility, geographic distribution across the state, state priorities, reasonableness, availability of funding, and cost-effectiveness.

4.5 NEGOTIATION AND AWARD

4.5.1 Negotiations

The specific dollar amount awarded to each Grantee will depend upon the merit and scope of the Application, the recommendation of the selection committee, the number of selected Applicants, and the decision of the DFPS Commissioner. Not all Applicants who are deemed eligible to receive funds are assured of receiving an award.

The negotiation phase will involve direct Contact between the Grantee and HHS PCS and DFPS representatives via phone or email. During negotiations, Grantees may expect:

- A. An in-depth discussion of the submitted Application and budget;
- B. Requests from HHSC or DFPS for clarification or additional detail regarding Application.

The final funding amount and the provisions of the grant will be determined at the sole discretion of DFPS.

4.5.2 Exceptions

Applicants are highly encouraged, in lieu of including exceptions in their Applications, to address all issues that might be advanced by way of exception by submitting an **Exhibit J, Exceptions Form**, or questions or requests for clarification pursuant to **Section 3.4.3, Questions and Requests for Clarification**.

No exception, nor any other term, condition, or provision in an Application that differs, varies from, or contradicts this RFA, will be considered to be part of any Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA unless expressly made a part of the Grant Agreement in writing by the System Agency.

4.5.3 Posting Awards

HHS will post to the [HHS Grants](#) website and may publicly announce a list of Applicants whose Applications are selected for final award. This posting does not constitute DFPS's agreement with all the terms of any Application and does not bind DFPS to enter into a Grant Agreement with any Applicant whose award is posted.

4.6 QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION BY DFPS

DFPS reserves the right to ask questions or request clarification from any Applicant at any time during the Application process.

ARTICLE V. NARRATIVE APPLICATION

5.1 NARRATIVE APPLICATION

Utilizing the exhibits attached to this RFA, Applicants will describe the proposed services, processes, and methodologies for meeting all components described in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award** including the Applicant's approach to meeting service delivery requirements. Applicant should identify all tasks to be performed, including all project activities to take place, during the Period of Performance. Applicant will also include all documents requested as part of completing forms to demonstrate fulfilling **Article II, Scope of Grant Award** requirements.

5.1.1 Executive Summary

Applicant must complete **Exhibit K, Executive Summary**, attached to this RFA. Applicants will provide a high-level overview with a broad understanding of the Applicant's approach to meeting this RFA's business requirements. The summary must demonstrate an understanding of DFPS's goals and objectives of this RFA. The Applicant should address program goals and propose at least three (3) objectives for the proposed program. Limit the Executive Summary to one (1) page.

5.1.2 Program Narrative

Applicant must complete **Exhibit D, Program Narrative**, attached to this RFA. Applicant will provide a detailed description of the Applicant's background and experience, needs assessment and goals, and program rationale. Application must support all the business activities and requirements described in this RFA. The detailed description must reflect a clear understanding of the work undertaken. Applicant will also include all documents requested as part of completing **Exhibit D, Program Narrative** to demonstrate fulfilling **Article II, Scope of Grant Award** requirements. The Program Narrative should not exceed ten (10) pages (excluding attachments).

5.1.3 Project Work Plan (PWP)

- A. Applicant must complete **Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan**, attached to this RFA. Applicant will describe its plan for service delivery to the eligible service population in the proposed Service Delivery Area to meet all the requirements outlined in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award**.
- B. Applicant will also include all documents requested as part of completing **Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan**, to demonstrate fulfilling **Article II, Scope of Grant Award** requirements.

5.1.4 Subawards

Applicant must identify any Subawards whom Applicant intends to award to provide HOPES services. Provide this information in **Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan**, attached to this RFA.

ARTICLE VI. REQUIRED APPLICANT INFORMATION

6.1 ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY INFORMATION

Applicant must provide satisfactory evidence of its ability to manage and coordinate the types of activities described in this RFA and to produce the specified goods or services on time. As a part of the Grant Application requested in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award**, Applicant must provide the following information in Sections 6.1.1-6.1.3:

6.1.1 Applicant Information

Use **Exhibit L, Applicant Information**, to complete basic information about the Applicant and project, including the signature of the authorized representative. The face page is the cover page of the Application and must be completed in its entirety.

6.1.2 Governmental or Non-Profit Information

- A. Complete **Exhibit M-1, Governmental Entity Authorized Officials**, if Applicant is a governmental entity; or
- B. Complete **Exhibit M-2, Non-Governmental Entity Board of Directors and Principal Officers**, if Applicant is a non-profit entity.

6.1.3 Administrative Information

Use **Exhibit N, Administrative Information**, to provide information regarding identification and contract or grant history of the Applicant, executive management, project management, governing board members, and principal officers. Respond to each request for information or provide the required supplemental documents behind this form. If the

response requires multiple pages, identify the supporting pages or documentation with the applicable request.

6.2 LITIGATION AND CONTRACT HISTORY

Applicant must include in its Grant Application a complete disclosure of any alleged or significant contractual failures, including any that occurred between Applicant and DFPS. In addition, Applicant must disclose any civil or criminal litigation or investigation over the last five (5) years that involves Applicant or in which Applicant has been found guilty or liable including any allegations of such that are currently pending.

Applicant must also disclose any settlement Agreements entered into in the last five (5) years related to alleged contractual failures. Failure to comply with the terms of this provision may disqualify Applicant. A Grant Application may be rejected based upon Applicant's prior history with the State of Texas or with any other party that demonstrates, without limitation, unsatisfactory performance, adversarial or contentious demeanor, or significant failure(s) to meet contractual obligations. Applicant must complete **Exhibit N, Administrative Information**.

6.3 CONFLICTS

Applicant must certify that it does not have any personal or business interests that present a conflict of interest with respect to the RFA and any resulting grant. Additionally, if applicable, the Applicant must disclose all potential conflicts of interest. The Applicant must describe the measures it will take to ensure that there will be no actual conflict of interest and that its fairness, independence, and objectivity will be maintained. DFPS will determine to what extent, if any, a potential conflict of interest can be mitigated and managed during the term of the grant. Failure to identify actual and potential conflicts of interest may result in disqualification of a Grant Application or termination of a grant.

Please include any activities of affiliated or parent organizations and individuals who may be assigned to this grant, if any. Applicant must complete **Exhibit N, Administrative Information**.

Additionally, pursuant to Section 2252.908 of the Texas Government Code, a Successful Applicant awarded a Contract greater than \$1 million dollars or awarded a Contract that would require the Successful Applicant to register as a lobbyist under Texas Government Code Chapter 305, must submit a disclosure of interested parties to DFPS at the time the business entity submits the signed Contract. Rules and filing instructions may be found on the Texas Ethics Commission's public website, and additional instructions will be given by HHS to Successful Applicants.

6.4 INTERNAL CONTROL STRUCTURE QUESTIONNAIRE (ICSQ)

Applicant must submit **Exhibit O, Internal Control Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ) for Cost Reimbursement Grant**. Applicant must include all required attachments. This

document serves to supply evidence of financial capacity sufficient to demonstrate the reasonable stability and solvency appropriate to the requirements of this RFA.

6.5 AFFIRMATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Applicant must complete, sign and return all the following listed exhibits.

- A. **Exhibit A, HHSC Solicitation Affirmations v2.4;**
- B. **Exhibit O, Internal Controls Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ) for Cost Reimbursement Grant;** and
- C. **Exhibit P, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire**

Note: A complete list of all required exhibits is included in Article IX, Submission Checklist.

6.6 TEXAS HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES (HUBS)

If a Successful Applicant chooses to contract for goods and services using the funding awarded in this grant, DFPS encourages the Applicant to use HUBs to provide those goods and services where possible.

ARTICLE VII. EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL

7.1 EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL

- A. Applicant must submit **Exhibit H-1, FY24 Expenditure Proposal**, and **Exhibit H-2, FY25 Expenditure Proposal**, of this RFA in its original Excel format clearly marked with the Applicant's name, the RFA number, and the RFA submission date.
- B. Expenditure Proposals should include the costs of services listed in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award**, and shall include all labor, materials, tools, supplies, equipment, and personnel, including, but not limited to, travel expenses, associated costs, and incidental costs necessary to provide the products and services according to the minimum specifications, requirements, provisions, terms, and conditions set forth in this RFA.
- C. The Expenditure Proposals shall indicate the necessary expenses on the proposed budget tab along with a narrative description of the methodology used to calculate the costs.
- D. Applicants must demonstrate that project costs outlined in the Expenditure Proposals are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and developed in accordance with applicable State and federal grant requirements.

- E. Costs will be reviewed for compliance with TXGMS, and federal grant guidance found in 2 CFR Part 200, as modified by TXGMS, with effective given to whichever provision imposes the more stringent requirement in the event of a conflict.

ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

8.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS

8.1.1 Amendment

HHS reserves the right to change, amend, or modify any provision of this RFA, or to withdraw this RFA, at any time prior to award, if it is in the best interest of HHS. Any such revisions will be posted as Addenda on the [HHS Grants](#) website thus becoming part of the original RFA. Applicants must return each Addendum acknowledgment form as instructed; failure to do so may result in disqualification of Application. It is the responsibility of Applicant to periodically check the [HHS Grants](#) website to ensure full compliance with the requirements of this RFA.

8.1.2 Costs Incurred

Applicants understand that issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by DFPS to award a grant or to pay any costs incurred by an Applicant in the preparation of this Application. DFPS is not liable for any costs incurred by an Applicant prior to issuance of or entering into a formal Grant Agreement, Contract, or purchase order. Costs of developing Grant Applications, preparing for, or participating in oral presentations and site visits, or any other similar expenses incurred by an Applicant are entirely the responsibility of the Applicant, and will not be reimbursed in any manner by the State of Texas.

8.1.3 Grant Responsibility

DFPS will look solely to Applicant for the performance of all grant obligations that may result from an award based on this RFA. Applicant shall not be relieved of any of its obligations for any nonperformance by Subawardees.

8.1.4 Texas Public Information Act – Application Disclosure Requirements

Applications and resulting Grant Agreements are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (PIA), Texas Government Code Chapter 552, and may be disclosed to the public upon request. Other legal authority also requires System Agency to post grants and applications on its public website and to provide such information to the Legislative Budget Board for posting on its public website.

Under the PIA, certain information is protected from public release. If Applicant asserts that information provided in its Application is exempt from disclosure under the PIA, Applicant must:

A. Mark Original Application:

1. Mark the Original Application, at the top of the front page, with the words “CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION” in large, bold, capitalized letters (the size of, or equivalent to, 12-point Times New Roman font); and
2. Identify, adjacent to each portion of the Application that Applicant claims is exempt from public disclosure, the claimed exemption from disclosure (NOTE: no redactions are to be made in the Original Application);

B. Certify in Original Application – HHS Solicitation: Certify, in the designated section of the Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v2.4, Applicant’s confidential information assertion and the filing of its Public Information Act Copy; and

C. Submit Public Information Act Copy of Application: Submit a separate “Public Information Act Copy” of the Original Application (in addition to the original and all copies otherwise required under the provisions of this RFA). The Public Information Act Copy must meet the following requirements:

1. The copy must be clearly marked as “Public Information Act Copy” on the front page in large, bold, capitalized letters (the size of, or equivalent to, 12-point Times New Roman font);
2. Each portion Applicant claims is exempt from public disclosure must be redacted (blacked out); and
3. Applicant must identify, adjacent to each redaction, the claimed exemption from disclosure. Each identification provided as required in **Subsection C of this section** must be identical to those set forth in the Original Application as required in **Subsection A.2.**, above. The only difference in required markings and information between the Original Application and the “Public Information Act Copy” of the Application will be redactions – which can only be included in the “Public Information Act Copy.” There must be no redactions in the Original Application.

By submitting an Application under this RFA, Applicant agrees that, if Applicant does not mark the Original Application, provide the required certification in Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v2.4, and submit the Public Information Act Copy, the Application will be considered to be public information that may be released to the public in any manner including, but not limited to, in accordance with the Public

Information Act, posted on the System Agency’s public website, and posted on the Legislative Budget Board’s public website.

If any or all Applicants submit partial, but not complete, information suggesting inclusion of confidential information and failure to comply with the requirements set forth in this section, the System Agency, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to (1) disqualify all Applicants that fail to fully comply with the requirements set forth in this section, or (2) to offer all Applicants that fail to fully comply with the requirements set forth in this section additional time to comply.

No Applicant should submit a Public Information Act Copy indicating that the entire Application is exempt from disclosure. Merely making a blanket claim that the entire Application is protected from disclosure because it contains any amount of confidential, proprietary, trade secret, or privileged information is not acceptable, and may make the entire Application subject to release under the PIA.

Applications should not be marked or asserted as copyrighted material. If Applicant asserts a copyright to any portion of its Application, by submitting an Application, Applicant agrees to reproduction and posting on public websites by the State of Texas, including the System Agency and all other state agencies, without cost or liability.

The System Agency will strictly adhere to the requirements of the PIA regarding the disclosure of public information. As a result, by participating in this RFA, Applicant acknowledges that all information, documentation, and other materials submitted in its Application may be subject to public disclosure under the PIA. The System Agency does not have authority to agree that any information submitted will not be subject to disclosure. Disclosure is governed by the PIA and by rulings of the Office of the Texas Attorney General. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel concerning disclosure issues resulting from this process and to take precautions to safeguard trade secrets and proprietary or otherwise confidential information. The System Agency assumes no obligation or responsibility relating to the disclosure or nondisclosure of information submitted by Applicants.

For more information concerning the types of information that may be withheld under the PIA or questions about the PIA, please refer to the Public Information Act Handbook published by the Office of the Texas Attorney General or contact the attorney general’s Open Government Hotline at (512) 478-OPEN (6736) or toll-free at (877) 673-6839 (877-OPEN TEX). To access the Public Information Act Handbook, please visit the attorney general’s website at <http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov>.

8.1.5 Applicant Waiver – Intellectual Property

SUBMISSION OF ANY DOCUMENT TO ANY HHS AGENCY IN RESPONSE TO THIS SOLICITATION CONSTITUTES AN IRREVOCABLE WAIVER, AND AGREEMENT BY THE SUBMITTING PARTY TO FULLY INDEMNIFY THE STATE OF TEXAS AND HHS FROM ANY CLAIM OF INFRINGEMENT

REGARDING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF THE SUBMITTING PARTY OR ANY THIRD PARTY FOR ANY MATERIALS SUBMITTED TO HHS BY THE SUBMITTING PARTY.

8.1.6 News Releases

Prior to final award an Applicant may not issue a press release or provide any information for public consumption regarding its participation in this Grant Opportunity. Requests should be directed to the HHS sole point of contact identified in **Article III, Administrative Information**.

8.1.7 Additional Information

By applying, the Applicant grants HHS and DFPS the right to obtain information from any lawful source regarding the Applicant's and its directors,' officers,' and employees': (1) past business history, practices, and conduct; (2) ability to supply the goods and services; and (3) ability to comply with grant award requirements. By applying, an Applicant generally releases from liability and waives all claims against any party providing HHS or DFPS information about the Applicant. DFPS may take such information into consideration in evaluating Applications.

The remainder of this page is left blank intentionally.

ARTICLE IX. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

This checklist is provided for Applicant's convenience only and identifies documents that must be submitted with this RFA to be considered Responsive. Any Grant Application received without these requisite documents may be deemed Nonresponsive and may not be considered for grant award.

Original Grant Application Package

The Grant Application Package must include the Application in one of the approved submission methods identified in **Section 3.6, RFA Application Submission and Delivery** in the order outlined below:

A. Administrative Information

- 1. Exhibit L, Applicant Information _____
- 2. Exhibit M-1, Governmental Entity Authorized Officials _____
- 3. Exhibit M-2, Non-Governmental Entity Board of Directors and
Principal Officers _____
- 4. Exhibit N, Administrative Information _____

B. Narrative Proposal [The Narrative Proposal must be titled “Narrative Proposal” and include the Applicant’s Legal Name, the RFA No., and the name of the grant program. Use the titles below for each required section.]

- 1. Exhibit K, Executive Summary _____
- 2. Exhibit D, Program Narrative _____
- 3. Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan _____
- 4. Exhibit E-1, Logic Model _____

C. Expenditure Proposal (templates included)

- 1. Exhibit H-1, FY24 Expenditure Proposal _____
- 2. Exhibit H-2, FY25 Expenditure Proposal _____

This Requested Expenditure Proposals are mandatory and must be submitted with the Application, in the original format (Excel), for the Application to be considered responsive. Applications received without the completed Requested Expenditure Proposals will be disqualified.

D. Exhibits to be Completed, Signed, and Submitted with Application

1. Exhibit A, HHSC Solicitation Affirmations v2.4 _____
Exhibit A is mandatory and must be completed, signed, and submitted for the Application to be considered responsive. Applications received without Exhibit A or with an unsigned Exhibit A may be disqualified.
2. Exhibit J, Exceptions Form (if applicable) _____
3. Exhibit O, Internal Controls Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ) for Cost Reimbursement Grant _____
4. Exhibit P, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire _____

E. Addenda

Each Addendum, if any, must be signed and submitted with the Application. _____

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ARTICLE X. LIST OF EXHIBITS ATTACHED TO RFA

Exhibit A, HHSC Solicitation Affirmations v2.4

Exhibit B, DFPS Grant Uniform Terms and Conditions

Exhibit C, DFPS Grant Supplemental and Special Conditions

Exhibit D, Program Narrative

Exhibit E, HOPES Project Work Plan

Exhibit F, Program Model Review Tool

Exhibit G, HHS Online Bid Room

Exhibit H-1, FY24 Expenditure Proposal

Exhibit H-2, FY25 Expenditure Proposal

Exhibit I, Evaluation Tool

Exhibit J, Exceptions Form

Exhibit K, Executive Summary

Exhibit L, Applicant Information

Exhibit M-1, Governmental Entity Authorized Officials

Exhibit M-2, Non-Governmental Entity Board of Directors and Principal Officers

Exhibit N, Administrative Information

Exhibit O, Internal Controls Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ) for Cost-Reimbursement Grants

Exhibit P, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire