



**Texas Department of Family and Protective Services**

**Commissioner**  
*Stephanie Muth*

**Texas Department of Family and Protective Services**  
**Stephanie Muth, Commissioner**

**Request for Applications (RFA) For**  
**Texas Home Visiting (THV)**

**RFA No. HHS0013406**

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# **ARTICLE I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, DEFINITIONS, AND AUTHORITY**

## **1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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), seeks Applications from qualified public or private entities, including counties, municipalities, and other political subdivisions of the State to implement the Texas Home Visiting (THV) program, as directed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, Assistance Listing Number 93.870.

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.

Through this RFA, DFPS will award grants to selected Applicants to implement the THV program in eligible communities across the State.

Grant awards will be administered through the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division of DFPS.

Applicants can access information regarding DFPS and PEI at the following website: [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention\\_and\\_early\\_intervention/](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention_and_early_intervention/).

To be considered for an 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. Awarded 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**.

## **1.2 DEFINITIONS**

The following terms and conditions have the meanings assigned below:

**Addendum** or **Addenda** is a written clarification or revision to this RFA issued by DFPS.

**Assistance Listing Number (ALN)** refers to the publicly available listing of Federal assistance programs managed and administered by the General Services Administration, formerly known as the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA).

**Amendment** is a formal revision or addition to a Grant Agreement.

**Applicant** is the entity applying in response to this RFA. Used interchangeably with the term **Respondent**.

**Application** is all information and materials submitted by an Applicant in response to this RFA. Used interchangeably with the terms **Response** and **Grant Application**.

**Business Day** is any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or day on which Texas State offices are authorized or obligated by law or executive order to be closed.

**Caregiver** is an individual who attends to the needs of a Child or Youth.

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

**Child(ren)** or **Youth** is a person under 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 (CSNA)** is an evaluation the Applicant develops and uses 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:

1. Confidential Participant information, including Protected Health Information;
2. All non-public budget, expense, payment, and other financial information;
3. All privileged Work Product;
4. 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;
5. Unless publicly disclosed by HHS or the State, the pricing, payments, and terms and conditions of the Agreement;
6. Information that HHS, the Grantee, or DFPS uses, develops, receives, or maintains to fulfill a duty or obligation under this Grant Agreement and that has not been publicly disclosed; and
7. 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 meeting, electronic communication (telephone, text, email, computer, or webcam), or letter.

**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.

**Deliverable** is a written, recorded, or otherwise tangible work product that the Grantee prepares, develops, or procures and provides as part of the Grantee's obligations under the Grant Agreement. A discrete type or increment of work that may involve the delivery of goods or services.

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

**Effective Date** is the date on which the parties agree the Grant Agreement will take effect.

**Evidence-Based Program** is a Program Model that:

1. Is research based and grounded in relevant, empirically based knowledge and program-determined Outcomes;
2. Has comprehensive standards that ensure the highest quality service delivery with continuous improvement;
3. Has demonstrated significant positive short-term and long-term Outcomes;
4. 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 discretion;
5. Substantially complies with a program manual or design that specifies the purpose, Outcomes, duration, and frequency of the program services; and
6. Employs well-trained and competent staff and provides continual relevant professional development opportunities to the staff.

For the purposes of this RFA, an Evidence-Based Program meets HHS criteria as an evidence-based early Childhood home visiting service delivery model and eligible for federal MIECHV funding as determined by HRSA based on alignment with MIECHV statutory and program requirements. Eligible models can be found here: [Models eligible for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting \(MIECHV\) funding | Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness \(hhs.gov\)](#)

**Family (Families)** is a specific group of people that may be made up of Caregivers, partners, Children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents served through this RFA.

**Grant** is an award from DFPS to an entity through this RFA for THV services.

**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 **Contract**.

**Grant Opportunity** is this RFA and includes any Exhibits and Addenda.

**Grantee** is an entity awarded a Grant Agreement pursuant to this RFA to provide programming. Used interchangeably with the term **Awarded Applicant, Provider, Lead Implementing Agency, Subrecipient, or Successful Applicant**.

**HHSC** means the Health and Human Services Commission.

**Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA)** is the federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services primarily responsible for improving health care to individuals who are economically or medically vulnerable as well as those who are geographically isolated.

**Home Visiting Program** is an Evidence-Based or Promising Practice Program that

provides expectant parents and parents of young Children with information, parent education, support, and Referrals to community resources and services. Home visiting requires that providers promote positive parenting, healthy development, and Family well-being through programs in which service delivery takes place in the Caregiver's home or residence.

**Index Child** is the Child a Family's eligibility for PEI services is based on, whether or not they themselves are receiving services.

**Invoice** is a Grantee's bill or written request for reimbursement under the Grant Agreement for services performed.

**Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA)** is an entity designated as an LMHA by HHSC in accordance with Texas Health and Safety Code §533.035(a).

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** is an agreement between two or more parties outlined in a formal document to cooperate or coordinate with each other for a specific purpose or purposes.

**Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program** is the federal program that supports pregnant people and parents with young Children who live in communities that face greater risks and barriers to achieving positive maternal and Child health Outcomes. Families choose to participate in Home Visiting Programs, and partner with health, social service, and Child development professionals to set and achieve goals that improve their health and well-being.

**Non-Responsive** is a designation for when an 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 a service's effects on Participants, typically related to improvements in their lives regarding safety, permanency, and well-being.

**Output** is an indicator referring to activities, methods, and approaches and the immediate result generated because of program efforts (e.g., number of Families served).

**Participant** is a member of the 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 who is eligible to receive PEI services and receives services under this Grant. Used interchangeably with the term **Client** for this RFA.

**PEI Program Staff** are employees who work for the DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division.

**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 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 (PEIRS)** is the data reporting

system used by PEI Grantees and PEI Program Staff to capture and report program and Grant-related information.

**Primary Caregiver** is the parent or Caregiver of the Index Child and the primary Participant in PEI services.

**Primary County** is a **Qualifying County** that is proposed by the Applicant for Texas Home Visiting services under this RFA and must be served under the award. Primary Counties are the counties for which the Grantee's program outreach, Family recruitment, program services, and any planned initiatives take place.

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

**Program Model** is the Evidence-Based Program, Promising Practice Program, or Evidence-Informed approach that the Grantee implements.

**Program Staff** are employees working under the auspices of THV Grantees, including Sub awardees who will be providing support and services to Families.

**Project Work Plan (PWP)** is the documentation describing how the Grantee will implement the THV Grant to achieve the Performance Measures outlined in the Grant Agreement.

**Promising Practice Program** is a Program Model that:

1. Has an active impact evaluation program or demonstrates a schedule for implementing an active impact evaluation program;
2. Has been evaluated in at least one Outcome-based study demonstrating effectiveness or random, controlled trial in a homogeneous sample;
3. Substantially complies with a program manual or design that specifies the purpose, Outcomes, duration, and frequency of the program services;
4. Employs well-trained and competent staff and provides continual relevant professional development opportunities; and
5. Is research-based and grounded in relevant empirical knowledge and program-determined Outcomes.
6. For purposes of this RFA, a home visiting service delivery model that qualifies as a promising approach is defined in statute; the model conforms to a promising and new approach to achieving Participant Outcomes in specified benchmark areas, has been developed or identified by a national organization or institution of higher education, and will be evaluated through a well-designed and rigorous process.

**Qualifying Counties** are the counties identified as high risk in the Texas MIECHV Needs Assessment AND included in the Service Delivery Area for this RFA.

**Referral** is the process whereby the Grantee connects Families 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 thoughts and actions to engage in a process of continuous learning. It involves paying critical attention to the values and theories that

inform everyday actions and enables a worker to learn from what happened to develop and improve future practice. Reflective practice enhances awareness of self, knowledge and understanding, skills and competencies, and workplace practices in general.

**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** is the designation for when DFPS determines that an Application complies with all material aspects of the RFA, including that Applicant has submitted all required documents.

**Safe** is the state in which an Index Child is secure from maltreatment or the risk of danger or harm.

**Scope of Work** is a description of what DFPS requires and what an Applicant must provide. The written statement or description and enumeration of services to be performed.

**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 or the Grantee.

**Service Delivery Area (SDA)** is the counties within which the Applicant proposes to provide THV services.

**State** is the State of Texas and its instrumentalities, including HHS, DFPS and any other State Agency or 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 performs 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** Any entity that has entered a Subaward with the Grantee to perform some of the obligations of the Grantee. Used interchangeably with the term **Subcontractor** or **Subgrantee**.

**Texas Home Visiting (THV)** is a program that employs evidence-based home visiting to improve Outcomes for young Children and their Families in Qualifying Counties in Texas, as funded through PEI.

**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:

1. Realizing the widespread impact of Trauma, understanding potential paths for recovery, and acknowledging the compounding impacts of structural inequities related to culture, history, race, gender, identity, locale, and language;
2. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of Trauma in clients, Families, staff, and others involved with the system;
3. Maximizing physical and psychological safety and responding to the impacts of structural inequities on individuals and communities;
4. Building healthy, trusting relationships that create mutuality among Children, Families, Caregivers, and professionals at an individual and organizational level; and;
5. Striving to avoid re-traumatization.

**Uniform Grant Guidance** is an authoritative set of rules and requirements for federal awards that synthesizes and supersedes guidance from earlier OMB circulars.

**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 Title 2 Texas Human Resources Code Subtitle D, Chapter 40, Section 40.058; Texas Government Code, Chapter 531, Subchapter X and Social Security Act, Title V, § 511 (42 U.S.C. § 711).

Pursuant to [Senate Bill 24 of the 88th Legislature](#), Prevention and Early Intervention division will be called the Family Support Services division 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.

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## **ARTICLE II. SCOPE OF GRANT AWARD**

### **2.1 PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

PEI 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 family well-being. PEI provides the Texas Home Visiting (THV) Program as part of its overall service array.

PEI intends for the THV Program to enhance maternal and child health, child development, children's school readiness, and family well-being. The THV Program supports expecting parents and families with young Children who live in communities that face greater barriers to positive outcomes, as well as fewer resources to support Child and family well-being.

The THV Program includes delivery of targeted, intensive evidence-based home visiting services and community-level approaches to enhance outcomes and well-being for young Children and their Families. In addition to offering in-home parent education and support, THV Programs connect Families to community resources and services by partnering with health, social service, and child development systems and professionals.

PEI currently implements THV programming and services in the following 29 counties: Bastrop, Bexar, Brazos, Cameron, Dallas, Ector, Galveston, Gregg, Hardin, Harris, Harrison, Hays, Henderson, Hidalgo, Liberty, Midland, Montgomery, Nueces, Potter, Randall, San Patricio, Smith, Starr, Tom Green, Travis, Victoria, Wichita, Willacy, and Wise.

## **2.2 GRANT AWARD AND TERM**

### **2.2.1 Available Funding**

- A. DFPS estimates the total amount of annual funding for awards under this RFA at \$9,000,000 per State of Texas fiscal year. DFPS anticipates making up to ten awards with annual awards per individual Grant ranging between \$350,000 and \$1,500,000 for each State of Texas fiscal year. To account for potential increases to available funding and any extensions, DFPS values this RFA at up to \$45,000,000.00 for the Period of Performance.
- B. Grants awarded from this RFA are on a cost reimbursement basis. Under cost reimbursement, Grantees must finance operations with their own working capital and, thereafter, DFPS will make payments to reimburse Grantee for eligible and approved project activities supported by adequate documentation. DFPS will only reimburse actual, allowable, and allocable expenses that occur within the Period of Performance.
- C. DFPS funds the THV Program primarily through the MIECHV program formula Grant, ALN 93.870, administered by HRSA in partnership with the Administration for Children and Families. PEI supplements the MIECHV funding with State and additional federal funding as available and necessary to meet any MIECHV maintenance of effort requirements.
- D. DFPS determines the exact amount of federal and State funding applied to each Grant at the end of the State fiscal year. Upon written request from the Grantee, DFPS will notify the Grantee in writing the exact amount of federal funds, State funds, or both

used to fund the Grant.

- E. Although DFPS is not requiring match funding for this Grant, requests for funding may not be fully funded to ensure that funds are available for the broadest possible array of communities and programs. DFPS encourages Applicants to outline any match in the Application.
- F. DFPS reserves the right to increase, decrease, or cancel funding for Grantees at any time during the Period of Performance. Any change in number of awards or funding amounts are at DFPS’s sole discretion. Grant Agreements will allow for flexibility to add either general revenue or federal funds during the Period of Performance should funds become available.

**2.2.2 Period of Performance**

- A. DFPS anticipates that the initial term of any Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA will begin **March 1, 2024**, and be effective through **August 31, 2025**, (base term). Following the base term, HHSC, at its sole option, may extend any resulting Grant Agreements for up to two additional years, through August 31, 2027.
- B. DFPS will only reimburse for allowable expenses under 45 CFR 75 <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-75> and Texas Grant Management Standards [https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/grant- management/](https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/grant-management/) that occur within the Period of Performance. No pre-award spending will be permitted.

**2.2.3 Service Delivery Area**

- A. All communities served through the THV program must be within areas identified as at-risk for poor maternal and child health Outcomes in the 2020 **Texas Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Needs Assessment (Exhibit D)**, as required under the MIECHV authorizing statute.
- B. Under this RFA, DFPS will award Grants to provide THV programming and services in eligible Qualifying Counties identified in the 2020 **Texas Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Needs Assessment (Exhibit D)** that do not currently have THV programming and services.
- C. Under this RFA, DFPS will award Grants to provide THV programming and services in one or more of the following eligible Qualifying Counties:

<b>Table 1. Eligible Qualifying Counties</b>			
<i>County</i>	<i>Texas MIECHV Needs Assessment Risk Rank</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Texas MIECHV Needs Assessment Risk Rank</i>
Tarrant	2	Kaufman	32

El Paso	6	Anderson	33
Jefferson	7	Parker	34
Lubbock	12	Navarro	36
Bell	13	Howard	37
Orange	14	Jim Wells	38
McLennan	15	Ellis	39
Taylor	17	Lamar	42
Johnson	19	Jasper	43
Webb	21	Atascosa	44
Grayson	22	Nacogdoches	47
Hunt	26	Angelina	48
Bowie	27	Walker	50
Hood	30	Caldwell	51
Cherokee	31	Maverick	53

\* The eligible Qualifying Counties under this RFA consist of those counties from the Texas MIECHV Needs Assessment (Exhibit D) Counties At Risk that do not currently have a THV Grant.

- D. DFPS considers the Applicant’s proposed Qualifying County a Primary County.
1. Primary Counties are the focus of the Grantee’s program outreach, Family recruitment, program services, and any planned initiatives under the Grant.
  2. Awarded Applicant must serve Primary Counties under the Grant.
  3. Families served under this Grant must have valid addresses within one of the Primary Counties.
- E. Applicants may submit one application to serve multiple Qualifying Counties if those counties are contiguous to each other.

## 2.3 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be awarded a Grant from this RFA, Applicants must be a nonprofit organization as defined by the Texas Business Organization Code Chapter 22 or a governmental entity.

## 2.4 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- A. The goals of the THV Program, through the delivery of targeted, intensive evidence-based home visiting services and community-level approaches are to:
1. Improve maternal and child health, security, and well-being;
  2. Support healthy and safe homes for Children;
  3. Boost positive parenting;

4. Strengthen Families of young Children through caregiver support;
  5. Promote child development and school readiness; and
  6. Prevent child abuse and neglect as well as other negative outcomes.
- B. The THV Program will support programming, service implementation, and community initiatives in identified communities to meet these goals, improving Child and Family Outcomes and well-being.
- C. The THV Program will use evidence-based, voluntary parent education and support programs in which early Childhood and health professionals visit the homes of and support expecting parents and Families with a Child under 6 years of age.

## **2.5 SCOPE OF WORK**

- A. The Grantee agrees to adhere to the requirements outlined in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award** in providing services to Participants under this Grant.
- B. The Applicant must propose programming and activities to meet the objectives described in **Section 2.4**.

### **2.5.1 Proposed Programming & Services**

- A. Applicants must propose to implement a THV Program in a Qualifying County as identified in **Section 2.2.3**:
- B. Applicants must propose programming and activities for the Qualifying County to address program objectives described in **Section 2.4**; address priority populations as defined in **Section 2.5.5**; and meet community needs and priorities identified in the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment summary defined in **Section 2.5.4**.
- C. Applicants must propose delivery of targeted, intensive home visiting services through use of one or more selected evidence-based service delivery models approved by HRSA for this purpose. See **Section 2.5.2, Required Use of Eligible Program Models** and **Exhibit E, Eligible Program Models**.
- D. Applicants must select from and propose eligible Program Models that are the best fit for their communities.
- E. Awarded Applicants agree to adhere to the requirements as outlined in Article II, Scope of Grant Award in the provision of services to Participants under this Grant.

### **2.5.2 Required Use of Eligible Program Models**

- A. Applicant's proposed programming must include one or more Program Models listed in **Exhibit E, Eligible Program Models**.

- B. Eligible Program Models under this RFA meet HHS criteria for evidence of effectiveness and meet all other statutory requirements for model eligibility as HRSA requires.
- C. Eligible Program Models also meet the following statutory requirements:
  - 1. Conform to a clear, consistent home visitation model that has been in existence for at least three years and is research based;
  - 2. Are grounded in relevant empirically based knowledge;
  - 3. Are linked to program-determined outcomes; and
  - 4. Are associated with a national organization or institution of higher education that has comprehensive home visitation program standards that ensure high-quality service delivery and continuous program quality improvement.
- D. Applicants may select multiple Program Models as well as use a combination of Program Models with Families, avoiding concurrent dual enrollment, to support a continuum of home visiting services that meets Families' specific needs.
- E. When selecting a Program Model or Program Models, the Applicant must ensure that the selection will:
  - 1. Meet the needs of the identified community and priority service populations;
  - 2. Provide the best opportunity to accurately measure and achieve meaningful outcomes in the MIECHV benchmark areas;
  - 3. Be implemented effectively with fidelity to the Program Model, based on available resources and support from the model developer; and
  - 4. Be well matched to the needs of the community's early childhood systems.
- F. Grantees must have policies and procedures in place to ensure fidelity of implementation to the evidence-based home visiting service delivery model(s) they select.
- G. Under the THV program, an acceptable enhancement of an evidence-based model is a variation to better meet the needs of the community or certain eligible Families that does not alter the model's core components, as defined by the model. Prior to implementation, Grantees that wish to adopt enhancements to a model must submit documentation of concurrence from the national model developer that the enhancement does not alter core components of the model and receive approval from PEI. Virtual home visiting may be considered a model enhancement and require this level of documentation and approval.

### **2.5.3 Additional Priorities & Approaches**

#### **A. Social Determinants of Health**

- 1. To competently support Families, provide quality services, and address identified needs of the community, Applicants should include strategies to address health equity through its planning, program selection, initiatives, activities, practices, and operations.

2. Applicants must develop and describe plans to address and incorporate health equity throughout the proposed THV programming and operations:
  - a. Organizational management
    - i. Conduct planning and identify key activities promoting health equity for service populations;
    - ii. Conduct an assessment to inform an action plan to advance health equity;
    - iii. Recruit and retain a workforce that provides culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including members that are representative of communities served;
    - iv. Conduct relevant employee training;
    - v. Review and revise policies and procedures;
    - vi. Conduct relevant data collection and analysis and utilize findings for continuous quality improvement focused on Family characteristics and needs.
    - vii. Identify further areas of focus such as Family economic supports, institutional and personal bias, Family access and linkage to nutrition, behavioral health, maternal health, early care and education, oral health and Family violence services, and other supports that address social determinants of health.
  - b. Programming
    - i. Serve and partner in a manner that acknowledges, respects, and is responsive to Family needs.
    - ii. Develop or adapt programs and support based on an individual's or group's needs.
    - iii. Ensure that Program Staff members understand barriers to enrollment or service provision.
    - iv. Build health equity into quality improvement activities.
    - v. Home visiting implementation strategies that may advance health equity include, but are not limited to:
      - a) Engage Family and community representatives in advisory and collaborative roles;
      - b) Provide leadership development opportunities and compensation for Families and Family representatives participating in the development opportunities;
      - c) Engage diverse Referral partners and other implementation partners, including those that support access to services that address social determinants of health;
      - d) Leverage Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) activities to identify, address, and mitigate systemic barriers;
      - e) Promote comprehensive, Trauma-Informed, and multi-generational approaches to service delivery and coordination; and
      - f) Collect and analyze program data to identify key health disparities and causes of inequity at the program or community level.

## B. Family Engagement

1. Family engagement is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which early Childhood professionals, Families, and Children build positive and goal-oriented relationships. It is a shared responsibility of the Grantee, Program Staff, and Families requiring mutual respect and recognition of the strengths each has to offer.
2. Family engagement focuses on culturally and linguistically responsive relationships with Parents and Caregivers. It requires creating and sustaining an ongoing partnership that supports Family well-being. It also recognizes and supports the relationships that are central to a Child's healthy development, school readiness, and well-being.
3. Applicants must include Family Engagement strategies in planned services, activities, and operations to competently support Families, provide quality services, and to further address community needs.
4. Applicants should identify key activities that support parent, Caregiver, or Family engagement and leadership to ensure high-quality services within local early childhood systems. Include any efforts to engage Family and community representatives in leadership and advisory roles and to support their meaningful and equitable participation.
5. Grantees should use ongoing organizational assessment, intentional quality improvement, effective supervision and staff development, and regular engagement with Parents and Caregivers throughout implementation to inform organizational efforts, program development, and practice improvement regarding family engagement.

#### C. Trauma-Informed Approach

1. Applicants must incorporate and demonstrate a Trauma-Informed approach in their proposed THV programming, operations, and activities.
2. Adopting a Trauma-Informed approach requires considered attention, awareness, sensitivity, and commitment to organizational culture that supports the approach.
3. Applicants may consider the following guiding principles for a Trauma-Informed approach to develop plans and strategies:
  - a. Safety;
  - b. Trustworthiness and transparency;
  - c. Peer support;
  - d. Collaboration and mutuality;
  - e. Empowerment, voice, and choice; and
  - f. Cultural, historical and gender issues.
4. Applicants must prioritize and include strategies to use a Trauma-Informed approach in planned services, activities, and operations to competently support Families, provide quality services, and address identified needs of the community.
5. Grantees should conduct routine organizational assessment, engage in intentional

quality improvement, provide effective supervision, and staff development, and regularly engage stakeholders to inform organizational development and practice improvement for a Trauma-Informed approach.

#### **2.5.4 Community Strengths and Needs Assessment and Summary**

- A. The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) is an evaluation the Applicant develops and utilizes to identify community strengths, needs, assets, characteristics, challenges, and available resources in the proposed Qualifying County.
- B. Applicants must conduct a CSNA for their proposed Qualifying County.
- 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 brief summary of the CSNA as part of Exhibit F, Program Narrative.

#### **2.5.5 Eligible Service Population**

- A. PEI defines Families eligible for THV services as follows:
  - 1. An expecting parent or expecting parents/Caregivers; or
  - 2. A parent or Primary Caregiver of a Child up to age five. Primary Caregivers can include a grandparent or other relative of the Child, or a foster parent or noncustodial parent who has an ongoing relationship with and provides physical care for the Child.
  - 3. Families are eligible for services if the parent or Primary Caregiver is expecting or parenting a young Child, from birth until the Child's sixth birthday or kindergarten entry, whichever occurs first.
  - 4. Families eligible for THV services must reside in the proposed Qualifying County.
  - 5. Families eligible for THV services must also exhibit one or more of the following Priority Characteristics:
    - a. Behavioral concern;
    - b. Family or household includes individuals who are serving or formerly served in the military\*;
    - c. Current or past alcohol abuse – Caregiver;
    - d. History of Child abuse, or neglect, or have had interactions with Child welfare services\*;
    - e. Current or past domestic or interpersonal violence;
    - f. Developmental delays or disabilities – Caregiver\*;
    - g. Developmental delays or disabilities – Child\*;

- h. Family dynamics concern;
- i. Family or household conflict;
- j. High stress level;
- k. Homelessness or a Child who has run away;
- l. History of alcohol abuse or a need for alcohol abuse treatment;
- m. History of substance abuse or need substance abuse treatment\*;
- n. Low school attainment – Caregiver\*;
- o. Low student achievement – Child\*;
- p. Low-income household\*;
- q. Mental health concern – Caregiver;
- r. Pregnant individual who has not attained age 21; \*.
- s. Parenting skills concern;
- t. Social support concern;
- u. Tobacco use in the home.\*

\* Denotes Priority Characteristics that are identified as priority service populations in authorizing federal legislation and under this RFA. Grantees must give priority in providing services under the THV Program to these priority populations outlined in statute.<sup>1</sup>

- 6. Grantees will collect required data regarding Family service eligibility and demonstrated Priority Characteristics.

### 2.5.6 THV Participant Requirements

If selected for a THV Grant, Grantee agrees to adhere to all the following conditions while providing THV services

- A. All Participants must enter the program voluntarily. Voluntarily means that the Family must not be coerced, court-ordered, or mandated to participate in THV programming.
- B. Grantees cannot charge Participants a fee for participating in a program or for any program participation-related costs.
- C. Grantees must develop and implement policies and procedures to avoid dual enrollment of Participants in more than one home visiting program at the same time.

### 2.5.7 Organizational Competencies, Requirements and Qualifications

- A. The Applicant must show how they will meet the organizational competencies, qualifications, and requirements in **Exhibit E, Program Narrative**.
- B. Applicant must demonstrate preparedness to implement and provide quality THV programming and services for expecting parents, parents of young Children, and their Families.

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<sup>1</sup> Social Security Act, Title V, § 511(d)(5).  
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- C. Applicant must demonstrate competence in working with individuals and Families experiencing any of the following:
  - 1. Mental health concerns and distress, including perinatal mood disorders;
  - 2. Trauma history and exposure;
  - 3. Disparities or discrimination; and
  - 4. Substance use concerns.
- D. Applicant must indicate meeting all the following requirements and qualifications:
  - 1. Applicant must have at least three years of experience working with expecting parents and Families with young Children or overseeing services to this population;
  - 2. Applicant must have provided services in the identified Qualifying County for a minimum of three years immediately preceding the submission of its Application;
  - 3. Applicant must have at least five years of experience managing budgets and Grants or Contracts for social services;
  - 4. Applicant that has monitoring reports from any Texas State Agency or federal funding entity and/or audits performed for the Applicant's organization during the past three years must be able to demonstrate that the organization is competent in managing and budgeting for its programs and operations; and
  - 5. Applicant must have a financial manager responsible for fiscal oversight of the Awarded Applicant's organization.
- E. Any Subawardees must meet these organizational competencies, qualifications, and requirements.

### **2.5.8 Staffing Requirements**

- A. The Applicant will develop and provide a staffing plan that includes concrete processes to recruit, hire, and train qualified Program Staff: home visitors, supervisors, program director, administrative staff, and Subaward staff as applicable.
- B. The Applicant must describe plans to do the following in **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan**:
  - 1. Strategically hire Program Staff to form a workforce that is representative of the community and prepared to provide quality THV services. The most effective staffing for competently supporting THV Participants incorporates intentional recruitment of staff with relevant backgrounds, demographic characteristics, and experience supporting Families and reflective of the community served.
  - 2. Strategically hire organizational leadership representative of the community and prepared to support quality THV services. Organizational leadership should have relevant backgrounds, demographic characteristics, and experience. Organizational leadership should be reflective of the community served and have breadth and depth of experience to successfully support and implement THV programming.

3. Prepare an effective staff retention plan that incorporates:
  - a. Competitive and equitable wages and benefits;
  - b. Quality training and professional development;
  - c. Effective supervisor support, especially Reflective Supervision;
  - d. Advancement opportunities to leverage experience and ability of skilled staff;
  - e. Plans to cultivate and maintain a positive work environment and culture for all staff; and
  - f. An operations and community collaboration plan that supports staff empowerment and quality services.

Please visit the following for additional staff recruitment and retention information, considerations, and recommendations: [Recruitment and Retention of Home Visitors](#).

4. Plan for timely recruitment, hiring, and continuous service coverage, including how Applicant plans to hire for THV Program vacancies and provide sufficient service coverage whenever vacancies occur or when facilitating Program Staff transition.
  - a. Program Staff vacancies must be filled promptly to avoid gaps in services for Families, diminished program capacity, and lapsing funds during programming.
  - b. Grantee must fill Program Staff vacancies as soon as possible and within 90 days of vacancy begin date.
  - c. Applicants must address plans to ensure continuous service coverage when vacancies do occur or when Program Staff transition or give notice of resignation.
- C. The staffing plan should ensure quality programming and service delivery with fidelity to selected Program Model elements and requirements.
- D. Grantees will allow for flexible schedules for direct service staff to accommodate Participant schedules. Schedules should be reasonable and not pose hardship or any safety concerns for Program Staff or Participants. Schedules and work hours should be optimal for both Program Staff and Participants.
- E. Volunteers are not permitted to provide Program Model services under this Grant.
- F. The Applicant must also provide detailed position descriptions for all positions under the Grant to include:
  1. Minimum educational and applicable licensing requirements;
  2. Required experience and skills; and
  3. Position responsibilities.
- G. Any changes to the staffing plan subsequent to award must have approval from PEI.

### **2.5.9 Program Director Responsibilities and 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. 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 years of relevant program management and supervisory experience or a master's degree in a relevant field along with a minimum of three 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:
  - 1. Serve as the primary Grantee contact and liaison for PEI;
  - 2. Provide THV Program oversight to include managing operations, supporting, and monitoring performance related to the project, and planning for improvements where needed;
  - 3. Ensure that THV Program operations and activities adhere to all applicable policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding the Grant Agreement, organization, and selected Program Model(s);
  - 4. Ensure that THV Program goals are met, especially related to Performance Measures, Project Work Plan (PWP) elements, and operations;
  - 5. Coordinate budget planning, ensuring that the budget aligns with THV Program goals and operations;
  - 6. Hire, train, and supervise Program Staff; and
  - 7. Provide for regular administrative supervision and Reflective Supervision of direct service staff, to include twice-monthly Reflective Supervision for any direct service staff.
- E. These activities and responsibilities are required of the identified program director or must be integrated into other appropriate manager roles where qualifications are met.
- F. Clear organizational structure is required, with the program director responsibilities clearly accounted for and assigned to the qualified FTE(s).

### **2.5.10 Home Visitor Responsibilities and Requirements**

- A. Home visitors provide assessment, education, and support as they assist expecting or parenting Caregivers and their Families.
- B. Home visitors are responsible for providing home visits to participating Families using approved Program Models.
- C. Home visitors must adhere to agency and Program Model requirements, policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- D. Home visitors must, at minimum:

1. Meet organization and Program Model educational requirements and preferred qualifications;
  2. Meet organization, Program Model, and local public health guidelines;
  3. Complete all required PEI and relevant Program Model training.
- E. If the selected Applicant elects to Subaward any services, the same minimum staffing qualifications and requirements will apply to Subaward staff, including home visitors.

### 2.5.11 Training Requirements

- A. The Applicant must submit a training plan in **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan**:
1. The training plan must include both initial and ongoing training and address training needs for all THV Program Staff, including Subaward Program Staff, and other staff or contracted providers working on the Grant.
  2. The Applicant must address how trainings support program goals and Program Staff needs.
- B. Volunteers may be included in Parent Advisory Committee, Parent Café, and National Family Support Network activities, trainings, and workshops. PEI will not fund volunteer participation in any Home Visiting Program Model training.
- C. At minimum, THV Program Staff training must include the following:
1. New employee orientation;
  2. Mental Health First Aid training;
  3. Reflective Supervision and Reflective Practice;
  4. Safe Sleep;
  5. Trauma-Informed practice and systems; and
  6. Required Program Model trainings.
- D. Additional training topics Grantees may incorporate in staff training, could include but are not limited to:
1. Adolescent development (especially as relevant to adolescent Caregivers);
  2. Adverse childhood experiences;
  3. Brain development;
  4. Breastfeeding or lactation consultation;
  5. Case management;
  6. Child development;
  7. Community collaboration;
  8. Co-parenting;

9. Communication skills;
  10. Family engagement;
  11. Home Visiting Core Competencies;
  12. Home Visitor safety;
  13. Motivational interviewing;
  14. National Family Support Network Standards of Quality;
  15. Parent advisory groups;
  16. Professional ethics;
  17. Referrals and service connections;
  18. Service documentation;
  19. Service planning;
  20. Social determinants of health; and
  21. Substance use.
- E. Grantees must provide or make available any required training as well additional trainings identified and approved in **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan**.
- F. Grantees must develop and follow a process to track all required training in personnel files.
- G. Grantees must note all training through required program quarterly reporting.
- H. Any Subawardee performing services under this Grant must meet the same minimum training and tracking requirements.

### **2.5.12 Programming Requirements**

Grantees must implement quality programming and services to meet program goals and objectives, ensuring competent and effective delivery of selected Program Model(s) and overall promotion of Caregiver and Family well-being, positive parenting strategies, and healthy development. Grantees must also ensure that planned operations meet RFA requirements and will provide sufficient support for THV programming and initiatives.

The following are required of Grantees under this RFA. Applicants must indicate plans to meet the following requirements in **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan**:

#### **A. Service Delivery Area**

1. Grantee must provide services to eligible Families residing in the proposed Qualifying County.
2. Grantees may not deny, limit, or delay services to eligible Families within the Qualifying County based on the Family's location within the designated Qualifying

County or based on Program Staff preference or structure.

3. Grantee must promote the THV Program in the Qualifying County to effectively support Family awareness, recruitment, and enrollment as well as participation in programming.
4. Grantee must also promote and cultivate awareness of broader early childhood initiatives in the Qualifying County.

#### B. Service Delivery Methods

1. Grantee must implement selected Program Models with fidelity to model and must meet all requirements as detailed by the respective Program Model.
2. Selected Program Model(s) must support and approve the Grantee's implementation and service delivery methods.
3. Grantee must make services available to Participants through effective, appropriate, and accessible service delivery methods, staff schedules, and service hours.
4. PEI requires in-person programming, which should comprise the majority of service delivery. However, Applicant may also propose virtual and hybrid service delivery to meet Participant needs and comply with any Program Model and local public health guidance. Applicants must describe the following if proposing any level of virtual service delivery:
  - a. Services that may be provided through virtual platform;
  - b. Policies and procedures for virtual services;
  - c. Conditions in which virtual services would be offered and implemented;
  - d. Process to determine method of services, which should include all parties involved, organization, Program Model, Program Staff, and Participants;
  - e. Platform for virtual services;
  - f. Means of ensuring quality programming when services are delivered virtually or through hybrid approach; and
  - g. Program Model authorization.
5. Grantees implementing more than one home visiting model in the same community must, with fidelity to the model, develop policies and procedures to screen and enroll eligible Families in the model that best meets their needs.
6. Grantees must develop and implement policies and procedures to avoid dual enrollment. Dual enrollment refers to home visiting Participant enrollment and receipt of services through more than one home visiting model concurrently.
7. Grantees must ensure that eligible Caregivers are not denied or delayed services because of a wait list. Grantees must have policies and procedures in place that provide alternative service options either through the Grantee or through other community resources when the Grantee's program is at capacity.

#### C. Addressing Participant Needs

1. Grantees must conduct screenings and assessments required by MIECHV or by selected Program Model(s) for corresponding service populations. Screening and assessment tools typically identified by eligible Program Models include developmental screening, Caregiver-Child interaction assessment, depression screening, and intimate partner violence screening. Applicants will identify planned screenings and assessments in **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan**.
2. Grantee must ensure Program Staff will competently engage with and serve Participants experiencing mental health concerns; Trauma exposure or history, including domestic or intimate partner violence; disparities or discrimination; substance use concerns; or other adverse experiences.
3. Grantees and any Subawardees will partner with mental health providers or the Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) to address mental health needs of participating Families.
4. Grantees must incorporate intentional, ongoing efforts to support and make resources available to Participants and their Families. These may include:
  - a. Information and Referrals to connect Participants to additional supports and services;
  - b. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation;
  - c. Basic needs support; and
  - d. Parent support groups.

#### D. Reflective Supervision and Staff Support

1. Grantee must provide Reflective Supervision for home visitors and any direct service staff a minimum of two times per month.
2. Grantee must provide supervision that includes case discussion and review, ongoing education, and professional development.
3. Grantee must ensure that caseloads fall within the recommended Program Model guidelines, not to exceed 25 Families per full-time home visitor. Some Program Models may indicate a lower maximum caseload; in these cases, Grantees will defer to respective Program Model guidance. Any variation from PEI's or Program Model's maximum caseload must be outlined and justified in **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan** and approved prior to implementation.
4. Program Supervisors should not carry a Participant caseload unless there are significant vacancies. DFPS is aware that some Program Models allow for supervisors to carry a caseload. However, supervisors must be able to focus on Program Staff support, supervision, and model fidelity. Any coverage plans that involve supervisors carrying or maintaining caseloads must be outlined and justified in **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan** and approved prior to implementation.
5. Volunteers may not provide Evidence-Based Program Model services under the THV Grant award.

#### E. Outreach and Recruitment

1. To maximize program capacity and accessibility for eligible Caregivers, Grantees must plan and conduct effective outreach and recruitment efforts.
2. Applicants must describe outreach strategies and plans that will ensure connection with eligible Families, especially those among priority populations, to include:
  - a. Developing and using recruitment materials and media in a manner that is accessible, relevant, and compelling to expecting and parenting Caregivers and those who support them;
  - b. Engaging program Participants in outreach strategies such as word-of-mouth awareness and promotion, direct Participant Referrals, and informing culturally relevant promotional campaigns;
  - c. Routine connection with referring agencies to provide information, meet with staff, speak to Families, and provide consultation;
  - d. Establishing relationships with businesses and organizations that cater to Families (e.g., obstetrics offices, birthing hospitals, clinics, WIC offices, schools, community colleges, libraries, craft stores, grocery stores, children's clothing, and toy stores, parks, and recreations, etc.) to provide information, meet with staff, conduct activities, and provide consultation;
  - e. Using social media and community texting platforms to connect with Families and community partners; and
  - f. Leveraging community events.
3. Outreach plans should consider community context, geographic location (high need neighborhoods), and other relevant factors.

#### F. Family Engagement and Retention

1. Applicants must indicate how they will actively engage Families, especially for priority populations, promote program completion, and alleviate barriers to engagement and participation.
2. Applicants should indicate how they will focus on building quality partnerships and relationships with Families.
3. Applicants should address the importance of Program Staff consistency, empathy, acceptance, responsiveness, and ability to understand Caregiver culture, values, priorities, and motivation in their plans to engage Families.
4. Applicants should indicate how they will prepare Program Staff to communicate and partner effectively with Families regarding priorities, needs, motivations, and concerns.
5. Applicants should indicate the ways in which they will incorporate all involved Caregivers and other Family members in services and Caregiver support.
6. Applicants should describe the process to assess, identify, and address Families' basic needs at enrollment and during services.
7. Applicants should detail an incentive plan to include how incentives were selected, relevance to Families, intended purpose, and anticipated impact on Participant engagement and program completion.
8. Applicants should indicate their ability to provide services according to Family preference (e.g., scheduling, in person or virtual services, preferred method of

Contact, etc.).

9. Applicant should describe plan to identify and implement tailored approaches for Families that may leave program early.

#### G. Program Quality Assessment and Improvement

1. Applicants must indicate how they will develop and maintain program quality.
2. Applicants may propose to use the [National Family Support Network's Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support](#) or propose another quality framework to assess and enhance their approach and services.
3. Grantees will participate in any PEI-required continuous quality improvement planning and efforts.
4. Grantees will engage Families in program quality assessment and quality improvement efforts.

### 2.5.13 Community Coalition and Collaboration

- A. Grantee must lead or engage with a local or regional coalition of parents and Caregivers, community organizations, providers, businesses, and institutions who share a common goal of supporting healthy early childhood development, promoting maternal health, strengthening families and family supports, preventing Child abuse and neglect, promoting school readiness and early learning, promoting Caregiver mental health, addressing social determinants of health, or a combination of these. Coalitions may be population or issue focused or have a subcommittee or task force to promote awareness and address goals.
- B. Coalition and community coordination and activities should lead to improved community conditions, services, and Outcomes.
- C. Grantees should lead or engage an existing coalition to meet these goals where possible.
- D. Grantee will document coalition goals and activities in the Events section of the PEIRS database and report on coalition efforts and Outcomes in the quarterly report.

### 2.5.14 Coordinating with PEI Grantees and Other Organizations

- A. Applicants must provide letters of support or copies of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) identifying the following:
  1. An entity that the Applicant currently partners with or will be partnering with for the purposes of improving maternal Child health, parent Child attachment, Child development, Child safety, Family stability or school readiness; and
  2. A local mental health provider or system the Applicant is currently in partnership with or will be in partnership with for the purpose(s) of enhancing service connections, service delivery, early Childhood systems, or Outcomes for Children and Families in the local community.

Letters of support or copies of MOUs must be labeled **Attachment F-1, Letters of Support and MOUs** as attachments to **Exhibit F, Program Narrative**, and submitted with the Application.

- B. Grantees must work with other PEI Grantees within the Qualifying County to consider and plan for appropriate partnerships. Applicants should address any such plans in their Application.
- C. Applicants may plan for more formal partnerships where appropriate and document any such partnership through an MOU. For an example, see a sample non-binding MOU and resources published by the Administration for Children and Families: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/fysb/training-technical-assistance/resource/sample-mou>.
- D. Through partnership with and awareness of other PEI Grantees' service arrays, Grantee will avoid duplication of services and further a continuum of services in the community. Applicants should try to avoid duplication of any existing State or federal programs.
- E. Area Information Center 2-1-1: Grantees must add their services to the 2-1-1 Area Information Center for where the Qualifying County is located and must update information provided to the 2-1-1 Area Information Center within 30 calendar days of any changes in programming. Grantee information should also be available and current on the Texas 2-1-1 website.

#### **2.5.15 Service Authorization and Enrollment**

- A. The program enrollment process must include completing the PEI enrollment form, which includes reviewing eligibility criteria, data authorizations, and any Participant surveys and assessments as required by PEI and respective Program Models.
- B. Grantees must have a process for enrolling Participants and assessing Families' strengths and needs at the outset of services.
- C. The Grantee's enrollment process must ensure that the program is suitable to meet the Participant's needs. Otherwise, the Awarded Applicant must be prepared to refer the Participant to appropriate resources.
- D. Any enrollment process undertaken, and information collected, must be included, and documented in each Participant's Case Record.

#### **2.5.16 Required Record Keeping**

Grantee must maintain Participant Case Records and service documentation to facilitate delivery of services, support programming efforts, and provide proper accountability. Comprehensive records are necessary to effectively assess Participant needs and circumstances; plan and deliver services; facilitate supervision; evaluate services provided; and ensure continuity and quality of services. Grantee must comply with all agency, Program Model, and DFPS required record keeping.

- A. Grantee will document and track all services provided in accordance with the Applicant's approved **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan** using any required forms, systems, and protocols.
- B. Grantee must maintain electronic or hard copy records for all enrolled Participants.

1. Grantee must ensure that all records are complete, accurate, and maintained in an organized fashion.
  2. All records must be maintained in a central location and in a manner that protects the confidentiality of Participants and Families.
  3. All records must be made available and accessible to DFPS without limitations. Records may be maintained electronically; however, Grantee must be able to promptly produce PDF or hard copy of any records at DFPS request.
- C. At minimum, the Grantee must maintain the following in each Participant record:
1. PEI Enrollment form or information;
  2. Program and agency enrollment form or information, as applicable;
  3. PEI Annual Data Authorization form;
  4. Informed consent procedures and signed consent for Program participation;
  5. Assessments and surveys required by PEI, Program Model, or agency;
  6. Service plans;
  7. Service activity documentation for each Contact with Participant or Family, whether individual or group, including description, activity occurring, or content for each Contact, the type of Contact (in person or other means), and date, time, and duration of the Contact;
  8. Referrals to other services, resources, or providers;
  9. Documentation of Contacts and consultation with third parties;
  10. Documentation summarizing any critical incidents and responses;
  11. Documentation of basic needs support to include basic needs assessment, questionnaire, or request; items or amount of financial assistance provided; and Participant signature indicating receipt of assistance.
  12. Documentation of incentives provided to include items and amount provided; purpose of incentive; and Participant signature indicating receipt of incentive; and,
  13. Subsequent to program completion or case closure:
    - a. Any required PEI or Program Model completion surveys;
    - b. Program Experience Survey;
    - c. PEI Discharge form.
- D. Grantee must develop and maintain a system to track Families referred to the Grantee's program, to include date of Referral; origin of the Referral; Participant eligibility for services; and date Participant began program.
1. Grantee must also track reason if services are not provided or reason a Participant did not engage in a program.
  2. If a Participant is placed on a waiting list, the Grantee must track duration on waiting list, how Participant was engaged, and frequency Participant was engaged.

### **2.5.17 PEIRS Database**

- A. Grantees must enter all service data for Participants served through the THV program in the PEIRS database, including but not limited to Participant enrollment and discharge information, service data, Referrals information, assessment data and survey data.
- B. Grantees must ensure accurate data entry into the PEIRS database and must enter all data for a specific month into the system no later than 30 calendar days following the

close of the month in which an enrollment occurred, services were provided, or a Family was discharged.

- C. Grantees must document Participant case closure through the PEIRS Discharge form and in the PEIRS database.
- D. Any Referrals made for additional services to other services or providers must be entered into PEIRS within 30 calendar days of discharge.
- E. Grantees must use a secure internet connection to complete PEIRS data entry and ensure that computer equipment used for data entry meets minimum requirements established by DFPS for efficient connection to the PEIRS database (at the time of this RFA, Internet Explorer 11 or higher or Google Chrome 47 or higher).
- F. Any individuals with permission to enter or view THV data must have a cleared DFPS background check and adhere to DFPS rules, regulations, and standards for confidentiality, security, and integrity of program data.
- G. DFPS requires annual cybersecurity training for all individuals who access the PEIRS database. Information on training requirements can be found at the following link: <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention and Early Intervention/Providers/cybersecurity.asp>.

### **2.5.18 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:

Quarter 1 - September, October, November, due December 15

Quarter 2 - December, January, February, due March 15

Quarter 3 - March, April, May, due June 15

Quarter 4 - June, July, August, due September 15

If a due date is on a weekend or holiday, the report is due the first Business Day following the weekend or holiday. In some cases, Grantees may be required to submit supplemental reports as well.

### **2.5.19 Background Checks**

Grantee must comply with the Background History Checks and Right of Removal found in **Exhibit B, DFPS Grant Uniform Terms and Conditions, Section VII. C.**

Before the employee, Subgrantee, or volunteer can provide direct services, have direct Contact with a Participant, or access PEIRS or Participant records, the Grantee must receive notice from DFPS that the background check has been approved. Grantee must repeat background checks every two years.

### **2.5.20 Required Personnel Records**

Evidence of the Grantee's minimum requirements for employees, Subawardees, and volunteers regarding qualifications and individual files for each employee, Subawardee, and volunteer must include, at a minimum:

- A. Documentation clearly establishing that all Program Staff meet the minimum qualifications\*;
- B. Documentation to support background check requirements;
- C. Documentation to support insurance coverage necessary to ensure proper fulfillment of this Grant, as applicable; and
- D. Documentation to support all completed training, especially training required by PEI and selected Program Model(s).

\*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.

### **2.5.21 Financial Requirements**

- A. Grantee must create and maintain reliable and accurate records to support all actions related to invoicing, payments, and adjustments for any activities under this THV Grant.
- B. Records must include at a minimum but are not limited to the following:
  - 1. Copies of all signed Form 4116 State of Texas Purchase Vouchers;
  - 2. Form 2030, monthly mileage log, monthly Participant activity log, and incentives log; and
  - 3. Any other supporting documentation requested by DFPS.

### **2.5.22 Billing Requirements**

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

### 2.5.23 Use of Subawards

- A. Awarded Applicant will provide direct Participant services or 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 those required of the Applicant.
- C. No Subaward under the RFA will relieve the Applicant of the responsibility for ensuring the requested services are provided according to required standards.
- D. Awarded Applicant will award Subawards based on their own internal policies and processes. Applicant will clearly identify work Subawardees will perform in **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan** and include proposed Subawardee budget or budgets in the **Exhibit H, Expenditure Proposal-THV FY24** and **Exhibit H-1, Expenditure Proposal-THV FY25**.
- E. Grantee must notify DFPS in writing of any Subawardee changes.

### 2.5.24 Transition Plan

At the end of the Period of Performance, including extensions if any or other Grant termination or cancellation, the Grantee will, in good faith and in reasonable cooperation with DFPS, aid in transition to any new arrangement or Grantee as applicable.

### 2.5.25 Additional Requirements

- A. Grantee must comply with all policy updates and clarifications issued by DFPS during the Period of Performance.
- B. Grantee must participate in required webinars, trainings, and videoconferences as scheduled by DFPS.

## 2.6 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- A. THV Grantees will be required to collect and report data regarding Participant demographics, service utilization, select clinical indicators, and the six statutorily defined MIECHV benchmark areas:
  - 1. Improvements in maternal, newborn, and Child health;
  - 2. Prevention of Child injuries, Child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment and reductions of emergency room visits;
  - 3. Improvements in school readiness and Child academic achievement;
  - 4. Reductions in crime or domestic violence;
  - 5. Improvements in Family self-sufficiency; and
  - 6. Improvements in the coordination and Referrals for other community resources and supports.

- B. Required Grantee Outputs and Outcomes are based on the MIECHV performance measurement system that includes a total of 19 measures across the six benchmark areas. PEI will negotiate final Output numbers regarding number of Families served monthly an annually during Grant negotiations.
- C. Grantees awarded through this RFA must enter all PEI-required data into the PEIRS database, including Participant information, service data, screening and assessment data, survey data, and Referrals data, as well as track required Outputs and Outcomes in PEIRS.
- D. All Grantees awarded through this RFA must meet the required Outputs and Outcomes.
- E. Outputs and Outcomes required for all THV Grants will include but are not limited to the Performance Measures in Table 2 below:

<b>Table 2. Performance Measures</b>	
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
<b>Output 1:</b> Expected number of Families served monthly.	<i>Applicant must propose the number of Families served monthly based on selected Program Model(s) and FTEs. *</i>
<b>Output 2:</b> Expected number of Families served annually.	<i>Applicant must propose the number of Families served annually based on selected Program Model(s) and FTEs.**</i>
<b>Output 3:</b> Families will remain engaged in the program for a minimum of one year or optimal length of time as determined by selected Program Model(s).	50%
<b>Output 4:</b> Primary Caregivers are screened for depression using a validated tool within three months of enrollment for those not enrolled prenatally or within three months of delivery for those enrolled prenatally	80%
<b>Output 5:</b> Primary Caregivers receive an observation of Parent-Child interaction using a validated tool.	80%
<b>Output 6:</b> Children receive a screen for developmental delays using a validated parent-completed tool.	80%
<b>Output 7:</b> Primary Caregivers are screened for intimate partner violence (IPV) within six months of enrollment using a validated tool.	80%
<b>Output 8:</b> Grantee will participate in or lead a local early Childhood coalition.	Regular coordination or participation.
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Women will breastfeed for at least six months postpartum.	20%
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Children will attend recommended well-Child visits.	80%
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Primary Caregivers and/or Family members will read, tell stories, or sing songs daily with their Children.	80%

<b>Outcome 4:</b> Parent-Child interaction will improve.	80%
<b>Outcome 5:</b> Primary Caregivers referred to services for a positive screen for depression receive one or more service Contacts.	80%
<b>Outcome 6:</b> Children with positive screens for developmental delays receive services.	80%
<b>Outcome 7:</b> Primary Caregivers with positive screens for IPV receive Referral information for IPV.	80%
<b>Outcome 8:</b> Children will remain Safe.	100%

\* The proposed number of Families served **monthly** must be based on selected Program Model requirements and the planned number of home visitor FTEs.

\*\* The proposed number of Families served **annually** must be based on selected Program Model requirements, number of home visitor FTEs, and service duration.

## 2.7 PROHIBITIONS

Grant funds may 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 and/or do not have a clear nexus to terrorism prevention, interdiction, and disruption (mobile data terminals, body cameras, in-car video systems, radar units, etc. for officers assigned to routine patrol);
- E. Weapons, ammunition, tracked armored vehicles, weaponized vehicles, or explosives (exceptions may be granted when explosives are used for bomb squad training);
- F. Admission fees or tickets to any amusement park, recreational activity, or sporting event unless such costs are incurred for components of a program the Grantor agency has approved and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- G. Promotional gifts;
- H. Food, meals, beverages, or other refreshments, except for eligible per diem costs associated with Grant-related travel where they are preapproved for working events or approved by the Grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- I. Membership dues for individuals except where 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. The delivery or costs of direct medical, dental, mental health, or legal services; and
- O. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, State, or local law.
- P.

## 2.8 STANDARDS

Grantees must comply with the requirements cited in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS awards (45 CFR 75) at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-75>; the Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS) at <https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/grant-management/>, 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 nondiscrimination requirements can be found on the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Civil Rights Office website at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/your-rights/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 Contract no more than 10 calendar days after receipt of the complaint. Notice must be directed to:

HHSC Civil Rights Office  
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

A Grantee must ensure that its policies do not have the effect of excluding or limiting any participation 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, 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 at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-87> or 7 CFR Part 16 at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-A/part-16>, which provide that

any organization that participates in programs funded by direct financial assistance from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture or U.S. Dept. 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.

## 2.9 NO GUARANTEE OF VOLUME, USAGE OR COMPENSATION

HHSC and DFPS make no guarantee of volume, usage, or total compensation to be paid to any Applicant under any awarded Grant 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.

The Grantee should not expect additional or continued funding. 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
RFA Release Date	September 8, 2023
Applicant Conference (optional)	September 15, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions	September 22, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Tentative Date Answers to Questions Posted	September 29, 2023
<b>Deadline for Submission of RFA Responses [NOTE: Responses must be <b>RECEIVED</b> by HHSC by the deadline.]</b>	November 1, 2023, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Anticipated Notice of Award	February 2024
Anticipated Contract Start Date	March 1, 2024

**Note:** All dates are tentative, and HHSC or DFPS reserves the right to change these dates at any time. At the sole discretion of HHSC and DFPS, events listed in the Schedule of Events are subject to scheduling changes and cancellation. Scheduling changes or cancellation determinations made prior to the Deadline for Submission will be published by posting an Addendum to the [HHS Grants website](#). After the Deadline for Submission, if there are

delays that significantly impact the anticipated award date, HHSC, at its sole discretion, may post updates regarding the anticipated award date to the [Procurement Forecast](#) on the HHS Procurement Opportunities web page. Each Applicant is responsible for checking the [HHS Grants website](#) and Procurement Forecast for updates.

### 3.2 CHANGES, AMENDMENTS, OR MODIFICATION TO RFA

HHS and DFPS reserve 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 any such decision will be posted 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 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: John Norton  
Title: Grants Specialist  
Address: HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS)  
1100 West 49th Street; Mail Code 2020  
Building S, Austin, TX 78756  
Email: [John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:John.Norton2@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**, 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 with HHSC or DFPS Staff

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** 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.

### 3.4.5 Responses

Responses to questions or other written requests for clarification may be posted on the [HHS Grants website](#). DFPS reserves the right to amend answers prior to the deadline of RFA Responses. Amended answers may be posted on the [HHS Grants website](#). It is Applicant's responsibility to check the [HHS Grants website](#) or Contact the Sole Point of Contact for updated responses. DFPS also reserves the right to decline to answer any question or to provide a single consolidated response to all questions they choose to answer in any manner at DFPS's sole discretion.

### 3.4.6 Applicant Conference

HHSC and DFPS will conduct an **optional** pre-submittal Applicant webinar on September

15, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Central Time. You may register by accessing the following link at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7250464879009229401> or dial +1 (562) 247-8422 and enter access code 487-071-779.

### 3.5 RFA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

#### All Applications must be:

- A. Clear and 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 10 for tables, graphs, and appendices;
- E. Blank forms provided in the Exhibits must be used (electronic reproduction of the forms is acceptable; however, all forms must be identical to the original form(s) provided); do not change the font used on forms provided;
- F. Correctly identified with the RFA number and submittal deadline;
- G. Responsive to all RFA requirements; and
- H. 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** no later than the date and time specified in **Section 3.1**.

#### 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:

<u>RFA NO.:</u>	RFA HHS0013406
RFA NAME:	Texas Home Visiting (THV)
RFA RESPONSE DEADLINE:	October 18, 2023, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
PURCHASER NAME:	John Norton
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 the 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 I, Online Bid Room**:

- A. Each document listed in Article IX. Submission Checklist submitted as an individual file in searchable portable document format (PDF) with the exception of the completed **Exhibit H, Expenditure Proposal- THV FY24** and **Expenditure H-1, Expenditure Proposal- THV FY25**, which must be submitted in original Excel format.
- B. In accordance with **Section 8.1.3, Public Information Act – Applicant Requirements Regarding Disclosure**, 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, Expenditure Proposal- THV FY24 and Exhibit H-1, Expenditure Proposal- THV FY25** in original Excel format.
- C. In accordance with **Section 8.1.3**, 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: John Norton Tower Building, Room 108 1100 W. 49th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756	Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: John Norton Procurement & Contracting Services Building 1100 W. 49th 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**; or
- B. Modify its Application by submitting a written Amendment to the Sole Point of Contact identified in **Section 3.4.1**. DFPS may request RFA Application modifications at any time.

### **ARTICLE IV. APPLICATION EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS**

#### **4.1 SELECTION PROCESS**

Generally, HHSC and DFPS will use a three-step selection process:

- A. Eligibility screening;
- B. Evaluation based on specific selection criteria; and
- C. Final selection based on State priorities.

#### **4.2 ELIGIBILITY SCREENING**

HHSC will review Applications for minimum qualifications and completeness. All complete Applications meeting the minimum qualifications as referenced in **Section 2.3** will move to the Evaluation stage.

#### **4.3 EVALUATION**

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.

Grant Applications will be evaluated based on and using **Exhibit J, Evaluation Tool**:

- A. Applicant's Background and Experience (Exhibit F, Program Narrative) - 40%
- B. Program Delivery (Exhibit G, Project Work Plan) - 40%
- C. Administrative and Financial Capacity (Exhibit P, ICSQ for Cost-Reimbursement Grants -10%
- D. Reasonable Project Cost (Exhibit H, FY24 Expenditure Proposal and Exhibit H-1,

FY25 Expenditure Proposal) -10%

Applications will additionally be evaluated and scored in accordance with the factors required by the THV Grant and other factors deemed relevant by DFPS.

#### 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**, a selection committee will look at all eligible Applicants to determine which Applications should be awarded in order 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

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 web conference, phone, and email. During negotiations, Grantees may expect:

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

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

Any exceptions to the requirements, terms, conditions, or certifications in the RFA or attachments, Addendums, or revisions to the RFA or General Provisions sought by the Applicant must be specifically detailed in writing by the Applicant on **Exhibit K, Exceptions Form** in this Application and submitted to HHSC for consideration. DFPS will accept or reject each proposed exception. DFPS will not consider exceptions submitted separately from the Application or at a later date.

HHSC 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 PROPOSAL**

#### **5.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Applicant must use **Exhibit L, Executive Summary** to provide a high-level overview of the Applicant's approach to meeting the RFA's requirements. The summary must demonstrate an understanding of the goals and objectives of the grant. Limit the Executive Summary to one (1) page.

#### **5.2 PROGRAM NARRATIVE**

Applicant must use **Exhibit F, Program Narrative** to describe their background and experience. The Program Narrative must not exceed ten (10) pages (excluding attachments).

#### **5.3 PROJECT WORK PLAN**

Applicant must use **Exhibit G, Project Work Plan** to describe the proposed services, processes, and methodologies for meeting all components described in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award**. Applicant will also include all required Attachment documents requested as part of completing **Exhibit G** to demonstrate fulfilling **Article II** requirements.

### **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.

##### **6.1.1 Applicant Information**

Use **Exhibit M, Applicant Information** to complete basic information about the Applicant and project, including the signature of the authorized representative.

##### **6.1.2 Governmental or Non-Profit Information**

- A. Complete **Exhibit N, Governmental Entity Information** if Applicant is a governmental entity; or
- B. Complete **Exhibit N-1, Non-Profit Entity Information** if Applicant is a nonprofit entity.

### 6.1.3 Administrative Information

Use **Exhibit O, 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 document behind this form. If Applications require multiple pages, identify the supporting documentation with the applicable request.

## 6.2 LITIGATION AND CONTRACT HISTORY

Applicant must use **Exhibit O, Administrative Information** to disclose any alleged or significant Contractual failures.

In addition, Applicant must disclose any civil or criminal litigation or investigation pending over the last five years that involves Applicant or in which Applicant has been judged guilty or liable. Failure to comply with the terms of this provision may disqualify Applicant.

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.

## 6.3 CONFLICTS

Applicant must use **Exhibit O, Administrative Information** to 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 Contract. Additionally, 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 Contract. Failure to identify actual and potential conflicts of interest may result in disqualification of an Application or termination of a Grant.

Please include any activities of affiliated or parent organizations and individuals who may be assigned to this Grant.

Additionally, pursuant to Section 2252.908 of the Texas Government Code, a Successful Applicant awarded a Grant with a value of \$1 million or more or awarded a Grant 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 the State Agency at the time the business entity submits the signed Grant Agreement. Rules and filing instructions may be found on the Texas Ethics Commissions public website (<https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/>), and HHSC will give Successful Applicants additional instructions.

#### **6.4 AFFIRMATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND EXHIBITS**

Applicant must complete and return all the following affirmations, assurances, certifications, and exhibits. A complete list of exhibits is included as **Article IX, Submission Checklist**.

- A. **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v. 2.4;**
- B. **Exhibit K, Exceptions Form,** if applicable;
- C. Federally Required Assurances and Certifications:
  - 1. **Exhibit O, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs;** and
  - 2. **Exhibit O-1, Certification Regarding Lobbying.**

#### **6.5 OTHER REPORTS**

Applicant must submit **Exhibit P, Internal Control Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ) for Cost Reimbursement Grants.** 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.

#### **6.6 HUB**

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

### **ARTICLE VII. EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL**

#### **7.1 EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL**

Applicant must complete and submit **Exhibit H, Expenditure Proposal- THV FY24 and Exhibit H-1, Expenditure Proposal- THV FY25** in its original Excel format clearly marked with the Applicant's name, the RFA number, and the RFA submission date.

Applicants must base **Exhibit H** and **Exhibit H-1** on the Scope of Work described in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award**. Applicant will propose expected annual expenses (or a

twelve (12) month budget).

Applicants must demonstrate that project costs outlined in the Expenditure Proposal are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and in accordance with applicable State and federal Grant requirements. Costs will be reviewed for compliance with TxGMS and federal Grant guidance found in 45 CFR Part 75 at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-75>, as modified by TxGMS, with effect given to whichever provision imposes the more stringent requirement in the event of a conflict.

Grantee will enter costs in **Exhibit H** and **Exhibit H-1** and support with narrative descriptions describing the need for the requested cost and a calculation demonstrating how the cost was derived.

Indirect costs are those that are not easily relatable to the THV Program but are necessary for the Grantee's general operation to conduct THV activities. If the Applicant has a federally approved indirect cost rate, please submit documentation with the Application; otherwise, once the direct costs are calculated, Applicants should calculate a 10% de minimis indirect cost rate as defined in 45 CFR 75.414(f) at [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-75/subpart-E/subject-group-ECFR1eff2936a9211f7/section-75.414#p-75.414\(f\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-75/subpart-E/subject-group-ECFR1eff2936a9211f7/section-75.414#p-75.414(f)).

DFPS Grants set limits on the maximum amount of allowable administrative cost that may be reimbursed. This limit or capped threshold will be determined during negotiations and outlined in the Grant Agreement. Grantees will need to establish codes in its chart of accounts to identify costs as administrative. Nonfederal or non-State revenue sources must be used to pay for costs that cannot be recovered because of the cap limitation.

Although DFPS does not currently require match funding for this Grant, requests for funding may not be fully funded to ensure that funds are available for the broadest possible array of communities and programs. DFPS requests Applicants to outline match in **Exhibit H** and **Exhibit H-1**.

Applicant may provide matching funds through local philanthropic, private, or city or county funds or pooled or braided funds from partner organizations committed specifically for the THV Grant. Applicant may not use State or federal funds as match.

The value of donated materials, professional services, and volunteer time is to be calculated in accordance with TxGMS.

## **ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **8.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS**

#### **8.1.1 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 an Applicant incurs in preparing the Response to this RFA. DFPS is not liable for any costs an Applicant incurs prior to issuance of or entering into a formal Grant Agreement. Costs of developing Applications are entirely the responsibility of the Applicant and will not be reimbursed in any manner by the State of Texas.

### 8.1.2 Grant Responsibility

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

### 8.1.3 Public Information Act - Applicant Requirements Regarding Disclosure

Applications and 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 DFPS to post Grant Agreements 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 complete all three steps below:

1. Mark Original Application;
  - A. Mark the Original Application, on the top of the front page, the words “CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION” in large, bold, capitalized letters (the size of, or equivalent to, 12-point Times New Roman font or larger); and
  - B. 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).
2. Certify in Original Application
  - A. Submit Affirmations and Grant RFA Acceptance (attached as **Exhibit A. HHS Solicitation Affirmations v. 2.4** to this RFA); and
  - B. Certify, in the designated section of the Affirmations and RFA Acceptance, Applicant’s Confidential Information assertion and the filing of its Public Information Act Copy.
3. 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:

  - A. The copy must be clearly marked “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 or larger);

- B. Each portion Applicant claims is exempt from public disclosure must be redacted (blacked out); and
- C. 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, and these can only be included in the Public Information Act Copy. There must be no redactions in the Original Application.

**By submitting an Application, Applicant agrees that, if Applicant does not mark the Original Application, provide the required certification in the Affirmations and RFA Acceptance, and submit the Public Information Act Copy, Applicant's Application will be consider Prop 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, posting on DFPS's public website and posting on the Legislative Budget Board's public website.**

**If any or all Applicants submit partial, incomplete information that suggests inclusion of Confidential Information and failure to comply with the requirements set forth in this section, DFPS, 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.**

Applicant should not 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 DFPS and all other State agencies, without cost or liability.

DFPS will strictly adhere to the requirements of the PIA regarding the disclosure of public information. As a result, by participating in this RFA process, Applicant acknowledges that all information, documentation, and other materials submitted in the Application may be subject to public disclosure under the PIA. DFPS 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. DFPS 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>.

#### **8.1.4 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 the RFA. Applicant should direct requests to the HHSC Point of Contact identified in Section 3.4.1.

#### **8.1.5 Additional Information**

By submitting an Application, the Applicant grants HHSC 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 requirements. By submitting an Application, the Applicant generally releases from liability and waives all claims against any party providing HHSC or DFPS information about the Applicant. HHSC and 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 Non-Responsive and may not be considered for Grant award.

### **Original RFA Response Package**

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

1. **Administrative Information (Exhibits M through O)**
  - A. Exhibit M, Applicant Information \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Exhibit N, Governmental Entity Information (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Exhibit N-1, Non-Profit Entity Information, (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Exhibit O, Administrative Information \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. **Narrative Proposal (Exhibits L, F, and G) (Article V)**
  - A. Exhibit L, Executive Summary \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Exhibit F, Program Narrative \_\_\_\_\_
    - i. Attachment F-1, Letters of Support and MOUs (to be created by Applicant) \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Exhibit G, Project Work Plan \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. **Expenditure Proposal (Exhibits H and P) (Article VII)**
  - A. Exhibit H, Expenditure Proposal-THV FY24 (in Excel format) \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Exhibit H-1, Expenditure Proposal-THV FY25 (in Excel format) \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Exhibit P, ICSQ for Cost Reimbursement Grants \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. **Applicable Exhibits (to be included in RFA Package) (Article VI, Section 6.4)**
  - A. Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v. 2.4
  - B. Exhibit K, Exceptions Form, if applicable \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Exhibit Q, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. Exhibit Q-1, Certification Regarding Lobbying \_\_\_\_\_

## **ARTICLE X. LIST OF EXHIBITS**

Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v. 2.4

Exhibit B, DFPS Grant Uniform Terms and Conditions

Exhibit C, DFPS Grant Supplemental and Special Conditions

Exhibit D, Texas Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Needs Assessment

Exhibit E, Eligible Program Models

Exhibit F, Program Narrative

Exhibit G, Project Work Plan

Exhibit H, Expenditure Proposal - THV FY24

Exhibit H-1, Expenditure Proposal - THV FY25

Exhibit I, Online Bid Room

Exhibit J, Evaluation Tool

Exhibit K, Exceptions Form

Exhibit L, Executive Summary

Exhibit M, Applicant Information

Exhibit N, Governmental Entity Information (if applicable)

Exhibit N-1, Non-Profit Entity Information (if applicable)

Exhibit O, Administrative Information

Exhibit P, ICSQ for Cost Reimbursement Grants

Exhibit Q, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs

Exhibit Q-1, Certification Regarding Lobbying